

**POSTHUMAN SECURITY AND LANDMINES:  
GENDERED MEANING-MAKING AND MATERIALITIES IN THE  
NORTH-EASTERN BORDER AREA OF ZIMBABWE**

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**2013201674**

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIALISATION IN AFRICA STUDIES**

In the Faculty of the Humanities

Centre for Gender and Africa Studies

University of the Free State Bloemfontein

November 2022

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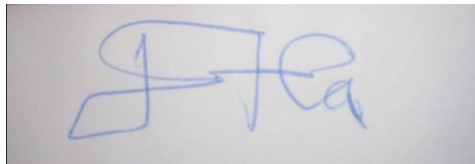
## DECLARATION

I, JACOB TAGARIROFA, declare that the Doctoral Degree research thesis that I herewith submit for the *Doctor of Philosophy with specialization in Africa Studies* in the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies at the University of the Free State is my own, original work and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

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30 November 2022

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my wife Beatrice, son Junior Shadreck, daughters Anenyasha and Anopaishe, my father, as well as my late loving mother.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to God, Almighty for enabling me to complete this piece of work despite numerous hurdles.

I would also want to thank my supervisors, Professor H. Hudson and Dr S. Cawood for their unwavering academic and financial support throughout the writing of this thesis. Your extensive criticism of my work shaped my study from the beginning to the end. You nurtured me perfectly to comprehend and enjoy the theoretical discourse that informed my study. Your guidance will forever be cherished. Continue to be blessed!

To my wife, Beatrice Mutikani, your emotional support went a long way in strengthening my elbow. You woke me up at odd hours telling me to ‘please write and finish’ even when I was tired. Thanks so much for being there for me and continue being there.

Colonel Ncube and the whole ZIMAC (Zimbabwe Mine Action) staff, hats off to you. You granted me permission to carry out my study in your area of jurisdiction. You provided accommodation for me during my stay in Mukumbura. You connected me to my participants and it helped a lot in soliciting the much needed rich and deeper findings.

I further acknowledge the staff as well as the financial support of the Social Sciences Research Council’s (SSRC) Next Generation of Social Sciences Programme which enabled proposal development and completion of the thesis through scholarly engagement workshops.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those who voluntarily participated in this study. Your direct or indirect contributions assisted in making this study come to fruition.

## ENGLISH ABSTRACT

This empirical study of landmines, gendered meaning-making and matter in the border area of Mukumbura, Northern Zimbabwe, was inspired by the everyday experiences of men and women as a consequence of their living together with landmines; the prevalence of a conspicuous gap in the human security literature on gendered discourses and human-object relationalities in relation to human security; and the inadequacy of grand security theories on how to overcome this deficiency by means of a feminist posthuman security perspective as analytical tool to study the gendered implications of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in a post-war setting. These informed the objectives of the study which include, among others, to account for the theoretical shift from Human Security to a feminist posthuman security approach and to develop a theoretical framework supporting the latter; to critically analyse how landmines influence the construction of masculinities, femininities and victimhood in the discourse of peace and security; to critically analyse the role of landmines in gendering socio-economic (in)security in post-conflict communities; and to assess how coping mechanisms become gendered through human-landmine co-existence.

The study used a qualitative feminist posthumanist methodology which was ethnographic and reflexive in orientation. Data gathering tools included key-participant interviews, life history narratives and overt participant observation. These data collection tools were strategically chosen as they befit the feminist qualitative methodology that recognises reflexivity in the context of fluid identities. As such, the participants were men and women whose lives were shaped and

reshaped by their co-existence with landmines during and after the war of liberation in the border area.

Drawing on three key theoretical pillars – the agency of all genders, the agency of objects, as well as taking the African context of intangible objects/spiritualities seriously – the study has shown that human (in)security ought to be understood as a complex, fluid and contextualised phenomenon. The focus of the study on everyday micro-level (in)security has challenged the theoretical prejudices of grand security theories such as Realism, Human Security, Critical Security Studies and Feminist Security Studies, as well as their negation of alternative analytical constructs that (re)frame (in)security at the community level. These included gender, context (Afrocentrism), and the agency of non-human things (tangible/landmines and intangible/spiritualities). Despite the fact that livelihoods, identities and victimhood have all been shown to be gendered in many contexts, the subsequent agency exercised by men and women in their constrained ecologies shows that physical and socio-economic insecurity (vulnerability) transcends gender binaries as both men and women are equally embroiled in the becoming of (in)security in these contexts. Thus, theoretically and empirically, the thesis has demonstrated that it is only through a feminist posthuman approach that we can comprehensively understand that (in)security is a function of the human-object intra-action, since both humans and non-human things are co-constituted in co-producing gendered (in)security spaces and practices in post-conflict communities where ERW are still present.

**Key words:** Landmines, (in)security, gender, intra-action, agency, non-human objects, Human Security, Critical Security, Feminist Security Studies, feminist posthuman security

**ZVIMBAMBAIRA NEPFUNGWA YEDZIVIRIRO ISINGAKOSHESI  
MUNHU KUDARIKA ZVIMWE ZVISIKWA:  
KUGADZIRWA KWEZVIREVO KUNE CHEKUITA NEPFUNGWA  
YEMAWADZANIRANO EVANHURUME NEVANHUKADZI UYE  
NEKUKOSHA KWEUZVOKWADI MUNZVIMBO YEMUGANHU IRI  
PAKATI PEMAODZANYEMBA NEMABVAZUVA MUZIMBABWE**

**Pfupiso yeTsvagurudzo**

Tsvagurudzo ino yezvimbambaira yekuzvionera wega, kugadzirwa kwendevo dziri maringe nepfungwa yemawadzanirano evanhurume nevanhukadzi mutsika nemagariro avo pamwe nezvinobatika munzvimbo yeMukumbura iri kumuganhu wenyika, Kumaodzanyemba kweZimbabwe, yakakurudzirwa nezvinosanganikwa nazvo zuva nezuva nevarume nevakadzi kuburikidza nekutambudzwa nezvimbambaira; kuwoneka kuri pachena kwemukaha muzvinyorwa zvedziviro yevanhu zviru maringe nehurukuro ine chokuita nepfungwa yemawadzanirano evanhurume nevanhukadzi pamwe nepfungwa dzine ungaru dzeukama pakati pemunhu nechinhu zvichenderana nedziviro yevanhu; uye nekushomeka kwepfungwa huru dzedziviro maererano nekukunda kushomeka uku kuburikidza nepfungwa yedziviro isinganyanyokoshesa munhu kudarika zvimwe zvisikwa, iri muhwaro hwemaonero anokoshesa zvinosangana nevanhukadzi saicho chombo cheongororo mutsvagurudzo ino chekuongorora pfungwa dzemhedziso dzisiri pachena dzewadzano pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi dzeZvinopotika Zvakasarira muHondo (*Explosive Remnants of War – ERW*) munguva iyo hondo yapera. Zvingangwa izvi zvetsvagurudzo, izvo zvinosanganisira pakati pezvimwe, kutsanangura kwemasanduro epfungwa yemaonero kubva kuDziviro yeVanhu kuenda kune pfungwa yemaonero isingatori munhu sechisikwa chakakosha kudairika zvimwe mudziviro pamwe

nekuumba hwaro hwemaonero anotsigira pfungwa yepiri; kuongorora zvakadzama kukurudzira kunoita zvimbambaira kuvaka pfungwa dzeundume, hunhukadzi nedzekuva munhu wekushungurudzwa muhurukuro dzerunyararo nedziviro; kuongorora zvakadzama basa rezvimbambaira mukukonzera kuti dziviro/kusadzivirirwa kwezveupfumi nemagariro kuonekwe maringe nepfungwa yewadzano pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi munzvimbo dzapera hondo; uye nekuongorora kuti nzira dzekugadzirisa matambudziko aya dzinozopinza pfungwa yewadzano pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi kuburikidza nedambudziko revanhu nezvimbambaira.

Nzira yetsvagurudzo yakashandiswa ndeyepfungwa isingakoshi zvakakanyanya chisikwa chinonzi munhu kudarika zvimwe zvisikwa, yakatsamira papfungwa yehwaro yehunhukadzi iyo yakanga ine maonero anokoshesa pfungwa dzevanhu venzvimbo iri kuitirwa tsvagurudzo pamwe nekuvapo kwemutsvagurudzi panyaya iri kutsvagurudzwa. Zvombo zvekuunganidza mashoko zvaisanganisira kubvunzwa kwevanhu vakakosha vakasarudzwa kupinda mutsvagurudzo, ngano dzenhorondo dzezveupenyu hwevanhu pamwe nekuongoona kuri pachena kwemutori wenzvimbo mutsvagurudzo. Zvombo zvekuunganidza mashoko izvi zvakasarudzwa paine vavairo yekuzadzikisa zvinangwa zvetsvagurudzo sezvo zvichienderana nenzira yetsvagurudzo yezvehunhukadzi inotsvaga chokwadi kuburikidza neongororo inotwa mumagariro evanhu chaiwo iyo inokoshesa kuva nechokuita kwemutsvagurudzi kutsvagurudzo munzvimbo dzine zvimiro zvinosanduka-sanduka. Nokudaro, vakatora nzvimbo mutsvagurudzo vaiva varume nevakadzi vane upenyu hwakasandurwa nekusandurwa pekare kuburikidza nekugara kwavo pamwe chete nezvimbambaira munguva yehondo yerusunguko, uye munguva iyo hondo yapera munzvimbo yekumuganhu iyi.

Ichitora kubva mumbiru nhatu dzakakosha dzezwaro hwemafungiro – kutora matanho kwevarume nevakadzi, magonero ezvinhu, pamwe nekukoshesa zvakanyanya mamiriro emuAfrica ezvinhu/zvemweya zvisingabatike – tsvagurudzo ino yakaratidza kuti dziviriro kana kusadzivirirwa kwevanhu kunofanira kunzwiswa sechinhu chakaomarara, chinolanduka, uye chiri mumamiriro acho. Kudondana kwetsvagurudzo maringe nedziviriro/kushaya dziviriro yezuva nezuva kuri padanho repasi-pasi, kwadenha pfungwa dzezvehwaro hwemaonero dzisina kutsigirwa nechokwadi dzepfungwa huru dzezwaro hwemaonero maringe nedziviriro dzakaita seyeHuchokwadi, Dziviriro yeVanhu, Pfungwa yeOngororo Yakadzama yeZvidzidzo zveDziviriro, nePfungwa yezveHunhukadzi yeZvidzidzo zveDziviriro pamwe nemarambiro adzo dzimwe pfungwa dzeongororo dzinoumba nekuumba patsva dziviriro/kusadzivirirwa padambo renzvimbo inogara vanhu. Pfungwa idzi dzinosanganisira pfungwa yemawadzanirano pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi mutsika nemagariro avo, hwaro hwemaitikiro ezvinhu (Pfungwa yehwaro emaonero inokoshesa tsika nenhoroondo dzeAfrica), pamwe nemagonero ezvinhu zvisiri vanhu (zvinobatika/zvimbambaira nezvisingabatiki/zvemweya). Kunyangwe zvazvo nzira dzekutsvaga chouvi, zvimiro pamwe nehukanganisirwi zvakaraidzwa zvose kuti zvimwe chokuita nepfungwa yezvekuwadzana pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi mutsika nemagariro avo mumamiriro nemaitikiro ezvinhu akawanda, matanho anotevera anoitwa nevarume nevakadzi munzvimbo dzavo dzakamanikana dzeukama pakati pezvipuka nenharaunda, anoraidza kuti kusadzivirirwa kwemiviri yavo pamwe nekwemagariro nezveupfumi hwavo kunodarika uviri hunopikisa hwezvewadzano yevanhukadzi nevanhurume mutsika nemagariro avo, sezvo zvose varume nevakadzi vachibatwa zvakaenzana mukuuya kwenjodzi muhwaro uhu hwemaitikiro ezvinhu. Nokudaro, mupfungwa yehwaro hwemaonero pamwe nekuzvionera

pamhuno sefodya, chinyorwa chino charatidza kuti kuburikidza chete nekushandisa maonero ehunhukadzi asinganyanyokoshesa munhu kudarika zvimwe zvisikwa, kunokwanisa kuti tinzwisise zvizere kuti (kusava ne)dziviro ibasa redanho remukati reukama kwevanhu nezvinhu, sezvo vanhu nezvisiri vanhu vachipinzwa pauviri hwavo mukuburitsa pahumwechete hwavo nzvimbo netsika dze(kusava ne)dziviro munguva iyo kurwisana kunenge kwapera, asi munzvimbo dzavo muchine zvisarirwa zvehondo zvinopotika.

**Mazwi akakosha:** Zvimbambaira, (kusava ne)dziviro, pfungwa yemawadzanirano evanhurume nevanhukadzi, wadzanomukati yematanho, danho rinoburitsa zvinodiwa, zvinhu zvisiri vanhu, Dziviro yeVanhu, Pfungwa yeOngororo Yakadzama yeZvidzidzo zveDziviro, Pfungwa yezvehunhukadzi yezvedziviro isingakoshesi munhu kudarika zvimwe zvisikwa

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AP	Anti-personnel
AT	Anti-tank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHS	Commission on Human Security
CSS	Critical Security Studies
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FSS	Feminist Security Studies
GHREC	General Human Research Ethics Committee
GICHD	Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining
HALO	Hazardous Area Life-support Organisation
HS	Human Security
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
IR	International Relations
RF	Rhodesian Front
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UFS	University of the Free State
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZIMAC	Zimbabwe Mine Action
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

## **INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION**

### **1.1 GENERAL ORIENTATION**

Globally, landmines or the so-called Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) have left a path of destruction at many levels within communities, including the physical, mental, environmental and socio-economic, long after wars have ended. In this regard, Kottack (2008) highlights that the agency of matter has been seen in contemporary weapons of war which, despite their abandonment, continue to influence human security in communities. He further argues that “war is the transformation of matter through the agency of destruction, and industrialised war creates and destroys on a larger scale than any other human activity” (Kottack, 2008: 42). It follows that modern wars have an unmatched capability to reconfigure countries, cities and individuals, and thus shape conceptions of (in)security and shared identity. The new meanings attached to the effect of these war objects on everyday security thus symbolise the limits of human behaviour, and are particularly evident in communities littered with ERW.

This study is an ethnographic exploration of the gendered socio-economic materialities and micro-political consequences of the entanglement of humans and objects/landmines in a post-war community in Zimbabwe. I use the post-war Mukumbura community as the case study as it is still contaminated by ERWs. Four decades after the liberation which was fought between 1964 and 1979, the landmines continue to exert an influence on everyday (in)security spaces and practices, and in turn reconfigure social-economic relations along gender lines.

In this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of the thesis with the main aim to orientate the reader in terms of the empirical and theoretical context. I begin with an exposition of the case study in context, informed by global, continental and national (Zimbabwean) experiences. This is followed by a theoretical contextualisation where I provide a brief literature review to situate the argument and contribution within scholarly debates and to support the rationale of the study. In the next section, I frame the problem and research questions, followed by a list of research objectives. In the last part of the chapter, I first discuss the parameters of the study before providing an overview of the structure/chapter layout of the thesis.

## **1.2 A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE GLOBAL LANDMINE PREDICAMENT**

Since landmines are conceptualised in this study as having agency, it is necessary to ‘characterise’ these ERW by engaging with their specific origins, (technical and other) specifications and functions from a global perspective.

Landmines have formed part of the story of the colonial and post-colonial wars that have been fought in Southern Africa for over five decades. According to Rupiah, “[d]uring this period, many millions of landmines were imported into southern Africa; others were manufactured in the region. More than 66 different types of anti-personnel mines from 21 countries have been found in southern Africa. These countries are Austria, Belgium, Cuba, China, former Czechoslovakia, France, former East Germany, former West Germany, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, South Africa, former Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Britain, United States, former Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe” (Rupiah, 1998: 24). Most of these landmines have come to Southern Africa

through direct sales, although in the case of Zimbabwe and Apartheid South Africa, these landmines were acquired against the United Nations (UN) sanctions. For instance, South Africa is said to have taken stock of landmines that were captured in its invasions of southern Angola in the 1970s and used these to supply insurgent forces in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Rupiah, 1998: 26).

In Africa, Angola stands out to be the most affected country in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region as it has been recorded to have millions of landmines in its soil (Africa Watch, 1993: 2). Globally, only Afghanistan surpasses these countries as it has been more heavily mined. Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have been noted to have the highest rates of landmine-induced injuries per capita in the world. For example, in Angola alone, out of a population of about 9 million people, landmines have accounted for more than 70 000 amputees, that is, 1 in 470 people (Rupiah, 1998: 28). It is estimated that Southern Africa has more than 20 million landmines buried in its soil, of which only about 400 000 have been cleared since mine clearance efforts began in 1991 (Rupiah, 1998: 28).

A landmine can be defined as “a munition placed under, or near the ground or other surface area and designed to be exploded by the presence, or proximity of a person or vehicle” (ICRC, 1996: 3). Others go beyond this definition to capture “mass produced, victim operated, explosive traps” (Croll, 1998: 10). The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) (2014: 241) observes that landmines are small military weapons that can be set off either by a trip wire or a pressure switch that requires minimal pressure of about 6kg. Most landmines are commonly armed with a

fuse that consists of “a trip-wire, an anti-handling device or a form of electronic sensors” (Lloyd, 1997: 2).

Landmines can be broadly categorised into two groups, as anti-personnel (AP) and anti-tank (AT). They are normally directed at and exploded by humans and vehicles correspondingly. Anti-personnel mines are filled with 10 to 250g of explosives, whilst the anti-tank mines are filled with 2 to 9kg of explosives and these usually need pressure of about 100 kg to be able to detonate and the ICRC (1996) has recognised about 360 types of anti-personnel landmines that are/were produced by about 55 countries.

AP landmines are largely categorised into two classes, as blast mines and disintegration mines. Lately the progression in mine expertise has facilitated the expansion of landmines with switches as well as landmines that are self-neutralising, self-destructive, providing a rise in the ‘smart’ mines whose life cycles are well-known, as opposed to the orthodox ‘dumb’ mines that have been known to stay active for more than five decades like the ones found in the case study (Lloyd, 1997). The term ‘landmine’ in this study is deployed with reference to AP mines that are most prevalent in the case study area as compared to anti-tank mines.

Landmines are known to have a very tenacious, indiscriminating and unrestrained nature that makes them look different from other traditional weapons. Once landmines are put in the ground, they pose a threat for decades to follow. It is impossible for them to be easily recalled by the military personnel upon declaration of cease-fires, and each and every individual landmine should be defused or destroyed, or it will remain capable to claim a victim (McGrath, 2014).

Besides the physical harm and emotional trauma (Goliath, 1998) that are a direct consequence of landmines, they ought to be seen as weapons of social cataclysm (McGrath, 2014) that is, they have “an insidious multiplier effect that can shatter human potential and drain resources throughout the entire fabric of society with potential to continue to bring misery to generations” (Davies, 1997: 12).

Landmines desist from being strictly military weapons when “their victim is no longer the enemy alone, but when their victims become innocent civilians, children, and refugees, and when they deny land for agriculture or other civilian purposes” (McGrath, 2014: 15). At that point, they become objects that disrupt the post-conflict reconstruction and socio-economic development processes and in this research they are dealt with as such. For a pictorial depiction of various typologies of landmines see Image 1 below.



*Image 1: Types of landmines (Source: GICHD, 2004. 'A Guide to Mine Action', Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining)*

### 1.3 THE CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

In what follows, I contextualise the case study area because it is the setting within which my study is geographically situated. The photo below (Image 2) aptly captures the prevailing atmosphere in the case study area.

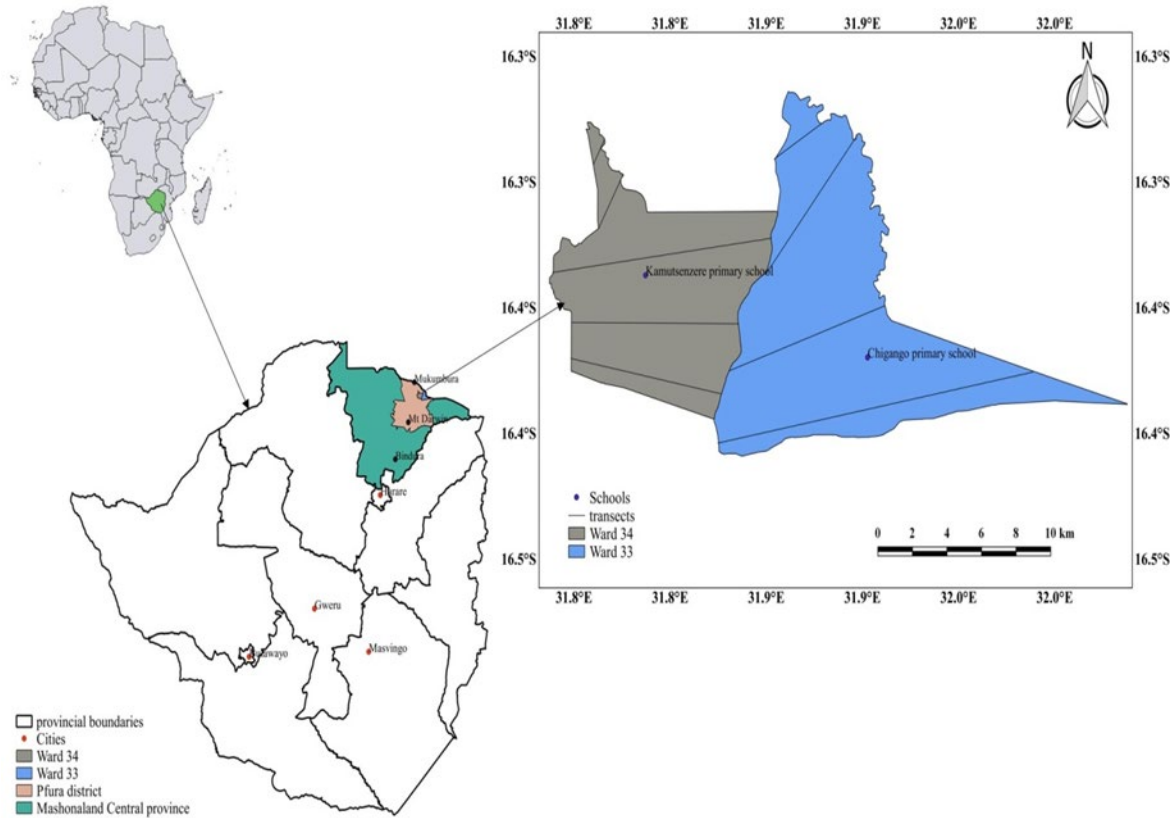


*Image 2: A landmine warning sign in Chigango Village in Mukumbura (Source: Halo Trust, 2020)*

#### 1.3.1 Geographical location

Mukumbura is a remote rural area located on the North-Eastern border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, about 382 km from Harare (see Map 1). The study area is in the agro-ecological region five, according to Zimbabwe's land classification system. It is characterised by high temperatures (above 25 degrees Celsius) and very low rainfall (below 500mm per year). As such,

there is limited surface water even during normal rain seasons (Broderick, 2000: 10). The major visible boundary is the Mukumbura River which is perennial as a result of the constant supply of water from its upper catchment.



Map 1: Map of the case study area (Source: Google maps)

### 1.3.2 Socio-economic organisation of the area

The society in the case study area is organised along the patriarchal system of the Shona culture. Male dominance is a key feature and women are expected to be subordinate to men. The people mainly speak Shona and they have strong kinship ties that keep their solidarity intact. The major

form of livelihood is subsistence farming of small grains and maize. Some economic activities carried out by the people in the village entail gardening, fishing and gathering and selling of wild fruits. The people also rear animals such as cattle, goats and sheep and these are used for draught power during ploughing and sources of food where necessary. A few relatively financially affluent families partake in cross-border trade where they cross the Mozambican border informally to buy cheap wares for resale back home. There are few shopping areas or marketplaces as they are strategically located in areas perceived to be safe from landmines.

### **1.3.3 Landmine incidence in Mukumbura**

The Mukumbura community is one of many communities in Zimbabwe living in constant fear due to the prevalence of landmines. Munaki (2016: 2) describes the community as consisting of:

*...people that spend every day listening and anticipating a fatal loud bang from the sound of an explosion of landmines. The people are afraid that the next landmine explosion could take away their loved one or ones, maim their children, husbands, mothers, brothers or sisters. Livestock too; the explosion could be a signature for the death of the family's only cow, a symbol of its entire savings* (Chipika, 2015: 23).

Fear in this community theoretically corresponds to Meiches' (2017: 1) analogy of weapons as agentic<sup>1</sup> entities with formative influence over human desires. The resultant fear also becomes

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<sup>1</sup> Later in my study I make a case for reconceptualising landmines as coercive entities that act in ways that exceed human intentions. Meiches (2017) affirms that this conceptualisation of weaponry can be useful in rethinking discourses of the nature of war, (in)security and technological advancement. Thus, it demonstrates how reducing governmentality of ERW obscures contemporary understanding of their materialities in the discourse of peace and

gendered in so far as women are confined to ‘safer spaces’<sup>2</sup> – the home; on the pretext that they are less knowledgeable about landmines compared to men; and are thus expected to socially and economically depend on men who can avoid the dangers of landmines in the everyday practices and spaces. Ironically, this observation dovetails with the view of Hynes (2004: 431) that “bombs and missiles kill men and women indiscriminately, but other aspects of the war affect women and girls disproportionately”. As such, the incidence of landmines in post-war Mukumbura has culminated in the misinterpretation of ‘safer spaces’ due to the gendered meaning-making of (in)security.

The Mukumbura community is adjacent to the widely recognised landmine-infested border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The people living in this area have had to endure the threats from landmines which were left during the war of liberation (Berhe, 2005). The area was one of the many border entry points used by liberation war fighters to enter or exit Zimbabwe to and from training bases in Mozambique during the bush war (Chikati, 2016). The bush war refers to the liberation struggle between the Rhodesian Front (RF) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe Peoples’ Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) (Rupiah, 1998). The war was characterised by the use of a wide array of weapons, such as all sorts of guns, tankers, aircraft gunships, missiles and anti-personnel landmines (Rupiah, 1998). Since Mukumbura was the area through which new military recruits would pass on their way to Mozambique, it therefore became a target for landmine planting by the Rhodesian forces as one of the deterrent mechanisms to prohibit free passage of ‘enemies’ to and from Mozambique

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security. This means that their agentic effect as they become co-constituted with humans should also inform the epistemological discourse and theorisation of peace and security.

<sup>2</sup> The irony of ‘safer spaces’ emanates from the mere fact that men can equally be harmed by these landmines –yet women are perceived to be the only victims.

(Chipika, 2015). Other strategies included the spraying of Anthrax on paths likely to be used by the liberation war fighters – a kind of unconventional biological war strategy – and the creation of ‘safe keeps’, which were fenced residential compounds for all the civilian population in war-torn areas (Rupiah, 1998).

These war strategies and tactics were however blind to future (in)security implications of those landmines for the civilian population living in the surrounding villages after the war ended. The growth of the population after the war saw a high demand for agricultural and residential land and this meant encroachment into the heavily weaponised land despite the dangers. It is these war-time landmines which continue to influence interaction and pose insecurity to the present generation living in the nearby villages. Herdsmen routinely witness the killing of livestock affecting people’s livelihoods in the rural community (Chikati, 2016). A British humanitarian demining organisation by the name of Hazardous Area Life-Support Organisation (HALO) Trust (2016) confirmed that this was also the everyday experience of people living in the villages of Nyamande and Chigango under Chief Chiswiti in Mukumbura. The villages are adjacent to the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The greater part of this underutilised land located between the two countries is heavily littered with landmines. It has therefore been declared a danger zone and in urgent need of landmine sweeping and demining. Allegedly, the AP mines were planted by the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) to discourage movement of military personnel from Zimbabwe –mostly those who were leaving the country for military training to join the war of liberation. So, the landmines were planted into the suspected crossing

routes into neighbouring countries (Rupiah, 2000)<sup>3</sup>. Paradoxically though, the landmines buried in the 1970s continue to (re)shape the socio-economic ecologies and everyday security experiences of Mukumbura almost four decades after the war ended in 1980.

Over the course of many years, the markers demarcating landmine-cordoned areas have disappeared and it is now difficult for the people, especially school-going children and women, to detect safer passages. While the problem is concentrated in that portion of the area, people have fallen victim to these landmines in the fields and pathways especially those fetching water every day, or gathering firewood and traditional vegetables in the bush. It is worth noting that these landmines have inverted the gendered division of labour as men now take up female roles in the name of protecting their wives and mothers, whilst widows and single mothers equally perform both masculine and feminine chores for their families. This phenomenon does not only draw attention to the importance of the materiality of objects, but also highlights changes in terms of gendered security and social relations in post-conflict communities littered with landmines. These shifts manifest as a result of the gendered effect of objects on people's everyday security and the consequent reconfiguration of everyday chores.

Rupiah (1998: 368) states that “the laying of the border minefields, which the Rhodesians boasted was the ‘Second Largest Man-Made Obstacle in the World’, contained from one to three million landmines”. These border landmine areas are not continuous but are separated into seven segments adding up to some 700km in length (Rupiah, 1998). The initial border landmine fields

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<sup>3</sup> The question as to who planted the mines is contested: Some scholars (Rupiah, 1998; Grobbelaar, 2004) claim that the landmines were planted by the guerrillas (Zimbabwe liberation war fighters) whilst others (Chikati, 2016; Mutwira, 2009) state that the landmines were planted by the Rhodesian Forces.

were built in the conventional method (in such a way that they do not directly affect or target civilians), but by 1977, repairs and care of these landmine fields slowed down as the war progressed. Landmines that were laid and being laid increasingly became uncontrolled and undocumented, and incidences of landmine explosions proliferated, killing infiltrators then and influencing the (in)security of innocent civilians in the post-conflict period.

Landmine clearing efforts have been erratic as engineers from the Zimbabwe National Army and other countries who were involved in the landmine sweeping and demining abandoned the work in 2003 arguing that the landmines were planted randomly and the apparatus that they were using exposed them to the dangers of landmine detonation (Grobbelaar, 2004). Because the mines have been there for so long, the impact on the local communities is staggering. In one area called Muzarabani close to the case study area , more than 20 people suffered landmine injuries resulting in amputations. In another community, 14 cattle were lost in a single year. At the local primary school, 66 children from Mozambique crossed the minefields twice a day to attend classes in Zimbabwe and there have been reports of more than fifteen victims in the period after HALO Trust halted its landmine sweeping and demining operations in the area (HALO Trust, 2016: 8).

Although the people are aware of the minefields, and despite the dangers posed by these landmines, they have continued to live in this treacherous environment since they are emotionally attached to the area where they were born, grew up, witnessed their relatives dying during the war and afterwards, lost their cattle, goats and donkeys, and where the graves of their loved ones are located. Many people who lived in the area when the landmines were being

planted remembered the clearance work done by Koch, a company contracted by the Zimbabwean government (HALO Trust, 2016). All of them recount stories of friends, family members or livestock killed or injured by landmines. Yet, ironically, the best agricultural land in the case study area is located between the minefield and the Mukumbura River. The water holes are in the same place. Numerous paths of various widths crisscross the minefields. While villagers felt safer on these paths, deminers from HALO Trust found landmines just a few steps away from these paths.

The indiscriminate presence of these lethal objects in the very spaces of women's work has rendered them prone to the dangers in a different way than men who have had the chance to gain knowledge of the landmines through landmines hazard community engagement programs previously done by HALO Trust. This is so, because men did not allow 'their women' to be part of community projects that would expose them to the hazards of landmines (Chikati, 2016), thereby denying women's agency. As such, women have suffered more in contexts where these interventions would result in the restoration of social relations, especially gender roles which are rearranged as a result of the fear and insecurity posed by landmines on everyday space and practices.

Thus, the differential impact of the war on men and women has been neglected for a long time, until the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in October 2000. This proclamation articulated a remarkable normative shift in peace and security thinking related to post-conflict contexts as this provided a framework of recognising women's important role in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. Yet with regard to violence

against women, traditionally regarded as an interpersonal/private matter (Mann, 2010) not much has changed over the years. Despite efforts at the international level to mainstream gender, such as in the Convention on the Elimination of Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, as well as the Beijing Conference (1995) which was dubbed The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, the advancement of women's human rights, and in particular the protection of women from conflict-related sexual violence remain a global concern (NF Hudson, 2010; Olonisakin et al., 2011). In 2008, at least, UN Security Council Resolution 1820 declared sexual and gender-based violence a tool of war to be eradicated.

In spite of all these efforts at the international level, women in post-war Zimbabwe had long endured exclusion from mainstream societal activities on the basis of their perceived lack of knowledge of ERW, such as in the case with landmines in Mukumbura. As such, social organisation and human ecology in post-war Mukumbura has been reconfigured as a result of the need to navigate the insecurity posed by landmines. Roles that have traditionally been conceived of as feminine have been further curtailed and assumed by men as women are restricted to the home where they are not exposed to the physical effects of landmines (see Chapter Four, Section 4.3). The task and roles of fetching water and firewood; accompanying children to school; going to the market; and even visiting relatives have been transferred to men (Chikati, 2016). Women can only do these everyday chores when accompanied by men. This structural arrangement has systematically reaffirmed masculinity over femininity, evolving into new meanings of security-insecurity, but, mostly endorsing the agential role of objects in reconfiguring gender relations as

they co-exist with humans; and broadening the understanding of human security in post-war communities with ERW.

This correlates with Oppong and Kalipeni's (2005) view that landmines result in famine and poverty and spread infections. Their study of the materialities of landmines in Angola reveals that despite fertile lands and good rains, many people are being killed by famine because of the landmines that are inhibiting farming space as a result of the political instability. As such, the fear of death or being maimed because of landmines keeps people from practicing farming in areas with fertile soils. Therefore, landmines have a more secondary effect than drought and environmental disasters, and able-bodied men and women succumb to starvation, despite an abundance of fertile soil. Going beyond the study of the ecological impact of landmines as in the case of Angola, I contend that a particular ethnographic exploration of the materialities of landmines and the resultant gendered meaning-making of (in)security and the human-object relationalities is justified through the case study of Mukumbura.

#### **1.4 BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

My choice of theoretical framework (outlined in detail in Chapter Two) is motivated by the limitations of mainstream International Relations (IR) approaches such as Realism that privileges state security over human security (Booth, 2007: 9). However, although representing more inclusive iterations of security thinking, non-traditional approaches including Human Security (HS) (Commission on Human Security (CHS), 2003; Hudson, 2005); Feminist Security Studies (FSS) (Enloe, 2014; Tickner, 1992; Hudson, 2005); and Critical Security Studies (CSS) (Aradau

and Huysmans, 2015) fail to explicitly focus on the three-way interplay between gender, meaning making/discourse and matter.

Firstly, the human security focus championed by international institutions such as the UN, policymakers and academics (Haq, 1995) inverts the state-centrism of realist security approaches and advocates for a bottom-up security perspective that focuses on the security of humans (Hudson, 2005: 165). Paradoxically, in so far as a focus on human security enlarges the concept of security to include seven interconnected subcategories (personal, political, economic, food, health, environmental and community (Ammann, 2017a) it wrongly assumes that ‘human’ includes men and women, yet in reality it has not been the case (Hudson, 2015a).

Secondly, FSS argue that traditional realist conceptualisations of security are exclusionary since they visibly overlook women and other minority identities in their security discourses (Ammann, 2017a; Enloe, 2004; Tickner, 1992) and forget to acknowledge that gender is a key analytical variable in understanding the meaning and politics of security (Hudson, 2005: 156). FSS helps to reveal the gendered asymmetries in terms of the framing of victimhood, agency and identity. This feminist security strand also accounts for the normative forces which sustain such dichotomies. It does so through decentring the androcentric connotations embodied in Realism.

Lastly, CSS view security as emancipation and thus challenge the realist hypothesis that notions such as ‘security’ and ‘insecurity’ reflect our reality and instead point out that the construction of these terms profoundly impacts the scope of politics and in turn people’s lives (Aradau and Huysmans, 2015). Subsequently, this approach has always been preoccupied with challenging

the resulting difference between discourse and matter (Fierke, 2016: 70). By so doing, CSS advocate a study of the world which culminates in the deconstruction of the systems and structures that perpetuate oppression of marginalised groups of people (Mutimer, 2017: 54), which in most violent conflicts have either directly or indirectly been women and children.

I contend that these three theoretical approaches lay a solid foundation from where a feminist posthuman framework that pays attention to both people and matter can be developed. Drawing on the critical-normative underpinnings of these three security variants, my study is a qualitative exploration of the gendered impact of landmines on everyday experiences and the security of people in the Mukumbura community located in the North-eastern border area of Zimbabwe. But I also look beyond these three theoretical strands to frame a theoretical approach which recognises the materialities of objects such as landmines in the unfolding of (in)security where humans and objects are entangled. My study is therefore three dimensional, that is, firstly I explore a variety of security discourses; secondly, I explore the materialities of objects (landmines) in influencing space and practices of people in the case study area; and thirdly, gender comes in as a cross-cutting variable present in both the other dimensions. Thus, this triangulation works as the basis for developing a feminist posthuman security approach which goes beyond merely looking at the human, to the materiality of non-human (objects, animals and the environment) in the (re)conceptualisation of (in)security in the post-conflict context.

With regard to matter, I draw on the New Materialisms (Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Hudson, 2015b; and MacGinty, 2017) and Critical Posthumanism (Barad, 2003; Haraway, 1992; 2008; Braidotti, 2002; 2007) literature which stresses a material turn from discourse/language to

a more practical material-discursive analysis which signifies the inception of relational ontologies (Bozalek and Zembyals, 2016; MacGinty, 2017; Hudson, 2018). Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams (2015: 4) acknowledge the importance of matter in the understanding of present political life. This is in sync with a range of scholarship variously depicted as New Materialisms, New Vitalism and the Materialist Turn fashioned by varied social and political theorists in recent years (Coole and Frost, 2010). The wide and varying literature on the discourse of New Materialisms commonly attempts to thematically classify the concept of materiality, its connection with politics, and how emphasis on material factors might result in the refashioning of our comprehension of ‘the political’ as a concept (Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015: 4). It is in this context where materiality as a perspective is characteristically framed in broad spectrum to depict “objects, bodies, machines” (Braun and Whatmore, 2010), as well as “edibles, commodities, storms, metals, micro-organisms, cellular reactions, cosmic motions” (Coole and Frost, 2010). Currently, the New Materialisms perspective entails generally the fact that humans are surrounded by, immersed in, and unquestionably comprised of matter as it is understood in these terms, and also the assertion that the connection between materiality and people’s socio-political life cannot be overlooked.

This material turn informed my adoption of a posthuman security lens in as much as landmines (objects) constitute the central ‘matter’ influencing (in)security in post-conflict Mukumbura. It therefore forms the basis for my framing of the discourse of security on the binaries of gender since this study of the influence of objects (landmines) on everyday social relations and security of people in Mukumbura problematises the human security notion which characteristically exhibits human-centric tendencies in its conception of security. As a result, the meaning of

security and insecurity becomes an entwined process of humans and matter (landmines). MacGinty (2017) illustrates the co-constitution through an example of how material objects offer understandings into international interventions and people's reactions to those interventions. He premises his study on a Toyota 4x4 vehicle as emblematic of intervention and argues that the utility vehicle as it is used in Sudan's Darfur can also be seen as a thing of resistance through its agency.

In sum, the feminist posthuman security approach that the study intends to develop is based on the integration of four theoretical variants or bodies of literature, namely HS, FSS, CSS, and the New Materialisms perspective.

## **1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The study is motivated by five major reasons, namely the lack of a critical gender focus in the research on landmines; the need for understanding temporal issues as these play out in a particular space and how the blurring of conflict and post-conflict impacts on peacebuilding practices; limited theoretical work in the area of posthuman security; limited empirical research from an African perspective on the topic, as well as the potential for adding to the body of research on theorising the everyday or everyday security.

Firstly, several scholars have written about landmines and their impact on other variables such as development (Chapman, 2010; Bocchino, 2007; Grobbelaar, 2004); trauma (Giannou, 1997); land and environment (Rupiah, 1998); health and the cost of landmine sweeping and demining in

relation to the subsequent economic returns from utilising the land (Njeri, 2015; Oppong and Kalipeni, 2005; Rupiah, 1998). But these studies have not explicitly and systematically focused on the gender impacts of landmines. We need to recognise that ERW continue to remodel social spaces, everyday practices, identities and the security of men, women, children and animals in Mukumbura due to their entwinement with these landmines every day more than four decades after the war of liberation. Their lived experiences and narratives are symptomatic of life devoid of security, characteristically gendered and seemingly constrained socially, physically and economically with real gendered effects.

At the same time, the few studies that have attempted to analyse the gendered impact of landmines have produced either essentialised or stereotyped gender accounts. Bloul (2012), for instance, through the ‘Miss Landmines’ pageant in Cambodia conceptualises such beauty pageants as rituals of reintegration which explicitly aim to symbolically represent integration of some stigmatised embodied identities. It romanticises the inclusion of gender and does not take into account the realities of insecurity experienced by these contestants. My study therefore intends to address this gap through a novel approach of exploring the material and psychological impact of landmines as objects on the security, socio-economic organisation, social relations and identities of people in the case study area. In this changing context, men constitute the major perpetrators of violence and insecurity during the war yet now they are emerging as protectors of women in post-war contexts. Furthermore, those who have attempted a gender/human-object security analysis have looked at other non-human objects such as viruses (Ebola in Liberia) (Ammann, 2017b), as well as security monitoring technology and enhanced security and warfare

technology such as the Harrassmap technology (Grove, 2015) and not at landmines, and it is here that my research seeks to make a contribution.

Secondly, the study is motivated by the value this study would bring to the broader peace-building discourse and efforts in terms of a better understanding of the impact of landmines across time and space. Landmines are murderous instruments of war and armed conflicts, which have devastating humanitarian and development consequences long after the end of armed hostilities (Njeri, 2015; Bocchino, 2007; Grobbelaar, 2004; Rupiah; 1998; 2000). More work is needed on the agency of landmines as colonial war objects with effects spanning the post-colonial epoch as they continue to reshape people's identities, practices, as well as social and physical space in time. This study seeks to demonstrate that, like no other weapon, landmines illustrate the fact that wars do not simply end, and certainly not automatically at the moment when peace is made. The continuing threat posed by millions of landmines in Mukumbura and other parts of the world today is both a real (material) and symbolic (meanings and discourses) manifestation of the permanent damage caused by wars and armed conflict even after peace has been achieved. The people of Mukumbura still endure psychological and social upheavals beyond the damage to the infrastructure of their community, affecting individuals as much as the society as a whole. Thus, the vestiges of the violent war, trauma, mistrust and family breakdown are not easily repaired; indeed they become dominant factors in the life of the community, thereby blurring the lines between conflict and post-conflict dispensations. Illustrating this through the case study may lead to a deeper understanding of how the co-existence of people, animals and ERW in post-conflict continues to reshape everyday socio-economic and physical

(in)security, and the relations of men and women and their identities well after the armed conflicts have ended.

The third reason why the study is considered significant is the fact that it actively engages with a radically expanded notion of (post)human security. The latter perspective coheres around the notion that the object is one of the units of analysis/actor in human security and peace discourse in post-conflict contexts thereby challenging the traditional realist notion of (in)security as a function of humans alone (Hudson, 2018). Very few scholars have attempted to develop a comprehensive posthuman security framework (Hudson, 2018 and Ammann, 2017b), whereas others have written more broadly on posthumanism and security (Cudworth and Hobden, 2014). In my work, I reinterpret Hudson's proposed pillars and apply them to the case study of landmines in Mukumbura – at once reinforcing existing work, but also providing added nuance and theorisation in an emerging field of security and New Materialisms research. My **theoretical** contribution to this field of research is made through a gender-sensitive discursive-materialist analysis of the human-object relationalities.

In the fourth place, the literature relating to landmines and their materialities is scant, especially with regards to the African context. Most of the literature on landmines in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular consists of merely historical accounts of the incidence of landmines (Berhe, 2005; Bocchino, 2007; Garbino, 2019; Rupiah, 1998) without a look into how their intra-action with humans have affected them beyond the physical safety towards embedded social reordering. Those that have attempted to explore the social aspects of landmines (Kim, 2016) have just offered an abstract conjecture of how they affect men and women differently but

without any empirical significance. Thus, this study contributes to the literature on the discursive analysis of the human-landmine relationalities in forging and re-forging new understandings of (in)security beyond mere abstraction. For this reason, the case study is paramount for keeping the analysis grounded in everyday realities of men and women in Mukumbura. The study is therefore significant because it provides much needed contextualisation or **empirical insight**, marked by an Afrocentric sensitivity, as a counter to the dominant Eurocentric security narratives, and literature. Eurocentric discourses of peace and conflict have tended to overlook the dictates of the normative structural forces of post-conflict African communities where gender is an endemic element characterising society.

Lastly and related to the previous reason, an empirical focus on real-world case studies from Africa further holds benefits for the theorising of the everyday (Lefebvre and Kolakowski, 1991) and everyday (in)security from a New Materialist perspective. The case study on landmines is therefore significant because of the location of the society at the epicentre of a landmine-infested border area, in order to theorise the everyday as an avenue for understanding the attainability of economic wellbeing and security of men and women in post-war contexts through their agency or coping mechanisms. Hudson (2015a: 413) observes in this regard that “[t]heorising the everyday is messy because it has to contend with the immediate social setting in which popular culture is inseparable from the economic materiality of the conditions of oppression”. This is qualified by Alexander’s (1993) argument that studying the resultant effect of the co-existence of humans and ERW in post-conflict communities in Zimbabwe is unique to the area’s geography, experience of the war and its impact in areas where landmines are still prevalent. Bhebhe and Ranger (1995) note that there are some areas of the country where little research has been

carried out. They acknowledge that “the contribution of landmine-infested communities to the understanding of various meanings deduced from the co-existence of humans and (objects) landmines is still a grey area in contemporary peace and security studies” (Bhebhe and Ranger, 1995: 47).

All in all, it boils down to addressing the conspicuous gaps in the literature on the gendered meaning-making and the relational effect of landmines and humans on security; and to ‘test’ the applicability of a feminist posthuman security perspective as a cogent postcolonial analytical tool of the gendered implications of objects/landmines in a post-war context.

## **1.6 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In Mukumbura, the people have co-existed with the landmines every day for more than four decades after the end of Zimbabwe’s protracted liberation struggle. Their everyday living experiences and narratives are indicative of life bereft of security, typically gendered and apparently restrained in terms of social and physical spaces and practices. On this basis, I raise four interrelated aspects of this problem.

Firstly, the materiality of landmines is a deeply relational experience between humans and matter (landmines) which co-produce (in)security in landmine-contaminated post-war communities. For instance, landmines have influenced land rights in post-conflict Angola in various ways. Land grabbing has been the order of the day due to the alleged disintegrated nature of the

peacebuilding efforts where the community is detached from full participation in peacebuilding efforts resulting in asymmetrical power relations and opportunities (Unruh, 2012: 154).

Secondly, these relational effects of humans and objects/landmines in post-war Mukumbura culminate in intra-active spaces and practices which are fundamentally gendered. For example, women have been seen as in dire need of protection in their everyday space and practices as they are perceived to be less knowledgeable about landmines and this has impacted directly on their ability to make a living. Yet paradoxically, men are equally at physical risk since the effects of the explosion of landmines are gender blind. This is confirmed by Kottack (2008: 18) who posits that people's identities, security, practices, social and physical space have habitually been reconfigured due to the coercive effect and insecurity posed by objects around them such as landmines in post-war settings.

Thirdly, the gendered effects of this co-production of (in)security spaces, practices and relations in landmine-infested Mukumbura are multidimensional. The intra-actions are not restricted to a singular level, that is merely physical security of men and women (see Ammann, 2017a: 21), but continuously emerge through all levels where even economic security is a facet (as indicated above). This study therefore explores how ERW continue to refashion socio-economic security of the people and their identities along gender lines.

Lastly, an understanding of this complex problem, as well as the way to approach the relationality, gender and multidimensional aspects of the problem revolve around challenging the binary between meaning/security discourse and matter/landmines as actors through an integrated

feminist posthuman security lens. In this regard, the study investigates the extent to which various meanings attached to these landmines by the people of Mukumbura have redefined (in)security discourses along gender lines – where men and women perceive their agency differently as dictated by the normative structures and systems regulating social relations in a patriarchal society. Put differently, attention to the impact of landmines in Mukumbura has so far focused almost exclusively on the physical security of the community but the study seeks to demonstrate the extent to which landmines have influenced other dimensions of human security such as socio-economic security in everyday gendered existence.

Following a posthuman security perspective, the research also aims to uncover the ignored impact of the embodiment of landmines as objects through their materiality. Landmines influence social relations, livelihoods, physical and social space and practices, as well as meanings attached to them by being objects of both pain and injury in both physical and mental forms. In this way, the analysis moves from just looking at landmines as objects to considering them as subject/agents in the process of constructing meanings about security. Matter as in landmines is thus seen as vital, vibrant and as possessing agency, as well as being ‘mutually constituted’ with the discursive as people grapple with new meanings of everyday (in)security, practices and space (Phillips and Larson, 2013).

Such an understanding of the problem offers an opening for pursuing the real emancipation of underprivileged gender categories. This is only possible through an analytical synthesis which is premised on the appreciation of the co-constituted agency of discourse and materiality (Hudson, 2015b: 414), which is the basis for the feminist posthuman security approach. Hudson (2018: 46)

acknowledges that “a feminist posthuman security approach therefore goes beyond just asking for the inclusion of women, and underscores agentic relations between (all) humans, the natural environment, technology and objects”. She opines that a prospective posthuman theoretical future that deconstructs the notion of the ‘human’ and recognises the political agency of both non-human and human actors captures the intertwined nature of human security practices more adequately.

For these reasons I borrow and adapt Hudson’s (2018: 46) posthuman analytical conceptual framework and apply it to the context of landmines in Zimbabwe. Thus, in the process of challenging the relationship between meaning and matter, I also problematise the gendered victim-perpetrator dichotomy in the context of the co-existence of landmines and humans, where women are seen as passive victims and men as active perpetrators and/or protectors.

The following research questions guide my study and the ensuing chapters:

- What are the theoretical and empirical forces behind the ontological shift from HS to a feminist posthuman security approach in contemporary peace and security studies? (Chapter Two);
- What are the key assumptions that a feminist posthuman security framework for Africa is based on? (Chapter Two);
- What methodological choices guide the integration of theory and methodology, in this study of feminist posthuman security thinking and qualitative feminist methods? (Chapter Three);

- How do landmines (objects) construct gender stereotypical imaging of men and women and the framing of victimhood in security discourse and in Mukumbura? (Chapter Four);
- How do landmines impact on the socio-economic (in)security of men and women in Mukumbura? (Chapter Five); and
- How do the coping mechanisms adopted by men and women in Mukumbura reconfigure social identities and relations? (Chapters Four and Five).

## **1.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In line with the questions above, the main aim of my research is to find out how the co-existence of people and landmines shapes everyday socio-economic and physical (in)security of people in post-conflict Mukumbura. The specific objectives of my study include the following:

- To trace the theoretical shift from HS to a feminist posthuman security approach (Chapter Two);
- To develop the key assumptions of a feminist posthuman security framework that speaks to the African context (Chapter Two);
- To explain and illustrate through a discussion of methodological choices in the field why a feminist qualitative methodology grounded in posthumanist theory is the most appropriate choice for this study (Chapter Three);
- To critically analyse how landmines (objects) influence the construction of masculinities, femininities and victimhood in peace and security discourse, with reference to Mukumbura (Chapter Four);

- To critically analyse the role of landmines in gendering socio-economic (in)security in post-conflict communities such as Mukumbura (Chapter Five); and To assess how coping mechanisms are gendered through the entanglement of humans and objects in Mukumbura (Chapters Four and Five).

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the research adhered to particular boundaries. Despite the existence of landmines in other areas in Zimbabwe such as Rushinga and Sengwe, the researcher focused on Mukumbura as the case study area since it is the area most infested with landmines in Zimbabwe. The area is also associated with a lot of history of the war which made it a rich source of contemporary knowledge and newly constructed meanings about the agency of objects (landmines) as they influence everyday peace, conflict and gender relations. While I acknowledge the contemporary notions of gender fluidity and the multiplicity of gender identities, my study focuses on the male-female gender binary as reflected by the gender identification of the key participants in Mukumbura society who have been resident in the area for long periods of time despite the prevalence of landmines. Besides, it is in the modification of their interaction due to the materialities of landmines where we understand the agency of matter in creating new meanings of (in)security, masculinities and femininities in the everyday practices and space through a feminist posthuman security lens. As such, the research remains located within the geographic and social boundaries of Mukumbura.

In terms of the time confinements, my ethnographic exploration was a purely emic perspective of the people in Mukumbura. As such, there were no specific time rules governing my fieldwork but, it was until I felt I had understood the (in)security dynamics and internal gendered meanings of the landmines. Through the fieldwork, I managed to generate adequate rich data for thick description.

## **1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

**Chapter One - Introduction and contextual background:** This chapter provides a broad orientation to the study and situates the study in the contextual and geographical background of landmines and human security. It provides detail about the case study area and highlights the key theoretical influences that informed the study. This is followed by an exposition of the rationale of the study, the problem statement and main argument of the thesis, research questions, as well as the main and secondary/specific objectives. It also stipulates the delimitation of the study and a brief summary of the content of each chapter.

**Chapter Two - Theoretical framework:** The chapter traces the assumptions of a variety of traditional and critical variants of security and shows how the posthumanist and New Materialist approach adopted in this study draws on these assumptions and contributions. In the process a case is made for the use of three core theoretical pillars, for consideration in the case study – gender/human agency, the agency of objects, and the agency of intangible objects as seen through an Afrocentric lens. Throughout the discussion attention is drawn to the limitations of some of the approaches in terms of what they offer a study that has gender at its core.

**Chapter Three - Research methodology:** The chapter highlights the methodological journey throughout the study referring to the ethical and methodological challenges encountered. The chapter also highlights the reasons for adopting a feminist research methodology that is grounded in posthumanism.

**Chapter Four - Landmines and (human) agency: The (re)construction of masculinities and femininities in post-war Mukumbura:** This chapter analyses the role of landmines in the framing of victimhood and construction of masculinities and femininities in peace and security discourse, with specific reference to the Zimbabwean case study. It also entails an analysis of the discursive construction of the ‘Other’ in contemporary peace and security studies in Africa. Using the binaries of ‘Self’ (man) and ‘Other’ (woman), I critically analyse how ‘agency’ is gendered and demonstrate that social constructions and notions of masculinity-femininity and negative stereotypical imaginings are more ubiquitous in post-conflict societies where people still grapple with the insecurities posed by ERW, in spite of various coping strategies employed by the community.

**Chapter Five - Landmines and the gendering of socio-economic (in)security in post-war Mukumbura:** This chapter critically analyses how landmines cement the redefinition of gender in social and economic (in)security as everyday work is redefined. It proceeds through an empirical exploration of the impact of landmines on everyday economic space and practices and how this culminates in skewed gendered economic relations. It also includes how social relations are modified including access to healthcare (e.g. prostheses) and education. This also entails the

various coping mechanisms adopted by the community to safeguard their everyday economic security and livelihoods.

**Chapter Six - Conclusion: Empirical and theoretical implications:** This chapter summarises the findings of the study and assesses the extent to which objectives have been met. It then reviews the theoretical and empirical contribution of the study after which limitations and areas for further research are explored.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main objectives of this chapter are to trace the theoretical shift from HS to a feminist posthuman security approach and to then develop a theoretical framework for a more holistic and nuanced framework for human security, which includes feminist insights as well as aspects of the growing field of posthumanism and ‘new’ materialisms. The aim is to develop a framework that is normatively inclusive and therefore taking cognisance of gender and other identities; and also, one that is more in tune with context, particularly the security dynamics and issues of the African continent, as these pertain to the case study of Mukumbura (see Chapters Four and Five).

In this chapter, I argue for a more inclusive theoretical framework for security, to allow for alternative forms of knowledge left out by traditional theorisations of human security. The chapter therefore offers a theoretical challenge to the universalistic (broad) and liberalist use of human and other security approaches in policy and practitioner circles by foregrounding firstly, intangible aspects of security, such as spiritual dimensions; secondly, the fact that (human) security in these contexts is deeply material (tangible) in respect of how it impacts on livelihoods and physical well-being and safety; and thirdly, how the scope of the human security concept can be broadened through a feminist posthuman security lens grounded in the New Materialisms/Posthumanism discourses. The latter recognise the entanglement of gendered

humans and non-humans (landmines) in the conceptualisation of (in)security – a dimension which previous security approaches (e.g. HS, CSS and FSS) seem to have overlooked.

In this study of landmines, landmines are conceptualised as actors interacting with human beings, curtailing as well as facilitating the agency of ordinary people. The theoretical framework will therefore draw on two bodies of literature, namely feminist/gender and security scholarship, as well as the literature on new materialities where objects are viewed as part of the security dynamic. The chapter therefore seeks to develop a gender-sensitive posthuman security framework that speaks to the African context.

In section 2.2 the chapter delves into the definitional contestations of the concept of HS and further discusses contemporary security discourses as conversations between meaning and matter. In section 2.3, I deliberate on realist security discourse and its feminist IR critique. In section 2.4, I discuss CSS and how its various schools of thought influence the conceptualisation of human security and why these contributions are deemed inadequate for my study. In section 2.5, I discuss the human security concept and the (feminist) critique of its universalistic tendencies. Section 2.6 examines FSS and its implications for the broad understanding of the human security concept. Lastly, section 2.7 expounds alternative posthuman feminist conceptualisations/discourses of security, with reference to three key pillars, namely the agency of things (tangible and intangible); the agency of women and men (humans); and the agency that comes with an Afrocentric or context-specific security analysis.

## 2.2 THE MEANING OF SECURITY: DIVERSE DISCOURSES

The definition of security has been characterised by contestations as it has emerged to be a fluid and value laden concept. Baldwin (1997: 10) attests that it is “essentially contested” and Caballero-Anthony (2015: 4) sees it as the justification for the variegated approaches to the conceptualisation of security. Contrary to Wolfers’ (2012: 484) and Morgenthau’s (1973) attempts to define security with reference to national and international threats respectively and how states combat such threats, my study proceeds with a fluid definition of security which recognises multi-dimensional sources of threats (socio-political, economic, environmental and bio-physical) to human security at all levels. This is because scholars such as Hudson (2018: 51) maintain that security theorisation should embrace new analytical variables such as gender, the environment and non-human objects or matter. As such, the ensuing discussion demonstrates how the emergence of numerous security theories constitute conversations of opposing discourses of security and how their silences and emphases result in exclusion/marginalisation and violence/insecurity on the ground for those who are marginalised in society (Hudson, 2018).

It follows therefore that an in-depth analysis of security discourses is necessary to explain how the changing viewpoints over time demonstrate divergent views within and surrounding the meaning of security. This again reveals hegemonic patterns in a particular discourse, and how its material consequences result in new meanings of security, for example how certain gender categories perceive their (in)security as a result of their entanglement with objects/ERW. This points to possibilities for alternative security discourses. Thus, my subsequent analysis of the different security discourses is not confined to the etymological features of the text under

scrutiny. Instead, I locate the meaning of the text into a larger discursive environment, showing how language produced in a specific context is used to construct different meanings (Boréus and Bergström, 2017: 37; Fairclough 1992: 3). This is because Esaiasson (2000: 9) emphasises the importance of applying a “careful reading” of the text, as the basis for extracting different meanings attached to language and practices in different contexts. This forms an essential component of my analysis, as it enables me to draw out how conflicting and converging security discourses provide a gap for alternative security theorisations. The alternative formulations that I have in mind seek to be more nuanced, holistic and accommodative of previously excluded security variables such as gender, contextuality (African post-conflict societies), as well as tangible and non-tangible things/non-humans as essential human security elements at the community level.

### **2.3 REALIST SECURITY DISCOURSE AND ITS FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CRITICS**

In this section, I discuss the major theoretical tenets of Realism and the challenges of its scope of analysis in accounting for the ever-changing understanding of security in different contexts. I opted to base my analysis on the contemporary political realists of the twentieth century from where the concept of state security as an issue began to be questioned. Equally, my justification for briefly considering realist security theorisations in this section is premised on the fact that all the subsequent critical security approaches which I will further discuss (CSS, HS and FSS) arose in response to the deficiencies of orthodox Realism.

### **2.3.1 Realist security discourse: The main tenets and limitations**

Traditional realist security within IR has been the dominant perspective of security in international politics for a large part of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Donnelly, 2008). For most classical realist security scholars (Morgenthau, 1973), security provision is a prerogative of the state. This perspective presupposes that states are the referent objects of security, whereas the military is perceived as the means to safeguard state security from direct violence and aggression from other states (Donnelly, 2008). The origins of this state-centric focus of realist security thinking can be traced to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and the birth of the nation state. It was from this juncture that states gradually assumed the place of the church and became the essential point of social identity in a new world order (Hettne, 2005: 35-37). The advent of states ensured the transition of intra-state sources of conflict to be viewed as inter-state conflicts. Thus, this approach saw security from a Westernised or Eurocentric realist perspective, in which the referent object of security was the state (Baldwin, 1997; Barkawi and Laffey, 2006: 331).

Thus, Hobbes' ill-famed proclamation about the state of nature as "nasty, brutish, and short" legitimised the state as the guarantor of security to the people and has been mirrored in the political realist conjecture that the world order and international relations are in a continuous state of anarchy (Bahdi, 2013: 44). This Hobbesian notion of the existence of a social contract between the state and its people remains a constant reference in numerous fields of security studies (Krause and Williams, 1997). States provide protection for their citizens in exchange for legitimacy, whereas states are seen as the ultimate providers of security for their inhabitants

within their territories. This also makes security in the traditional realist perspective a matter of absolute sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, as security is a matter for the state alone (Herring, 2010: 67).

To comprehend and mitigate the chaotic world order, realists seek to know or even at least to predict the self-interested behaviour of states. One such (neo)realist scholar, Waltz (2010: 102) argues that “states find themselves in a constant security dilemma due to the inherent anarchical nature of international politics and among states the state of nature is a state of war”. This state-centric notion presupposes that states are primarily concerned with the protection of their own security and consequently see other states as sources of insecurity. Thus, inter-state military conflict and physical violence are the point of focus in traditional realist security. I reiterate that, this macro realist approach has fallen short in its conception of security as it mainly focuses on public/state security – an approach which equates the security of the state to the security of the people, protecting the interests of a small minority, disregarding the everyday (socio-economic) security of ordinary people and overlooking the micro (in)security matrices at community/individual level.

Consequently, Realism’s distortion of the security dilemma prompts Hudson (2005) to advocate for a bottom-up approach to understanding security. The failure of Realism to recognise security as a multi-dimensional (e.g. political, socio-economic, environmental and military) and multi-level (individual, local, national, regional and international) phenomenon has opened itself to scrutiny and the probability of alternative security approaches which offer a holistic analysis of the causes and effects of (in)security at different levels. Clearly the narrow conceptualisation of

security as state security no longer holds and is inappropriate for understanding the complex insecurities of men, women, animals and their immediate environment in a post-war African community.

### **2.3.2 Feminist critiques of Realism**

In addition to the above, a major challenge of Realism has been its failure to recognise other analytical variables such as gender. Numerous feminist scholars (Enloe, 2014; Tickner, 1992; 2004; Youngs, 2004; Hudson, 2016; 2018) have highlighted the major challenges of Realism in its portrayal of (in)security as a predominantly masculine domain and the implications of that on the overall meaning of everyday security. Four major tenets of feminist critique of Realism are discussed in this section.

Firstly, Realist security theory in IR has been premised on its emphasis on males as citizens and political actors (Runyan and Peterson, 1991; Grant and Newland, 1991). For example, Realism's dominant point of departure is centred on the behaviour of 'man' in the 'state of nature' which points to men's dominance in the Great Chain of Being. Citing the example of ancient Greece, feminists further avow that even the formation and the functioning of the state has always been gender-biased as issues of defence of the state remained inherently skewed towards males. By virtue of men serving as soldiers, it reinforced their entitlement to the exclusive right of citizenship. Women have been denied the role in conflict and peace (the so-called 'frontlines') and consequently they had no role in the 'international' relations between the Greek city states (Grant and Newland, 1991: 14).

The projection of this gendered (in)security outlook on the contemporary discourses and practice of security has consequently portrayed women as passive and invisible ‘objects’ as states become more insecure. This portrayal undermines the agency of women in equally providing security at different levels and contexts. The realities of (in)security in post-war African communities testify to the opposite as women equally provided military support and continue to provide everyday security to their communities<sup>4</sup>. Hudson (2018: 57) therefore pleads for closer attention to the politics of everyday gender security at the community level and how that espouses other unforeseen variables such as the link between gender and non-human objects as the basis for a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of (in)security.

Secondly, feminists point out that orthodox realist security theory is inherently a product of Western binary (dualistic) and positivist thinking, thereby entrenching the treatment of women as ‘the Other’. Women are associated with constructs such as the private, irrationality/emotion, subjectivity, nature and practice rather than those belonging to the public, rationality, objectivity, culture and theory. Tickner (1992: 16) argues that such an approach is not gender-neutral but simply represents men’s experiences of the world. Such theories risk duplicating and buttressing gender inequalities in international politics and security. The end result is the inability to achieve a multi-dimensional and multi-level security for the entire population (comprehensive human security) because the underlying theories offer only an incomplete view of reality.

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapters Three and Four for evidence of female ex-combatants who fought during the war of liberation against colonialism in Zimbabwe; and female spiritual figures whom men depend on in the everyday practice of security in post-war communities with ERW.

Thirdly, feminists argue that since the focus of IR has always been solely on the public domain, it renders women and their experiences in the areas of politics and security invisible. Women have always been perceived to be ignorant of how the international political and security system operates. As a result, they have not only been excluded in the practice of security, but also in all theories (e.g. Marxism and Functionalism) that have been used to explain the current world order, which emerged to be gender-biased. Grant and Newland (1991: 22) argue that “it is extremely difficult to introduce gender as a category of thought in International Relations as long as the discipline is ensnared by the trap of dividing the domestic (private) and the international (public)”. It is in the same vein that Hudson (2015a: 49; 2018: 51) calls for the need to dig into the politics/power dynamics at the community level (private) to espouse the often hidden everyday (in)security realities.

Finally, feminists criticise Realism on the basis of the glaring empirical evidence of women’s absence from international affairs. Halliday and Rosenberg (1998: 374) affirm that “women have been hidden from International Relations. It is as if the issues raised by feminism are not relevant to the international sphere and need not form part of the academic agenda for the study of International Relations”. In particular, realist thought is criticised by feminists for its preoccupation with military matters and with the state as the primary unit of analysis in IR (Hudson, 2005). Peterson (1992: 31) states that “[t]he security of states dominates our understanding of what security can be, and who it can be for ... because other forms of political community have been rendered almost unthinkable. The claims of states to a monopoly of legitimate authority in a particular territory have succeeded in ... erasing other expressions of political identity”. Although the gender perspective of IR is much more prominent as a result of

the contributions by, for example Sjoberg (2016: 411), Shepherd (2013: 440) and Steans' (2003: 429) view still holds: IR remains a gendered discourse through reiterating its continued masculinisation of the state and the 'hidden' connection between state, power and patriarchy.

In sum, in realist terms security is perpetually conceived as a function of "hard politics" that emanates from the top to the bottom where human individuals, everyday security practices, and non-human matter are not considered relevant (Wohlforth, 2017: 34). I intend to fill this theoretical gap through a human-centric theoretical approach which cherishes the influence of the non-human entities in differentially shaping and reshaping everyday security spaces and practices of men and women in post-conflict communities through a feminist posthuman security-oriented approach. Correspondingly, feminist scholars argue that realist security approaches' main emphasis on states and their behaviour created a world where issues of human security, agency and identity are disregarded (Tickner, 2001; Enloe, 2004).

## **2.4 CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES (CSS): DECODING THE SILENCES AND INTONATIONS**

Although numerous non-traditional security approaches have arisen from IR, Realism continues to influence the discourse of security studies in as much as this theoretical approach is pleasant to those "who prosper from the intellectual hegemony of a top-down, statist, power-centric, masculinised, ethnocentric, and militarised worldview of security" (Booth, 1997: 9). The enduring effects of realist thinking and practices can however be seen in post-conflict communities where ERW remain long after war has ended. Landmines become an extension of

state-centric practices such as war. I therefore argue for an analytical approach which takes cognisance of the need to inculcate other variables such as the agential power of objects, as well as constructs such as gender in framing the incidence of (in)security along existing micro and structural dichotomies governing everyday relations in post-conflict African communities.

In this section, I will trace critical security responses to traditional state-centric security approaches. The need for recognising variables such as community and gender in theorising security is historically rooted in Galtung's (1969) call for the expansion of the conception of violence to include 'indirect structural violence', which relates to the adverse effects of established institutions and social structures such as racism or sexism on humans' everyday security. This is why CSS scholars agitate for an inclusion of individual, group and community security perspectives in IR (Krause and Williams, 1997) and take a critical stance toward states and their intentions.

It is apparent that CSS was also preoccupied with the concept of HS which shared the latter's sentiments of the 'people' as referent object of analysis in the security discourse rather than the state (Robinson, 2011). CSS challenges the realist assumption that structures, institutions and norms of IR are a given and must be dealt with (Buzan and Hansen, 2009). CSS propagates a broadening and deepening of the security agenda through including alternative analytical frames (gender/politics) and referent objects of security. It was mainly inspired by the work of Booth (1997, 2007), Wyn-Jones (2005) and their Aberystwyth students and contributors (Bilgin, 2004, 2005; Dunne and Wheeler, 1999).

While I will discuss three key schools of CSS, namely the Copenhagen, Aberystwyth and the Paris Schools, it needs to be noted that they are not homogeneous entities, and that critical thinking is also found in other general traditions such as poststructuralism and postmodernism (Walker, 1997). The aim of what follows, is to briefly trace the ‘big ideas’ or contribution of each school and then to flag gaps in order to support my argument for an expanded posthuman-feminist security framework.

### **2.4.1 Copenhagen School**

This perspective is represented by the likes of Buzan and Weaver. Buzan’s (1991) seminal book *People, States and Fear*, debates the way individual human beings and their (in)security ought to become an important concern for security. However, he maintains that the core referent of security should remain the state; both as the central element to security and as a main actor to address potential insecurities. In as much as the Copenhagen School has been credited for expanding the areas of interest of security studies, through including other possible dangers such as political, economic, societal and environmental, its protagonists continued to think of security in a way that put much emphasis on the military aspects (McSweeney, 1999).

Buzan (1991) has contested this notion of security by calling for the need to widen and deepen the security studies agenda, both horizontally and vertically. Having in mind the horizontal facet of security, those who are inclined towards the widening enclave think that in reality the (in)security concept has expanded from entirely military into political, economic, societal and environmental sectors. Vertically, the transformed security concept should also be open to

referent objects (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, 1998: 36) other than the state (e.g. individuals, social groups and humanity as a whole).

The Copenhagen School theorists maintain that the process of threat assessment is inter-subjective. Their understanding of what is, or what becomes a security issue depends on the process of 'securitisation' (Buzan, 1998: 289). According to this view, security issues are a product of political language in that interventions could only be called for when the issue becomes labelled as a security problem. Thus, the securitisation consists of both a discursive (speech act and shared created understanding) and -discursive component (the policy implementation).

Critiques of securitisation theory emphasise the normative consequences of securitisation (Huysmans, 1998: 13). Their criticism stems from the Copenhagen School's treatment of securitisation as an objective process, without addressing the possibility of securitisation increasing divides or allowing for oppressive, exclusionary, or violent policies (Williams, 1997: 522). The process of determining what constitutes threats and possible sources of insecurity remains the prerogative of political actors within the state. It thus remains a public matter, relegating insecurity at the private everyday level to the margins. For example, how men and women in post-war patriarchal communities exercise their agency in navigating the insecurities posed by ERW and the resultant implications of that on their identities and socio-economic security remain hidden as the government fails to recognise landmines as existential threats warranting immediate and comprehensive intervention. Thus, the call for widening and deepening of security should reflect a normative commitment to the everyday, the individual and

the context as essential variables for understanding security especially in post-war African traditional communities.

In terms of gender, the Copenhagen School has also received critique for its apparent gender-blindness. In this regard, Hansen (2000) offers a thought-provoking critique in her article, “The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School”. She alludes to how the silent security dilemma of the Little Mermaid is indicative of two major gaps in the Copenhagen School’s ‘speech act’ framework which excludes a gendered analysis of security (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005: 26). These can be categorised as the ‘security as silence’ and the ‘subsuming security’ problems (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005). ‘Security as silence’ occurs when insecurity cannot be voiced, when raising something as a security problem is impossible or might even aggravate the threat being faced. ‘Subsuming security’ arises because gendered security problems usually entail an intimate inter-linkage between the subject’s gendered identity and other aspects of the subject’s identity, for example nationality and religion. This equates to the embedded ‘silences’ depicted in the notion of homes as ‘safer spaces’<sup>5</sup> for women in post-war communities littered with landmines. Such confinement connotes lack of voice and capability on the side of women, while also undermining the agency that some of them have displayed by defying confinement in order to feed their families.

Hansen and Stepputat (2005) remind us that this approach subsumes gendered security problems, because gender itself is rarely defined as a self-contained referent object, and gendered subjects are therefore subjugated to broader identities. In addition, the constitutive nature of speech-acts

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapters Two and Four on how women in the case study area were confined to the home by protective husbands and fathers as these are considered to be safer spaces.

is inherently exclusionary (Hansen, 2000: 289). This speaks to the power dynamics of the securitising actor and the agency of the audience, as insecurity may be ‘silent’ because of a lack of agency or exclusion from the securitised audience (Hansen, 2000: 290). The androcentric nature of African traditional communities demonstrates how entrenched power dynamics between men and women continue to shape everyday (in)security (vulnerability and agency) as a result of their entanglement with ERW. Hence Booth (1997: 101) states that, “to talk about security without thinking about gender is simply to account for the surface reflections without examining what is happening deep down below the surface”. This affirms the need for security theorisations to acknowledge the significance of the inherent silences and structural power dynamics at play in different contexts and how that frames gendered ‘(in)security becoming’ in post-war communities. With reference to my study, I therefore conclude that the Copenhagen School theorisation has limited utility as a lens to better understand gendered relations in everyday post-war settings.

#### **2.4.2 Aberystwyth School**

The Aberystwyth School of thought was represented by Krause (1996), Williams (1997) and others. According to these theorists, the state-centric nature of security studies should be disputed and there should be more focus on humans, individuals and their surrounding environment, as the ultimate security referents (Booth, 2007: 56). Security should thus be about protecting “real people” in “real places” (Booth, 2007: 57). They further affirm that the state should be considered as the means rather than the end to security, enabling and facilitating the security of the other referent objects. In contrast, according to Waltz (2000: 35), insecurity stems

firstly from political calculations of other people and after that from the system itself. In response, critical security scholars contend that it is therefore the emancipation of the human beings from the structural constraints and their empowerment that ensures security, not power and order as it is depicted by the realist/neo-realist schools (Booth, 2007: 23).

The emphasis on emancipation and empowerment in the Aberystwyth School's perspective is strongly related to Tickner's (2001: 46) feminist vision of security. Tickner (2001) emphasises the expansion of the continuum of possible insecurities beyond the narrow realist conviction of military securities. This should take into consideration, for example, ecological destruction, structural (including gendered) violence and poverty. This normative paradigm which emphasises the enhancement of people's lives brings Aberystwyth thinking closer to the ideas of human development thinkers and/or the capability approach to development (Sen, 1999: 366). Thus, the Aberystwyth perspective claims that security is achievable through the process of enablement and freedom – a state where individuals and their communities are in control of their own social relations and contexts.

The Aberystwyth School takes issue with the prevailing scientific orthodoxy of the traditionalist/realist schools, criticising the constricted positivistic view of security (Van Munster, 2010: 23). To them, the significance of emancipation is echoed in an environment where humans could be freed from the physical and human constraints that prevent them from doing what they choose to do (Booth, 2007: 26). Security does not just involve survival (or overcoming the existential threats, in the sense that it is understood by the Copenhagen School) of individuals and/or their surrounding environment, but should also include the fostering of such

conditions that would permit them to follow the political and social goals including the space to make empowered choices (Booth, 2007: 27).

### **2.4.3 Paris School**

This is another critical stream of security studies represented by Bigo (2002) and Huysmans (1998), among others. Contrary to the Copenhagen and/or Aberystwyth Schools that have been located principally within the realms of IR and its adjacent disciplines of International Security, Strategic Studies and Peace Research, the Paris School protagonists came from a varied range of disciplinary backgrounds including political sociology, criminology and law – disciplines that were traditionally focusing more on internal than external/international security.

The School is strongly hinged on the ideas of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, a critical scholar who made use of the reflexive epistemology and focused on the deconstruction of systems and structures of domination within society (Adler, 1997: 44). The School also derives its inspiration from Michel Foucault's work on the relation between power and knowledge, and the value-ladenness of that knowledge. According to Foucault (2008: 27), "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations".

The Paris School advocates for the study of the practice of danger and threat production by 'security professionals'. In contrast to the Copenhagen's securitisation theory which focuses on the speech acts that make the issue to be a security theme, the Paris School focuses on everyday

security-related practices which could contribute to the production of (in)securities and argues that this invoke further security-related actions (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 56). This notion points to a particular shift in security thinking away from legitimising the thinking, policymaking and actions of the dominant actors. Thus, the definition of what security is and how it is defined remains a function of the capabilities of different actors to declare with authority whose security matters and who needs to be protected (Bigo, 2002: 68).

The Paris School is therefore interested in the empirical practice of security through exploring the conduct of everyday activities and security practices of various security-related actors, respective agencies, especially those lying outside the traditional security realms (Bigo, 2002: 68). The School challenges the traditional divide between internal and external security, focusing on transnational threats such as organised crime, terrorism and migratory flows.

In conclusion in terms of the contribution of CSS, it is clear that their call for the broadening and deepening of security varies widely in respect of objective, that is, either to securitise or de-securitise; or whether the theoretical emphasis should be normative or explanatory (Newman, 2010: 85). This multifarious analytical basis enables CSS to encompass numerous perspectives where different issues are explored from divergent opinions and via varying methodologies (Aradau, 2010: 494). However, all these different CSS approaches discussed above have one thing in common, which is the continuous critical (re)consideration and (re)configuration of objects and subjects, which in my study would relate to landmines and humans respectively. Thus, an exploration of the relationality of humans and landmines in gendering (in)security

through other security ontologies is vindicated under these epistemological circumstances where CSS affirms that (in)security does not have a constant, settled definition.

In the next section I turn to the concept of human security and outline its development and contribution.

## **2.5 HUMAN SECURITY AND ITS LIMITATIONS**

The emergence of the HS paradigm owes a lot to the UN's efforts to enhance sustainable peace where it mentioned the paradigm in its 1994 Human Development Report (Haq, 1994). The Report provides seven broad categories for all security threats, namely personal, political, economic, food, health, environmental and community (in)security (Haq, 1994: 24). The dawn of the 'human security era' was celebrated as ushering in a significant transformation in the reconceptualisation of security (Buzan et al., 1998: 26; Booth, 2007: 19). This is mainly because of HS's focus on the security of humans thus broadening security to entail human rights, development and non-state actors (Hudson, 2005: 165). As such, HS offers a more holistic understanding of all threats to security as enshrined in the UN's 1994 Report mentioned above. Booth (2007: 20) reiterates that each of these subcategories was meant to comprise numerous security threats, such as earthquakes, cyber-terrorism and poor educational systems. HS's view of the entanglement of the categories of (in)security with the budding underlying sub-threats offers quite a broad theoretical understanding of security as compared to realist state-centric security conceptions. Consequently, insofar as HS considers individuals as security subjects (Futamura, Newman and Tadjbakhsh, 2010: 4), it enables context-specific analysis of security

which allows multi-focal vantage points where many variables can equally act as referent variables of (in)security.

Nevertheless, one of the challenges of HS is that it was intended as a radical emancipatory intervention but remains in practice too focused on liberal individualism instead of communities. So, the human that is meant to be protected remains an abstract and universal individual (Bellamy and Griffin, 2004: 78; Thomas, 2002: 118), with little space for differences between people, in terms of gender, race and historical experiences, for example. This has prompted scholars such as Axworthy (2011: 22) to suggest that HS should rather delineate its scope by narrowing its focus to “the physical protection of the individual”. In contrast, the Commission on Human Security (CHS) (2003: 29) surmises that HS should broadly focus on “satisfying socio-economic needs” and “empowerment” of individuals by going beyond the survival of individuals.

Another HS challenge is the gender-blindness of the field (Nuruzzaman, 2006; Tripp, 2013: 10; Hudson, 2005: 158). These scholars concur that HS missed the point as enunciated in the 1994 Report as well as the Commission on Human Security Report (2003). Firstly, they argue that it has perpetuated the security discourse tradition to infantilise women by lumping them together with children; secondly, it failed to address gendered differences, as well as the gendered security language where the ‘human’ prefix was erroneously thought to include women (Tripp, 2013: 12). More so, it has not only failed to deconstruct the ‘human’ in HS but has also facilitated the reproduction of dominant gendered institutions and norms (Marhia, 2013; Hudson, 2005). Bunch (2004: 32) further argues that such universalising security discourses have resulted

in its inability to explore issues related to bodily integrity, such as reproductive rights and domestic violence which are particular to women. Here I would add the gender roles in post-conflict communities as another variable whose understanding cannot be possible without exploring the gendered nature of ERW in space and time in the conception of everyday human security.

In addition, Shepherd (2013: 437) notes that HS has largely been feminised by policymakers and academics alike since it has been regarded as a soft policy arena that is too fluffy and broad to be measured by traditional Security Studies standards. It remains a challenge to subvert the view that security is only concerned with extreme, large-scale violence while everyday security is overlooked by those in power (Hoogensen and Stuvøy, 2006: 210). This conceptualisation of security has culminated in the disregard of most post-conflict communities which are littered with ERW such as landmines. This negligence has even resulted in undermining the micro-relational effect between different gender categories on the micro or ground level as they co-exist with objects/landmines, the symbolic meaning of which depicts a prolongation of war. It is in this context that the theoretical limitations of HS again provide a caveat for a more holistic conceptual framework which is conscious of the agential role of matter and the influence of inherent identity binaries epitomised by socially constructed power relations in any efforts to understand (in)security.

Moreover, previous epistemological engagements in the form of academic symposiums or conferences and publications have also romanticised the concept of HS. In an analysis of the 2004 *Security Dialogue* special issue on HS, Hoogensen and Stuvøy (2006: 210) found the issue

to be fundamentally gender-blind as all deliberations failed to include gender-related issues. Although the authors were not explicitly mandated to engage gender, it offers a very vivid indication of how insignificant gender issues were to security concerns and discourses at the time (Acuto, 2014: 346). However, since the publication of this special issue, much has changed in the academic world and scholarly work that engages with HS from a gender perspective has steadily increased (Fukuda-Parr, 2004; Hudson, 2005; 2015a; 2015b; 2018; NF Hudson, 2010; Tripp et al., 2013; Truong et al., 2006).

Since 1994, more than eighty-five academic works have engaged with feminist-related issues in relation to HS and most of them have signified an inclination towards a feminist HS approach (Ammann, 2017a: 44). Natalie Hudson (2010: 122) also reiterates that the presence of HS as a policy paradigm that originated from the UN resulted in the formulation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda due to its turn to individual security. She argues that HS has proven to be effective as a conceptualisation that includes feminist issues in the security discourse and as a framework for action that influences how the international community tackles such security issues.

I maintain, firstly, that HS's turn to individual security has not lived up to expectations. The turn to the 'individual' only relates to a departure from state-centrism to the 'human', yet does not explicitly recognise how the inherent dichotomies between individuals themselves – more notably on the basis of their socially ascribed roles – continue to differentially reconfigure everyday (in)security spaces and practices of men and women in post-conflict contexts. Hudson (2018: 47) surmises in this regard that HS carries a semblance of inclusivity, but empirical

evidence testifies to the opposite since this seeming humanistic inclination conceals the particular injustices on the ground, especially for those on the margins of the power strata.

I argue, secondly, that this continued epistemic centring of the ‘human’ remains theoretically limited as the conventional HS framework fails to allow for new conceptions of human security beyond the ‘human’ to other variables such as non-human objects. HS omits the agential role of non-human objects in influencing everyday security as it has been preoccupied with state-human relations in its conceptualisation of security. This is why Hudson (2018: 48) argues for the need of a posthuman theoretical engagement which departs from the ‘human’ and considers the “political agency of both humans and non-human actants” as a basis for an adequate dissection of the complexities characterising human security practice. I therefore argue that these typical HS shortcomings can only be disarticulated if they are infused with feminist thinking as a way of effectively linking it to people’s everyday experiences of security and power in their relations with humans and non-human objects.

This would provide a more vivid theoretical exegesis of how for instance, ERW continue to reconfigure everyday security spaces and practices along gender lines especially in post-conflict communities where people continue to co-exist with these lethal weapons long after the armed conflicts subside. As such, my discussion of HS and its theoretical limitations highlights the importance of gender in that it enables us to investigate gendered (female as well as male) insecurities and inequalities in post-conflict contexts. This is where the complementarity of HS and a feminist perspective on security can be seen to be beneficial. I will demonstrate this as the chapter ensues. In subsequent chapters I intend to show that a comprehensive understanding of

everyday security in post-conflict contexts should be both a theoretical and methodological concern.

So while I concur with HS advocates that one of the strengths of the HS paradigm is precisely in its theoretical scope and breadth, I contend that the paradigm should be appraised for its ability to account for the epistemological tripartite security questions of whose security?, security from what?, and by what means?. Besides the fact that these questions undress HS, they form a cogent ontological foundation for enactment of an alternative theoretical approach appropriate for post-conflict contexts where security/insecurity manifests in multiple dimensions such as physical and socio-economic or human or non-human. Moving from a focus on security theorisations, in the next section I focus on gender and feminist theory in order to assess its usefulness for my feminist posthuman security framework.

## **2.6 FEMINIST SECURITY STUDIES (FSS)**

FSS is concerned with the inclusion of gender-based perspectives and analysis into traditional theorisations of security. This entails how the roles that women and gender play in the context of war or conflict is comprehensively accounted for in understanding (in)security. Hagen and Yohani (2010: 15) submit that, rather than a distinct subfield of security, FSS may be seen as a ‘project’ which aims to understand a wide range of gender-related security issues. Therefore, the most significant mission of FSS is to shift the field of traditional security politics away from the emphasis on securing state borders towards securing the rights and well-being of individuals (Hagen and Yohani, 2010: 18).

So, through a discussion of the genesis of the field and its foundations, I intend to illustrate in this section how these silences in the field of security studies culminated in the proliferation of various feminist strands and how these can potentially aid in reshaping and redirecting the future of security studies. During the 1980s, developing out of the existing wealth of gender research, numerous feminist strands began to permeate Peace and Conflict Studies and its subfield of Security Studies invoking new feminist thought in the 1980s (Sylvester, 2010: 145). It is worth noting that these scholars persisted with the argument that gender was indispensable to everyday lived experiences, and more so, they found that gender was equally central to the definition and politics of security (Hudson, 2005: 156). Many FSS scholars felt that stereotypical masculine views of the world focused on organisations and institutions while feminine views emphasised the relationships between humans (Reardon and Snauwaert, 2014: 66). The aim of this section is to identify and evaluate the contribution of FSS through an analysis of the various theoretical, normative and empirical aspects of the field.

### **2.6.1 Gender and security: Towards gender as an analytical construct**

In this section, I briefly sketch the field of Gender Studies within which FSS is built and derived from before I elaborate on FSS later. Gender studies as a distinct academic field emerged in the 1970s to illuminate on the unexplored academic spheres related to women and the inherent stereotypes that had typified them (Lykke, 2010: 16). Generally, the majority of established gender scholars comprehend gender as a socially constructed structure or system derived from everyday human interaction (Kottack, 2008: 6).

Butler (1990: 8) adds that it is a process of construction and performativity which results in the variegated experiences of and expectations towards different gender categories across cultures, time and place. These experiences of and expectations towards these different gender categories are, therefore, relational and dynamic as a result of different forces. In my study, the ever-changing gender roles as a result of the gendering of (in)security due to landmine threats would constitute one dimension of such dynamism. Here women's roles are assumed by men as a way of protecting their wives and daughters from the insecurity posed by landmines. It follows therefore that studying gender is also a major point of contestation amongst gender researchers as this is shaped by one's general epistemological viewpoint (Peterson, 2007: 49). As a result of these different viewpoints, FSS has been typified by different theoretical strands, namely liberal, postcolonial and poststructuralist and these will be unpacked.

Outside of gender research, the concept of 'gender' has, however, often been confused with 'sex', which describes the biological anatomy of a person. The difference between gender and sex was first explicitly emphasised by Butler (1990: 31) namely that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, woman" and likewise, one is not born, but becomes, man. Butler (1990: 33) and Box (2003: 11) concur that gender is constructed in our everyday discourses, linguistics and communications; it is something that we do rather than are or have. Battezat (2018: 9) states that this means that gender is not anything less real for it constitutes our daily lived realities. This relates to the notable social interactions where women and men receive differential treatment, for instance with regard to their respect and status; expectations of differential gendered behaviour; as well as sanctions if they act outside the expectations of their predetermined gender roles. These societal expectations are reinforced through primary socialisation at the hands of the

family (Giddens, 2010). Thus, the masculine-feminine binary remains a product of society and is reproduced through conservative androcentric epistemological discourses. Realist security as a masculine and state-based enterprise (Tickner, 2001: 579) is testimony to this. As indicated before in Section 2.3.2, as a result of this women have been ‘othered’ in realist security discourses because of the privileged status of men as warriors/protectors and citizens.

These simplistic categorisations as either ‘male’ or ‘female’ provoke reductionist and essentialist stereotypes that fail to realise the multifarious and varying experiences that stretch across this spectrum (Tickner, 1992). Hoogensen and Stuvoy (2006: 208) add that “in regards to gender stereotypes, hetero-normative standards enshrine and continuously promote ideals of men as rational, strong, and forcibly ‘emotionally-handicapped’ while women are seen as emotional, weak, and in need of protection”. Such gender-essentialist stereotypes fail to understand the varying effects of personal characteristics such as race, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and age on individuals’ lived reality (McCall, 2005: 1782). Cohn (2013: 89) submits that as humans “we categorise and are being categorised and we order as much as we are being (re)ordered in the continuous (re)creation of inequalities”. Through institutional arrangements that support and recreate such power dynamics, and through beliefs and ideologies that perpetuate the male-female binary, these gender differences become naturalised. Buzan and Hansen (2009: 208) note that “this binary categorisation of men and women as rigidly closed-off entities denies the existence of the great variations across but also within these groups”. In subsequent chapters, I will show that in the context of my case study, the assumption that women are weak and the major victims of the constrictions posed by landmines is misconstrued.

As a consequence, numerous gender scholars (Tickner, 1992; Sylvester, 2013; Hudson, 2005; Cohn, 2013) concur that a gender analysis should inform any analytical effort to conceptualise security in these seemingly socially-dichotomised identity contexts. Reardon and Snauwaert (2014) further affirm that any analytical considerations that exclude gender as a variable “maintains and perpetuates hetero-normative standards that affect men and women who do not live up to or ascribe to gender stereotypes, identities, and/or sexual orientations that are expected of their respective sex”. For this reason it is necessary to think of gender not merely as an identity category or descriptor, but rather as an analytical construct aimed at exposing unequal power relations. Whether gender is seen as an identity marker or an analytical tool will likewise determine which type of feminism dominates in the reconstruction of a gender perspective of security (see Section 2.6.2). Thus, Scott (1988: 33) acknowledges the credence of poststructuralist theory as it informs feminist conceptions of “language, discourse, difference, and deconstruction in understanding of meaning construction and power relationships that questioned unitary, universal categories and historicised concepts otherwise treated as natural (such as man/woman) or absolute such as equality or justice” (Scott, 1988: 34).

### **2.6.2 Types of feminism**

In this section I discuss the liberal, radical and poststructuralist feminist strands to inform my framing of a more inclusive gendered security perspective.

### *2.6.2.1 Liberal feminism: Where are the women?*

The major contention of this theoretical strand is that women have been left out from many of the most significant public spheres of modern social, political and economic life (Butler, 1990). As a consequence, they have been accorded an inferior identity and position in the broad conceptualisation of security with the effect of undermining their agency. Thus, liberal feminists draw attention to the existing legal obstructions to women's recognition in mainstream security discourse and practice (Hudson, 2005; Giddens, 2010). Steans (1998) notes that, although the studies of peace and conflict have broadly recognised women's activities in war and in post-war contexts as the object of research, the important tools for operationalising women's rights have been the UN's call for the need to observe human rights.

The major thrust of liberal feminism is that it is all about gender equality where women are treated the same as men, so it links to equal opportunity and liberal human rights discourse, as well as the argument that women's rights are also human rights (civil, political, socio-economic). Liberal feminists sought to abolish political, legal and other forms of discrimination against women to allow them the same opportunities as men (Sjoberg, 2013: 34). Discrimination on the basis of gender, either in the workplace, education or in the home and the patriarchal mentality in inherited traditions constitutes the cause for the liberal feminist movement (Butler, 1990: 34). Liberal feminists sought to alter the structure of society to ensure the equal treatment of women. The first and second feminist waves were led by liberal feminists and they managed to formally and legally achieve many of the sought equal rights for women, including the right to vote, the right to be educated, as well as the elimination of many other patriarchal paternalistic and

moralistic laws (Butler, 1990: 36). In liberal-feminist fashion Caprioli (2014) argues that if a society is less discriminatory there is less chance of violent conflicts.

However, Whitworth (2013) argues that, in as much as it is imperative to collect empirical information about women's experiences in these contexts, the process often neglects the need for an assessment of the structural features of relations of inequality between men and women in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Enloe (2004: 195) adds to this argument by affirming that "relationships we once imagined were private or merely social are in fact infused with power, usually unequal power, backed up by public authority". In the context of my study, liberal-feminist thinking therefore champions parity in the agency of both men and women in post-conflict communities where, for example, ERW continue to pose insecurity. This is so because not every woman in these communities is either married or has a 'superman' to provide socio-economic and physical security for her every day. Some have to do it on their own for their children and in the process expose the unequal power relations between men and women as the latter demonstrate unexpected agency amidst the insecurity posed by landmines. Yet, a liberal-feminist perspective does not go far enough to present women's intersectional security needs and identities and tends to work more with an abstract, rights-bearing universal woman. In this regard Kottack (2008) recognises that liberal feminism laid the ground for a more radical feminist stance to take the war of emancipating women further.

*2.6.2.2 Radical feminism: Replacing the male norm with a female norm because women's experiences matter*

Unlike the soft stance of the liberal feminists, radical feminists argue that the prevailing relations of domination and subordination between men and women constitute one of the major fundamental forms of oppression (Butler, 1990: 13). If these relations are left to proceed unchecked, they are bound to give a distorted picture of (in)security. Thus, the manner in which the security discourse has been presented and the policy prescriptions which emerge from the traditional theorisations of security, exhibit a masculine worldview, which they propose should be replaced by a feminine one (Whitworth, 2013: 6). Radical feminists differ from their liberal counterparts in that they are concerned with considering women's different attitudes towards peace and conflict, suggesting that women in general are more peace-loving and connected with life through childrearing, and therefore will think differently about these matters (Whitworth, 2013: 9). Radical feminists argue that we should replace the male norm with a female norm, because gendered experiences of men and women differ radically (Harding, 1998). This position, however, runs the risk of essentialising women's experiences and roles, which in a way is the flip side of the liberal-feminist tendency to present women as an abstract identity category. It can therefore be argued that radical feminists make significant advances over their liberal counterparts as they call for the need to subvert the inherent masculine bias brought by men to the discourse and practice of security.

### *2.6.2.3 Poststructuralist feminism: The error of homogenising identity*

Another important strand of feminism is poststructuralist feminism. Proponents of this variant (Butler, 1990) criticise their liberal and radical counterparts for universalising and essentialising women and understandings of femininity and masculinity since poststructuralists regard these categories as ever-changing social constructs (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015: 59). Poststructural feminism is a branch of feminism that engages with insights from poststructuralist thought. Poststructural feminism emphasises “the contingent and discursive nature of all identities” (Randall, 2010: 116), and particularly the social construction of gendered subjectivities (Alcoff and Gray, 1993: 40). The major contribution of this branch is to argue that there is no single universal category of ‘woman’ or ‘man’. Similar to poststructuralism itself, this feminist branch is broadly a tool for literary analysis. It deals with psychoanalysis and a critique of the socio-cultural structure through exploring the relationships between language, subjectivity and power relations and their implications on gender in particular (Giddens, 2010).

Poststructuralist feminism therefore places a huge emphasis on meaning-making and discourse and makes a strong argument against the homogenisation of women in social contexts. I concur that the homogenisation of women’s experiences works against broadening the analytical spectrum of security. Contemporary security realities and practices have shown that there are other emerging forces that shape and define (in)security such as the Ebola virus as discussed by Ammann (2017a) and the incidence of landmines as I intend to demonstrate in this study. I therefore further submit that this poststructuralist broadening of the conceptual focus of security lays the ground for a comprehensive discursive analysis of security. The comprehensive

analytical frame recognises the spatial concerns and objects surrounding different social categories of people, especially those that threaten their immediate social-political and economic security through a feminist posthuman approach.

#### *2.6.2.4 From FSS limitations towards a feminist posthuman security approach*

As noted above, FSS have made positive strides in enhancing and conscientising the need for taking into account the impact of gendered experiences in the conceptualisation of conflict and (in)security. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS in October 2000 calling for the need to mainstream gender perspectives in order to ensure women are represented and participate in efforts to protect them during and after conflicts is a testament to that (Sjoberg, 2013: 252). This resolution marks the official start of the WPS agenda, which has since been expanded to include many issues that affect women, and nine other UNSC Resolutions as well as a wide-ranging body of literature on WPS, while finding significant relevance in post-conflict countries as these notably experience a rise in violence against women (Ní Aoláin et al., 2016: 157; Kirby and Shepherd, 2021).

Ground-breaking as it is, the resolution has nevertheless been challenged. Schott (2013) submits that its main critique has revolved around the WPS agenda's heteronormative conceptualisation of gender and violence as static and (biologically) predetermined categories (also see Hagen (2016) for a queer critique). As a result, the WPS agenda fails to capture the dynamic processes that are part of the broader spectre that (re)produces insecurity, violence, gendered bodies, subjects and norms (Schott, 2013). I therefore concur with Sjoberg (2013: 252) who highlights

that pragmatic implications of FSS have culminated in security resolutions, which erroneously reduce women to being the sole sufferers of conflict. For instance, UNSCR 1325 views ‘man’ as incapable of such suffering which presupposes a hegemonic masculinity as either cold-hearted killer/rapist or chivalrous protector/peacekeeper and in a way indirectly affirms the gendered binary status quo. Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011) further highlight that the UN resolution is a liberalist document, which is less critical, hence it has failed to transform society. In spite of all the advances in terms of women, peace and security, it remains universalist, with an abstract individual (woman) at the centre and does not pay attention to specific contexts such as those of post-war Africa.

Although FSS is concerned with the everyday, the theoretical strand has not always captured the specific dynamics of everyday contexts because most FSS scholars frame their security thinking and critique in Western or Eurocentric terms (Hudson, 2016: 197). Therefore, one way to decolonise this security thinking is to find an indigenous approach that speaks to the African context where human beings’ interaction with ancestors and the natural environment is paramount. Thus, Sabaratnam (2013: 261) reasons that “accounts of liberal peace, valuable as they might seem, have basically failed to extricate liberal peace as the dominant matter of inquiry as a result of neoliberal governance becoming more politically correct and critics failing to come up with options that are decolonial at their core”. Hudson (2016: 197) further vindicates taking the everyday and the local seriously to avoid depicting the local as gender-neutral, while chiefs in reality still speak on behalf of rural women and other ostracised identities. This relates to the realities in post-war patriarchal Mukumbura, Zimbabwe where unequal gendered relations still prevail in the community.

## **2.7 KEY TENETS OF POSTHUMAN SECURITY**

In order then to develop an alternative, more inclusive and just/authentic contextual framework for global security, I draw on the following bodies of literature as indicated in Chapter One and the introduction of Chapter Two (Section 2.1) namely feminist posthumanism, material feminism and new materialism. I will begin by clarifying the notion of posthumanism.

### **2.7.1 Posthumanism**

Posthumanism is a theoretical inclination that calls for the need to understand the human condition beyond the Anthropocene because the human condition is shaped by non-human elements as well (MacGinty, 2017: 856; Mitchell, 2016: 12; Wilcox, 2017: 361). There are several posthumanist strands that try to account for the human condition beyond mere human interaction to human-object relations, such as the agential realism of Barad (2003), the posthumanism of Haraway (1988, 1999) and the Deleuzian materialism of Rosi Braidotti (2016).

In IR, the concept of the ‘posthuman’ draws on “re-modelling the notion of ‘system’ in complexity theory as multi-levelled, nested, overlapping and non-saturated, while acknowledging distinctions between human and non-human systems” (Cudworth and Hobden, 2014: 3). This approach is progressive as it enables the consideration of the embedded nature of human relations within broader multi-species and biosphere contexts. Whereas the posthuman depicts the perspective of ‘beyond the human’; and ‘post’-human seemingly depicts a period ‘after the humans’, the ‘post’ should not be construed as implying anti-human. Rather, it hints to

the furtherance of the analysis of patterns of social relations and exploitation in deeper and embedded ways that reveal multi-faceted and dynamic configurations and intersected qualities between humans and non-humans (Cudworth and Hobden, 2014).

The posthumanist call to decentre human supremacy and embrace non-human elements seems apposite especially if Braidotti's (2016: 685) submission that "life, as it happens, is not the exclusive prerogative of humans", is considered. The argument proceeds by acknowledging that posthumanist feminism is not merely a new discourse in which humanist and anti-humanist ontologies end but provides a complex, new pathway for analysing the security complexities of the contemporary post-conflict contexts which are hugely androcentric and anthropocentric.

As a result, if the posthuman concept is applied in the analysis of (in)security, it implies that security should not be a matter of safeguarding human lives and bodies only (Mitchell, 2016). Instead, the focus should be an interplay of diverse beings other than humans in the shaping of the conditions of (in)security and therefore a relational issue. This conceptual ambit dissects the notion of security in contexts intersected and co-constituted by various kinds of beings such as humans, other organisms, machines, elemental forces, diverse materials and hybrids of all of the above (Mitchell, 2016).

Schwarz (2016: 61) notes this diversity, but suggests that posthumanism can be approached largely in terms of trans-humanism, hybridity and the cyborg. This is indeed a significant notion in posthumanist thinking, and one that, as Schwarz advocates, has essential implications for traditional security concerns such as the conduct of warfare and the distribution of agency in

violence. On the other hand, numerous contemporary posthumanists are concerned with the liveliness and peculiarity of matter, and its effects on ontology, agency and causation. They draw on sources such as New Materialism (Coole and Frost, 2010; Bennett, 2010) and the politics of affect (Massumi, 2002; Protevi, 2013). Kaltofen's (2017: 16) work draws on New Materialism to examine the emergence of hybrid posthumans in the worlds of the virtual and sonic war-scapes.

Still other posthumanists are concerned with how thinking in ecological terms transforms perspectives on what it means to be 'human', and the meaning of being 'secure'. For instance, the work of Cudworth and Hobden (2014) examines the implications of animal bodies and subjectivities in warfare. Other posthuman theorists are concerned with the agentic role of the 'things' that are often construed as rigid and lifeless, and in particular their ability to provoke human thought and action, structure violence and create disruption (Grove 2015<sup>6</sup>; Barad, 2003). It should be noted that all these posthuman approaches only scratch the surface of the perspectives that are expressed under the rubric of posthumanism or 'posthuman security'. More so, these terms do not denote a 'theory' or 'framework', but they refer to a swarm of resonating, sometimes overlapping and often conflicting lines of thought. Insofar as the discourses of Security Studies have become increasingly variegated and pluralistic in their conceptualisations of and approaches and methods to security, a dialogical approach that creates common spaces and bridges among these various approaches is desirable (Schlag, Junk and Daase, 2016: 234). For the sake of my study, I chose to take the posthuman performativity or agential realism of Barad (2007); and the security notion grounded in feminism as substantiated by the theoretical

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<sup>6</sup> Grove (2015) analyses the power of surveillance systems to control crowds on the streets of Cairo in order to ostensibly curb sexual and gender-based violence, while masking other more politically motivated objectives.

pillars articulated by Hudson (2018) as my point of departure for the development of an alternative feminist posthuman security frame to be elaborated in subsequent sections.

### **2.7.2 Posthuman security**

This section outlines the major highlights that a feminist posthuman perspective would espouse regarding the broad issues of human (in)security. Firstly, as shown in literature, traditional approaches to security are intrinsically anthropocentric, thus blinding these perspectives to the view that conceptualising human (in)security should go beyond the human to the non-human as depicted in posthumanist thinking. To illustrate this point, contemporary literature on the ‘more-than-human’ nature of warfare has demonstrated that wars between humans only would be very different. However, the conscripting of a huge variety of non-human artefacts such as bacteria, weaponised viruses and nuclear bombs as typified by modern warfare, implies a qualitative alteration of the nature of war (Cudworth and Hobden, 2015).

I would add that some of these non-human elements of war had a secondary effect, that of perpetually imposing insecurity well after the armed conflict or wars have ended officially. A good example would be ERW or unexploded ordinances such as landmines, which continue to maim, kill, destroy livelihoods and instil fear in post-war communities. As such, I can safely say ERW such as landmines reincarnate the war context, yet without the presence of an enemy soldier or rebel. The manner in which these non-human objects are entangled with humans in post-war communities and the resultant effect of that on everyday physical and socio-economic (in)security of men and women can thus only be understood from a posthumanist perspective of

security. Humans and objects are thus co-constituted in the framing of everyday (in)security; yet, this has almost exclusively been ignored within the broad discourse of Security Studies. So, for us to be able to comprehensively comprehend the subject matter of human (in)security, we need to appreciate the multifarious ways in which our modern society is packed with numerous human and non-human lives, relations and constructions of being.

### **2.7.3 Feminist posthumanism**

In this section I will focus on three specific interpretations and/or contributions to the feminist posthuman debate, namely (1) its challenges against androcentrism; (2) Barad's contribution; and (3) material feminisms.

#### *2.7.3.1 The feminist critique of androcentric (security) practices*

It is often forgotten that all feminist theorising and scholarship is intrinsically posthuman in that it challenges the androcentric/male-centredness of society and security practices in particular (Hudson, 2015: 416; 2018; Wilcox, 2017: 13). 'Post'human in this sense refers to the fact that 'human' is often equated with being male, i.e. 'Man'. I argue that these bifurcations have typified traditional security conceptualisations with the effect of venerating the hu(man) as the only security provider and/or referent – a notion which erroneously restricts security to be a human issue and agency to be a merely male domain. Thus, women's work in peace and security in communities has remained unnoticed (Wilcox, 2017: 16; Mitchel, 2016: 7; Hudson, 2015: 416; Hudson, 2018: 48).

Despite the ostensible comprehensive nature of the ‘human’ security perspective, the gender dimension tends to be ignored, culminating in the provision of only a fractional understanding of security issues (Hudson, 2015) in as much as the traditional security project enforces conformity to androcentric values. Feminists therefore argue for the need for a security ontology, which includes the concerns of women. Thus, Hudson (2018: 56) critiques the human security notion as exclusionary. She further acknowledges that all feminisms are already largely posthuman by virtue of their challenge to the anthropocentric, androcentric and logo-centric affairs of society.

In this context, humanism therefore generates divisions between some humans and ‘others’ or between humans and the non-human. On the contrary, posthumanism is a border-breaking exercise as it unshackles us from Western thinking that glorifies rational ‘Man’ over nature or elevates the male norm as the referent point for humanity. Hudson (2005: 156) comments that “there is a real danger that collapsing femininity or masculinity into the term ‘human’ could conceal the gendered underpinnings of security practices”. The term ‘human’ is presented as though it is gender-neutral, but very often it is an expression of the masculine. Therefore, a feminist posthuman security penchant would go a long way in dissecting the multifarious dynamics of security that are concealed in identity politics.

### *2.7.3.2 Barad’s agential realism*

I will briefly articulate the main tenets of Barad’s agential realism as they converge in a posthumanistic ontological frame. Barad (2003) has provided a methodological frame, which enables a materialist-discursive analysis of the social and the natural by decentring the prevalent

binaries between the internal and the external. She proceeds through invocations of a scientific explanation through quantum physics – particularly Bohr’s philosophy-physics; and critical feminist theories, especially the works of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway in order to suggest agential realism as an ontological, epistemological and ethical framework (Ammann, 2017b: 136). Barad (2007: 26) further suggests that agential realism provides an enabling framework for reassessing notions of objectivity, which is the prime basis for understanding nature and its role in meaning-making – especially epistemological asymmetries such as human-nonhuman, material-discursive, as well as natural-cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices. Barad’s agential realism framework hinges on the reconceptualisation of agency, causality, matter and ethics; and these act as bedrock for a posthumanist notion of performativity which seeks to enable the theorisation of the natural and cultural.

Most significantly, Barad (2003: 809) acknowledges that in her typology of agential realism, matter is a dynamic expression or articulation of the world in its intra-active becoming. She further indicates that all bodies, including but not limited to human bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity, which is its performativity. Thus, boundaries, properties and meanings are differentially enacted through the intra-activity of mattering (Barad, 2007: 39). Barad (2007: 41) refers to our existence as “intra-active becoming” to emphasise the entangled and relational nature of all matter(s). Instead of calling this ‘interaction’, a term that would imply that matter has a stable pre-existence before interacting with other pre-existent matter, she refers to it as ‘intra-action’ which describes how existence emerges through intra-

actions between humans and non-human objects as demonstrated in subsequent empirical chapters (see Chapters Four and Five).

As she further highlights that pre-existence is not possible since all matter is already entangled in the intra-active becoming of the world, reality is therefore composed of entangled “things-in-phenomena”, rather than “things-in-themselves or things-behind-phenomena”, making phenomena our “basic units of reality” (Barad, 2003: 811). This is complemented by Latour (2009: 56), who notes that any human interaction makes some appeal to objects or devices where action must be shared with these non-human objects. They have the ability to act socially through *faire-faire*, meaning ‘to make one do and ‘causing to be done’ (Latour, 2009: 80). The combination of a subject with an object gives rise to a hybrid formation:

*For instance, a human with a smartphone, for instance, is no longer a human and a smartphone, but a human-smartphone hybrid. Such a hybrid: 1) can perform actions, (connect with other humans, access entire libraries of information, geo-locate itself and others, etc.) and; 2) embodies the competence necessary for achieving such actions. In this way, competence is distributed across human and non-human entities (Watson, 2016: 78).*

Agential realism has a direct bearing on my study. Any conceptualisation of security should start from the ‘causality’, a task, which has often been denoted by the securitisation/de-securitisation concepts. This relates to what is the cause of insecurity and therefore victimhood and more broadly agency. Agential connotes that there is agency between the causal element of insecurity and the victim insofar as these variables did not exist/occur on their own but rather out of their inevitable entanglement. For instance, landmines were planted by humans during the war of

liberation for a particular purpose, namely to deter free passage of military personnel to and from Mozambique (Chipika, 2015).

Yet, the collision of the intention (agency) of their initial purpose with their current agency in posing insecurity to the post-conflict community marks the ontological turn to the nature of matter/non-human objects which is an epistemological enhancement in the theorisation of (in)security. As a result of the intermingled nature of the security web, Barad's call for the need to move away from an 'interaction', which often has overlooked this inextricable connectedness, to 'intra-action', which connotes a reciprocal or cause-effect relationship where both humans and non-human elements matter in framing (in)security, becomes tenable. It is in this complex (in)security web where the socio-spatial, economic and political interplay of the numerous variables involved in (in)security justifies the need for social analysis of the entanglement in order to denote how it may still differentially affect victims based on either gender or other related stratifications.

### *2.7.3.3 Materialist feminism*

Materialist feminism derives from Marx's historical materialism (Jackson, 2001: 284). Materialist feminism originally emerged in opposition to both conventional Marxism and to feminisms of difference (Delphy, 1980). The theoretical variant is closely related to radical feminism in that the object of their analysis was primarily patriarchy and not capitalism and they refused to see the former as deriving from the latter; but they saw historical materialism as a

possible method of analysing relations between men and women in social rather than natural terms.

Consequently, materialist feminism cannot be equated with economic determinism. Hence Delphy and Leonard (1992: 67) affirm that a notable strength of Marx's materialism was that he saw the economic sphere as stretching beyond an abstract system with its own internal laws, to a realm of social relations, constructed through social activity. Thus, a version of materialist feminism that relates well to my study is the one that foregrounds social structures, relations and practices; yet does not reduce all social structures, relations and practices to capitalism (Jackson, 2001: 22). Materialist feminism thus becomes a revised version of Marx's ideals of capitalism and this is why Gibson-Graham (1996) treats Marxist accounts of capitalism as a discursive construction, not to deny the material, but as a means of focusing on contextualised and localised processes and practices. It therefore becomes possible to analyse the appropriation of women's labour within households as a non-capitalist class process. This gives room for considering the implications of the reproductive and productive roles of women on socio-economic security in any analysis of relations at community level. Thus, materialist feminism captures the often-neglected economic agency exercised by women in circumventing the constrictions posed by landmines in the analysis of everyday economic relations in post-war contexts as will be elaborated in Chapter Five.

Jackson (2001: 23) further acknowledges that "androcentric structures, relations and practices are similarly as material as capitalist ones, as are those shaped by racism, colonialism, and imperialism". All these interconnect and interact, often in unfixed and conflicting ways, so that

the social order is not some continuous uniform entity. Hence, accepting a materialist stance does not disqualify attentiveness to differences among women. On the contrary, a full understanding of those variances requires particular attention to material social inequalities and everyday social practices. Although materialism does not ignore issues of language, culture representation and subjectivity, it does not locate them in their social and historical context.

Above all, materialist feminism does not limit women's oppression to a single cause; it evades endeavours at totalising grand theory and trans-historical, universalistic claims (Delphy, 1984: 19). In that vein, materialist feminism thus allows the method of historical materialism to be applied to patriarchal productive relations within family households (see Chapters Four and Five). It is in this context that everyday social and economic security and relations of men and women in Mukumbura can be understood from the historical and social context of their social organisation as a community while they experienced and continue to experience the war as a result of ERW. How these ERW influence livelihoods and gendered economic relations and agency will be shown in Chapter Five.

#### *2.7.3.4 'New' Materialist thinking: The new-security ontology*

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2015: 4) submit that “materiality is seemingly back: matter matters after all in the study of contemporary political life. This is the mantra of a range of scholarship variously referred to as ‘New Materialism’, ‘New Vitalism’, and the ‘Materialist Turn’ produced by diverse social and political theorists in recent years”. According to Coole and Frost (2010: 43), what binds Posthumanism and the literature on New Materialisms together is a

common attempt to problematise the notion of materiality, how it relates with politics, and how an emphasis on material factors might lead to a revision of our understanding of the concept of security. It is in this very context where ‘materiality’ is characteristically cast in deliberately broad terms, i.e. “objects, bodies, machines” (Braun and Whatmore, 2010: 10); “edibles, commodities, storms, metals” (Bennett, 2010: 46); “micro-organisms, cellular reactions, cosmic motions” (Coole and Frost, 2010: 9). The ‘New Materialisms’ standpoint entails generally the fact that human beings are surrounded by, immersed in, and indeed composed of matter understood in these terms. It also entails the claim that the relationship between people, materiality and socio-political life cannot be disregarded.

Coole and Frost (2010: 34) submit that the New Materialisms/Posthuman turn constitutes the notion that the “stuff of politics, the plethora of objects, materials, and forces around us help constitute the common worlds that we share and the dense fabric of relations with others in and through which we live”. In other words, ‘things’ condition the possibility of human interactions, shape political communities, and influence behaviour and outcomes. For example, in my study, landmines as non-human objects cannot be divorced from the everyday socio-economic engagements of the people in the community. So instead of thinking of their (in)security as a function of merely human interaction, a posthuman vantage point provides a new theoretical lens which begins with how landmines reconfigure everyday security spaces and practices of people as a result of their entanglement. It is for this reason why Coole (2013: 6) characterises Posthumanism/New Materialisms not only as an ontological diagnosis of contemporary political life, but also as a “political-ethical intervention” and a “reckoning of the material circuits, flows and experiences that mark the 21st century”. Therefore, it becomes justified to seek to

understand how livelihoods become gendered as a result of the insecurity posed by landmines as men and women are both entangled with these adverse objects of insecurity in the community. In the next section (2.8.1), I will clarify the types of matter that I will deal with in my study).

## **2.8 A FEMINIST POSTHUMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK: BROADENING THE THEORETICAL SCOPE**

The feminist posthuman security framework I propose in this study draws from some of Barad's concepts of agential realism and Hudson's pillars for a posthuman security ontology. Hudson's (2018: 56) pillars include the following:

- A poststructuralist understanding of agency as the product of intra-action rather than interaction;
- Feminist critiques of equating what is male and what is human;
- The emphasis on intersections between race and gender in feminist postcolonial theory;
- The importance of situated knowledge;
- The agency of matter and objects in the construction of (in)security; and
- An acknowledgement of indigenous African-centred knowledge forms.

For my study, I take inspiration from only three pillars which I will apply in a more integrated manner. These are firstly, a poststructuralist understanding of agency as the product of intra-action rather than interaction which also dovetails with the work of Barad as discussed in Section 2.7.3.2 which to me is closely related to the other pillar presented by Hudson related to the

agency of matter and objects in the construction of security and/or insecurity. My second pillar relates to feminist critiques of equating what is male and what is human; and the third pillar concerns the importance of situated knowledge which is related to the other pillar calling for acknowledgement of indigenous Africa-centred knowledge forms (Hudson, 2018: 56). I use these pillars as the basis for expanding the feminist posthuman security theory through acknowledging existing theoretical dimensions and the conceptualisation of human security while at the same time demonstrating how these can be enhanced by adding other agentic dimensions to human agency, namely the agency of tangible non-human objects, the agency of all genders, and the agency of intangible non-human objects through spirituality in an Afrocentric context.

The analysis above can be exemplified by the case of post-war ravaged communities, where the gendered insecurity of such communities continues to be shaped and reshaped by the presence of ERW. Landmines continue to act in a manner that eclipses prior conceptualisation of (in)security especially where gender roles, victimhood and agency are seen to be mutating in response to these objects. The impact of matter/objects in invoking new meaning-making avenues for (in)security acts as a cogent basis for a more complete theoretical approach which puts the inevitable role of objects as a complementary analytical dimension to the already existing FSS preoccupation with the “imagined polarities of masculine/feminine, aggressive/peaceful, protector/protected” (Schott, 2013: 19). Such a feminist posthuman security paradigm caters for the dissection of those dichotomies as well as the agential role of the non-human. It scales down to the micro/community level of (in)security dynamics where the everyday entanglement of humans and matter/landmines cannot be easily discerned by applying macro security theories.

Thus, a holistic feminist posthuman security approach that recognises the micro/community level engagement would demystify crude gender binary assumptions of men and women's everyday security experiences in relation to ERW. This is why I pointed out in Chapter One that the notion of 'safer spaces' is an irony in that women are ambivalently confined to the homes which are considered to be safe yet a landmine blast knows no gender. Thus, men and women are all enmeshed in a socio-economic security trap which requires their agency rather than their identity to circumvent insecurities around them. The manner in which the agency should traverse the existing structural barriers between men and women as spelt out by inherent unequal power relations, does not only deconstruct the masculine-feminine binary, but also forms one of the caveats for the need for a comprehensive feminist posthuman ontology. This is augmented by Hudson's (2018: 46) notion that a feminist posthuman security approach would therefore go beyond just asking for the inclusion of women, but would underscore agentic relations between (all) humans, the natural environment, technology and even objects. The inherent gap in previous security theorisations has therefore laid the ground for a security conceptualisation which is human-centric, gender sensitive, Afrocentric and going beyond the human to human-object relationalities.

### **2.8.1 Pillar one: Agency extended to the non-human**

The first pillar of my theoretical framework concerns an expanded conceptualisation of agency, namely as 'intra-active-agency' that extends agency to non-human objects through a relational process. This expanded agency also means that the human is still important but decentred and the relationship between humans and non-human agents will be conceptualised based on the

Baradian notion of intra-action. The conceptualisation informs efforts towards the deconstruction of the prevalent binaries of human-nonhuman; victim-perpetrator and masculine-feminine, and now also human-object/non-human. Thus, this pillar aligns with the Baradian re-presentation of agency as an issue of intra-action or relationality as opposed to interaction. The main issue here concerns how objects may provide constraining and/or enabling spaces for influencing the meaning and practice of (in)security and what that means for gender relations. This resonates with my study in that landmines matter in gendering physical and socio-economic insecurity of the people living in post-conflict Mukumbura.

My frame will include two types of matter that is, firstly tangible matter (landmines as they exercise infrastructural power in controlling movement and engagement of people long after the war). Secondly, it entails intangible matter, i.e. spirituality, as it forms part of the belief systems characterising everyday security in an African post-war community. This will be given more substance in Chapters Four and Five. This articulation of the concept of agency has led Ahern (2001: 110) to affirm that “the socio-culturally intermediated capacity to act, is consciously not delimited to persons, and may include spirits, machines, signs and collective entities (ancestors, corporations, social groups). It is also purposely relative, since ... they [society] may have diverse ideas about who and what is proficient to act in a particular context”. This allows a particular theorisation of security which looks at the impact of non-human matter (landmines) on everyday security. Under this pillar Hudson (2018) surmises that a feminist posthuman analysis of security should consider the material consequences of infrastructural power over people, especially those who are marginalised.

## **2.8.2 Pillar two: Agency of men and women**

Following the feminist work as outlined in previous sections, but particularly the work of Hudson (2018), I adopt the following as my second pillar and it relates to the feminist critique of human security as exclusionary and focused on a universalist discourse of people's security where an abstract individual remains at the centre, and this individual is usually male. Hudson (2018) explains this by highlighting that it is in this perspective where the previous security theorisations' obsession with 'humanism' culminated in practices that unjustifiably create boundaries between some humans and 'others' or between humans and the non-human.

I argue that these bifurcations have entrenched traditional security conceptualisations with the effect of venerating man as the only security provider, a notion which erroneously restricted security to be a human issue; and agency to be a merely male domain. This is the reason why in my study, I noted that women are confined to the home which is considered a 'safe space' to protect them from the insecurity posed by landmines, while men have taken over women's roles and are traversing the mass-weaponised roads, agricultural land, water reservoir areas, firewood fetching places and animal grazing areas. Apart from the effect of this in reconfiguring everyday gender roles, it buttresses security as a gendered issue where agency and victimhood is erroneously framed within a masculine-feminine binary. Thus, a posthumanist theoretical turn in this context would act as a boundary-breaking practice as it allows for both men and women's agency, and the role of the non-human in the everyday (in)security becoming in post-conflict communities littered with ERW.

### **2.8.3 Agency and the unseen: Intangible knowledge into an Afrocentric context**

My third pillar is twofold in that it firstly seeks to contextualise security realities/knowledge in Africa as a continent (Afrocentricism) as a unique process of revealing complex security realities that were often negated by Eurocentric discourses of security. Secondly, it extends agency to the unseen objects such as ancestral spirits. This is inspired by Hudson's theoretical pillar of situated knowledge, or the issue of the social context from where we speak (Hudson, 2018: 58). This also speaks to my critique of the Afrocentric-Eurocentric binary in the study of security, where the development of the global South is often seen as necessary to ensure the security of the West/global North.

The Eurocentric analysis of peace and security negates the dictates of the normative structural forces of post-conflict African communities where variables such as gender, age and ancestral spirits are endemic elements characterising society and influencing the conceptualisation of (in)security. In this regard Chowdhury and Ling (2010) emphasise that to focus on the African context is epistemologically significant as this enables an analysis of the (in)security realities of African post-war communities in which the reproductive, productive and care-work of African women can be noticed for its contribution to the shaping of the economic security at the community level. A focus on the security plight of marginalised African women and men underlines the need to adopt theorisations which decentre the androcentric obsessions symptomatic of life in African traditional communities.

In this respect, 'African' incorporates the world views and meaning-making of people formerly recognised with the African continent, irrespective of where they live or have lived. The experiences of people defined as belonging to the African continent constitute the basis of African specific cultural values and social systems. For Nkulu-N'Sengha (2005: 32), "given the specificity of their location in the world and their experience in human history, African people have a specific way of understanding and explaining the world and the complexity of the human condition".

Mazama (2003: 390) explains that there are specific qualities which define phenomena and people as African. He elaborates that culturally, 'African' denotes a set of customs and a social setting that place 'community' and 'ancestry' at the centre of existence and knowing. It follows therefore that every phenomenon, including humans, that bears the adjective as being 'African' share in these specific ways of knowing. Thus, Hamminga (2005: 54) admits that African knowledge systems are not impositions from elsewhere, though they have been shaped greatly by knowledge systems of other cultures outside Africa. Without standardising Africa, it is essential that African epistemology should inform African theories of knowledge, which should include African conceptions of (in)security; the nature of the world from an African perspective; the means and criteria to acquire credible knowledge about that world; and the role that knowledge plays in human existence.

Nevertheless, it is these changing African realities where the implications of intangible non-human elements (spirituality) in the African contexts remain elusive and underexplored. As such, I add that dimension and elaborate how it enables a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of

human security especially in deeper unimagined contexts epitomised by African traditional communities. This observation is in sync with Hudson's (2018: 58) submission that this call for Afrocentric contextuality in foregrounding posthuman security implies submerging oneself in African experiences and theories seriously. This forms a cogent theoretical ground for a posthuman ontology; one which according to Mitchell (2016) should involve indigenous cosmologies that are marked by a deep relationality, multi-species community and an ecological ethic. This will not only enable the broadening of (in)security conceptualisations to include spirituality and intuition as credible sources of information (Mazama, 2003), but also justifies Afrocentric contextualisation as a necessary element of a posthuman ontology in which the tangible and nontangible elements, such as ERW and spirituality, equally become referents in the material-discursive analysis of (in)security.

I therefore conclude that apart from introducing a new analytical dimension of spirituality in the understanding of (in)security in the African context, the theoretical pillars I propose offer the theoretical bricks from where a feminist posthuman ontology of security is constructed. The pillars enable theoretical operationalisation of the often-overlooked variables such as gender and an expanded conceptualisation of non-human elements which in my study relates to ERW (the tangible) and spirituality (the intangible). This would also allow a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of human security in particular African contexts.

## 2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The broad aim of this chapter was to develop and propose a theoretical framework for a more holistic and nuanced framework for human security, after having outlined the evolution of security thinking and its limitations. This is based on the understanding of how traditional theorisations of security overlooked the significance of other variables (e.g. gender and the agency of tangible and intangible non-human objects) in conceptualising human security. As such, these parameters of understanding security ensured that security remained state-centric and inherently gender blind. This analysis exposed the need for a broader and deeper theorisation of security that speaks to the perpetual changes in the incidence of (in)security in post-conflict contexts. The theoretical gaps of these traditional conceptualisations of security have further justified the focus on a ‘posthuman turn’ grounded in feminist security theory.

Drawing on this posthuman penchant, feminist materialism and the literature on New Materialisms, the feminist posthuman security perspective constitutes a more comprehensive and nuanced framework for human security, which challenges gender and other identity binaries; foregrounds the agentic effect of objects; and is also more in tune with context and the nuances of local (African) knowledge production. Such a framework is more inclusive, because it allows for alternative forms of knowledge that foreground intangible aspects of security, such as the spiritual dimensions, as well as the materialities of human security, especially how it impacts on livelihoods and physical well-being and safety. Thus, in this particular study of ERW, landmines are theorised as actors intra-acting with human beings, restraining as well as enabling the agency of ordinary people to navigate various forms of insecurity. The co-constitution of humans

and non-human objects (landmines, environment and spiritualities) in gendering security and everyday relations is discussed in more depth in subsequent chapters, as these relate to the case study of the Mukumbura area in northeast Zimbabwe.

In the next chapter, I discuss the research methodology of my study, and also explain the normative and practical reasons for methodological decisions while navigating the field

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter highlights the methodological journey throughout the study discussing the ethical and methodological challenges that I came across and how I circumvented them. It was informed by the third objective, to explain and illustrate the possibility of using a qualitative feminist-posthumanist methodology in analysing the (in)security realities in an African context. I highlight the reasons for adopting a feminist research methodology informed by a posthumanist ontology which was this study's methodological orientation. The study proceeds through an account of my ethnographic journey and the methodological considerations that influenced this study.

I chose a qualitative feminist research methodology grounded in posthumanism as it enabled an exploration of the agency of inanimate objects/landmines as they intra-act with humans and animals in producing and reproducing gendered (in)security spaces and practices. Besides, this posthumanist-inclined feminist qualitative methodology enabled a focus beyond the anthropocentric and androcentric. This was made possible through pragmatism and reflexivity in the field, while focusing on the intra-action (agency) of both humans and objects in shaping everyday (in)security relations. Thus, the chapter details every step I took during my ethnographic engagement in the case study area during data collection. It also highlights the tensions and contradictions that emerged during fieldwork in a traditional androcentric African

society, which is re-militarised by the physical presence of landmines. The chapter explores how these contradictions affected the data collection process and ethical choices. I furthermore discuss how I operationalised key feminist research principles grounded in a posthumanist-inclined methodology in the field in a post-conflict community.

## **3.2 RATIONALE FOR A QUALITATIVE FEMINIST AND POSTHUMANIST METHODOLOGY**

### **3.2.1 Setting the posthuman methodological terms: An ontological turn**

Posthumanism is a deconstruction of anthropocentric humanism and it opens its inquiry to non-human life, from animals to artificial intelligence, from aliens to other forms of hypothetical entities related to the physics notion of a multiverse (Ferrando, 2012: 11). By so doing, it enunciates the conditions for a posthuman epistemology concerned with non-human experiences as sources of knowledge. As such, posthumanism offers a multiplicity of perspectives in and about and without methodology (Ulmer, 2017: 3). By reassessing who and what constitutes the social, posthumanism deviates perhaps the most from traditional social science research (Ulmer, 2017: 3). Thus, posthumanism decentres the notion of humans as the only species that can produce knowledge and rather creates avenues for other forms/things/ objects/beings/phenomena to know as well. It also problematises binaries that structurally exist between and among species. Ulmer (2017) further affirms that this is significant, because when humans are decentred as sole custodians of knowledge, a wealth of research possibilities arise. Posthumanism thus affirms that insofar as we are already linked with things and our environments, methodological thinking

should equally follow suit by evoking the same interconnections. My methodological approach thus took a feminist orientation as it tried to untangle the androcentric hurdles that often characterise patriarchal societies. I did this by affording space to marginalised gender categories to voice their sentiments about security and everyday life in a post-war society. My methodology was grounded in posthumanism as it tried to give tangible (landmines, land and animals) and intangible (spirits) things an opportunity to ‘speak’ through their agency in reconfiguring socio-economic relations, security and identities.

Snaza (2014: 54) acknowledges that a methodology grounded in posthumanism forms the basis for a significant departure from the traditional human-centred research which has been shown to be inadequate for producing piecemeal knowledge through interviews, observations and texts. In contrast, posthumanism entails numerous ways of thinking about research design. Posthumanism provides opportunities for dissecting interconnections with the material settings in which we live, with fellow human beings, and with the environment and all that it contains. A more-than-human turn in research, therefore, ushers a different set of methodological possibilities, in which inanimate objects such as landmines and spirits assume agency and act as key-participants in shaping and reconfiguring everyday relations and (in)security spaces and practices in post-war communities littered with ERW.

### **3.2.2 Posthumanism: From theory to methodological praxis**

Spawned from Postmodernism, Posthumanism seems to resist the notion of ‘method’ (Ferrando, 2012: 10). A posthumanist ‘methodology’ resonates with the postmodern critique of objective

knowledge and the notion of outright truth. It follows therefore that a methodology grounded in posthumanism “is in no way definitive, but dynamic, mutant, shifting; it has to be aware of the state of things in order to acknowledge current challenges and be open to possibilities” (Ferrando, 2012: 11). This significantly influenced the qualitative feminist research methodology I adopted as I tried to be pragmatic, reflexive and considerate during my fieldwork as I was conscious of the fact that my key-participants were both humans and things (landmines, animals and spirits). This posthuman-inclined qualitative feminist methodology was deemed flexible and sensitive as it enabled indulgence in the semiotics, hermeneutics, pragmatics and meta-linguistics associated with landmines and their materialities to the people entangled with them in post-war communities. This was informed by what posthumanism theoretically acknowledges as relationalities through intra-action between humans and non-humans in (in)security (Barad, 2003) (see Section 2.7.3.2).

### **3.2.3 Feminist qualitative research and posthumanism: A methodology-theory nexus**

As indicated above, I have adopted a qualitative methodology informed by feminist research principles. My choice was based on numerous reasons as articulated below. The first reason coheres around the fact that methodologically feminist research differs from traditional qualitative research in that it actively seeks to remove the power imbalances between researcher and subject; it is politically motivated as it seeks to change social inequality; and it begins with the standpoints and experiences of women (Bhavnani and Talcott, 2012: 137). In my study, the approach did not only allow women to voice their opinions and experiences in the post-conflict Mukumbura community, but by revising the notion of agency, it also made a more nuanced

analysis of security and identity possible in post-conflict scenarios where humans and ‘things’/objects should matter in the conceptualisation of human security. My inclination toward posthumanist feminist research followed from the recognition of the agency of things (landmines, land and animals); the influence of context (Afrocentrism/spiritualisation of security, see Section 2.8.3); and the inherent androcentric epistemology and methodology associated with the conventional study of human security. Women’s everyday experiences in post-conflict settings have been marginalised and pathologised (Cosgrove and McHugh, 2000). This methodology enabled all my participants (widows, male and female household heads, war veterans, young girls and boys) to narrate their different experiences of these ERW<sup>7</sup>.

Beyond hearing the voices of those that have been marginalised, a second reason for this methodological choice was due to my concern to make a difference in the lives of my research participants. One of the primary goals of feminist research is a commitment to experiential and reflexive knowledge-building and the hope that these efforts might contribute to the improvement of women’s lives (Basini, 2016). My methodological choice therefore sought to meet one of the major feminist goals of considering the plight of marginalised gender categories and bring about change (Hudson, 2005, 2015, 2016; Basini, 2016) through giving their voices and experiences a chance to be heard in research. In my case, it was the expectation (or hope) that my findings would confirm the need to continue processes of demining for the betterment of the lives of men and women whose spaces, practices, identities and security are constrained and reconfigured by the continued agency of ERW in the villages. The agency exhibited by men and

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter One, Section 1.2 on the photos of some of the landmines and their characteristics, how they work, their impact and where they are located.

women in this constrained environment would also provide a platform for assessing their socio-economic security so that pragmatic solutions that enhance livelihoods and everyday security could be proffered.

Thirdly, in addition to making a difference, it was also important to me to do no harm (Anderson, 1999; Basini, 2016) especially in the context of a militarised, masculinist post-war community as “wartime experiences often precipitate memories and emotions that researchers need to be sensitive towards under the principle of ‘do no harm’” (Basini, 2016: 164). Consequently, the major challenge was to develop research strategies that could capture the data relating to my study without violating the ethical boundaries of soliciting data in such androcentric and seemingly militarised contexts. Since the aim of my research was to uncover and deconstruct the absence of gender in the broad discourse and theory of peace and security by looking at the gendered effects of objects on everyday security, spaces and practices, I needed to be very careful in how I approached my interaction with the research participants, both men and women. Gender formed the foundation of my study and led to the alignment of this research with the emancipatory theoretical and normative principles of FSS (see Section 2.6.2). Therefore, the ethical considerations and research design were inspired by feminist reflexivity (England, 1994; Ackerly and True, 2008; Basini, 2016) which refers to the sensitivity to the challenges that could have distorted data collection and ultimately the feminist project.

In the fourth place, feminist research often focuses on people’s everyday lives and particularly the lived experiences of those existing on the margins of society, such as women, children and the physically challenged (Hudson, 2018). The lived experiences of men and women in the post-

war community of Mukumbura presented a rich context from where the gendered effects of landmines on everyday spaces and practices of men and women could be effectively explored. From this focus on the everyday, it follows that the feminist qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate as it sought to account for the nature and pattern of changes in everyday security and social relations of the people in the case study area. This enabled me to undertake in-depth exploration of data relating to the meanings of (in)security derived from the everyday human-object entanglement as knowledge is enmeshed in lived experiences (Brown, 2014).

In this study, the lived experiences of people in Mukumbura necessitated an understanding of the impact of landmines on gendered space, practices and security, and the socio-political and economic meanings deduced by the people through the co-constitution of humans and objects (landmines) over time and space. This methodological orientation pointed to a qualitative feminist methodology where the central focus was a gendered theory of power, where feminists argue for the deconstruction of social systems and structures that perpetuate asymmetrical gender relations (Hudson, 2018). In extending this thinking to include objects in a feminist posthuman understanding of security, it implies that 'social' relations exist between humans and objects (landmines) and that they should be considered as equal agents in the reconfiguration of everyday gender relations in mundane spaces and practices that dictate social interaction in post-war communities.

A fifth and final reason for adopting a qualitative feminist methodology grounded in posthumanism has to do with the limitations of traditional methods. Surveys, structured

questionnaires, psychological tests and experiments are often criticised for their lack of context (Bohan, 1992). For instance, they pay little or no attention to the identity politics that often culminates in gendering (in)security. As a consequence of this lack of context and a gendered angle in positivist and mainstream quantitative research, the everyday realities of human security, and more particularly women's experiences and security dilemmas, are obscured. I therefore resorted to a qualitative feminist methodology informed by posthuman security theory for its intrinsic emphasis on the significance of the 'social context', reiterating the need for feminist researchers to be contextual, reflexive and pragmatic (Hutchings, 2000; Hudson, 2018), that is, "avoid focusing on the individual in isolation, cut off from interactions and relationships with other people and the surrounding environment" (Gordon, 1989: 159). This is one of the reasons why I opted for a gender sensitive methodology which again recognises the role of inanimate objects in shaping everyday socio-economic relations and (in)security.

Taking into account the androcentric nature of the traditional discourses of peace and security as explained in Chapter Two, my major goal as an ethnographer using this feminist lens was to explore the theoretical turn to a feminist posthuman security approach. This theoretical framework hinges on the experiences and language (meaning-making) of men and women as a way of locating the forces that often stipulate gender-based differences and conceptualisations of security. This is why Enloe (2007: 17) remarks that, "to make sense of today's complex world, we need to understand that many decisions have not only gendered consequences but gendered causes that is, causes flowing from presumptions or fears about femininity or masculinity".

Using a feminist posthuman security lens (see Chapter Two) to reconsider the inherent binary between the traditionally perceived differences in the representation of male and female identities in peace and security studies also requires the application of a corresponding feminist methodology which untangles the structures and systems that downplay femininities in the peace and security discourse. Following posthumanism, the significance of the human-non-human binary in the theorisation of security is also unpacked. This explains why there is an important connection between epistemologies, methodologies and research methods which is distorted when one tries “to add women” to traditional analyses (Harding, 1998: 4). This indirectly affirms the androcentrism of traditional conceptualisations of security through objectifying women as instruments of analysis.

Ontologically, conventional security studies are androcentric due to the patriarchal nature of conventional social science, which carries epistemological consequences. Androcentrism is a by-product of patriarchy and in science operates in a very specific way. Epistemologies are not culturally neutral, as standards of science are androcentric and sexist, especially ideas of universal values and objectivity. When I speak of an androcentric epistemology, I refer to the practice to place male humans or a masculine point of view at the centre of a worldview, culture and history (ontology) which manifests as gendered dualisms in science: objectivity (male) vs. subjectivity (female), rationality (male) vs. irrationality/emotionality (female), mind (male) vs. matter (female), ‘hard’ natural sciences (male) vs. ‘soft’ social sciences (female) (Harding, 1998: 6). Feminists challenge such dualisms and offer feminist standpoint epistemologies that focus on the lives of women and exploited men (studying up) and not the lives of elite men only. This is coupled with critiques of Eurocentrism to bring in the nuances of the specific African context

(see Section 2.8.3), and this confirms why the application of qualitative feminist research is not only appropriate, but necessary.

### **3.2.4 Feminist methodology and epistemology**

The efficacy of feminist methodology in peace and security epistemology is captured by Hudson (1998) in her “Feminist reading of security in Africa”, where she echoes the very anchors which are supposed to epitomise efforts towards comprehensively conceptualising peace and security in the African context. She argues that although the security concept has gone through immense transformation over time, those developments have negated a feminist epistemology. This affirms the notion that from the outset the current security framework together with its recognition of multi-level and multi-dimensional principles of security falls short in that it is premised on crude determinism. Despite the current security framework’s seemingly increased concern with the ‘disenfranchised’ without openly recognising women's particular gendered security requirements and the agency of things/landmines, it remains epistemologically exclusivist in orientation. This is where a comprehensive human security ethic and methodology should be reflexive to these feminist insights and gravitate towards reflecting a combination or reconstruction of the different levels and dimensions of human security.

It is from this epistemological vantage point where a qualitative feminist research methodology guided by a posthuman security perspective was considered appropriate for my ethnographic fieldwork and the design and use of gender-sensitive methods in a study of a landscape weaponised by ERW. I therefore developed a schema of gender relations that comprises major

themes as encapsulated in El-Bushra's (2014) criterion which entailed the following: (1) gender roles or the division of labour; (2) gender identities that are influenced by landmines as objects; (3) gender structures or institutions that control the household and communities; and (4) gender ideology or the patriarchal culture or system of values that buttresses gender roles and identities and that validates gender power structures. These categories formed the benchmark for the recurring efforts to locate, through a discursive analysis, the relationality of humans and landmines as 'things' in gendering everyday social relations, identities and everyday socio-economic and physical security of men and women in the case study area. The questions I employed in the field thus revolved around these themes to establish through a feminist posthuman lens how the materialities of landmines as inanimate objects continue to shape and reshape social identities, relations and everyday security along gender lines.

### **3.3 FEMINIST ETHNOGRAPHY: THE PRAGMATIC MERITS**

#### **3.3.1 Insider-outsider politics and positionality: Intersectional issues and accessing the field**

Intersectionality as defined by Crenshaw (1997: 11) is a description of how different aspects of people's social and political identities might combine to create unique modes of privilege and discrimination in the field. As a feminist researcher, my positionality was thus important as it enabled me to critically reflect and consider the dynamics of the prevalent power relations that would negatively affect my fieldwork. This prompted me to be reflexive in my methodological approach as a way of circumventing any challenges emanating from my identity, beliefs and

values throughout my interaction with the participants. I took personal identities seriously (culture, gender, socio-economic class and educational background) to explore the intersections between my identity and the identities of my participants and how they differentially influenced my access in the field. I elaborate on this ‘intersectionality in practice’ (in the field) in subsequent sections of this chapter. I do this by espousing a context-specific African experience that uniquely offers a richer and more inclusive account of the lived experiences of people in this African post-war community.

Most of the available feminist literature underscores identities in terms of insider or outsider issues, which influence fieldwork (England, 1994; Dwyer, 2009; Basini, 2016). Feminist scholars such as Oakley (2015) and Collins (2000) have discussed the implications of a researcher’s gender for accessing data on the experiences of particular communities. The identity of a researcher has been found to matter greatly in peace and conflict research (Collins, 2000; Dwyer, 2009). While feminist research on the impact of war in conflict and post-conflict contexts has grown (Baaz and Stern, 2016; Jacobs and Jacobsen, 2000; Moser, 2001; Giles and Hyndman, 2004; Fonow and Cook, 2005), literature on fieldwork concerns in post-conflict research has been written mostly from the standpoint of expatriates who conduct fieldwork in foreign communities (Higate and Sanghera, 2009).

According to Hayfield and Huxley (2015: 91), “an insider is a researcher who personally belongs to the group to which their participants also belong based on characteristics such as ethnicity, sexual identity and gender, while an outsider is not a member of that group”. As a young Zimbabwean scholar who had only known about landmines from historical studies and in news

of various landmine incidences along various Zimbabwean border areas, my ethnographic experience in the field at once reconfirmed and corrected some of my assumptions about the effect of the entanglement of these ERW and humans in the broad (in)security spectrum.

Although I was not tribally related to the participants (as I am *Karanga* and they are dominantly *Korekore*), my ethnographic stay in the field enabled a subjective engagement with the participants, as I managed to build relations that were detached from my preconceptions of their lives (especially the assumption that they were unsafe and completely constrained by landmines). After obtaining ethical clearance (1 July 2019) from the University of the Free State (UFS), I then travelled to Zimbabwe so that I could organise the field work logistics. I travelled to the ZIMAC offices in Harare on 17 July 2019 to apply for permission to undertake research in their area of jurisdiction. They verbally allowed me to travel to the study area whilst I was waiting for the formal approval letter, which worked positively on my side as it aided in the logistical preparations. I wanted to ensure that I get the necessary contacts before the commencement of the actual interviews and interaction with participants.

I shared in the lived experiences of the people in Mukumbura and my experience of the study reflected an insider perspective since an ethnographic account is a construction, which owes something to the ethnographer's own life experience (Chapman, 2010). Through a multi-sensory experience of ERWs, I could equally make sense of their world. For instance, through sight I could see the extent of the damage to the landscape, or repeatedly seeing a place where people or animals died as a result of a landmine explosion. Through the narratives of the sound of landmine explosions, I could imagine how the people would ask, who or whose animal has been

hurt. I tasted the fear of co-existing with lethal ERWs everyday as I walked on some paths where landmine explosions had occurred. In as much as I did not qualify to be an insider on the basis of Chavez's (2008: 56) definition of an insider (one who has *a priori* knowledge about the group under study), my knowledge of the participants' social organisation (through participant observation) qualified me to be positioned subjectively within the culture of the participants – my ethnography enabled a dialogical engagement with the subalterns (England, 1994), so to speak.

My identity as an insider-outsider is complex in that I am a young African male scholar conducting fieldwork in an African context, albeit in a different tribal community, with elderly participants, whose experiences of the landmines differ from my own. I had never before been in a direct entanglement with these ERW except for the fieldwork period (see Section 1.3 for a detailed description of the community's socio-economic, historical, demographic context). The feminist reflexive approach I adopted as a result of that complex identity assisted my data collection through being sensitive to the cultural, spiritual and gender biases that I saw as impediments to this process.

### **3.3.2 Positionality and reflexivity**

Challenging the positivist tradition that researchers should be analytically separated from the researched, qualitative feminist research methodologies maintain the need for engagement with participants and the deployment of self-reflexivity (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015: 12). This axiological call for feminist researchers to be flexible resonates with the feminist posthuman

methodological emphasis on pragmatism (see Section 3.2.2 above). As a result, contemporary feminist works emphasise the complexity of power dynamics within research methods and the need for participatory methodologies and reflexivity (Pollack and Eldridge, 2015: 132; Philip and Bell, 2017: 72).

Through self-reflexivity, I recognised the influence of my values, assumptions, cultural background, identity as a man, as well as my educational background on the process of inquiry (Cunliffe, 2003; Finlay, 2002). As such, I reflected on the above issues as I was conscious of their possible effect on the overall research process – stretching from engaging participants during data collection to interpretation and analysis of research findings.

I firstly reflect on my identity as a feminist researcher. My immersion into feminist research precipitated from the recognition that as a result of the inherent androcentric predispositions at both the epistemological and methodological level, women's everyday experiences in post-conflict settings have been ostracised and pathologised (Cosgrove and McHugh, 2000). As a feminist researcher, my epistemological and methodological conviction necessitated the revision of the embedded values in traditional research methodologies that considered women as 'other' and misconstrue difference to mean deficiency. I therefore avoided this essentialist inclination by adopting reflexivity through a feminist methodology grounded in feminist theory so as to avoid the dilemmas of sanctioning the masculine-feminine binary. Instead I sought to offer an equal opportunity for men and women's voices to be heard regarding their understanding of (in)security from their knotted relations with landmines. This enabled all my respondents

(widows, male and female household heads, war veterans, young girls and boys) to freely and willingly narrate their experiences as a result of their everyday interaction with ERW.

Reflexivity was necessary to manage the power dynamics that often typify qualitative interviews and other research interactions insofar as the researcher sets the rules of the game. There are inherent power dynamics that emerge between the researcher and interviewees, but in my study, power differentials were less pronounced because, like them, I am black, a Zimbabwean man who like many other black men have worked and lived in that area, was one of them, speaking the same language though dialectically slightly different and sharing the same culture and (in)security concerns broadly. This significantly eased my engagement with the participants. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the power dynamics inherent in the research process and the interview setting. I can confirm that my age and educational level, for instance, could have prejudiced my relationship and engagement with my participants, especially since most of the elderly men and women do not have a formal education. However, I built rapport through openly and honestly acknowledging my lack of knowledge of landmines and their effects on the lives of the participants. This ambivalent position of being a cultural insider as well as a researcher worked out well for me since the participants positively and actively engaged with me without reservations. The participants were free and open enough with me and this enabled me to immerse myself and participate in some of their everyday activities (for example going to the gardens, fishing and gathering wild fruits) without any complications or deceit. Furthermore, this also made it easy for me to be trusted by my participants and it enhanced my chances of accessing rich information.

Bearing in mind that being reflexive “is about the interpretation of data through which meanings are drawn rather than found” (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003: 414), this reiterated the significance of context as a fundamental underpinning element of a qualitative feminist research methodology as highlighted in the previous section. This observation ensured that I continuously reflected on my identity and the cultural context and identities of my participants. I therefore became conscious of the patriarchal entrapments of the cultural context of the communities under study that would act as barriers to my study of men and women’s experiences of landmines in their different gender categories. For instance, this prompted me to rely on a local male research assistant who was trusted by the local men and women as they thought they would be safe in the hands of ‘one of theirs’. Choosing a male research assistant would seem to be playing into the hands of androcentric thinking as it could be methodologically interpreted as pleasing men. Initially I had opted for a female research assistant but I was advised by the local community elders (men and women) to be assisted by a local male assistant whom they trusted and who was acquainted with the area in terms of safer paths to travel. This, I thought was motivated by the local culture where men are considered to be protective of the community which includes children, the elderly, animals, as well as visitors. It was therefore a methodological decision that I took based on contextual dynamics, guided by pragmatism. The local community may also have found it culturally inappropriate for a woman to move around with a male researcher and spend time with me in addition to the requirement for women to spend much of their time on recurrent domestic chores. In my opinion, the gender identity of the research assistant did not compromise effective data collection as the community (both men and women) felt safer and at ease seeing ‘one of theirs’. To counterbalance that, I made use of life history narratives as a data

collection instrument to allow women an opportunity to freely narrate their physical and socio-economic security experiences as a result of the landmines.

From the triangulation of data, what I saw, heard, and in my analysis and interpretations, I have been particularly cognisant of gender and the role of patriarchy in shaping women's everyday lives. I learnt from my study the need for more equitable interpersonal relationships as a basis for developing a gender-conscious worldview where equality and equity are key principles. This is the reason why Muzvidziwa (2004), an anthropologist and Basini (2016), a feminist peace researcher concur in their submission that both feminist methodology and ethnography in conflict and post-conflict settings should be strongly founded on gender sensitivity as a rule in order to be able to generate gender balanced and comprehensive findings in the field. Chapman (2010: 46) notes that researchers consciously choose ethnography not only because it is located within qualitative methodology, but because the "shifts in the ontology, epistemology and method of one finding resonates in the others". It follows therefore that I constructed knowledge from the narratives and everyday experiences of the people (as they interacted with material objects such as landmines). At the same time, I practiced reflexivity by remaining conscious of how my assumptions and feelings would influence the collection and interpretation of the data. In turn, I also reflected on my practical experiences and how these 'spoke' back to my positionality as a researcher.

### **3.4 STARTING THE JOURNEY: THE CLEANSING RITUAL AND THE ‘SPIRITUALISATION’ OF SECURITY**

After a three day stay in Harare, I proceeded to Mukumbura<sup>8</sup> border area (20 July 2019), about 357 km from Harare towards the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border where my fieldwork was based. Mukumbura is a remote rural area that resembles an abandoned area due to its location in a war zone with ERW during and after the war of liberation. The state of housing and road networks is clear testimony to the constraining effect of landmines. As I travelled through the villages, I witnessed poverty and confinement as there was visibly less movement of people as compared to remote areas that are without landmines. This provoked the need for further analysis as to how the constraining effect of landmines differentially realign men and women’s everyday socio-economic security spaces and practices.

My base for the fieldwork was the Zimbabwe Mine Action (ZIMAC) station where coordination and management of all demining activities was conducted. ZIMAC is an engineering department of the Zimbabwe National Army which controls landmine sweeping and the demining activities in all landmine-contaminated areas in Zimbabwe. Deminers stay on the premises in pitched prefabricated apartments (See Images 3 and 4). Prior to my arrival, I had negotiated with the supervisor to stay there as well. I had also been granted permission<sup>9</sup> by the ZIMAC headquarters to carry out research.

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<sup>8</sup> See Section 1.3.1.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for approval letter from ZIMAC.



*Image 3 and 4: HALO Trust and ZIMAC campsite where I stayed during my fieldwork (Source: Researcher)*

I established an early rapport with the supervisor whose army rank was captain because he too was a student, studying War and Strategic Studies at a local university where I usually participated as a part-time lecturer. This dovetails with Basini's (2016: 167) acknowledgment of intersectionality as a crucial element that feminist researchers often ought to consider as instrumental in determining access in the field. I decided to use the ZIMAC station as my base from where I would visit the two villages for my data collection.

The following morning (21 July 2019), I met with the interlocutor whom the ZIMAC site camp supervisor had sought for me and he informed me about the need to meet with one of the village leaders. On our way to the village leader's homestead, I shared with him my fear of working in a weaponised landscape, as I feared for my safety throughout the fieldwork. He responded by saying that "after we talk to the village elder, we are proceeding to grandmother Chifeya"<sup>10</sup>, a respected spirit medium who dealt with war-related spiritual issues. She would perform some

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<sup>10</sup> Chifeya is not her real name, but a community name for a spirit medium which can be assumed by any person who is spiritually possessed at a particular point in time.

rituals to bless my entry into this dangerous space as a safety measure. This was part of following local cultural custom and respecting the local authority protocols. The village elder gave us permission to carry out the research in the village but insisted that we should be “good to the community”. This instruction reminded me of the principle of ‘do no harm’ (Kottack, 2008; Anderson, 1999) which urges ethnographers to be diligent, empathetic and honest when dealing with participants in the field to effectively access reliable data.

We proceeded to grandmother Chifeya and as we arrived at her homestead, she started chanting in a discreet spiritual language and my research assistant quickly answered “yes”. I realised they understood each other in that seeming spiritual language. I realised that since the presence of landmines still epitomised a community at war due to the everyday insecurities that the landmines posed to them, the community believed in conducting cleansing rituals for visitors so that they would be protected. I was told that this was done for all students who come to do research in the area. This experience also laid bare for me the often-neglected spiritual dimension of security in studies of post-war communities. This is qualified by Mitchell’s (2016) observation of the need for a security ontology which recognises indigenous cosmologies in accounting for relationalities between humans and the non-humans in understanding (in)security in post-war communities.

The grandmother started chanting as she took a small clay pot full of water and placed it on the ground. She instructed me to jump over the clay pot. I did so after which she took the clay pot and drank two sips of water. She stood in front of me and spat the water into my face and at my back and yelled *unofamba zvakanaka mwanakomana* (you are going to have a safe journey, my

son). My research assistant told me it was done and we are safe now. We then greeted each other as it was spiritual protocol not to touch each other's hands before the ritual is performed. I introduced myself and offered her my gift of two sachets of pounded snuff, which she accepted. My experience from this very moment symbolised ethnographic 'bonding' (Kottack, 2008), a situation where ethnographers are expected to create rapport with the participants in the field so that they feel at ease.

My participation in this ritual constituted a bonding strategy, which helped me gain the trust of the community. After I told the old woman about the purpose of my visit, she started to tell stories from the war and her role as a spirit medium during and after the protracted war of liberation in Zimbabwe and in Mozambique. She automatically (and unexpectedly) became one of my key-participants as I sought to understand a new gender nuance, namely that of the role of women, especially those who act as ancestral spiritual mediums, in ensuring security in landmine-infested communities during and after the war and how that redefines the security-masculine-feminine nexus. This gendered security nexus and the broader implications of considering the spiritual dimension in understanding the relationship of insecurity between landmines and the community are explored later in Chapter Four. In post-war African traditional communities, there is a thin line dividing women's identity and roles in the physical and spiritual conceptions of (in)security. This fluidity of gender roles and identity redefines objects as invincible agents transforming gender beyond normative social roles to spiritual realms. In these realms women exert mystical power and agency as spirit mediums when they perform and participate in such cleansing ceremonies/rituals for the security of the community at large (Barad, 2007; Jones and Boivin, 2010; Kim, 2016).

Apart from the fact that the cleansing ritual has underlined the material presence of fear related to landmines in these communities, this encounter also brought to light the spiritual realm. Together, the materiality of the landmines (the physical danger) and the spiritual 'resistance' (or coping strategy) confirmed the invincibility of objects/landmines as actors which continue to shape the understanding of (in)security. Literature on fieldwork in weaponised/militarised landscapes emphasises the need for physical security of the ethnographer and the challenges associated with gaining access to the environment (Kim, 2016; Ammann, 2017a; Maringira et al., 2014; Baaz and Stern, 2016). The psycho-social trauma and spiritual experiences that ethnographers go through are often overlooked but are integral to reaching a redefined understanding of gendered (in)security beyond the physical, to include spiritual and/or cultural meaning-making. This is why one of the aims of my study was to account for the theoretical shift from Human Security to a feminist posthuman security approach, where the liberal-positivist orientation of the former proves to be inadequate in accounting for cosmological explanations of the relationalities between non-humans and humans. My ethnographic experience explored this relationality through giving respect to the indigenous cultural tradition of the people in Mukumbura. My experience also foregrounded how, in traditional African communities, normative assumptions about binary gender roles and the gendered division of labour are challenged by the agency of female spiritual mediums in securing communities.

### 3.5 THE FIELD: NAVIGATING INSECURITY AND NEGOTIATING SAFETY IN THE FIELD

Throughout the fieldwork, I was concerned about my personal safety, especially after having spoken to an ex-deminer<sup>11</sup> whose left side of his body was ripped apart by a landmine during a demining exercise in one of the villages. During a preliminary field visit on 28 May 2018 to acquaint myself with the study area, whilst using public transport, he overheard me asking someone about the prevalence of landmines, and where they were concentrated. The former deminer exclaimed as follows:

*Look at me closely. I am the right person to ask what you are asking because I am like this because of the landmines you are talking about. I removed landmines for close to three years, but one day, I made a mistake and it detonated and ripped my body parts to the extent that I am now using one hand and one eye (In situ interview with a former deminer, 28/05/2018).*

The reality of the situation drove home the importance of picking the right research assistant or interlocutor who knew the area, its dangers and communities. Just like other researchers whose studies of post-conflict or post-war communities posed direct threat to their lives during data collection (Maringira, 2014: 76; Njeri, 2015: 19; Ammann, 2017a: 43; Kim, 2016: 163), some of my fieldwork decisions were influenced by the insecurity I felt and experienced when I interacted with victims of landmines later on when I came back for data collection (I had to go back to my home town and prepare for longer stays into the field. I returned to the field on 13

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<sup>11</sup> It is a technical name given to personnel who do landmine detection and removal.

August 2019 to commence fieldwork on 14 August 2019). When I got into the field, I tried to relive the experiences of my participants by visiting the very physical spaces where landmine accidents had occurred. For instance, my research assistant accompanied me to one of my participants whose young daughter and three cows had been killed by a landmine while she was herding cattle. Her father, Mr Mtamba (pseudonym), gave a heart-rendering account and offered to take me to the place where it happened, since the area had already been cleared from the rogue weapons that “lie in waiting” (Kim, 2016: 175). He showed us the place as he said:

*I think it's here where I lost my girl and three cows to a landmine blast. It was during the school holiday and she was helping us with some chores since my two boys were helping me to dig the well at home. So, she had relieved them from herding cattle as she assumed that role. Our neighbours just came running as they shouted about a loud bang that had occurred in the direction of where the village used as a grazing area. We rushed only to find out that my daughter was dead and two cattle were struggling since their stomachs and legs were ruptured by a landmine. I took my daughter's body and the villagers took and slaughtered the two beasts (Interview with Mr Mtamba, 14/06/2018).*

Although the area was declared ‘safe’ after confirmation from ZIMAC, I remained sceptical, especially in view of the horrific incident narrated by Mr Mtamba. It also dawned on me that it was highly likely that I would encounter many more such distressing stories during the course of my fieldwork, and that I would therefore have to find ways to work through the mixed emotions of fear and empathy. I thus took courage from the cleansing ritual by grandmother Chifeya and decided to trust my research assistant and follow his safety instructions, in order to apply Kottack’s (2008: 64) notion of “deep-hanging-ethnography”. This describes how ethnographers go the extra mile to ignore the insecurities surrounding their landscapes in order to gain access to embedded everyday experiences of subalterns. At this juncture, I began to feel more at ease and

witnessing the mounds of extracted landmines amassed at the HALO trust offices and ZIMAC station (see Images 5 and 6) strengthened my resolve to solicit first-hand information from participants who were directly entangled with ERW in their everyday lives, to understand the (in)security nexus of landmines and humans.



*Image 5 and 6: Stockpiles of extracted landmines ready to be destroyed at the ZIMAC disposal station in Mukumbura (Source: ZIMAC, 2020 )*

### **3.6 SELECTING PARTICIPANTS**

I opted to use the term ‘participants’ rather than ‘informants’ because of the derogatory connotations associated with the latter term throughout the colonial epoch in Zimbabwe, where it often referred to ‘sell-outs’ – black people giving information about the location of ZIPRA and ZANLA forces to the Rhodesian Security Forces (Muzvidziwa, 2004). Thus, like numerous social science researchers (Hall and Callery, 2001), I rather opted for the use of the term ‘participants’. This demonstrates that the research process is one in which both the researcher and the researched are co-constituted in co-producing knowledge related to the study. The population consisted of men and women who reside in the two villages of Mukumbura, namely,

Chigango and Nyamande under chief Chiswiti (see Chapter One). I chose only two villages for the sake of their proximity to each other (logistical advantages) and because they were statistically marked as constituting heavily contaminated areas (ZIMAC, 2018). This enabled me to solicit rich data for thick description. Participants were therefore recruited voluntarily from men and women who participated in the war of liberation and those who did not participate, but who are still experiencing the impact of landmines in the post-conflict period either as primary or secondary victims of landmines.

Another category of participants included an all-male cohort of ex-deminers. The inclusion of this group of participants raised questions about them being seen as heroes with a militarised-masculine<sup>12</sup> identity, both feared and respected by the community, and how they reinforced gendered perceptions about demining as being a male preserve and too dangerous for women, as well as their possible gendered behaviour in relation to members of the community. These men happened to live for months in the villages without their spouses. I was interested in finding out how this could have had an impact on everyday social relations particularly informal/formal sexual relations as a result of their everyday engagements with, for instance, widows, single mothers and young women in the community.

Through a combination of purposive and snowball non-probability quota sampling, I managed to recruit six ex-deminers including the one I mentioned before. The aim was to explore how their previous direct encounters with landmines had shaped and continued to shape their interaction with different gender categories amidst the often-hyped notion of security as a masculine

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<sup>12</sup> It is a typology of masculinity that I discuss further in Chapter Four in relation to how it has been constructed.

domain. My engagement with these research participants would enhance my understanding of how landmines aided in the construction of masculinities and femininities in post-war communities through the experiences of people who were directly involved with the removal of the landmines in the community. I solicited data from these participants because the co-constitution of landmines and humans revolved around them. They had spent considerable time working directly with landmines and these objects therefore would have impacted on the deminers' relations with the local community.

For the other participants (apart from the ex-deminers), I used purposive sampling which is also called judgmental, selective or subjective sampling technique (Giddens, 2010). I judged the participants as better placed to give relevant information pertaining to the history, meanings and effects of landmines on the people's everyday practices and spaces in Mukumbura community. Apart from the six ex-deminers who are all men, I recruited 44 participants in total with 22 from each of the two villages. The 44 participants were selected on a 50:50 gender basis in order to explore adequately the nature and patterns of interaction and social organisation induced by both men and women in their everyday entanglement with landmines. This also provided comparative data of how women and men have different everyday entanglements. This sample therefore consisted of 11 men and 11 women from each of the two villages. I had 50 participants in total. I judged them to be reliable sources of information for the issue under study by virtue of their status as community members who have been directly impacted by the historic prevalence of landmines in Mukumbura. They have been directly or indirectly impacted either through having their livestock and economically active family members maimed or killed by landmines, or through being denied access to land for agriculture due to the presence of landmines.

## **3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

In this study, I triangulated data collection tools (Giddens, 2010; Creswell, 2008) so that the strengths of certain instruments could offset the weaknesses of other instruments.

### **3.7.1 Key-participant interviews**

Across the two villages, key-participant interviews were conducted with 26 participants who happen to be associated with these landmines during the conflict and post-conflict periods. This category of participants included the six deminers and those who directly witnessed the incidence of landmines either as veterans of the war of liberation or as affected civilians, such as for example witnessing landmines being planted by Rhodesian Forces against the guerillas or liberation fighters. Of these 26 key-participants, there were 10 participants (five men and five women) from each of the two villages and the six ex-deminers. I managed to interview all participants although five interviews (two with ex-deminers and three with villagers) were shorter than scheduled as a result of the participants' time constraints and other logistical challenges. However, this did not affect the integrity of my study, as I managed to generate a rich body of data for 'thick description'<sup>13</sup>. For the remaining 24 participants, I employed life-history narratives (see Section 3.7.2).

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<sup>13</sup> Thick description refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social organisation of a particular society (Giddens, 2010).

Key-participant interviews represent a subset of knowledgeable interview subjects, which often serves as a guide within the social context under investigation (Giddens, 2010). Key-participant interviews offer clarifications and understanding of events over a long period of time and often suggest alternative practical avenues for further exploration within the issue under study (Dexter, 2006). This type of key-participant interview as data collection instrument in qualitative research offers the investigator crucial and hands-on knowledge about the research topic under investigation (Bryman, 2008).

In this research, the interviews were semi-structured as I relied on a list of themes to discuss with key-participants through further probing. Key-participant interviews represent a conversation among acquaintances, which allows a free flow of ideas and information (Marshall, 1996). Some of the questions I asked included the following:

- How did landmines influence people's everyday security?
- How do landmines differentially affect men and women's identity in the community?
- Were there any changes in their everyday chores as a result of landmines in the community?
- Have landmines had a differential effect on men and women's livelihoods, and if so, how?
- Do landmine victims have equal access to healthcare?

- What are the coping mechanisms adopted to overcome the effects of landmines in everyday spaces and practices? <sup>14</sup>

Key-informant interviews allowed me to pose probative questions about the materialities of landmines to existing knowledgeable participants. In this study, key-participants with the knowledge of landmines were interviewed to gather data about the magnitude and social effects of ERW on identities and everyday spaces and practices of men and women in Mukumbura. Thomas (1989: 12) emphasises that ethnographic engagement should entail trust and taking people seriously when in the field. Through reflexivity, I was prompted to take gender into account (using a different interview process for women as compared to men as shown in the ethics section below) in the hope that it would allow space for participants to more openly speak about their lived experiences of landmines during and after the war. I ensured that I constantly referred to my interview guide and the objectives of the study to avoid responses that digress from the main aim of the study, which is to find out how the entanglement of humans and landmines continues to shape and reshape everyday (in)security spaces and practices along gender lines. Throughout the interviews, I remained reflexive to any possible constrictions arising from my engagement with the participants as demonstrated in subsequent chapters through concrete examples.

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<sup>14</sup> See interview guide in Appendix B.

### 3.7.2 Life history narratives

Besides the key-participant interviews, I used life-history narratives as a complementary data collection tool. It is a qualitative data collection method where participants are asked to narrate their life over a period of time. It is a personal explanation of their life, in their own words and using their own personal timelines. Consequently, they tend to be selective, depending on remembered events that are open to being told, be they fact or fiction (Giddens, 2010). The study involved twenty-four (24) life history interviews with participants from the two villages under study to discover variations in experiences according to different circumstances. These were carried out with 12 participants (6 men and 6 women) from each village. I asked the participants how landmines have restructured their social organisation as they have emerged to be part of their everyday experiences. This led to further questions that were aimed at soliciting the participants' new understanding (meaning-making) of the landmines after having lived with them for so long, focusing on their effect on people's everyday socio-economic and physical security, identity and relations.

Widows, single mothers and men were the major participants. I asked them to narrate their life stories as far back as they could remember, but covering at least life immediately before, during and after the war of liberation. The periodisation was not intended to be connected to a specific date, as I was more interested in the transformation of space and everyday practices of the people before landmines, when the landmines were planted and after the war (independence) to date. They were asked to mark significant life events on a timeline covering those three key phases. The aim was to document changes in their ability to cope with everyday needs, ensure their

security and mould social relations with whomever they relate to. For each phase, they would identify their major life event, why they consider it significant, and what meanings they attach to it. As they narrated their life story, I would draw the timeline, matching the events with the years (if the respondent could remember it) and the outcomes. This was mostly related to how landmines had differentially impacted their everyday security, livelihoods and interaction in the community by virtue of them being either men or women to frame the gendered effect of landmines in the understanding of (in)security.

### **3.7.3 Overt participant observation**

I also complemented the above data collection tools by adopting overt participant observation for its ability to generate rich qualitative data through transect walks. In this case, I participated in overt participant observation by being deeply immersed in the everyday activities of the people of Mukumbura so as to strengthen the given interview responses. Creswell (2008) points out that the most commonly used method of observation in contemporary social research is overt participant observation, in which the subjects of interest to the researcher are made aware of the researcher's aims and purpose before the period of participant observation commences.

Specifically, the study was conducted in Pfura district of Mashonaland Central Province in Zimbabwe. The villages in which the case study areas are located are housed in ward 33 and 34 respectively. In those villages, I managed to carry out nine random transects walks of varied lengths. My interlocutor was very helpful in identifying the direction and orientation of the transect walks and also provided information on safer areas to walk through.

Kothari (2004: 47) points out that this kind of research requires the researchers to immerse themselves in the activities and lives of their research subjects, while at the same time maintaining the kind of professional distance that allows adequate and objective recording of data. In this sense, much of the data from the research was recorded in a field-journal and was also used to aid in taking notes about conversations and daily activities by participants. In this case, I was immersed in the research for a considerable period of time (from 14 August 2019 to 20 December 2019) participating with the villagers, especially in fetching firewood; gathering *Masawu*<sup>15</sup> and mushrooms with some men and women; as well as going to dip cattle with the boys. I also observed and recorded all the necessary information regarding the restrictions imposed by landmines in the everyday lives of the people. In the evenings, I would review notes and keep them together in a drawer secured with a lock which had a password, for safety of the data.

### **3.8 ISSUES OF VALIDITY**

To ensure validity of my data, I triangulated multiple types of sources and data collection tools (Höglund and Öberg, 2011: 191). The different data gathering methods allowed me to assign different types of sources and validate my data along the way. For instance, individual interviews offered me some insights into people's observations, perceptions and opinions; life history narratives gave me an insight into long term socio-economic and historical trajectories of people's entanglement with ERW; and participant observation afforded me some insights into my daily observations of socio-economic dynamics at community level. These enabled me to

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<sup>15</sup> A popular wild fruit found in the north-eastern area of Zimbabwe and major source of livelihoods.

change my first analytical impressions of my participants and enabled me to correct or confirm preconceived assumptions that I harboured about people under study. The reliability of my fieldwork material was further enriched by my repeated contact with my informants over two fieldwork stays, which is from 14 August 2019 to 20 December 2019; and the second field visit from 10 January 2020 to 14 April 2020. I would break my field work depending on special days such as cultural celebrations in the village or public holidays. In my analysis, I have also striven to juxtapose my findings with the work of other theorists and scholars on the same issue of relationalities of humans and non-humans in redefining (in)security practices and spaces in post-war communities. I argue, therefore, that the findings, analysis and conclusions that I have drawn from this data are credible and acceptable.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Since qualitative research may involve contact with humans in the ‘field’, ethical problems may arise (Silverman, 2013). In line with qualitative feminist research, I adopted a feminist reflexive approach to ensure ethically sound research from a feminist perspective. As mentioned in previous sections of this chapter, ethics required being sensitive to my own positionality and intersected identities, as well as the principles of ‘doing no harm’. In order to carry out my research in an ethical manner, I sought ethical clearance<sup>16</sup> from the University of the Free State General Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) before I commenced data collection. Ethics clearance (UFS-HSD2016/1479) was obtained on 17 April 2018 after meeting the requirements for scientific review. This research deals with a sensitive topic, namely that of war,

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<sup>16</sup> See attached letter in Appendix C.

landmines and gender and therefore required concerted engagement with ethical principles and guidelines. These principles and guidelines provided the guiding principles for engaging gatekeepers, and navigating confidentiality, anonymity, consent and rapport as discussed below.

### **3.9.1 Engaging gatekeepers: Seeking consent and the hurdles of signing forms**

To avoid the problem of gatekeepers such as demining institutions, chiefs and their headmen, I made sure I first sought permission from the village heads to conduct my study. Secondly, I sought permission from ZIMAC, which (as mentioned before) is a military engineering institution which oversees the landmine sweeping and demining activities in collaboration with HALO Trust in all landmine-contaminated areas in Zimbabwe. ZIMAC did not provide any data relating to the socio-economic and physical impact of landmines on the communities in which they are present as they reiterated that some of the related data is classified as the institution falls under the Zimbabwe National Army. The only secondary data available from them, relate to the statistical compilations of landmines clearance activities and progress by their funding institution which is HALO Trust. After informally engaging with an acquaintance based in Mukumbura to start my fieldwork on 14 August 2019, I was advised that I could not proceed with fieldwork without clearance from ZIMAC. ZIMAC controlled the area, which still very much resembles a war-zone due to the heavy presence of security personnel. I had to travel to Harare on 17 July 2019 to obtain the letter and with the assistance of a former student who was now working as an aide-de-camp to one of the commanders, I was granted verbal permission to proceed to the field with the promise that a signed letter would “follow as soon as possible” due to the bureaucracy system of the military. The ‘as soon as possible’ became two months and the signed letter was

emailed to me on 23 August 2019, after I was already in the field. I was ethically concerned about going to the field without a letter but the officials from ZIMAC verbally advised me to proceed especially with the assistance of the interlocutor as he was officially recognised by ZIMAC and the villagers. The letter confirmed the verbal permission granted in the previous two months. It is through ZIMAC's permission that I was availed with secondary data by HALO Trust, which included reports on landmines and photos of landmine blast incidences and of some of the people who were once assisted by HALO Trust in the case study area.

In line with the principle of informed consent, I explained in detail to my participants what their participation in the research would entail, that I sought their consent to participate in the study, and that I would require them to sign consent forms in line with institutional ethics requirements. The signing of consent forms proved challenging and was met with resistance in the research setting of rural Zimbabwe where literacy levels are low. Even though consent forms were translated into Shona (the most widely spoken language in Mukumbura), the people in the post-war villages of Mukumbura struggled to understand the legal and academic language involved. The participants in this research opposed the 'bureaucratic procedure' of signing forms. Their opposition is rooted in colonial experiences where the villagers were coerced into completing and signing forms by colonial administrators that would later act against them (Muzvidziwa, 2004). Ultimately, the research participants agreed to participate on condition that no forms were signed and I therefore opted for verbal consent. In order to safeguard the research process, I also obtained the verbal consent of the village elder, who acted as the local gatekeeper for the whole community. My research assistant was present as a witness to the verbal consent process.

### **3.9.2 Establishing rapport: Making participants feel at ease**

I managed to gain trust from the participants as I spent significant time with them and especially through respecting their cultural protocols. Kottack (2008) affirms that by staying in the field for considerable periods and partaking in the everyday cultural cycles of societies under study, ethnographers gain the much-needed trust and rapport which ease their engagement with participants during data collection. I explained to the research participants the purpose and method of the research, as well as that the research was for postgraduate study at the University of the Free State in South Africa. With this purpose in mind, I then explicitly asked them whether they still wanted to participate in the study or not. I also made it clear to them that they were free to withdraw at any stage of the research process. I also reiterated that there were no material or monetary benefits that would accrue to them personally as a result of their participation in my academic research. In line with feminist qualitative research, I promised to share with participants the findings after the writing and completion of the research.

### **3.9.3 The challenge of ‘recording’**

Since I hoped to record the interviews with key-participants and life history narrators for the sake of accuracy, I sought the participants’ permission to record. I informed them that they could halt recording at any time if and when they preferred to share information off the record. However, some participants refused to be recorded for the same reasons they refused to sign consent forms. My inability to record interviews made it challenging to capture lengthy interviews and rich data for decoding later on. The only option available to me as the researcher was to take down field

notes, take some few photos of the typologies of landmines and deminers and where I was camped (see Section 1.2 (Image 1) for some photos of ERW found in the case study area) and probing for more information where I needed clarity. In addition, I had to rely more heavily on overt participant observation, and constant re-engaging with participants to compensate for missed information.

This situation demonstrates one of the major methodological challenges of ethnographic research in politicised/militarised post-war landscapes. Recording participants covertly would be entirely unethical and would compromise the integrity of the research and the trust between the researcher and participants, which is so essential in ethnography. Thus, my ethnographic engagement highlighted that fieldwork relies on “the balanced reciprocity of relationships and information sharing” (Mascarenhas-Keys, 1987: 186).

#### **3.9.4 Confidentiality and anonymity**

The participants’ right to confidentiality was fundamental to this study and I made sure that confidentiality was observed at all times (Creswell, 2008). I informed the participants that the data gathered would be shared in the academic research community and alternatively in the public domain as publications. Since I could not guarantee complete anonymity of the participants by virtue of my long stay in the field and also because in a small village people would be aware who speaks to whom, I ensured the anonymity of the participants by using pseudonyms whenever I wrote about them. I tried to remove all information that would identify the participants. There were no names or addresses recorded on the interview schedules of my

participants although I knew where to find them for the purpose of returning my findings to them. Therefore, I coded the interview schedules using numerical identifiers disconnected from individual identities. I kept the code key independently from the diaries in a notebook, which was securely stored. I was the only person who had access to the research information. The above procedures aligned with the University of the Free State GHREC guidelines where confidentiality is an ethical requirement for researchers dealing with people in communities.

### **3.9.5 Being gender-sensitive in the field**

Although my research focuses on gender and security, this is no guarantee for ethical conduct in the field. I therefore had to take extra care to be consistent and true to the normative principles of my study. One of the ethical imperatives I observed related to the need for ensuring that I avoided skepticism from men when I interview women (wives and daughters) through being reflexive. This consideration ensured that I became sensitive to the challenges posed by patriarchal tendencies from within the community that would act as barriers to my engagement with female participants as I sought to capture their experiences of landmines in their different settings. This is why, as indicated earlier on, I had to respect and adhere to the local cultural protocols and depend on a local research assistant who was trusted by the local people. I applied pragmatism which in light of a posthuman ontology holds a pragmatist concept of truth. While my choice to make use of a male research assistant was done for pragmatic reasons, I do acknowledge that a female research assistant probably could have facilitated more trust between

me and some female participants. That said, my positionality as a male researcher worked in my favour as participants saw me as their *mwana*<sup>17</sup> (son) or *mukoma* (brother).

This “fictive kinship” (Willet, 2009: 82) cemented my rapport with the participants and cultivated relations of trust and appreciation. In addition, to respect local mores governing interaction between men and women, I conducted my interviews with female participants in open spaces and in the company of one or more of their relatives to ease the engagement and conversations. Since this engagement took place in the open, it also circumvented any suspicion of inappropriate behaviour. This point also emphasised how gendered women’s everyday spaces and practices in African traditional communities are and how much of their lives are governed by patriarchy.

### **3.9.6 Cutting the cost of engagement for the participants**

I was also aware of the inherent cost that could be incurred by my participants given that the rural economy required them to work every day either through gathering of fruits and mushrooms, or fishing for income. Some of them, when asked for an interview, would give excuses such as that they were working in their fields or that they were supposed to go to the market and sell their goods. I had to make sure that any engagement with the participants was done in a central and convenient place that they could easily access without cost and unnecessary

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<sup>17</sup> It is the Shona name for a son. So, the female participants who were old enough to be my mother’s age considered me as their son. *Mukoma* is a Shona name for a brother. As such, most female participants slightly above my age took me as their brother. *Mwana* also means daughter. Shona tends to use gender-neutral terms – a fact often obscured by Western understanding of patriarchy which is often assumed to be even more oppressive in African cultures. *Mukoma* is also used by younger siblings of both genders.

effort. Furthermore, I ensured that the interviews were conducted at times convenient for the participants. This resonates with McLaughlin's (1990) emphasis on ethical caring about the needs of participants in any given context as the basis for establishing effective and durable rapport. This consideration relates to how ethnographers are supposed to be sensitive to the everyday constraints of the participants. Particularly in my experience, I had to adjust some of the meeting times with especially female participants who would want to first go and fetch water or gather *Masawu* for sale at the market. As a student, again I had to incur the cost of travelling for myself and the research assistant, and this involved using local transport and walking for about 5 to 10 km to the participants' location, where necessary. By so doing, it became easy for me to engage on a friendly and mutual basis with the participants as they appeared to appreciate my commitment.

### **3.9.7 Avoiding re-traumatisation**

I was aware that the nature of the data I was soliciting from the participants would conjure up memories and emotions that may result in participants reliving previous war trauma. Although my budget was limited, I was prepared to incur the cost of hiring professional counselors (as required by the UFS ethical guidelines) in such events. Fortunately, counselling did not become necessary during my fieldwork, as participants have developed their own coping mechanisms to live with traumatic memories. In order to mitigate the risk of re-traumatisation, I tried to be empathetic at all times, consoling participants, and sometimes offering small tokens of comfort to my participants before proceeding with the interviews, for instance providing snacks and drinks for the participants during the interview. Although Schrijvers (1991: 178) asserts that “we

are not required to love those we study, or even give them our unqualified approval”, as an anthropologist using a feminist lens, I nevertheless believe that my involvement with the participants in this study had to be strongly hinged on being authentic and that meant being empathetic.

The ethical problem that I foresaw for my research was that my research participants would not be very free to divulge information about their insecurity and constrained social life for fear of exposing their strained social relations in the community. To overcome this problem, I avoided excessive probing and I made use of a complementary data-gathering tool, overt participant observation, to be able to have an emic view of the everyday experiences of my participants in the case study area.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS**

The process of data analysis emerged to be a challenging procedure as it started with the re-organisation of the field notes so that I could come up with thematic analysis of the issues (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I coded the field notes according to the themes that ensued from the data. My presentation of the themes was based on an inductive approach, that is, drawing from the data I gathered. As such, the everyday stories told by men and women in the study area embodied the core of their experiences and the meanings they attached to their everyday entanglement with landmines. Consequently, my data analysis required an immersion into the diverse and complex materialities and meanings of landmines to the extent that I felt I co-constituted with my

participants the meanings of (in)security as a result of the co-existence of humans and landmines in a post-war context.

I adopted an approach of deep reading the field notes, juxtaposing the findings from the interviews with existing literature and theorising of (in)security. From this process, I used the frequently used terms from the interviews and the life stories to represent major themes. For example, the community referred to landmines as *zimbambaira*, which is a colloquial name for landmines. In the vernacular, the term derives from the sweet potato (which is the metaphorical name for landmines), a tuberous root vegetable that grows underneath the soil. Thus, I employed Fereday and Muir-Cochrane's (2006) approach of the 'thematization of meanings', which means the categorisation of themes by virtue of the coherence and congruency in their meanings. I also read detailed notes from the interviews several times and this enabled me to generate particular thematic categories from the data. In developing these themes, I paid more attention to the specific narratives and terms that the participants used in our conversations and in response to my questions which I considered to be rich data of the everyday lived experiences (Ponterotto, 2006). Recurring ideas and themes that emerged from the 'rich data' (Given, 2008), which resonated with the overall aim and objectives of the study, became my initial analytic themes for subsequent chapters.

### **3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological journey I took and the myriad factors that influenced my ethical and pragmatic research choices. I also discussed the hurdles that worked

against my access and desire to solicit data in an androcentric and weaponised post-war community, as well as the various steps I took to circumvent the challenges that could disturb the data collection process. Informed by a qualitative posthuman-feminist methodology, the chapter affirms the unquestionable need for reflexivity on the part of ethnographers doing fieldwork in contexts where humans and objects/landmines are entangled in reproducing gendered (in)security spaces and practices in patriarchal communities. This has emerged to be the only means for ensuring subjective engagement with both male and female participants to develop a nuanced understanding of security meanings, that are embedded in those normative structures and systems of society that are often used to differentiate men and women. The chapter has thus shown the inextricable nexus between a feminist posthuman security approach and a feminist qualitative methodology. It follows that theory informs practice as the agency of both humans and objects is accorded space in influencing deductions about everyday security meanings.

In the next chapter, I demonstrate how the presence of landmines in post-war Mukumbura reproduces a community at war and how that explains the importance of theoretically recognising the human-object entanglement in (re)framing vulnerability/victimhood, agency and the construction of identity binaries often characterising (in)security.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**  
**LANDMINES AND (HUMAN) AGENCY: THE (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF**  
**MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES IN POST-WAR MUKUMBURA**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This empirical chapter critically analyses the role of landmines in the framing of human agency and the (re)construction of masculinities and femininities in peace and security discourse as applied to post-war life in Mukumbura. Through data gathered from interviews, observation and life history narratives, the chapter offers an analysis of the construction of the discourse of ‘othering’ in contemporary peace and security studies in Africa. I problematise the binaries of ‘Self’ (men) and ‘Other’ (women) to answer the research question how landmines/objects construct gender stereotypical imaging of men and women and the framing of victimhood in security discourse and in Mukumbura? I intend to explain how human agency and victimhood have been gendered through intra-action with ERW, with reference to some coping strategies employed in response.

I employ three theoretical pillars from the feminist posthuman security perspective advanced in Chapter Two, namely the feminist distinction of what is hu(man) (men and women); the agency of things; and the concept of Afrocentrism (situated knowledge) and its dimension of spirituality. Since it is difficult to disentangle the interplay of the pillars in the analysis of gendered dynamics in the case study area, they will be employed in an integrated manner. Similarly, since the agency of objects cannot be separated from everyday gendered spaces and practices of the people

in Mukumbura, I will present the analysis in an integrated way while making explicit reference to the particular pillars throughout the subsequent sections. Drawing from these three pillars of the feminist posthuman security approach, this chapter juxtaposes the everyday narratives and experiences of the villagers with extant literature through a feminist posthuman security lens, to explain how objects/landmines are co-constituted with humans in the reconstruction of a community 'still at war' in the post-war period. Through this human-nonhuman engagement various forms of victimhood, agency and identities are created and reconfigured. The chapter therefore seeks to present an ontology in which the human-nonhuman relationalities take on new meanings of (in)security and in turn reframe the gendered nature and analysis of everyday human security in post-war settings.

In the first part of the chapter, I will demonstrate through evidence from the findings how the presence of landmines in post-war Mukumbura signifies the continuation of the war and gendered practices in everyday security. This speaks to my earlier point about the entangled and integrated nature of the analysis. In the subsequent sections, I will show how evidence from the findings and extant literature affords a feminist posthuman security analysis that recognises the agency of both humans/women and objects/landmines and also underscores the need for context specificity in understanding how human security is gendered in post-war communities with ERW.

## 4.2 LANDMINES AS ACTANTS: (DIS)CONTINUITIES OF THE CONFLICT AND THEIR GENDERED EVERYDAY IMPLICATIONS

In this section, I analyse participants' narratives focusing on the following two themes: The continuity of the war as well as the gender implications that this continues to have for the everyday posthuman security situation of the Mukumbura community. I argue that the presence of landmines in post-war communities reincarnates the war. It is in these war-scapes where landmines continue to shape and reshape everyday security, relations and identities of people who live with them. Evidence from participant narratives supports my argument through reference to the socio-historical analysis of the incidence of landmines in Zimbabwe; institutional efforts to remove them; and the nature and pattern of their effects on the community as shown in everyday stories and extant literature on landmines and the war in Zimbabwe. From participant testimony, such as by Mr Svosve and Ms Mutoda cited below, it is evident how the presence of landmines constrains people's everyday spaces and practices. People have had to adapt their daily lives to this dangerous environment. In an interview, Mr Svosve, an elderly villager, emphasises the enduring impact of landmines across time during and after the war:

*Yes, there are many landmines in the villages especially in the farmland and grazing areas. They are hidden enemies of the village. We are forced to live with them because they are here and we are here. We cannot go anywhere. Our parents are here and forefathers are buried here. These landmines have killed many people and livestock – even those who are trying to remove them. They were planted during the war by the enemies and we suffered then, we are suffering now and our children will suffer again if the government does not act effectively in this respect. But we are surviving here despite their threat (Interview with Mr Svosve, 17/01/2019).*

The community members share similar sentiments on the continued effects of ERW/landmines in reconfiguring everyday human security of men and women in post-war Mukumbura and these were corroborated by Ms Mutoda who narrates her life story in terms of the multiple roles that she plays:

*I am a woman and I am the mother, father, grandmother of these children. Their father was killed by a landmine blast when they were hunting. Their mother went to the city five years ago. She does not even remember that she left me this entire burden. These kids need to be fed and I am there to help them out. I don't see the difference between now and during the war because we used to run when we hear about soldiers, helicopters and gun sounds. Now the war ended years back but we still hear the sound of landmines. The bombs are the ghosts of the war. Our lives are still guided by the war because my grandchildren cannot go to the playfield freely. They are always afraid of these ghosts (Interview with Ms Mutoda, 25/01/2019).*

It is interesting that Mr Svosve acknowledges the continued existence of landmines and their persistent implications on everyday lives, yet he looks to the government to end the problem, whereas Ms Mutoda, in despair, likens ERW to ghosts, implying that there is no solution or no end to the suffering. Mr Svosve looks for external solutions (government), while acknowledging the past and forefathers, whereas Ms Mutoda seems to be preoccupied with her role as caretaker. The differential expectation of a remedy from both participants does not only demonstrate how even men are constrained by landmines, but it shows how women tend to endure, adapt and continue to diffuse the agency of these ERW through their resilience and multifarious coping strategies.

Ms Mutoda reiterates that “I am the mother, father, grandmother of these children”, because their father was killed by a landmine when he was hunting. Her acceptance of these roles demonstrates that amidst the constrictions posed by landmines, women are propelled to act for the survival of their families despite the societal expectations and assumptions that they are inferior and incapable. In this respect Hynes (2004: 431) states that “bombs and missiles kill men and women indiscriminately, but other aspects of the war affect women and girls disproportionately”. Women are ‘coerced’ to act towards assurance of their families’ socio-economic security in situations where men still look up to the government and other external players to intervene where they see no hope for the future. It follows therefore that conceptualising (in)security without deeper exploration of the gendered realities and experiences of men and women in post-war communities with ERW only gives us a partial insight.

Nevertheless, what the two quotes have in common is the sense of time, namely that the lines between the past, present and future are blurred. Mr Svosve mentions that their enemies are in their midst – “they are here and we are here” (in the present) and that “our parents are here and forefathers [the past] are buried here”. The notion that Ms Mutoda “will suffer again” gives a sense of endless repetition of a cycle of violence exerted by the ERW extending into the future. Ms Mutoda also talks about not seeing the difference “between now and during the war”. The war ended but they still hear the sound of war; they are “still” and “always” afraid of landmines.

To capture this sense of a continuous or perpetual reproduction of the war (as discussed in the two extracts above), I employ the metaphor of ‘war-scapes’<sup>18</sup> (Bolton, 2015: 40). The concept helps us to more clearly ‘see’ the performativity of landmines in reproducing landscapes that reflect the continuity of the war as well as the reproduction of a masculine-feminine binary. This resonates with Dolan’s (2010: 23) acknowledgment that ‘the war is not yet over’ with reference to continued experience of sexual violence (rape) in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) even after elections and peace agreements in 2003. The everyday life of women in the DRC still mirrored the war as they had to continue enduring unprecedented violence at the hands of some ex-combatants who after the official end of the war had joined the Mai-Mai rebel groups (Dolan, 2010: 25). The rebels continued to be militant as they believed they were tricked into thinking that the war was over, yet they wanted to ensure that they protect their land and homes. Likewise, the presence of landmines in post-war Mukumbura has blurred the lines between the war and the post-war periods as the insecurity they pose continues to reproduce post-war-scapes well after the war ended.

This state of affairs shows the insidious agency of these objects as they continue to be active remnants of the war that persistently reconfigure the security spaces, practices and social relations of the people in post-war contexts (Kim, 2016: 163) – the outcome of which was Ms Mutoda’s ‘fate’ of having become a woman who is at once “the mother, father, grandmother of these children”. This demonstrates how Shona culture is characterised by gender fluidity, for example, a paternal aunt can be a female father to her brother’s children and a maternal uncle can

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<sup>18</sup> Appadurai (2002) uses the idea of ‘scapes’ to describe the connection between the people and the land; and the meanings they attach to it. In this study, I use ‘war-scapes’ metaphorically to depict people’s connection to the land, landmines, water, firewood and animals, among others.

be a male mother to his sister's children (Bourdillon, 1982). Strong and industrious women in this culture can be designated as male in the same way that weak men are regarded as women (*murume pachake and murume pasina vamwe/mukadzi* respectively). This participant's choice of words is taking place in this cultural context and many women use it knowing that it cannot be challenged if they are performing roles associated with masculinity. This shows how patriarchy, the cultural ideology behind men's presumed domination, is fluid in contexts where women equally perform the roles that men play – especially those aimed at ensuring the socio-economic and physical security of themselves and their families in the absence of men.

At the same time, it also underlines women's agency in war/conflict. Ibnouf (2020) in her work on women and peacebuilding in Darfur shows how women bear a massive burden as care-takers during and after war. This problematises the essentialist theorisation of gender that accepts that biological sexes determine the behavioural patterns and roles of males/masculinity and females/femininity (Diamond, 2000: 89). The narratives discussed in this section show that in post-war communities with landmines, gender remains a process of identity construction related to how people experience gender in war-scapes and within social interactions. Gender performances are greater than just the biological bodies of humans, which presume males can perform in feminine ways and females can perform in masculine ways (Fitri and Padmi, 2018: 78).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.8.1, the agency of landmines in such contexts resonates with the feminist posthuman security theoretical pillars of the agency of things and people/women. Here, objects ought not to be seen as passive things, but are in fact active

artefacts of the war which are co-constituted with humans in shaping and reshaping everyday (in)security and gender relations. Landmines continue to resuscitate gendered war-scapes especially when mothers become fathers and grandmothers at the same time. This theoretical vantage point has been influenced by Barad's (2003: 812) "posthumanist performativity" to suggest how life in these militarised ecologies is characterised by the human-nonhuman intra-actions that defy straightforward moral evaluation. She further argues that these intra-actions between humans and objects offer a "new understanding of causality itself" (Barad, 2003: 812).

Such a framing constitutes a security theorisation that views subjects and objects through a relational ontology. Thus, instead of conceiving agency as distributed through objects that facilitate a self-knowing subject's intentions, subject and object come into existence through their concrete, performative relations (Barad, 2003: 242). As such, to think of landmines through a relational ontology means rejecting the view that either landmines or humans are ontologically pre-given. This is evidenced by the sentiments expressed in Mr Svosve and Ms Mutoda's narratives respectively. Mr Svosve says that "we are forced to live with them" and Ms Mutoda acknowledges that there is a sense of living with ghosts which are referring to the bombs/"ghosts of war".<sup>19</sup> This shows that over time, landmines – which were planted for the purpose of deterring free movement of liberation fighters to and from their training bases in Mozambique – have become volatile and de-territorialised via their ecological entanglements with humans. They are still exerting force in defining the gendered (in)security of the people in post-war

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<sup>19</sup> In African mythology (see Achebe, 1958) a ghost is believed to be a spirit of the dead which is invisible, yet manifests itself through constantly haunting the living and even inflicting pain or killing them. In African traditional societies, people believe in them and in this study they are being likened to the inherent deadly effect of landmines.

Mukumbura as though the war is continuing. Men, women, children and animals are still insecure as a result of the presence of the landmines.

Sjoberg (2010: 36) reminds us that security itself is a social construct, and therefore it becomes necessary to broaden areas and analytical variables to be considered in the understanding of human security. Following this argument, the enduring presence of landmines in the study area necessitates a security lens that not only goes beyond state security to include human or everyday security of humans, but also considers (in theory and in practice) an everyday security that acknowledges the ontological relationship between humans, their environment/landscape, as well as the objects that cause their insecurity. In this sense then, landmines become a fundamental actor within the everyday security in post-war communities where they are still present. Insofar as landmines have situated post-war communities as epitomising the continuation of the war as shown above, their materialities have always mirrored the war especially on everyday gender relations and security. The agency of landmines has ambivalent effects. On the one hand, landmines continue to foster the masculine-feminine binary through constraining women's everyday lives and security as compared to men. But on the other hand, this situation allows us glimpses of women's agency in managing security in 'private' spaces of the family and the community.

By looking specifically at the issue of the continuation of the war post-war as a result of the presence of ERW, as well as the gendered dimensions of posthuman everyday security, it is apparent that the landmine-infested border area becomes blurred across time and space and continues to mirror the gendered (in)security practices of the war. The fact that these landmines

have an average life-span of between fifty and a hundred years (Kim, 2016; Bolton, 2015) reinforces a sense of ubiquity and timelessness, signifying the uncertain spatio-temporality and historicity of landmines, in which their distributed agency can be redistributed over time.

In the next section, I discuss the (posthuman) intricacies of gendered agency and victimhood as a result of landmines in post-war Mukumbura.

### **4.3 TOWARDS A GENDERED AND POSTHUMAN AGENCY: RE-FRAMING VICTIMHOOD AND AGENCY IN POST-WAR MUKUMBURA**

#### **4.3.1 “I don’t have any option because I have to feed these children”: Landmines and gender role reversal**

Another security issue that emerged from the study relates to the interplay between gender, agency and victimhood in the understanding of (post)human security in post-war Mukumbura. Giddens (2010) defines agency as the ability of individuals to observe their own experiences and then give reasons for their action. Since landmines have been considered a security issue, the same androcentric sentiments that saw security as a masculine domain presuppose that landmines affect men more than women. This view is premised on the assumption that men as a naturally muscular and dominant gender have the capacity to navigate the treacherous weaponised landscapes to ensure the survival of their families, while women and children are always confined to the home which is considered to be a ‘safe space’. In this regard, Hoogensen and Stuvøy (2006: 45) remark that “gender stereotypes and hetero-normative standards enshrine and

continuously promote ideals of men as rational, strong, and forcibly ‘emotionally-handicapped’ while women are seen as emotional, weak, and in need of protection”.

This is supported by both global and African literature (Rupiah, 1998; Berhe, 2005; Bocchino, 2007; Kim, 2016; Counter, 2018) on the effects of landmines in post-war communities. Scholars concur that globally, the demographic impact of landmines is positively skewed towards men (Gruhn, 1996). However, in this section, I will share my fieldwork findings with regard to the assumption upon which the gendered effects of landmines are based, and intend to refute the notion of the home as a ‘safer space’ for women and children. I argue that such bifurcated assumptions are based on crude determinism, as (in)security realities in African post-war settings offer a different representation of women in post-war landscapes. Landmines indiscriminately affect men, women and children, yet with the effect of reversing gender roles. They are rather gender blind. In this respect one of my female research participants shows through her narrative that contrary to the socially constructed gender stereotype, women do not stay confined to the home, but ‘venture out’ in order to make a living:

*You see, I am a widow. I lost my husband a long time ago. I was responsible for taking care of four children for the past fifteen years. I cross the border together with other women on foot to Mozambique to purchase goods for resale here. They always tell us that one day one may lose her legs or die as a result of landmines that infest the illegal roads that we use, but I don't have any option because I have to feed these children. You see this young girl, she is my second born child and she is fourteen years old. She is the one who goes with others to the forest to fetch firewood and goes to the river to fetch water too (Interview with Ms Makosi, 03/02/2019).*

From the quote, it is apparent that landmines are gender blind. They equally kill, maim and constrain men and women in post-war settings. This is because the mechanism upon which they can be triggered is not based on socially constructed parameters – the only criterion is having the necessary weight (Hynes, 2004), and not whether one is a man, woman or a child. Hence animals (donkeys, cattle and goats) also fall prey to the ERW when they step on them. Thus, to assume that women are more constrained and affected by landmines than men is a misrepresentation of the realities typifying post-war communities with ERW.

As shown in Chapter Two, there are two types of agency that can be deduced, that is identity/human agency and the agency of objects/landmines. There is the agency of Ms Makosi, which is expressed through necessity. Normally, one would think of agency as ‘the freedom to having a choice’. Yet, she states that she has ‘no option’, but this does not make her a victim, instead she pushes through her actions to feed her family testifying to her agency. We also see the same kind of expression of agency in the case of Ms Mutoda in Section 4.2 who, out of necessity, acknowledges that “[t]hese kids need to be fed and I am there to help them out” as she becomes the mother, father and grandmother of the family after the death of the father due to a landmine blast. When women become ‘breadwinners’, this represents a clear and emphatic challenge to the patriarchal ideology which in the Shona culture is the ideological pillar that fosters male domination (Bourdillon, 1982). This gender role reversal signals the fluidity of patriarchy in light of changing contexts in the Shona culture. For instance, they go/act (crossing the landmine-infested border, fetching firewood and water) at great risk to themselves, but they bravely persist despite knowing how dangerous it is. It puts women in the same position with men as they also become ‘breadwinners’ and at the same time challenges the notion of a male

‘breadwinner’ which came with colonisation and transplantation of the Victorian ideology to what is now Zimbabwe. Kottack (2008) acknowledges that this can be justified by women in hunter-gatherer communities and women in sedentary pre-colonial societies working in the fields and controlling their produce and feeding their children, for example, women as quasi-heads of households in polygamous families. Men were heads of households but this did not translate into women economically depending on men even in Shona patriarchy where married women were given pieces of land to produce their own food (Battezat and Mwalo, 2000).

Similarly, another interviewee, Mr Joram, points to these gender role reversals when he describes how women have to gather food in mine-infested areas:

*I don't forget these things, landmines; they killed three of my relatives in one year. All of them were fathers, breadwinners, imagine...Today I take care of some of the children because their fathers tripped into a minefield while they were hunting six years ago and they all died on the spot. I am helping their wives as they struggle for their families as they gather Masau and mushroom in the forest and on river banks ... they then look for customers who buy their goods in bulk from town. Sometimes they do it all alone and sometimes I help them. All these areas have landmines that can blow us one day but we are left without option except to eke a living out of that (Interview with Mr Joram, 09/02/2019).*

The interview extract above (Joram) also alludes to the vulnerability of men. The fact that the deceased were “fathers, breadwinners’ yet they ‘tripped’ into a minefield demonstrates that landmines indiscriminately kill and maim both men and women. It shows that men can equally become victims of landmines. These objects are buried in the ground only to detonate when triggered by stepping on it with the requisite weight. Joram just helps the widows to search for

customers who buy their goods in bulk from the city, but the women gather their wild fruits and mushroom for themselves<sup>20</sup> in the weaponised forests and river banks. They are not dependent on him.

Thus, a holistic feminist posthuman security approach that recognises the agency of groups that are traditionally considered victims, such as women and children, while at the same time acknowledging the victimhood of men would demystify this crude determinism and stereotypes. A granular analysis of the micro/everyday experiences of men and women in post-conflict communities where men, women, children and animals are equally vulnerable to the insecurity posed by ERW exposes the fallacy of ‘safer spaces’ (see Section 1.3.3). It subverts the belief that, since women are perceived to be less knowledgeable about landmines they end up being confined to the home, which is considered to be safe, and instead emphasises that a landmine blast maims and kills both men and women indiscriminately. Thus, men and women are equally enmeshed in a socio-economic security trap which necessitates the deconstruction of the identity binary as well as the reversal and/or blurring of gender roles in an attempt to circumvent insecurities around them.

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<sup>20</sup> These tasks are consistent with women’s traditional roles in Shona culture and one also sees this in the hunter-gatherer inhabitants of the region before the arrival of the Bantu people.

### **4.3.2 “Landmines that infest illegal roads”: The agency of objects/landmines**

In analysing agency in the context of the victim-protector dichotomy in relation to the masculine-feminine binary, the interview extracts demonstrate that these terms cannot be used as clear-cut markers since ‘victim’ and ‘protector’ are transient experiences/labels/categories within a context where (in)security emerges intra-actively. In this scenario, women gathering food in dangerous places are no longer victims but rather agents and men are no longer just aggressors or protectors but become victims in their interaction with ERW as the ‘new’ aggressors/perpetrators/actants of violence. As illustrated by Ms Makosi and Mr Joram, landmines still “infest illegal roads” that they use when crossing the border; and “all these areas have landmines that can blow us one day” – pointing to the agency of objects and the empirical meaning-making related to the two theoretical pillars of the agency of things and the agency of women/all genders (see Chapter Two, Sections 2.8.1 and 2.8.2).

By considering the agentic relations between humans and objects both theoretically and empirically, we are able to close a gap in previous security theorisations. The manner in which such conceptualisation of agency should traverse the existing structural barriers between men and women as spelt out by inherent unequal power relations, does not only bridge the masculine-feminine rift, but forms one of the reasons why a comprehensive feminist posthuman security ontology is necessary. The latter has the potential to pave the way for a more inclusive and integrated security conceptualisation which is at once human-centric and gender sensitive, while also going beyond the human to human-object relationalities.

While so far, I have focused largely on the human/gender-object relationship, I have not fully considered the environment or context in which these relations play out. With reference to the third theoretical pillar that foregrounds the importance of Afrocentric knowledge, I now turn to field data that speaks to this pillar. In the next section, I continue to build the case for the need to rethink traditional human security understandings but argue more specifically that this needs to happen through Afrocentric empirical evidence, by focusing on how the agency of intangible objects/spirituality challenges the masculine-feminine binary in the conceptualisation of human security in a post-war African context.

#### **4.4 AN AFRICAN-CENTRED FOCUS ON SPIRITUALITY AND GENDERED AGENCY**

In this section, I first highlight the rationale for developing an Afrocentric human security lens that takes cognisance of the African context and its myriad socio-economic and religious organisations. Secondly, I demonstrate how spirituality is a central element to human security in Africa which ought to be embraced as an essential theoretical underpinning in the understanding of the gendered nature of human security and how intangible non-human things matter in everyday security in post-war African contexts.

##### **4.4.1 From Eurocentric to Afrocentric conceptions of human security**

Developing the idea of the need for an African-centred dimension of human security further in an empirical sense in post-war communities is aligned with my discussion of the feminist

posthuman security theoretical pillar on spirituality in Section 2.8.3. This pillar acknowledges “indigenous Africa centred knowledge forms” (Hudson, 2018: 46) and prioritises security thinking that is context-specific, aimed at deconstructing the Eurocentric notions of security through recognition of the cultural-political empirical as well as theoretical significance of Africa. This approach stands in clear opposition to an approach of ‘taking western theory to Africa’. In this regard, Brown (2006: 57) argues that “traditional, western IR theory” is problematic when taken to the African continent. “At best, we are told; IR theory misrepresents or misunderstands African reality, at worst it participates in an exercise of neo-colonial theoretical hegemony”.

Unlike in the Eurocentric conception of security where spirituality is considered to be a mirage (Brown, 2006), the Afrocentric notion of security recognises the significance of such spiritualities in informing existing security worldviews that are particular to specific contexts. A post-war/conflict African community is a classic example of one such specific context. Most such African contexts are characteristically religious and patriarchal, yet the inherent religious practices related to the everyday security of the community challenge the hegemonic nature of masculinity in defining human security. In this section in particular, I challenge the Eurocentric-Afrocentric binary that often defines, legitimises and reifies elitist Western discourses of security. Instead, I offer a context-sensitive alternative reading, rooted in a post-war African community where spirituality (intangible non-human) and community/everyday security together enable a more authentic depiction of security realities. This, in a way, constitutes a more nuanced understanding of human security which takes cognisance of gender as well as the non-human as significant variables in the theorisation of security in particular contexts.

The spiritualisation of war in the form of indigenous religious beliefs and values (cleansing and appeasing rituals and ceremonies) is not unique to Africa. The Cambodian Khmer Buddhist example is a case in point. As Cambodia is one of the many post-war countries with landmines, there have been several efforts by the local rural communities to keep themselves safe. These include dependence on government assistance, local demining initiatives and engagement with the spiritual ecologies in fostering everyday security. Kent (2003) notes that in a post-war village called Khmer in Cambodia, Khmer Buddhism provides cosmological, material, political and moral security. She states that “[t]he area enclosed within the sacred and ritually demarcated boundary (*sima*) of the pagoda is theoretically beyond the control of secular power. It therefore represents a centre of autonomy as well as moral rectitude” (Kent, 2003: 350). Kent further states that in rural areas, “[m]onks acquired magical powers by performing particular kinds of meditation ... They became repositories of knowledge about how to protect and empower themselves and others, and ... provide sacred amulets and provide blessings to protect people or even make them invincible” (Kent, 2003: 349-350).

More directly related to the role of gender in this spiritual dimension of agency, the Lakota (Native American) ‘way’ of dealing with conflict is instructive. They embed cosmology or spiritualities in their everyday security. During one of the protestations by the local people, police tried to disperse protestors, a female Ponca Nation elder with Lakota men and women behind her “stood silently, heads bowed in prayer while the crowd around them was being whipped into a frenzy by the use of tear gas and the threat of rubber projectiles ... The small group showed no

signs of wavering and, after what seemed to be an eternity, the police decided to bypass the group and continue with their evacuations” (Leon, 2016: 34).

With regard to the role of female spiritual leaders in the Zimbabwean context, female spirit mediums guided men throughout the war of liberation, providing direction and foretelling the military battles to be encountered and how to successfully attack (Chipika, 2010: 19). The spiritualisation of war that was evident during the Zimbabwean war of liberation is still prevalent in the post-war Zimbabwean context as they are conceived as avenues through which community or everyday security/safety can be achieved. Chipika (2010: 33) states that the Zimbabwean liberation struggle was epitomised by ritualistic performances where spirit mediums would (through traditional beer) entice ancestral spirits to offer strength and guidance in the battlefield. The guidance would entail prescriptions on the dos and don'ts, songs and directions of attack in the practice and conduct of war among the fighters. These practices continue in the post-war period, where the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government officials periodically visit the Njelele shrine in the Matopo Hills and the Shona village at Great Zimbabwe Monuments for consultations with spirit mediums stationed there about any problems bedevilling the country.

The role of female spiritual figures is also evident in African folklore, for example, Chielo the priestess of Agbala in Chinua Achebe's Igbo folklore *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe (1958: 3) presents Chielo as a feminine figure who was a priestess of the “oracles of the hills and caves” from whom the whole Igbo community received all the necessary spiritual guidance and protection. She was highly ranked to the extent that her social position transcended that of

ordinary men and women when she was possessed and that is why she earned the title of priestess – a prophet upon which the whole community depended for knowledge that went beyond human consciousness. She was highly regarded and considered a sovereign being with superior intuition regarding socio-economic and political security and community relations, while still also leading an ordinary life as “a widow with two children” (Achebe, 1958: 15). The fact that she was revered despite her gender demonstrates the importance of spirituality, an intuitive way of knowing the concealed and a basis for guiding the community on unknown issues that could bring ‘bad omen’ or harm/insecurity.

In the next section, I turn to my case study of Mukumbura in order to describe some of the specific spiritual dynamics. After that, I will reflect on the implications of the case study findings for the meaning of an expanded security concept.

#### **4.4.2 Spirituality and gender role reversal in post-war Mukumbura**

The general sentiment shared by the participants was that the socio-economic and physical insecurities posed by landmines were a result of the failure of the community elders to appease ancestral spirits of the war (*mhondoro dzehondo*). This was as a result of the generational gap and the subsequent different roles played by the elderly and the young. Like in many African traditional societies, the elderly are responsible for appeasing the spirits and the young people are always dependent on the elderly in a spiritual and physical sense (Bourdillon, 1982). In Mukumbura, if the elders do not intercede with the ancestors, the young people can also die. So, there is a direct link between the power of the tangible objects/landmines; the power of actors

(elders) interceding; the powerlessness of potential victims (youth); and the overarching power of the ancestors/intangible spirits. Ms Makora, an elderly woman, confirms this by stating that:

*[T]hese people erred by disrespecting the spirit mediums of the war such as grandmothers Makora and Chifeya. We would not have experienced the incidence of landmines and their effects to this extent. Unfortunately, those who were able to effectively carry out this task passed on and others migrated. These remaining young people in the community will perish if the elders fail to periodically appease the spirit mediums (Interview with Ms Makora, 22/02/2019).*

I argue that invoking a spiritual angle in the understanding of (in)security in post-war communities deconstructs the normative gendered stereotypes that often sustain the masculine-feminine schism in the conceptualisation of (in)security and vulnerability/victimhood. Key here is the role that powerful women as spirit mediums play in securing the safety of the community. In this regard, Grandmother Chifeya narrates how her role has stretched across time. During the war she advised the liberation fighters and community leaders, whereas after the war, she now protects deminers who work in the area:

*Ever since I was a young girl during the war, I was a maiden spirit to the spirit mediums at the shrine until I was elevated to the current rank of spirit medium. My role was to be consulted by the liberation fighters on any problems that they are facing but mostly I would give them guidance and cleanse them of any bad omen that they would get through bad conduct/behaviour in the bush. All this was meant to protect them from being attacked unaware by the enemy soldiers. I would also advise the community leaders about when the community would be attacked by enemy soldiers as our villages were part of the routes through which our comrades would travel to and from Mozambique for training and deployment. So the community was a risk to the enemy soldiers and that is why they planted all those landmines left right and centre. Now, my role is to cleanse deminers who are removing those*

*landmines from bad luck during their work and anyone who want to deal with landmines as I did to you (Interview with grandmother Chifeya 25/02/2019).*

This interview extract illustrates the gendered role reversal mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.1. Grandmother Chifeya is a female leader who acts as advisor, guide and consultant but also transcends these tangible human roles, to include a superhuman spiritual role of Protector against bad omens. As noted in Chapter One as well as earlier in this chapter, the popular assumption that women are always expected to be confined to the home as it is considered to be a 'safer space' was demystified by the findings as the spiritual realms of security in an African traditional post-war community have deconstructed the normative gender expectations. The assumption was based on the erroneous supposition of security as an androcentric domain (Cockburn, 2013) in which men assume the role of the protector, relegating women to victimhood as they are considered more vulnerable. Apart from sustaining patriarchal hegemony in the broad conceptualisation of security, this also undermines women's agency in the physical and spiritual realms of everyday security in post-war communities. This was corroborated by Grandmothers Makora and Chifeya's narratives of how female spiritual figures have transcended the gender barriers through their formidable roles in the community. From the above discussion and findings from the field in Mukumbura, it can be safely argued that the connection between war/conflict and spirituality as well as the role played by feminine figures in spiritually protecting war and post-war communities in Zimbabwe have significant implications for how we understand agency in an African context.

#### **4.4.3 Spirituality, gender and human security: Rethinking the agency of intangible non-human matter**

Whereas the traditional security discourse seems to have venerated masculinities over femininities, ethnographic evidence from this study exposes a different and interesting dimension of human security ontology. Here, the deconstruction of gendered conceptions of human security informs the need for transcending the physical conception of human security on the basis of a male-female dichotomy, to a posthuman ontology. It dovetails with Mitchell's (2016) call for a security ontology which directly involves indigenous cosmologies which spell out deep relationalities of humans and the non-human elements in the (in)security 'becoming' of post-war communities. An added advantage of a feminist posthuman security ontology which recognises gender binaries and the role of tangible non-human (landmines) and intangible (spiritualities) is that it could go a long way in challenging all sorts of binaries (human versus object, as well as male versus female) and could therefore also contribute to a 'de-masculinisation' of security. The centrality of women as spiritual leaders during war challenges traditional masculinist notions of security and also breaks down stereotypes regarding the all-peaceful nature of women especially when women encourage men to attack such as in the case of Darfur's women 'Hamakat'<sup>21</sup> elders (Ada, 2016). And the spiritual power that these women yield in battle and peacetime effectively subverts the protector-victim gender dichotomy as the abstract spiritual power and protective roles of these women match or even supersede the physical power of men fighting on the battlefield, which makes such spiritual power real and material in its everyday workings.

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<sup>21</sup> Contrary to the view that women are often perceived as passive victims of violent conflict, Sudan's Hakamat or female elders play an active role in the country's on-going tribal conflicts through singing warrior songs about honour and bravery to encourage men in their communities to fight against the enemies.

What makes the agency of these spirit mediums even more ‘tangible’ and significant is the fact that traditionally in battle women were not only not considered as warriors but were even denigrated for hampering the war effort. Spiritual accounts of the wartime have it that liberation war fighters, for example, saw women as profane identities who could contaminate the war efforts if they participate whilst menstruating (Chipika, 2010). During the war of liberation in Zimbabwe, male fighters were forbidden to participate in the battlefield if they had had sexual intercourse with their wives or any other woman. This spiritual standpoint was induced by the belief that sexual intercourse contaminated the purity of the fighters as divined by the ancestral spirit mediums who gave spiritual directions of the war such as *Nehanda* and *Kaguvi* (spirit mediums who operated during the war of liberation). Any defiance of this belief would be met with definite attack from the ‘enemy’ and would result in permanent injuries and/or death (Chipika, 2010: 21).

This recognition by scholars (Chipika, 2010) of these spiritualities of the war, and as corroborated by evidence in post-war communities signifies that security in the African context cannot be understood without reference to the agency of intangible non-human forces (spirits) as these shape and continue to reshape gender relations during and after war. Not only does a focus on the spirituality-security entanglement offer new insights into the gendered nature of everyday security in a post-war militarised terrain, but it also broadens security theorisation by considering the significance of new analytical variables as espoused by realities from ethnographic post-war African contexts. A posthuman Afrocentric focus on spiritual beliefs challenges the stereotypical and essentialist gender notions that relegate women to the home front and enhances our understanding of the role of intangible non-human elements in the making of security.

In the sections that follow, I highlight how gender identities have been rendered complex, intersectional, and fluid as a result of landmines in post-war Mukumbura.

#### **4.5 INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: MILITARISED/MASCULINISED FEMININITIES**

My analysis here delves into the integrated nature of human agency and the agency of landmines which constitutes the other two pillars. The section will look at the multiplicity of overlapping and oppressed identities (intersectionality) of female and male ex-combatants through the lens of gender (considering militarised/masculinised femininities in relation to hegemonic masculinities). In subsequent sections I deal with other intersections, such as gender and disability, as well as gender and age (seniority). In the last section, I consider how gender norms shape the identities of deminers in the case study area.

##### **4.5.1 “Few men can go where I go to fetch firewood”: Militarised femininities and the fluidity of identity**

Apart from drawing attention to the agency of female spiritual leaders in security as discussed in the previous section, female and male ex-combatants emerged to assume somewhat complex and intersectional identities based on age, military experience and training as shown in their language (meaning-making) about ERW and (in)security. In this section, I examine the testimonies of both male and female former liberation war fighters in order to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of their gendered identity categories. In particular, I focus on former female liberation

war fighters who as a result of their military training and experience during and after the war, continue to speak, act and think in a masculine way contrary to their expected normative feminine identity.

I make reference to both masculinities and femininities as it is important to follow Lennon's (2003: 56) advice that feminist scholars should not only focus on women's experiences but instead should also include the views of men, since a failure to do so would reinforce the binary of 'female' versus 'male' and, therefore, 'them' against 'us'. The 'militarised femininities' found in this study deconstruct those rigid conceptions of gendered security as female ex-combatants exhibited equal agency with their male ex-combatant counterparts. One female war veteran remarks that:

*The military training that I received in Mozambique was enough for me to be able to survive during and after the war. I am not afraid of landmines because they were our daily bread during the war. I was trained together with men, by men. So, inwardly I am a man because I am a soldier and I am supposed to survive so that my family gets food on the table (Interview with Mama Veronica, a female ex-combatant, 04/03/2019).*

The fact that landmines in this context are equated with "daily bread during the war" shows the proximity or close contact these ex-soldiers had with landmines and how these agentic military elements were co-constituted with humans in framing (in)security in post-war communities. It drives home the inextricable nexus between the non-human objects and the militarised identities of these ex-soldiers. Thus, Barrett (1996: 129) reminds us that "the military is a prime candidate for the study of masculinity, not only because it is an institution populated with men but also

because it plays a primary role in shaping images of masculinity in the larger society”. Ratele (2012: 4) equally observes that “militarised masculinity being central to discourses of military capability and superiority is privileged in Africa, privilege which therefore, produces warrior-like gendered ‘performances’, identities, relations and attitudes”. Accordingly, the interview extract above of ex-combatants in post-war Mukumbura indicates that their identities are in constant mutation as female bodies assume masculine traits as a result of their military training, experience and entanglement with ERW.

Similar sentiments are expressed by Comrade Bea, another female ex-combatant who lost her lower left limb to a landmine during the war. She comments as follows:

*Look, my life today is just like my life during the war. I went to fight during the war because I was even prepared to die. I was lucky just to lose my lower left limb and now life is the same despite that experience as you can see I am using a prosthetic limb. I was trained to be strong and I am not afraid of landmines because their fatality rate is lower than the gun in the hands of enemy soldiers. I am a widow and a grandmother but look, I am able to ensure my grandchildren eat and sleep well. Few men can go where I go to fetch firewood because they are afraid and I am not because I experienced these insecurities before. Through my training, I know how to traverse all these areas with landmines (Interview with Comrade Bea, 10/03/2019).*

The militarisation of post-war terrains as a result of the presence of ERW does not only re-enact the war context, but also transforms undervalued identities (femininities) into revered ones (masculinities). This observation is confirmed by Maringira (2015: 126) who highlights that “the identity of an ex-combatant overlaps with a militarised society, where communities have remained embedded in violence/war”, and in my study this identity is affirmed through the

presence of ERW/landmines which symbolically and physically mirror the war and its variegated insecurities. Whereas Xaba (2012: 56) talks about “struggle” and “post-struggle masculinities”, the (in)security effects of landmines on the identities of women in post-war communities have culminated into militarised femininities. To buttress the above observation, Comrade Gun, a male ex-combatant, concurs with the sentiments of the two female ex-combatants cited:

*People misconstrue the male and female combatants as different. There is no difference at all if we received similar training. A soldier is a soldier and there are no female soldiers or male soldiers. Soldiers are not born they are trained. In many instances during and after the war, female combatants or ex-combatants would help the civilian populations to navigate minefields and they would lead men and boys. I respect female ex-combatants because their military experience and knowledge strengthens them and makes them different from ordinary men and women (Interview with Comrade Gun; 16/03/2019).*

What is depicted here by the research participants is a case of fluid identities, in particular that of militarised femininities in post-conflict contexts. This identity differs from tomboyism or *Bacha Posh*<sup>22</sup>, a female masculinity found in patriarchal societies in Afghanistan, but which is devoid of power and privilege (Fitri and Padmi, 2018: 45). Magadla (2015: 54) also acknowledges the roles of various categories of female combatants who fought in the liberation movements in South Africa during apartheid. She highlights three broad categories of female combatants, namely guerrilla girls, combative mothers and the in-betweeners. These categories capture the

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<sup>22</sup> *Bacha Posh* was a cultural practice experienced by many girls in Afghanistan. This form of tomboyism was created by a society where the girls were told to dress and act as boys. The society and family constructed masculine identity and performativity with these girls, but when they enter puberty, social pressure will push them to transform into feminine girls (Fitri and Padmi, 2018).

numerous ways in which women have exercised agency by contributing to combat within the national liberation movements. She notes that their age and ability to skip the country determined whether women could participate in combat as ‘guerrilla girls’ or whether it inhibited them from fighting apartheid violence from their homes, or if there were women who could be defined as falling within these categories.

Unlike the elitist security theorisation which legitimises combat as a male domain, security realities in African states testify to the contrary as women equally partook in combat. Such women earned power and privilege in the post-war community as they were considered to be knowledgeable about landmines. Their meaning-making of security differed from ordinary feminine identities of women/girls who never participated or just witnessed the war in the villages. As a result, for these combat women, their spaces and practices were less constrained by gender compared to other men and women who had not directly participated in the war.

Maringira (2015: 140) acknowledges that there is a thin line between military identity and masculinity. Rather, they are inextricably interwoven. This is why military anthropology encapsulates masculinity issues (Maringira et al., 2014: 56; Maringira, 2015: 126). Thus, the traditional theorisation of security embodies a masculine-feminine bifurcation as a result of societal dictates such as patriarchy which erroneously legitimises and reveres masculinity whilst subordinating femininities. This has been supported and reproduced through traditional, conservative discourses of security with an androcentric and militarist bias. This view has been challenged because women also fought in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe and were also

perpetrators of violence, just like men, and have displayed agency in the spiritual realms of security (as discussed in Section 4.4.2).

McCall (2005: 178) also states that these gender-essentialist stereotypes overlook the varying effects of personal characteristics such as lived experiences, race, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and age on an individual's lived (in)security. Through such ordering meaning-making practices, gender differences are presented as 'natural', thereby entrenching inequalities between women and men. In addition, through institutional layouts, cultural beliefs and ideologies which support patriarchy, the masculine-feminine binary is transmitted and kept alive.

Thus, the continuities and reproduction of militarised identities in post-war communities in the form of masculinised femininities should be understood within a particular historical context where ERW still pose insecurities and in turn alter everyday spaces and relations of men and women as in the case study area. The social constructionist theory of masculinity and femininity recognises that men's behaviour as men is culturally and historically defined. As depicted in the context of the insecurity posed by landmines in post-war Mukumbura, it follows that being a man or a woman, then, is not a fixed state. It is a 'becoming', a structure actively under construction. In this regard, a feminist posthuman security approach calls for context specificity because post-war experiences of different communities vary depending on different socio-economic and political structures and organisation. Military training and the experience of war as referred to in this study, transcend the 'all male' gendered association with the military institution, in that empirical evidence from the ex-combatants' narratives indicates that female

ex-soldiers exhibit similar agency to their male counterparts in navigating everyday security in a post-war community with ERW.

Military training and war experiences therefore influence the understanding of everyday human security. Insofar as the security discourse and practice have looked down upon feminine identities on the assumption that they are physically weak and lacks agency to manoeuvre the socio-economic dangers posed by landmines, female ex-combatants in post-war Mukumbura are of the opinion that they are equally endowed with security knowledge similar to their male counterparts and ordinary women. Hence, Nesbit and Reingold (2011) as well as Thornborrow and Brown (2009) concur that the processes involved in the making of a soldier no doubt have implications in post-war life.

The observation of Maringira et al. (2014: 78) that “soldiers are not born, but ‘made’ in the process of training” implies that military experience does not distinguish between male and female soldiers, but, it effectively equates female and male military personnel. In light of this, I argue that the military training exhibited by the female and male ex-freedom fighters in post-war Mukumbura, defies the traditional definition of security in which a masculine-feminine dichotomy presents the identities and experiences as belonging to static categories. This is supported by Buzan and Hansen (2009: 208) who note that “this binary categorisation of men and women as rigidly closed-off entities denies the existence of the great variations across but also within these groups”. This implies that their identity becomes fluid and contextual.

Illustratively, in this study female ex-fighters have proceeded with life despite the constraining effects of landmines as if everything is normal, compared to men and women who have not participated in the war. They are no longer afraid because fear is a ‘feminine’ trait which is not associated with having been a freedom fighter. Resultantly, their feminine identity has been transformed to be similar to militarised masculinities. Theirs effectively has become a case of masculinised femininities.

Thus, humans and non-human objects (landmines) are co-constituted in reaffirming the deficiencies of the traditional theorisations of security such as Realism which remains androcentric. The resultant effect of this human-object entanglement in breaking the masculine-feminine binary underlines the need for a posthuman feminist security ontology to challenge the omission and/or passivity of the feminine identity in the broad security discourse in contexts in which humans are entangled with ERW.

#### **4.5.2 “We are still using our experience and skills to help the community to avoid the hazardous paths”: Militarised femininities and social navigation**

In this section, I will show how female ex-combatants make use of social networks or the notion of social navigation to circumvent the physical insecurities posed by landmines in the case study area. Vigh (2009: 419) defines this social navigation as the way in which “people act in difficult or uncertain circumstances and describing how they disentangle themselves from confining structures, plot their escape and move towards better positions”. Insofar as social navigation is a common social phenomenon, it is interesting to note that female ex-fighters traverse the

expectations of the normative social structures in which tradition dictates masculinity as a superior identity over femininity. As evidenced from the narratives and my observation, it is through social bonding, navigation and networking that female ex-military personnel have built operational relations with male ex-soldiers and other ordinary men and women in ensuring safe passages and practices that guarantee security at the community level. In this regard, a female ex-freedom fighter recounts as follows:

*I fought in the battlefield, deep in the bushes and I was in the reconnaissance section of the military. I worked with men and we were responsible for identifying safer paths for our freedom fighters, and tracking the enemy. We used different strategies that ensured everyday safety of the fighters. That is the same knowledge we are using today many years after the war. Look, the presence of landmines in this community has just put us in the wartime mood and experience. We are still using our experience and skills to help the community to avoid the hazardous paths because of landmines. So the community needs us because we managed to draw some paths that are safe and to be used by children who go to school every day, women who go to fetch firewood and water, and young boys and girls who go for cattle herding. They know what the sticks that are on the sides of the road mean because we educate them not to go beyond those sticks as they separate safe from contaminated areas (Interview with Musoja, a female ex freedom fighter, 19/03/2019).*

Significant here is the fact that ex-liberation fighters are ‘kept’ in a quasi-military role long after the war because of the presence of ERW. One can argue that their military role has remained constant, although in a more informal way. The ex-fighters continue to combat the landmines, albeit in an indirect way, namely through protecting members of the community, by laying out safe pathways and relying on their knowledge and experience of the terrain, among others. Thus,

while I argued in the previous section that identities have become fluid, in a way, identities have also remained constant.

The above narrative is complemented by the pictures below (Images 7 and 8) which show school children going to school albeit through safe passages demarcated with sticks that act as a guide. They are re-erected by female ex-combatants after they had long fallen due to rotting and successive rainfall over two decades. By virtue of constant informal education on landmines and resuscitation of danger warning signs by female ex-combatants, children going to and from school thus are made aware of the security repercussions of going beyond the sticks/barricades. The school children know that the sticks represent danger and mark the divide between life and death.



*Image 7 and 8: Sticks (barricades) erected by female ex-combatants to demarcate safe paths for school children (Source: Halo Trust, 2018)*

The performativity of landmines in post-war contexts does not only re-enact the war context, but also affirms the correlation of militarised identity with the possession and use of military skills – most importantly, survival and navigation skills (Woodward and Jenkins, 2011: 58). It is in this

survival and navigation spirit where femininities are masculinised, as expected gender roles are inverted. When women, by virtue of their military skills and experience, assume roles of guiding the community in ways to navigate the insecurity posed by landmines, the assumption of security as a masculine domain is subverted. In the next section, I explore how landmines reconfigure everyday security and the agency of other embedded identity categories such as age.

#### **4.6 INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: GENDER, AGE AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES**

The notion of overlapping identities also emerged as central in framing, yet another complexity associated with theorising human security in post-conflict settings. Through a juxtaposition of the divergent views from elderly men versus the young, the section demonstrates how age-gender binaries and entanglements are embedded in notions of ‘superior knowledge’ about landmines. It emerged from this study that the intersection of age and gender in everyday spaces and practices significantly influences the understanding of security between and within these different age categories. In as much as this would render the young vulnerable to those various threats, the incidence of the landmines in the case study areas has equally replicated the same social structure as the elderly perceive themselves as less vulnerable to landmines than their children. This was substantiated by narrative extracts from the interviews. One elderly veteran of the war explains:

*We always teach these children about the dangers of landmines. They are young and some of them are not aware of the dangers. Especially young girls who go and play in open spaces away from home are mostly vulnerable. Boys are better because they sometimes accompany their fathers to the rivers and*

*bushes for fishing and firewood. So they know safe paths better than girls. In the absence of the elders, we also encourage boys to always accompany girls to fetch firewood and water. We always teach them not to pick what they did not put on the ground. It will keep them afraid and they will suspect every metal object to be a dangerous weapon (Interview with Mr Nhopi, 24/04/2019).*

The interview extract demonstrates the extent to which the notion of masculinity is engrained in African traditional societies that are patriarchal. In this context, the masculine-feminine binary is being projected as a defining parameter which determines vulnerability to insecurities posed by ERW in post-war communities. Mr Nhopi's insistence on the need for girls to be accompanied by boys reinforces the notion of girls as lacking agency in the minefields. This resultant societal structure affirms how co-constituted non-human objects/landmines are instrumental in framing gendered (in)security spaces and practices between the young and the old. There is a tendency towards invoking patriarchal domination with the effect of forging masculinity as hegemonic in its provision of everyday defence and guidance to the feminine category.

In the case study, knowledge about landmines and the resultant insecurities they pose remains a gerontocratic and masculinist domain. This resonates with Thorne's (1993: 98) observation that in the literature on boys there is a "‘Big Man bias’ similar to inclinations of anthropological research which equates male elites with men in general". This means that there are tendencies of ascribing to 'masculinity' ways of being that are found in dominant male groups in particular social contexts. Hence, the traditional notion of community security in localities bound together with mechanical solidarity has always been characterised by gerontocracy, which is the rule by the elders (Kottack, 2008: 68). Most African traditional communities that are patriarchal are epitomised by this gerontocratic structure. Everyday community security provision is a

prerogative of the elders who are knowledgeable of, for instance, the dangers associated with heavy rainfalls; sending children to remote areas during the night; and letting children gather fruits and other necessities alone in wild animal-infested forests (Kottack, 2008: 41).

However, further interviews and observation carried out revealed that even girls have developed coping strategies/agency to navigate the insecurity posed by landmines in Mukumbura. Ms Tembo, a young woman, displays resilience when she recounts how youth-elder relations adapt to the dangerous circumstances:

*Yes, our children are in danger especially where they are supposed to go out alone to look for cattle, fetch firewood and water. But we cannot help it because even if you have girls only, they have to do these duties even in the absence of boys of the elders. It is their community and hence their life. They are in it and they have to survive. Imagine where there is a family of orphans, where there are no parents like many families in this community. Those children still need to survive and they will carry out everyday chores without the guidance of the elders. They have been taught by the environment to be vigilant. Even girls alone are going out to buy groceries unaccompanied. They have gained knowledge on how to walk in these dangerous paths (Interview with Ms Tembo, 04/04/2019).*

This interview extract shows that despite the seeming belief of a gendered victimhood by elderly men; young girls in some instances have shown equal knowledge of the insecurities of the landmines through their capacity to navigate the minefields. Such intra-action (Barad, 2003) affirms the affective capacity of landmines especially as they reconfigure perceived inferior/feminine identities to act, understand and see just like the so-called superior/masculine identities. It is this capacity to constrain which tends to be relational insofar as landmines as actants re-organise social relations and space through their performativity. Thus, the impact or

effect of landmines emerges and manifests in the ordinary material-symbolic encounters of bodies, human or non-human (Stewart, 2007: 78) in which gender relations are re(ordered). When young girls become capable of navigating the war-scapes without the company of men/boys and the elders, this demonstrates their agency. Unlike in the first extract of this section, where the main thrust is the role of the elderly in teaching the young people to stay safe as the elders are the custodians of the knowledge, in the second narrative we hear the voices of the youths, who are becoming producers of knowledge in their own right.

From my observation of everyday social organisation of life in the case study area, and through further exploration through interviews, I established three pertinent issues. Firstly, I established that in the discourse and practice of security, the age-gender nexus is a significant aspect in determining (in)security consciousness/knowledge and the agency of people in post-war communities with ERW. Secondly, I established that it is between and within these differentiated age categories where the masculine-feminine binary is produced, propagated and sustained. Lastly, apart from refuting the androcentric inclinations typifying traditional theorisations of security, the adoption in this study of a feminist posthuman security lens and its various theoretical pillars has enabled post-war security realities to be broadly espoused through the analysis of micro, everyday relations of the young and the old at the community level in the weaponised villages. Paradoxically, such suppositions have not only been refuted by the everyday (in)security realities of the social organisation of the two villages, but it has also shown how the masculine-feminine bifurcations in human security discourse and practice are produced and sustained through normative cultural practices of knowledge creation in traditional post-war communities where humans and non-humans are co-constituted in producing (in)security.

In sum, as gleaned from the study findings, a feminist posthuman security lens enables one to understand how deep the human-nonhuman relationalities are embedded in post-war contexts. It helps us to see how everyday (in)security spaces and relations are reframed through meaning-making and knowledge production when the roles and expectations associated with gender, as it intersects with age, are deconstructed as a result of the people's entanglement with landmines.

#### **4.7 INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: LANDMINES, GENDER AND DISABILITY**

Continuing the theoretical focus on intersectionality, in this section I further highlight how landmines influence the lived experiences of landmine victims, especially how their vulnerability is framed in contexts where they are entangled. One major effect of landmines has been its disabling effect. In most instances, landmine blasts maim or kill people and those who survive the blasts usually live permanently with the physical disability (Rupiah, 1998; Kim, 2016: 168). Physically challenged people have often been considered as the most vulnerable group in that they are considered to be lacking the agility required in traversing everyday hurdles for survival compared to their able-bodied counterparts (Counter, 2018: 89). In the context of their security in a landmine-infested post-war setting, their plight has thus been compounded as they need to survive and be physically safe from the everyday threats posed by landmines. Contrary to available literature (Rupiah, 1998; Bocchino, 2007; Berhe, 2005) which largely depicts landmines as hazardous objects which can cause disability to the victims, this study demonstrates in this ensuing section that there is a gendered dimension to this landmine-induced disability.

I draw my insights from the narratives of different categories of physically challenged people in Mukumbura. These entailed people living with disability prior to the incidence of landmines, or put simply, those whose disability was not as a result of landmines; males with landmine-induced disability; and females with disability caused by landmines. I extracted narratives from these three main groups with the view of understanding the episodic and circumstantial variations in their understanding of (in)security, and the changes in their everyday spaces and practices from their co-existence with ERW given their physical condition. This section shows how landmines cause physical disability and disempower already physically challenged men and women and how in some cases they exercise agency in spite of this.

#### **4.7.1 “I can’t walk; I have to crawl all by myself every day”: Feminised masculinities**

Mr Madhombiro was born physically challenged and was later affected by a landmine blast. He describes his circumstances and daily existence which were similar to many other participants of his physical status:

*I was born physically challenged (with one short hand) and then my legs were blown off by a landmine when I was harrowing maize. Now I can’t walk, I have to crawl all by myself every day doing my work close to the home. I can’t go to the garden anymore, or river for fishing and bathing or to the forest to gather mushrooms and masau for myself and my mother. She does all that for me because she is afraid that I may be finished by these landmines. I am only able to feed the chickens and turkeys here at home. Here people use well defined paths to and from the river for fear of setting foot on a landmine. I walk using both my hands and my legs so I don’t think I will manage to properly follow the foot paths used by everyone. I am comfortable staying at home (Interview with Mr Madhombiro, 19/03/2019).*

From the narrative it is evident that landmines continue to be a social and physical threat to the communities where they are still present. They physically disable people through causing permanent injuries, and in turn curtail their everyday living spaces and practices. Unlike the general perception of women as the only gender that was restricted to the homes for fear of landmine attacks, landmines have equally resulted in the confinement of men to the homes. This was even confirmed by Mr Madhombiro's wife who stated that "it's true, he stays at home because we also fear that he can be finished. He will be doing what he is able to do here at home". Thus, the physical effects of landmines as experienced by men subvert the traditional belief of the home as a safe haven for women alone. Male victims of landmines are also confined to the home and this affirms the agentic role of objects in deconstructing the male-female binary often associated with the theorisations of (in)security. This further confirms the feminisation of these men's position as a result of the constrictions posed by landmines.

Yet, the insecurity posed by ERW does not always totally disable men – they are not completely feminised. Even though Mr Madhombiro may be confined to the home, he still fulfils important chores for the family's survival and around the house. Instead of being a marker of complete disempowerment, it is rather a case where gender roles become renegotiated. The constraints posed by landmines therefore do not mean total disempowerment.

#### 4.7.2 “Lucky to survive but I am useless”: Disability, emasculation and gender role inversion

The nexus between gender, disability and landmines can however produce varying degrees of victimhood. In this regard, Mr Magavadela observes that:

*My life has not been the same ever since I was amputated. I used to cross the Mozambican border together with my colleagues to buy goods for resale here and in the capital city. This all changed as a result of my physical condition after I stepped on a landmine one day when we were using these illegal routes to evade border patrol security. I was injured together with one other friend who later died from the injuries. I was lucky to survive but I am useless and my wife and sister took over the business. They are the ones who now go to Mozambique and buy some wares for resale here in the village and in Harare. They realised that with my condition it is no longer business as usual as I can't carry heavy stuff and walk to and from Maputo. I can't work and they feed me like a baby here (Interview with Mr Magavadela, 24/03/2019).*

In contrast to the qualified victimhood in the previous analysis, in Mr Magavadela's case we see a stronger sense of disempowerment or emasculation. It is clear from these horrific narratives that landmines shape the inherent everyday and future socio-economic security of men and women who live in post-war communities with these ERW (see more discussion later in Chapter Five). The effect on the physical condition of landmine victims does not only compound their plight, but also affirms in numerous ways the notion that the agency of ERW to some extent lies in the fact that they continue to harm and coerce even when armed conflicts/wars subside. The socio-economic organisation of post-war terrains has changed from the normative social structure of traditional patriarchal societies to one where men returning from war are no longer

breadwinners and protectors. Their identities are fundamentally tied to their masculinity and they become emasculated when these roles are taken away from them as a result of ERW.

Thus, the inculcation of disability as a thematic variable and aspect of an intersectional feminist analysis of (in)security broadens the conceptualisation of human security. Whereas Mr Madhombiro's narrative demonstrates that the agentic effect of landmines exacerbates the vulnerability of already physically challenged people in post-conflict settings, Mr Magavadela's life story also shows how dangerous landmines are as weapons (Kim, 2016: 163), that maim and change the victim's future, thus making landmines equal actants in the (in)security becoming of post-war communities. Notably, Mr Magavadela has had his expected roles altered as a result of the landmine-induced disability, thus decentring the patriarchal hegemony which sees men as breadwinners and women as dependent on men. In this case, it is women who are traversing the landmine insecurities by going to Mozambique and coming back to sell the wares for the family. It is a depiction of inverted gender roles as a result of ERW which implies the co-constitution of humans and non-human objects in re-framing changing gendered security relations.

It affirms that the changes in identity-based roles (when you mix disability with gender) are context-specific. Such contexts where the human-object entanglement is so prominent should inform any efforts at holistically theorising human security. Thus, using an intersectionality lens serves to avoid simple categorisations of either 'male' or 'female' and helps us to see identities as nuanced, overlapping and intersected while also being situated in a particular time and space.

### **4.7.3 “I am hopeless, who can marry me when I am like this?” Female victimhood confirmed**

Below I will show the differential impact of landmines on the security of boys and girls or men and women. This emanates from the conservative nature of patriarchal societies which legitimises the seeming importance of the boy child over the girl child despite the fact that they are both able-bodied (Skelton and Francis, 2002; Butler, 2004: 78). This owes a lot to the general sentiment that whilst the boy child signifies the family and continues to work for the same even when married, the girl child drains the family’s resources only to later on create wealth for another family through labour and bearing children (Butler, 2004: 34). The girl child is thus seen as less significant to the traditional family than the boy child – reinforcing the masculine-feminine binary. This state of affairs became evident in the interview with Ms Maudi, who became a landmine victim on her way to school. She recounts as follows:

*I was twelve years when I was hit by a landmine. I was late to school and my friends had already gone. So I decided to take a shorter route which was not often used by school kids. I saw myself in the air and woke up in a hospital without a leg and my left palm as they were amputated. I stayed in hospital for months and was discharged later. My schoolmates proceeded to school and I could not go to school anymore since it was a long journey. I stayed at home from that time up to now and I lost any hope of completing my education. My parents told me that they lost everything for me to survive so they cannot send me to school again. I am hopeless, who can marry me when I am like this? Sometimes I wish I were dead (Interview with Ms Maudi, 28/03/2019).*

The hopelessness exhibited in Ms Maudi’s interview demonstrates the conflation of her identity and the effect of landmines as actants in post-war communities, which further curtails any

optimism for her future socio-economic security as she sees herself as having lost her education and any hopes for marriage. This is devastating because in African societies, marriage and motherhood are seen as something a woman is born to do for her society. In this case, landmines are acting as agentic objects in bolstering societal sentiments regarding the lesser importance/worth of the girl child to the extent that she loses hope for the future and any semblance of ontological security (Giddens, 2010: 34). This resonates with the notion of ‘social death’ where disability coupled with a loss of traditional maternal gender roles can be conceived as “a loss of social vitality” which does not only depict a “loss of identity and meaning for one’s existence, but also a deeply material loss of political, economic, and social relations” (Hudson, 2015: 416).

The elaboration of how the intersection of disability and identity politics compounds and reframes the security dilemma of different gender categories in post-war landscapes contributes to a thicker and more nuanced understanding of security from a feminist posthuman perspective. In the section that follows, I explore how demining (the removal of landmines) continues to exhibit the (hyper)masculinisation of security in post-war settings where ERW are still present.

#### **4.8 INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: DEMINING AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES**

In this section, I firstly discuss how demining has culminated in the projection of deminers’ identities as hegemonic or hyper-masculine and secondly, how such masculinisation has culminated in sexual exploitation often associated with militarism.

#### 4.8.1 “They call us real men”: Masculinisation of demining and security

From the interviews conducted during fieldwork and observations made, I established firstly that demining exercises which constitute one of the facets of post-war reconstruction and peacebuilding remains a masculinist security enterprise. Most literature on landmine detection and removal has shown that deminers are mostly men usually with a military background (Bocchino, 2007; Counter, 2018), but studies have not considered an explanation of such a gendered structure. I was interested in exploring the structural forces that culminate in such gender asymmetry and the resultant effect of that on everyday relations between deminers and men and women given their militarised identity. From the interviews and observations, it emerged that the deminers assumed a hegemonic masculinity<sup>23</sup> in the community, an identity which reinforced the masculine-feminine binary in security practice in post-war Mukumbura. Such an identity in turn precipitated into gendered and sexualised security depictions, confirmed by numerous narratives. For instance, one ex-deminer, Mr Mareza, explains as follows:

*You know, landmines are very dangerous. They destroy lives of people and animals and people are afraid of them. I removed landmines for the past ten years and I stopped two years ago after I chose to retire so that I could concentrate on my family. I have helped the community to regain confidence in the security of their environment. I have guided people through safe paths and have been involved in informal training of the community members (men, women and children) to know the signs of mined areas. The community has respect for me and some think that I am a super human because I survived*

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<sup>23</sup> Hegemonic masculinity is defined as a normative male ideal in a society which supports the gender hierarchy and subordinates marginal masculinities and men who do not comply with it. Hence, hegemonic masculinity is seen as a cultural prototype or ideal masculinity which is largely acknowledged and accepted by both women and men in a society, even if they have no chance of conforming to the ideal (Connell, 1995).

*throughout my professional career as a deminer. They call us 'real men' because of our bravery  
(Interview with Mr Mareza, 07/04/2019).*

The interview extract confirms that demining is the domain of men – ‘real men’ – and not women. Such a seeming institutionalised gendered security practice strengthens the masculine-feminine division in security discourse and practice. Inasmuch as identities in post-war communities sometimes tend to be fluid, demining has remained rigidly masculine and in turn has undermined the agency of marginalised gender categories. Despite the calls by UNSCR 1325 to recognise women’s role in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, demining in post-war Mukumbura has remained gendered, which in turn has reinforced the militarisation as well as the continued (hyper)masculinisation of security.

Such (in)security realities have seen numerous feminist scholars (Enloe, 2007; Cockburn, 2010) highlighting that there is a link between militarism (an ideology which legitimises violent solutions to conflict and disorder) and patriarchy (an ideology which legitimises the supremacy of men over women). This is because militarism is strongly hinged on the acceptance of patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity in order to make militarised responses to conflict appear legitimate, normal, or even inevitable (Theidon, 2009: 78). Consequently, these ideologies depict militaries and men who symbolise (stereotypical) masculine ideals, as ‘protectors’ as illustrated by Mr Mareza when he talks about how his ‘leading’ role in community training has brought respect and status for him in the community. This discourse presents deminers’ ability to use force (indirectly) to position themselves as decision-makers on behalf of others.

Another ex-deminer adds that “even female soldiers refused to volunteer for fear of dealing with hidden weapons”. It follows therefore that ‘women and children’ (a phrase frequently used as a byword for ‘civilians’) are presumed to be weaker, less rational victims, and in need of protection by men. Through attention to micro-security realities of how demining has remained masculinised on the ground, one is able to glean the gendered implications of objects/landmines at the community security level.

#### **4.8.2 “...you know how young girls view soldiers”: Hegemonic masculinities and sexualisation of identity**

The second finding regarding the intersectional identities of deminers relates to how participation on demining activities created a kind of invincible hegemonic masculinity that became linked to their expression of sexual promiscuity (Maringira et al., 2014: 64). In this respect, Mr Balloon, an ex-deminer, states that:

*I came here as a young man about seven years ago through ZIMAC and I stayed in this landmine infested community for a long time that I feel I belong here. I was single then and was excited by the respect I got from the community even from people who were older than me. I was regarded as a real man as compared to those local men who were afraid of participating in demining work. Women flocked to me like nobody's business especially unmarried young girls because they used to call us 'machines'. I was young then and it was exciting to be in that space where you would have many sexual partners because of being a deminer. They associated deminers with soldiers at war and you know how young girls view soldiers. In our team then, even some married men had to engage in extramarital relationships because they would leave their spouses back home. You cannot carry your family to the war (Interview with an ex-deminer Mr Balloon, 05/04/2020).*

This extract draws attention to how landmines facilitate or reinforce the link between hyper-masculinity and sexual identity. The performativity of landmines illustrates the scaling of masculinities into 'hegemonic' and 'thwarted'/'sexed' masculinities. I adopt the concept 'sexed' (Burns, 2019: 34) to depict a transformation of sexuality from the normative (patriarchal) to the contextual (militarised masculinities). The end product of the whole process becomes 'thwarted masculinities' (Safe, 2014: 14).

From the interviews it becomes clear that the combined notion of 'real men'; the promiscuous behaviour of ex-deminers with married women and widows in the villages; and respect accorded to the ex-deminers by local men helps to construct a 'big man' perception of the ex-deminers' identity. It equally demonstrates that even in security practice at the community level, there are differences amongst men/masculinities themselves. When ex-deminers are viewed as 'real men', it implies local men and any other men who were not involved in the demining work are not seen as 'real' men. Even if this does not mean local men are equated to women, it accords them an inferior status which qualifies how their expected masculine identity appears to have been thwarted/demeaned or 'sexed' as a result of their non-engagement in demining which is seen as a hypermasculinised security domain.

The fact that men who do not participate in demining activities were considered to be less than 'real men' as compared to men who were involved in demining activities illustrates that they are also vulnerable to the insecurities posed by landmines and in need of protection from 'real men' thus showing that victimhood cannot be a rigidly gendered state of affairs in post-war communities littered with landmines. Victimhood in the security discourse and practice thus

should rather be seen as a concept laden with multiple intersectionalities which go beyond the masculine-feminine binary as masculinity tends to become fluid. Thus, a feminist posthuman security theory that shows how the seeming rigidity of gender identities is deconstructed by the entanglement of human and non-human elements reveals how the non-human (tangible or intangible) objects create new imaginings of masculinities and femininities in security discourse and practice. This is elaborated further in the next section.

#### **4.8.3 “People viewed us as immortals”: Demining and the posthuman creation of the superhuman**

Complementary to the feminist posthuman security pillar of the intangible (spirituality) non-human component of (in)security in post-war African communities as discussed in Section 4.4.2, demining has resulted in new representations of the male ex-deminers as immortal beings. Juxtaposing ‘immortality’ and its definition as “exemption from liability to death” (Strauss, 2007: 13) with posthumanism points to a broadening of the posthuman security ontology in its encapsulation of the invisible and intangible as a significant analytical pillar of security. An ex-deminer, Mr Shinda, relates his experience by referring to their perceived immortality:

*You know just like during the war, soldiers depended on the community on everything as they viewed the fighters as their protectors. You just had to accompany female cross-border traders to and from Mozambique because we knew how to avoid landmines and authorities. They saw us as machines which could not be harmed or killed by landmines. So you would end up living in with them and I can confirm that a lot of us ended up in that situation. It was because of our knowledge of landmines that the people viewed us as immortals (Interview with ex-deminer Mr Shinda 08/04/2020).*

The reference to ex-deminers as “immortals”, and “machines” suggests the notion of human-object intra-action, as the fearlessness exhibited by ex-deminers in interacting with deadly objects/landmines re-configures their humanity/mortality into a ‘superhuman’ identity of protector. Thus (in)security remains a relational (human-object) matter, which in the African context takes on new meanings when an Afrocentric conception of immortality is used as analytical lens of everyday (in)security. In the African context, “immortality is only possible with the soul or spirit of the dead which remains quite active and exercises a great influence in the security affairs of the living” (Chukwuedo, 2015: 57).

Thus, Mbiti (1989: 43) acknowledges that the ghosts of people who died recently and whose names are remembered are called “the living dead”. The term refers to the existing relationship between the living and their dead ancestors. Though the person is “dead” physically, they are “living” in their continued communication with the living (Mbiti, 1989: 45). Ifesieh (1989: 66) further notes that the immortal soul of the dead “is supposed to be a person who has undergone a physical death, but, because of kinship relationship with the surviving relatives, remains alive in their memory as they knew him as being alive in the world of spirits. The living relations therefore have recourse to the dead through cults, which they are convinced is the way of alleviating their fears”. A similar relationship applies to how landmines as living objects have equally been seen as ‘ghosts’<sup>24</sup> which are still exercising agency through terrorising the people decades after the war.

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<sup>24</sup> See Section 4.2 where participants refer to landmines as ghosts.

The reference to ex-deminers as immortals just like machines or ancestral spirits therefore affirms that (in)security in an Afrocentric sense cannot be understood without reference to the entanglement of the intangible non-human elements and humans. Likewise, the case of mothers Makora and Chifeya in Section 4.4.2 demonstrates that where there are assumptions of a superhuman (an immortal being in the form of an ancestral spirit) gendered conceptions of security can be deconstructed. Yet paradoxically, the assigning of superhuman/immortal status to ex-deminers (unintentionally) reinforces the androcentric nature of demining while also affirming more broadly the intra-action of humans and objects in the framing of gendered (in)security in post-war communities with landmines.

#### **4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Following the three theoretical pillars outlined in Chapter Two, namely the agency of objects; from hu(man) agency to the agency of women; and the Afrocentric context of the agency of intangible non-human objects, this chapter has discussed how landmines as objects are co-constituted in the (re)framing of everyday gendered relations in post-war settings and what implications this has had for the agentic dimensions in the case study area. Through reincarnating the war context, landmines have been shown to be agentic non-human objects that continue to influence the gendered realities of human security at the community level. The chapter used the everyday narratives of the people from the two villages as evidence to illustrate how the entanglement of humans and objects/landmines in post-war communities reframes the gendered understanding of victimhood in security discourses and practices.

The masculine and feminine identities have been marked with fluidity as dictated by different experiences and contexts. For example, through a feminist posthuman security lens, the chapter has highlighted how the African conception of human security rebuts the masculine-feminine division as female spirit mediums are revered and accorded their rightful position in ensuring community security ahead of men, thereby confirming the value of attention to intangible elements of security. Physically challenged male landmine victims have also been seen to assume a subordinated masculine identity as their wives and daughters perform masculine roles for their families. On the same note, female ex-combatants have exhibited a masculinised feminine identity by virtue of their agency in navigating the weaponised terrains to provide for their families. Similarly, young girls who are traditionally seen as more vulnerable and in need of protection from boys/men have proved to be equally capable just like their male counterparts to navigate the insecurities posed by landmines.

In the penultimate section of this chapter, I discussed how demining exercises carried out in post-war communities littered with landmines have deconstructed masculinity in two major ways. Firstly, demining has remained a gendered security domain as it employs men rather than women in this case study area. Secondly, it has transformed masculinity into thwarted and sexed masculinities as local men just like women in the villages, have assumed a subordinate identity as they also view deminers and ex-deminers as possessing a hyper-masculine identity. I conclude that these metamorphoses in identity have become visible through the use of the feminist posthuman security pillars of the agency of tangible and intangible non-human objects in the analysis of security in post-war African contexts.

What we also learn through this feminist posthuman lens is that, although social organisation and experiences differ across different (African) contexts, these contexts are always deeply gendered, in flux and in need of transformation. The use of this lens not only drives home the deep entrenchment of the masculine-feminine division that typifies traditional theorisations of security, but also reminds us of the need to deconstruct narrow, rigid androcentric and anthropocentric security frames that are inappropriate analytical tools of human security at community level. As such, from the literature and the empirical findings of this study, I therefore conclude that, through a feminist posthuman security lens, we can comprehensively understand (in)security beyond the traditional elitist theorisations by broadening the variables (objects) as well as the various human identities (intersectionalities) that are encapsulated in the security discourse.

The next chapter explores how landmines are entangled with humans in gendering socio-economic (in)security in post-conflict Mukumbura.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
**LANDMINES AND THE GENDERING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC (IN)SECURITY**  
**IN POST-WAR MUKUMBURA**

**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter critically analyses how objects/landmines influence the gendering of socio-economic (in)security as everyday work and livelihoods are re-organised as a result of the human-landmine entanglement at the community level. In addition I also aim to present the innovative ways in which members of the community make use of indigenous knowledge to mitigate their insecurity (coping strategies). For this purpose, I deploy two of the theoretical pillars of my feminist posthuman security framework; i.e. the agency of objects (pictorially depicted in the chapter) and the agency of women/all genders in explaining the socio-economic security ramifications of the human-object entanglement in post-war communities laden with ERW.

The chapter does that through an empirical exploration of the material effects of landmines on everyday socio-economic spaces and practices. I will explore how the agentic effect of landmines culminates in firstly, gendered economic relations and the resultant agency of perceived marginalised groups of people affected by landmines to meet their everyday economic needs. In the second place, I explicate how everyday social relations are modified with reference to access to healthcare (e.g. provision of prostheses) and education through a gender lens.

Similar to the analysis in Chapter Four, I use the two pillars in tandem in the application to the socio-economic security in the case study community.

In the first section, I discuss the relationship between ERW, livelihoods and gender in post-war contexts in general. The next section explores how landmines affect the environment in post-conflict contexts. The third section looks into the various forms of livelihoods prevalent in the case study area and how they are affected by landmines. In the fourth section, I show how access to other forms of social security such as healthcare and education are gendered in a particular posthumanist way as a result of landmines. Throughout all these sections, I discuss the numerous coping mechanisms adopted by the villagers to ensure their everyday socio-economic security.

## **5.2 THE CONTEXTUALISATION OF LANDMINES, LIVELIHOODS AND GENDER IN POST-CONFLICT COMMUNITIES**

Young and Holland (2002: 19) define livelihoods as “the ways in which people access and mobilise resources that enable them to pursue goals necessary for their survival and long term well-being, and thereby reduce the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflicts”. Having acknowledged already in Chapter Four, Section 4.2 that landmines extend, prolong or reignite the war context, the need for an assessment of the material impact of landmines on the socio-economic security of people in these spaces is apparent. The reminder of CSS that security should embrace an emancipatory orientation drives home the fact that the discursive construction of terms such as security profoundly impacts people’s lives (Aradau, 2010: 493). Attaining or

seeking security is therefore more than an epistemological or intellectual exercise, but rather a very real material project with ‘bread and butter’ implications.

I adopted the definition of livelihoods by Young and Holland (2002) because it captures the wide range of livelihood strategies that people in landmine-infested communities usually apply; the resources upon which these strategies depend; the specific livelihood goals that people pursue, including survival; and how the entanglements reframe everyday gendered socio-economic relations as vulnerability and agency tend to change with circumstances. From my observations and interviews with participants in the field, numerous livelihood strategies emerged, such as subsistence farming, gardening, gathering wild fruits and mushrooms, fishing, and informal cross-border movement. It was also established that most of these livelihood activities were aimed at subsistence – providing food at the household level, and only for income if there is surplus. These livelihood activities have been severely constrained by the presence of landmines as they mainly affect the very resources required in carrying out the activities which directly and indirectly limited resources (land, animals, safe roads) or access to resources needed for the execution of these activities. This is summarised in the table below:

*Table 1: Summary of livelihood activities in Mukumbura*

<b>Livelihood activity</b>	<b>Major participants</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Goals of livelihood activity</b>
Subsistence farming	Men, women and children	Land, draught power (animals)	Food provision at household level
Gardening	Men, women and children	Land and water	Food provision and income from selling vegetables
Gathering wild fruits and mushrooms	Men, women and children	Safe roads to the forests	Income from selling wild fruits and mushrooms
Fishing	Men, women and children	Safe water bodies, canoes and fishing nets	Food at household level and income from selling fish
Informal cross-border trading	Men and women	Capital and safe roads to and from Mozambique	Income from selling wares
Community work and Care-giving	Women	Women’s bodies	Community and family wellbeing

*(Source: Compiled by the Researcher)*

The interplay between agency and vulnerability/victimhood continues in this chapter when analysing the nexus between landmines, gender and livelihoods. Post-war/conflict communities are marked by ever-changing gendered livelihood patterns as people's everyday socio-economic spaces and relations continue to be influenced by the insecurities posed by ERW. Living with social vulnerability in this fluid context means the vulnerable (or insecure) are not simple victims, but may acquire considerable agency in the process of constantly managing threats to their livelihoods in risky environments. Living with susceptibility also signifies that they purposefully adapt to the fluid risks to which they are exposed while negotiating options to mitigate risks. The focus of my study is thus on the agency that vulnerable people hold to live with liability. It thus will focus on the abilities of the susceptible to secure their livelihoods rather than their weaknesses and failures to do so.

On the basis of this, through evidence from the fieldwork, I will analyse how landmines continue to dictate and reconfigure everyday socio-economic security along gender lines and how human agency in turn deconstructs such gendered assumptions of economic vulnerability in post-war Mukumbura.

### **5.3 LANDMINES AND THEIR PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Contemporary anthropological literature on infrastructure has tended to focus on urban or cybernetic systems, and has paid less attention to military infrastructure, despite the military roots of the term (Petroski, 2009: 373). A central emphasis of these anthropological studies is that infrastructure “constitutes and reflects fundamentally modern projects, entailing the

construction and maintenance of systems and exemplifying human mastery over nature, with attendant aesthetics of modernity, progress, and futurity” (Larkin, 2013: 45). In light of this particular study, it becomes apparent that landmines might easily be seen as anti-infrastructure objects in their intended, normative function as explosive devices that are categorised as “area-denial weapons” (Kim, 2016: 169) in common military terminology.

It is therefore apparent that the environmental effects of landmines epitomise all environmental disturbances ranging from death or injury of human beings (bio-physical considerations) to impacts on the social, political and economic systems of a region (Berhe, 2005: 375). Viewed as such, environmental impacts represent all the impacts instigated by landmines and suffered by humans and animals, and the resultant implications of that on livelihoods, social interaction and spaces. Consequently, where the environment is contaminated by ERW, livelihoods and social relations are reshaped in numerous ways in post-conflict communities.

Petroski (2009: 374) observes that the effect of landmines on the environment is determined by the number of landmines in a unit area and the typology and toxicity of the landmines considered. On a more general note, the environmental impacts of ERW can be categorised as primary or secondary. The primary environmental effects of landmines manifest in multiple ways, some of which are outlined below.

### **5.3.1 Denying access to vital resources**

On a global scale it is estimated that landmines have denied access to or degraded 900 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land (Kim, 2016: 168). Subsequently, free movement of people and animals is prohibited in and around huge areas of arable land, pastures, forests, migratory paths, coastal areas, as well as important infrastructures including bridges, roads, electrical installations, canals and water sources. The latter are all requisite variables for sustainable livelihoods in post-conflict communities. For example in the case study area, there is constrained movement as men, women, children and animals are coerced to move along uniform paths that are considered to be safe from landmines.

### **5.3.2 Landmines and destruction of numerous fauna and flora**

Landmine explosions in most cases cause death or injury of human beings and animals (Berhe, 2005: 376). Despite the fact that landmines are intended to target soldiers or spies who work for them, about 90% of the wartime victims and almost all the post-conflict victims have been civilians (McGrath, 2014: 16). Very little data exist on the effects of landmines on plant and animal populations. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century only, landmines are believed to have killed 57 000 animals in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia and Mozambique (Andersson, da Sousa, and Paredes, 2003: 47), and another 125 000 camels, sheep, goats and cattle were reportedly killed and injured in Libya (Gray, 1997: 12). ZIMAC (2020: 23) reports that in Zimbabwe, more than 250 cattle, 130 donkeys, 118 goats and 90 sheep perished since 2009 as a result of ERW. In most contexts, landmines affect individuals, but in some cases, they

are implicated in threatening the extinction of animals that are traditional forms of capital such as cattle, goats and donkeys (Berhe, 2005: 376).

### **5.3.3 Disruption of the environment**

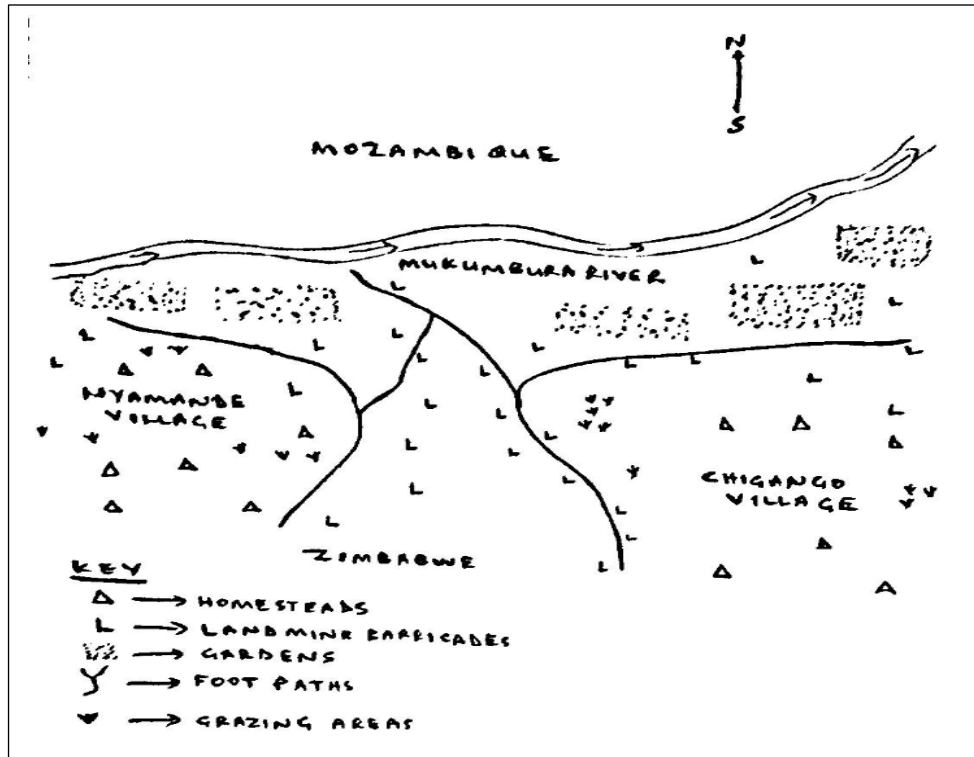
Participant observation revealed that when a landmine detonates, it has the capacity to create a crater with a diameter of up to 3m. This structural disturbance caused by the detonation can cause soil erosion or compact soil around the sides of the crater (ZIMAC, 2020). The impact appear to be more serious in areas with dry, loose soil which have little or no vegetation cover or when multiple landmines explode simultaneously or consecutively in the same area. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (2020: 11) notes that in other regions which are more warm and humid, the crater can hold stagnant water and act as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other disease vectors.

### **5.3.4 Decreasing resource productivity**

A combination of the environmental impacts described above diminishes the productivity of land resources and therefore livelihoods in post-conflict communities with ERW. In 2000, it was reported that in the absence of the landmine crisis, crop productivity in Afghanistan could have increased by 88% to 200%, 135% in Cambodia, 11% in Bosnia, and 3.6% in Mozambique compared to pre-war conditions (United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 2020: 12). The multidimensional environmental degradation discussed above, along with the already desperate state of the economy of many of the landmine-affected communities, unavoidably results in

complex indirect or secondary impacts that are perpetuated as socio-economic and political crises for the affected populations in those communities. Berhe (2005: 378) acknowledges that several of the affected post-war communities have too many landmines compared to the available resources to detect and extract them. This explains why for example in the case study area, ZIMAC (the local military department responsible for landmines detection and demining) is being aided by numerous humanitarian agencies such as Swiss Development Aid and Norwegian People's AID.

This factual analysis draws attention to the 'agency of things' again in so far as landmines continue to affect a large number of children, farmers, herders and internally displaced persons many of whom are heads of households/bread winners or financial sources of families (Mutwara, 2010: 23). These objects foreclose the very capital resources needed for rural livelihoods in post-conflict communities. Map 2 below depicts the area-denial effect of landmines or the exact manner in which landmines suffocate the essential environmental pacts that sustain human and animal life. I drew the map from my transact walks during participant observation in the villages.



Map 2: Sketch map of the location of the villages, homesteads and landmines (Source: Participant observation through transact walks by the researcher)

Besides showing how close the case study area is to the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border area, the sketch map also shows the density and extensive nature of landmine contamination in the villages. The villages are located on cleared land although there are some remaining landmine-barricaded areas close to the villages especially along the foot paths used every day by the people to and from the gardens, water points and grazing areas. The map concretises the material proximity and agentic effect of landmines on the bio-physical and socio-economic environment and suggests a reframing of the nature and pattern of livelihoods of post-war communities in which they are still present. Similarly, the photograph below (Image 9) affirms the agentic effect of objects in denying access to territory/resources and the subsequent (in)security becoming of post-war communities still littered with ERW.



*Image 9: Woman using a foot path adjacent to landmine barricade. (Source: HALO Trust, 2020)*

More than four decades after the war, these ERW are still exerting a force through sequestering land and constraining movement of both humans and animals. This resonates with my feminist posthuman security pillar of the agency of things, in which landmines/objects were laid to destroy or prevent access to critical infrastructure and to disrupt, block, or divert flows of people, resources, supplies or commodities (Bocchino, 2007: 79). Landmines are at once singular and multiple, with the explosion of one landmine suggesting the presence of many other landmines, yet their discovery naturally culminates in the sequestration of space, where it is secured as minefields. One research participant, Mr Mutebuki, commented that:

*These landmines have denied us farming land, safe grazing areas for our animals and capacity to expand our homesteads and even schools (Interview with Mr Mutebuki, 15/03/2019).*

Thus, in post-conflict settings, landmines and the suspicion of their existence continue to restrict human and animal mobility and land use and impede or prevent the repair or maintenance of

basic infrastructure in what Unruh (2012: 858) calls a “switch from an intentional to an unintentional remaking of nature”. As a result, landmines foreclose, especially for people and animals entangled with them, the social, economic, affective and aesthetic possibilities afforded by infrastructure (Kim, 2016: 166). The long lifespans of landmines can affect the physical and mental health, livelihoods and economic development of post-conflict societies for generations. Moreover, the political economy of landmine contamination and landmine removal “reinforces global patterns of environmental racism and inequality, starkly illustrating not only the uneven distribution of economic resources to clear mines but also the disproportionate physical and psychic burdens shouldered by the most politically, economically, or racially marginalised groups” (Nixon, 2007: 164). With these secondary environmental effects in mind, a view of landmines as merely anti-infrastructural would fail to account for the unintended effects of landmines, especially as landmines and minefields persist and change over time in specific ecologies, generating novel configurations among humans and non-humans. Following Larkin’s (2013: 329) definition of infrastructure as “matter that enable(s) the movement of other matter”, in this chapter, I emphasise how landmines may disable systems, but also how they, like other infrastructures, “produce environments” (Carse 2014: 6) and come to enable the movement of other matter (human/women’s agency).

So, as a result of the noted impacts of landmines on the environment, it means numerous livelihoods in the landmine-infested Mukumbura are also affected with the net effect of reconfiguring social relations of the people in the villages. The next section thus explores through various livelihoods strategies and testimonies from the participants in the case study

area, whether the alteration of socio-economic security of the people reflects a masculine-feminine division or otherwise.

#### **5.4 LANDMINES, GENDER AND LIVELIHOODS IN MUKUMBURA: RE-EXAMINING HUMAN-OBJECT INTRA-ACTION**

This section highlights the multifarious livelihoods activities adopted by people in the case study area and how they reconfigure gendered relations, and in turn demonstrate the human-object relationalities in the reconceptualisation of human security at the community level.

##### **5.4.1 Landmines and the gendered access to agricultural land**

Rupiah (1998: 22) claims that societies with the most severe landmine problems are decimated by war and among the poorest in the world. As mentioned before, landmines make land uninhabitable. Garbino (2019: 24) acknowledges that throughout the world millions of acres of land are abandoned because they are mined, e.g. in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Libya. The dispersal of the mines in many cases is so random and scattered that even those who were responsible for their planting may not be able to locate them. Moreover, landmines are mostly planted in rural areas where land is used for farming or grazing as the primary means of livelihood. This puts a severe strain on people who are already marginalised, such as women who are denied access to their family land after the death of a husband or father (Garbino, 2019: 31). Carse (2014) acknowledges that in most conflict and post-conflict settings, women are reduced to dependent individuals as they are left without any means of tangible capital to earn

income on their own. This gendered effect of conflict has been noted in Mozambique, Angola, Iraq, Cambodia and Sri Lanka where Garbino (2019: 34) reiterates that even well after the guns have been silenced and bombs have stopped detonating, women and children continue to suffer more as they bear the brunt of marginalisation from accessing capital resources such as land, employment and even humanitarian aid for their socio-economic security.

Evidence from the case study area testifies to the same as women and children have lost land to their paternal relatives upon death of a husband or parent due to landmine explosions and as dictated by the patriarchal tradition of the Shona people in Zimbabwe. One research participant, Mrs Masawu, explains as follows:

*You know here in rural areas land belong to the father (men) who is also the head of the household. The little land that was cleared by the government was redistributed to most men who were available and related to the village heads. There is no way I could have accessed the land being a widow as I am (In situ interview with Mrs Masawu, 29/03/2019).*

The presence of landmines in agricultural areas not only impacts on the local community which relies on the land for a living, but the decreased food production has widespread consequences for social and economic security and relations at the family and community levels. This emanates from the fact that access to safe land for agriculture and the community level remains masculine. This was evidenced by my observations and some follow-up interviews with the villagers. Women decried being excluded from access to formerly landmine-cleared land and this owed much to the social structures and dynamics of power at the community level. As stated in Chapter One, Section 1.3.2, the villages under study are patriarchal. It follows that land cleared

by the government was surrendered back to the village elders who happen to be all men. This perpetuates the gendered/patriarchal patterns of land distribution at the community level, whereby widows and women with no male representation (e.g. single mothers and girls) are excluded (Battezat and Mwalo, 2000: 3).

It should be noted that such gendered cultural constrictions are exacerbated by the limitations posed by landmines in post-war communities with ERW. Once again, the human-object interaction is mirrored in the realities of accessing land that is otherwise scarce as a result of the contamination posed by landmines. In this context, despite the patriarchal dictates in accessing and distribution of land, landmines disable the possibility of equitable distribution of land thus stifling the economic security of widows, single mothers and girls as they lack male representatives to own the land. This implies the prevalence of perpetual deprivation of food security for women in post-war communities with ERW as they are compelled to depend on other means of ensuring food security. A feminist posthuman security lens helps us to see both the direct and indirect agency of objects/landmines in shaping and reshaping everyday relations and economic security of people in post-war communities. Those who lack land often rely on gardens which again exhibit gender traits.

#### **5.4.2 Gardening and everyday food security: A gendered analysis**

As depicted in the photograph below (Image 10), gardening is another major source of livelihood in the villages that reflects a gendered division of labour. I observed that most women who had no access to arable agricultural land would opt for small gardens adjacent to the Mukumbura River which cuts across both villages. In rural areas in Zimbabwe, gardening is considered less

important compared to other livelihood strategies due to its perceived low income-generation capacity and is therefore considered a feminine venture (Mutwara, 2010: 12).



*Image 10: Woman watering her garden along Mukumbura River (Source: HALO Trust 2020)*

Yet ironically gardening has provided the requisite food security at household level in most rural and urban areas (Mutwara, 2010: 13). In Mukumbura, women spend most of their time in the gardens, weeding and pruning vegetables. However, from interviews and life history narratives, the participants highlighted that the river was surrounded by landmines, so men come in as helpers to lead women through safe paths. In the process some men/husbands have taken over control of the proceeds from the gardens as vegetables are readily available compared to men's crops (maize) in their farmland which take long to mature and are seasonal. So they are now in charge, ostensibly citing security provision as a justification. The testimony of Ms Musekesa

below illustrates how women are deprived of control of their everyday income, further constraining their livelihoods and economic security:

*As women, we work in the gardens every day for our families whilst our husbands' main area is the fields where they cultivate crops and sorghum. But the problem is that they now control our income as they always accompany us to safe sources of water since the river is encircled with landmines. They feel they have the right to control our garden income as they are our everyday source of security from planting, watering, harvesting and selling our vegetables around the villages and on the market places (In situ interview with Ms Musekesa, 09/04/2019).*

Landmines restrict access to public spaces such as the markets and open spaces where women usually display their vegetables for sale. But in my view, landmines have not only resulted in the disruption of women's income-generating activities, but have also reconfigured the masculine-feminine binary. The patriarchal system is rekindled through men's hegemonic intervention in supposedly women's livelihood and income. Thus the agentic role of things/landmines is two-fold: acting as a direct attack on the economic security of women and indirectly coercing them into passivity as they have to depend on men for their everyday security in public spaces.

Despite all these setbacks in their everyday activities, some women – especially single women – have refused to be victims of both landmines and men. Instead, they have devised different means for survival through vegetable farming, among others. Most of them indicated that they just follow through the paths to safer water sources as denoted in Image 9. Others resorted to depending on man-made boreholes at home for their home gardens. By so doing, they avoid going to the gardens which are adjacent to the river and do not need men/husbands to help them

through the safer paths. These women had complete control over their income and they were also safe from the insecurity posed by landmines. It is in this context where the agency of landmines stimulates women's agency. Thus (in)security again becomes a function of relationality as humans and objects/landmines are seen to be enmeshed in an intra-active becoming (Barad, 2003).

### **5.4.3 Livestock, landmines and non-human intra-actions: Of the agency of 'things'**

As have been noted, livestock have equally been major victims of ERW and this has had a secondary effect on gendering economic security and livelihoods. This is because in most African countries which are patriarchal, livestock such as cattle, donkeys, goats and sheep are not only a form of traditional capital for men, but they also act as major sources of food and clothing, meat, wool and hides (Jaspars and Maxwell, 2009: 9). They are also used as draught power for transportation and ploughing farmland (Berhe, 2005: 34). So the loss of oxen to landmine blasts would mean threatened livelihoods at the household level. Like in other landmine-infested post-conflict communities such as Cambodia and Liberia (Kim, 2016), in the two villages under study, livestock also emerged to be a business enterprise for these rural peasants yet perpetually threatened by landmines. In the case study area, I observed that livestock were killed by landmines while grazing or while they were being moved from one area to the other. The lure of virgin grassland areas where grass grows tall and lush during the rainy season is deadly for cattle grazing (see Images 11 and 12).



*Image 11 and 12: Showing a cow blown up by a landmine and a landmine hazard warning sign*

Even men (including boys) who usually herd cattle end up unknowingly traversing into these minefields with the intention of feeding their livestock on greener grasses or shrubs. Due to huge stock losses in Mukumbura herding cattle is considered a role for men not only because the cattle belong to men but also because men ostensibly know better than women how to avoid these dangerous areas and reduce the risk of losing cattle or human lives (see Images 13 and 14 below). Men are perceived to be the ones who have interacted with the outside environment more than women and girls and as such are considered to be more knowledgeable.



*Image 13 and 14: Men in charge of herding cattle (Source: ZIMAC, 2020)*

As shown by some interviews and my observation in the field, men remained in control of large livestock as a means of income generation. Women would only be allowed to milk the cows and use the milk for food purposes whilst grand purposes (such as paying bride price, starting up a business and major household use like paying school fees for children) upon which livestock could be sold remained the preserve of men. Such gendered control over livestock relates to Hovorka's (2012) study of the othering effect of cattle and chicken rearing in Botswana. The fact that women's livelihoods are associated with small animals such as chickens, whilst men control cattle has been noted to be an engrained cultural product resulting from "shared species positionality within dominant hierarchies that shape the subjectivities, material realities, relationships, and daily existence of both humans and animals" (Hovorka, 2012: 875). It relates to how in the Zimbabwean Shona traditional society, boys are socialised to own bigger animals as they are given calves, whilst girls are given chicks to take care of from their childhood. Bourdillon (1982) notes that such differential nurturing of girls/women and boys/men according to the value of animals at the family level constitutes a reaffirmation of how the cultural notions of gender roles and responsibilities are produced and sustained in patriarchal societies. Hovorka (2012: 875) submits that in the traditional setup, this connection between species positions men as superior whilst women are considered inferior as signified by the value of cattle and chickens respectively.

In Mukumbura the marginalisation of women from controlling livestock income means strangulation of their livelihoods and in turn their socio-economic status in the community. The feminist posthuman security caveat of the agency of things (animal-object) is thus reinforced when we see the double impact of 'things', i.e. animals and landmines in reaffirming men's

position as economically superior to women and disabling women's participation in major economic activities of the family in the villages. The cultural notion of large livestock as a traditional form of economic capital for men does not only accentuate the disenfranchisement of women's economic security, but also demonstrates that things matter in the re-conceptualisation of agency and causality. In accordance with the broad notion of agential realism (see Chapter Two, Section 2.7.3.2) this acts as foundation for a posthumanist notion of performativity which seeks to enable the theorisation of the natural and cultural (Barad, 1999). The notion of women as being unable to safely herd livestock in landmine-infested areas infantilises women when livestock becomes an object of both physical and economic security which again limits women's economic security. It is therefore apparent that the resultant socio-spatial re-positioning, is broadly and materially constrained, producing and reaffirming dominant gender-species hierarchical structures that affirm the human-object/landmine/animal relationalities in the understanding of (in)security.

#### **5.4.4 Fishing as a means of survival: A gender inclusive activity**

My field research revealed fishing as one of the most inclusive forms of livelihood in post-war Mukumbura. Men, women and children from both villages were seen partaking in fishing in Mukumbura river despite the landmine-induced insecurities. Fishing thus emerged to be a gender neutral activity where both women and men equally ventured without being constrained by the fear of landmines. This is because the community mastered the safe paths to the river and once they are in the fishing canoes, they are relatively safe from the threat of landmines. The relative

safety of the river and therefore fishing compared to land-based agricultural activities is evident from the testimony of Ms Musasa:

*You see, the waters are safer than the land. We also have women only groups and we get into the river and cast our nets and draw out our catch (fish) on our own without the help of men. We then dry and salt them at home and pack them and send them to the city for selling. We do this throughout the year because the river is perennial and we have managed to build houses, send children to school and buy small livestock such as goats and turkeys (In situ interview with Ms Musasa, 7/04/2019).*

Despite fishing being a traditionally male preserve across Africa (Mann, 2010: 22), the insecurity created by landmines has dissolved the boundaries of gendered livelihoods in the case of fishing, thereby allowing women alternative forms of livelihood. Women in this context have taken advantage of safe paths created by men for their economic benefit as discussed before and depicted in photograph/image 9. They escape the insecurity of landmines on the land by adhering to the safe paths to the river to earn income from fishing. This again confirms the intra-active nature of agency (Barad, 1999) encapsulated in the human-object relationality. Whereas landmines constrain women's normal everyday livelihoods, they find alternative livelihoods, which are not only safer, but also significant in their real economic value.

Fishing in some instances surpasses the subsistence benchmark to commercial income levels wherein they enjoy absolute control of their income. Insofar as landmines exert their agency through restriction of other land-based livelihoods, women have also exhibited agency in circumventing the restrictions and insecurities posed by landmines by opting for fishing in the territories traditionally perceived to be masculine. Thus, the feminist posthuman security

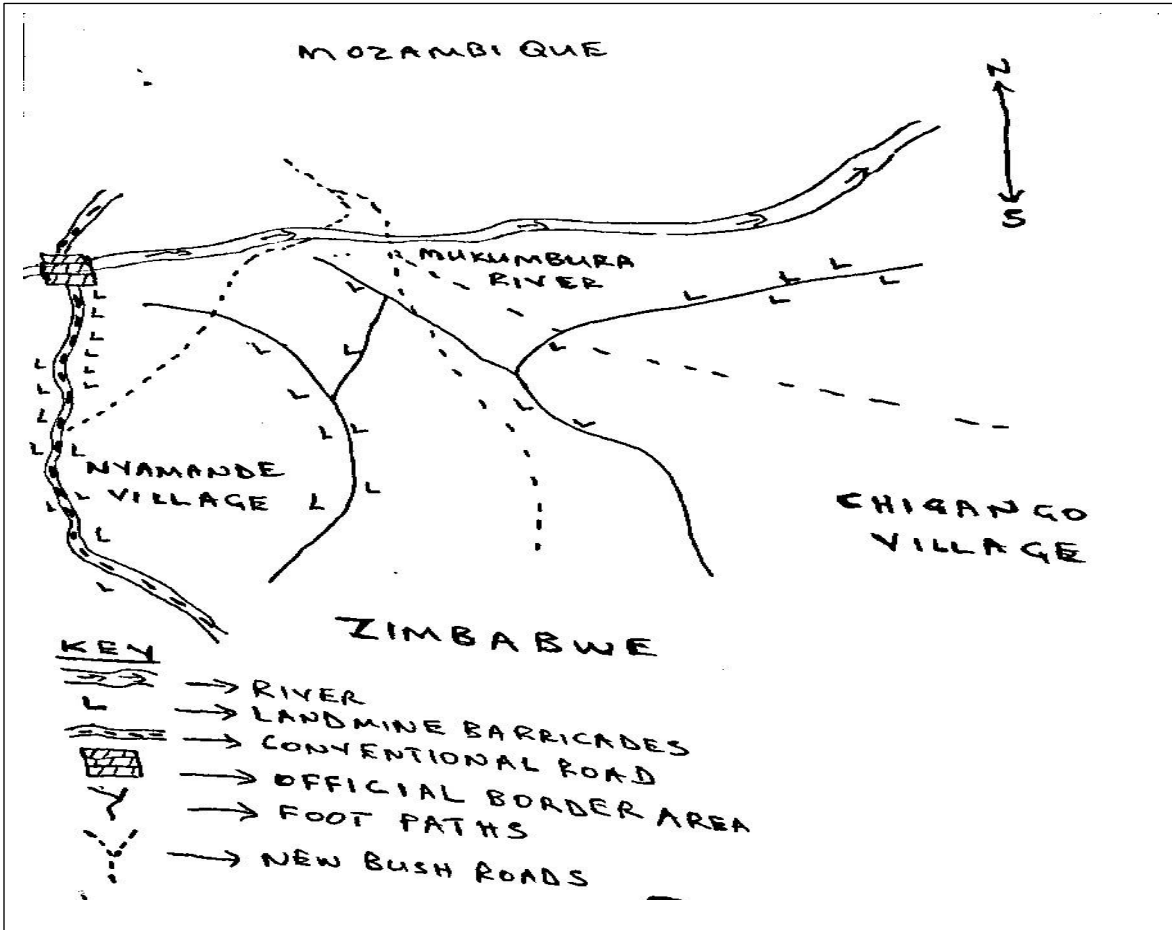
perspective does not only afford a new theoretical avenue for understanding everyday security in landmine-infested post-war communities, but aids in the deconstruction of the traditional notions of human security premised on the masculine-feminine divide.

#### **5.4.5 Informal cross-border trading and the gendering of everyday (in)securities**

Besides fishing and the gathering of wild fruits (*masawu*), cross-border trading came out to be one of the most common and thriving forms of livelihood for the financially affluent rural folks (Nhodo, 2021: 20). Cross-border trade has been labelled informal due to the nature of the operations of those involved. In most instances, the cross-border traders use illicit ways of hiding their wares from police and security personnel manning the border area when travelling back from countries where they would have bought their goods (e.g. clothes, food stuffs, other small items) for reselling in Zimbabwe (Nhodo, 2021: 22). Most of the informal cross-border activities in Zimbabwe have been prevalent in the areas bordering Zimbabwe and South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana, Women have been the major informal traders (Nhodo, 2021: 23). Although many studies have looked at the gendered implications of cross-border trading (Nhodo, 2021; Chikanda, 2021; Tawodzera, 2022), very few have analysed the complexities through a feminist posthuman lens.

From my participant observation and further probing through interviews, it became evident that men and women participate in informal cross-border trading where they use newly created paths other than the ones which were guarded by landmine barricades (see Map 3 below). The informal ‘bush roads’ emerged to be a creation of the community as they sought safer paths which

doubled as short cuts through the dangerous landscapes to the Mozambican side where they illegally buy clothes and food for resale back in their communities.



Map 3: Sketch map of the bush roads used by illegal cross-border traders from Mukumbura to Mozambique (Source: Participant observation through transact walks by the researcher)

Rupiah (1998: 23) acknowledges that landmines have left a deadly legacy in Zimbabwean border areas as they continue to govern the movement of people in-between informal channels of the Zimbabwean border and Mozambican and Zambian borders. ZIMAC (2012) reports that a significant number of victims are being recorded along the ‘bush roads’ of the borders with both men and women being equally affected. Nevertheless, women confirmed that they were more

afraid of the dangers posed by landmines along those informal paths, but they were motivated by the desire to generate income for their families. Alternatively, they would devise strategies of hiring men to accompany them through the weaponised terrains or send men to cross the border and purchase clothes and food for them whilst they wait in clear and safer places that are adjacent to the landmine barricades. From participant testimony it is evident how the threat of landmines negatively influences women's cross-border trading as illustrated below in the accounts by Ms Mutondo and Ms Mupfura:

*You know, after I realised that two of our fellow cross borders (ladies) were blown by a landmine on their way back, I became afraid and had to resort to paying a guy who was experienced with the new safer paths to Mozambique. It's a bit cheap and affordable as they can bring back our good and we can resale them at a profit (Interview with Ms Mutondo, 16/09/2019).*

*I used to go to Mozambique alone to buy goods for resale back here, but after we heard about some landmine accidents along the way, my husband and my friend's husband said we can no longer go without them or they would go for us. We had to respect their position and agree because it was for our safety and for the livelihoods of our families (Interview with Ms Mupfura, 7/04/2019).*

However, it is not only the informal trading of women that is negatively impacted – men are also affected as Mr Muuyu notes:

*We can't go to Mozambique through the Mukumbura border because it is about 100km from here. Instead we just found a way through the landmine barricades where there was minimal known landmine accidents and very shorter. It's about 25km to the nearest town in Mozambique so we were tempted to use those bush roads and it worked although there were some landmine accidents periodically where some of our colleagues (men) were killed and maimed as I am speaking. Now these*

*paths are our business and source of living as we are hired by women who are afraid to die if they miss the safe footsteps along the way (Interview with Mr Muuyu, 9/04/2019).*

Insofar as these narratives confirm the notion that the effects of landmines can be gender blind, the immediate and long-term risk they pose, and the resultant action adopted by women demonstrates the agentic effect of landmines in the broad understanding of everyday human (in)security in post-war communities. Physically, they can maim and kill; economically, they disable and pose unprecedented risk to people's livelihoods; socially, they reproduce gendered relations through recreating the men-women, husband-wife and protector-protected relations which follow the masculine-feminine binary. Although landmines pose equal danger or insecurity to both men and women, men stereotypically view women as more at risk and insecure than them. Resultantly, men are re-enacted into their social position of protectors by the role they play in guiding women and being sent by women through the dangerous environments. As such, the call of the feminist posthuman security approach for the need to recognise the agency of things in the broad conception of security is not only tenable, but further hints at the need to theorise and understand human (in)security beyond human-human relations to a posthuman performativity of things/objects other than humans.

The reconfiguration of everyday relations as a result of the livelihood constrictions posed by landmines in cross-border trading affirms their paradoxical disabling and enabling effect. They directly thwart alternative livelihoods for the villagers through the danger they pose, yet indirectly, they enable the reincarnation of patriarchal milieus where men reassume their social standing as protectors and women as victims. Landmines at the same time, pose a greater threat to men as they move about freely. And if men face the greater danger in their daily lives, then

perhaps that is why they feel they are entitled to resources such as land and livestock. The insecurity created by landmines actually seems to deepen the patriarchal fault-lines of gender roles in post-conflict contexts which are still littered with landmines.

Having dealt with a variety of livelihood dimensions, in the next section I turn to the social implications of gendered access to healthcare and education.

## **5.5 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: A GENDER ANALYSIS**

### **5.5.1 Healthcare provision in post-conflict settings: Tracing the gender binary**

Counter (2018) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Landmines have been noted to cause immense musculoskeletal injuries to their victims (Rupiah, 1998: 24). In post-war communities that still have ERW, civilians have remained victims and more often landmines result in death or injury (Coupland, 1997: 23) as they have been used mostly as instruments of terror against local civilian populations – isolating from their communities by depriving them of access to farmlands, roads and even necessities such as drinking-water and firewood (Bocchino, 2007: 80). This section explores how gendered power differentials ensue in accessing healthcare and education, once again expounding the tenacity of objects in contexts where they are intertwined with humans.

Since landmines have a long lifespan; they can kill and maim indiscriminately for decades. The longevity of landmines and their random dispersal into rural areas make it difficult to know the true extent of their global health hazard in post-conflict communities where they are still present. What is known, but is not quantifiable, is the human suffering that they engender. An estimated 800 people die monthly from landmine-related injuries, and 15 000 to 25 000 people a year are maimed or killed by landmines globally; approximately 80% of these casualties are civilians (Halo Trust, 2020: 13). It is worth noting that the exact numbers may be higher, because many incidents occur in remote areas without medical facilities to document them such as in this case study (see Image 15 below). In most instances, it has been difficult for victims to access adequate healthcare as a result of the remoteness of the areas in which landmine accidents occur.



*Image 15: Male landmine victim without prosthesis (Source: Halo Trust 2020)*

From observation and further interviews with the villagers in Mukumbura, it was found that landmines exacerbate unequal gendered access to healthcare and education among the victims. Female victims of landmines remain constrained in accessing prostheses as compared to their

male counterparts. It could be argued by men that women do not need prostheses, because the assumption is they belong in the home anyway, whereas it is more justified to provide prostheses to men who are expected to go about in the world. This was illustrated by the narrative of Mrs Mutondo, a female landmine victim:

*I lost my leg to a landmine detonation four years ago, but my husband is reluctant to pay for another prosthetic limb since the one I initially used got damaged. He keeps on saying I don't have money but he managed to buy one for his young brother who also lost a leg. I received the first one from the donors after my hospitalisation but since the donors have gone, I cannot have another one as they are sold (Interview with Mrs Mutondo, 16/04/2019).*

A male landmine victim, Mr Derere, confirmed the gendered nature of disability in this context:

*The problem is that as a man you cannot use a stick to walk since you are supposed to run around for the family. So I sold two goats for me to be able to have a prosthetic limb. If I were a woman I would just use a stick as I will be just around the house (Interview with Mr Derere, 24/04/2019).*

It appears from the interview extracts that there is preferential treatment in accessing healthcare for male victims at the family level. The projection of such favouritism in terms of gender confirms conventional male-female dichotomies. This results in an element of victim blame here when it comes to injured women. Women who are injured by landmines may be blamed for their own misfortune because they ventured into a male domain that they do not belong to and it is therefore considered to be their own fault. Instead of relying on men to face the danger, they entered into a male domain and were injured. The reasoning is likely because of the assumption that they are not as skilled as men to detect landmines or to look after themselves in these

militarised ecologies. So, a man who gets injured is heroic, but a woman who gets injured is irresponsible. This is despite the previous observation that they should also participate in economic activities on behalf of the household. From observations in the field, it can be said that landmines physically affect both men and women in the same way but socially and economically the indirect implications for women are worse. But from the general sentiments it was deduced that when a woman has a landmine accident, it is less challenging than for a man as his social status as a bread winner and father figure diminishes.

In other cases, Zwang and Simon (2017: 34) note that male victims of landmines can try to survive, but if it is a woman, it gets very miserable. They further highlight that it is worse if the woman is pregnant and uses a prosthetic as she cannot go to the farmland due to a lack of mobility. An ex-deminer indicated that in his experience, women injured by landmine explosions experience social stigma as they are perceived to have been in that condition as a result of their stubbornness. He gave an example of one young woman who had her leg and arm blown off by a landmine as a child, who told him that when she was growing up no one wanted to play with her and other children in the village jeered at her, socially alienating her. A look into the impact of landmines through the lens of a feminist posthuman security perspective would reveal that objects/landmines have agency in that they physically maim; economically disable; and socially alienate their victims compounding their human insecurity dilemma. As such, it is tenable to call for the need to untangle the human-object relationalities in order to understand the gendered nature of human insecurity instigated by an unequal access to healthcare in post-war communities with ERW.

### 5.5.2 Gendered access to education in Mukumbura

Some literature (Berhe, 2005; Bocchino, 2007) on the physical effects of landmines on people point to children being the most affected as they die from landmine injuries more commonly than adults owing to their smaller size which exposes their vital organs. But from observation and further interviews, I found the experiences of the impacts of landmines by different generations to be similar. That said, I observed gendered access to education for most of the school-going children who were victims of landmines in the two villages. Female victims dropped out of school while male victims continued with school as their families ensured that they got prostheses so that they can walk to and from school. One elderly male participant, Mr Jombo, bluntly stated that:

*There was no way I can let my daughter who was maimed by a landmine proceed with education as it is a waste of time. It is better for her to be helping her mother at home since she cannot walk anymore. Besides, I cannot afford a wheelchair for her (Interview with Mr Jombo, 06/04/2019).*

Most research participants confirmed that they opted for ceasing the education of girls rather than boys. They saw it as normal for female landmine victims to drop out of school as opposed to their male counterparts as the former would be considered an economic burden since they will be married off. This coupled with the absence of formal rehabilitation systems and structures for landmine victims in rural Mukumbura has compounded the plight of female landmine victims. Financial incapacity of the families of the victims again aids in further disenfranchising the female landmine victims as it becomes difficult to acquire wheelchairs and prostheses that would enable them to go to school. This erodes their opportunity for a better economic future through

education, thus perpetuating their dependency on men. A feminist posthuman security perspective which unpacks how non-human objects in conjunction with patriarchal attitudes and economic realities create such gender imbalances is therefore theoretically and empirically justified.

## **5.6 “AS WOMEN, THOSE SPACES ARE A NO-GO AREA”: LANDMINES AND TERRITORIALITY**

Landmines have triggered strained socio-economic relations over territorial space along the banks of the Mukumbura River among villagers from the two adjacent villages under study. This has also taken on a gendered outlook as women, especially widows and single mothers, have been the major losers as they lack the power and support to fight for free and arable land along the river. From my observation and further probing through interviews, I noted that access to flat land which is easy to construct gardens and plough their crops has become a bone of contention. This has culminated in physical fights between people often resulting in physical injuries as men from both villages organise themselves into vigilante groups aimed at fighting, grabbing and defending their interests along the riverbanks. This has resulted in the exclusion of women (single mothers and widows) from directly accessing these spaces as they are unable to compete in these physical fights. This disenfranchisement is not only a culmination of the prohibitive effect of landmines in terms of space, but has also indirectly affected the economic prospects of women as they are attacked and victimised if they are seen around the sought-after riverbanks even in the company of their husbands or other men. This ‘gendered apartheid’ applied to the

riverbanks is confirmed in the stories told by Ms Mutondo and Ms Mukwakwa below and highlights the fact that venturing into this space may even lead to gender-based violence:

*Due to lack of safer spaces for agriculture, some people have resorted to the use of riverbanks as they are fertile and close to the water. Men from this side often engage in furious fights for those spaces. As women, those spaces are a no-go area because you get scolded or physically attacked if you are seen there (Interview with Ms Mutondo, 06/04/2019).*

*These landmines have pushed people to the extremes. There is not enough land here and people fight for the riverbanks. It is worst for women, especially us who are widows. How can you fight with men for the land in those fertile spaces? It is not possible because sometimes there are bloody fights that ensue from the disagreements over sharing of those spaces and we cannot be near those. So, we are forced to remain in the gardens which are a bit smaller than land used by men along the riverbanks (Interview with Ms Mukwakwa, 28/03/2019).*

From these interview excerpts, one can deduce that landmines do not only effectively function as area-denial weapons (Kim, 2016: 174) that exacerbate strained relations between people. The territorial tensions that arise also catalyse gendered access to fertile land in contaminated spaces as women are restricted from access to land, which often are determined between men in bloody fights. The implications of that on the economic security of women become visible as they remain relegated to the peripheries of the rural economic sphere where food security is firmly entrenched in patriarchal structures as men always own the status of bread winners. The study therefore confirms Butler's (2004) contention that women have invariably been left out from many of the most important spheres of socio-economic life as a result of the prevalent socio-cultural structures in society. In this context, exclusionary patriarchal societal structures are

amplified by the insecurity caused by landmines that further restrict women from accessing arable land compounding their socio-economic insecurity.

## **5.7 SPEAKING FROM THE CLUTCHES: LIVELIHOODS DILEMMAS OF FEMALE LANDMINE VICTIMS**

Having examined the various areas of social life in Mukumbura where landmines have an impact. In the next two sections I first discuss the dire situation of female landmine victims (as depicted in Image 16 below) only to be counterbalanced by a more positive view of women's coping mechanisms or strategies.



*Image 16: Female landmine victim in Mukumbura (Source: Halo Trust, 2020)*

The challenge of creating sustainable livelihoods by female landmine victims in the two villages emerged as a major theme. While available literature concentrates on highlighting evidence of the physical impact of landmines on women (Zwang and Simon, 2017; Walsh and Walsh, 2003),

the associated disruption of the socio-economic security of women are underrepresented in literature. My study revealed the untenable situation women who were maimed by landmines find themselves in just to survive. I spoke to several female victims of landmines who confirmed their daily socio-economic (in)securities as a result of the physical deformities caused by landmines. Zwang and Simon (2017: 63) confirm that adult women constitute a significant proportion of landmine victims in post-war communities with ERW. Mrs Mushuku explains her hardship as a crippled mother who is socially expected to fend for her family even in the presence of the husband:

*Look at me; it's as good as I am dead. I cannot walk on my own; I can no longer work in the garden from this wheelchair. I lost both legs from a landmine explosion when we went to fetch firewood from the bush. Am I still a mother in this condition? We are despised by the community as they see us as useless (Interview with Mrs Mushuku, 21/03/2019).*

Another female landmine victim, Ms Makwati, illustrates the stigma such women have to contend with on a daily basis, even in their intimate spheres:

*I lost my hand and leg from a landmine blast when I was coming back from the mountains to gather wild fruits for resale. I am now in clutches [crutches] and can no longer help my family as this was a source of income for us. They ignore me and sometimes they avoid my calls for help. Even my children shun me because I am no longer relevant in the family (Interview with Ms Makwati, 09/04/2019).*

Ms Makonde, another landmine victim, illustrates how the life-world of women can become smaller after injury leading to increased dependency on others to survive:

*I was blown by a landmine and I cannot walk anymore. I am a widow, yet I am now just confined to the home. I have since hired two helpers, one man for the garden and his wife for the young children here at home. She also helps me feed these broilers (chickens) which are a good source of income for my family (Interview with Ms Makonde, 22/09/2019).*

From these interviews, I inferred three themes related to the socio-economic security of female landmine victims. Firstly, their plight is quite tragic as their injuries drastically diminish their ability to participate in everyday economic activities. This resonates with Khamala's (2015: 31) observation that doing informal business in African cities and market centres requires physical strength and mobility since there is need for moving from one place to the other. Firstly, the despondent resignation of these women suggests that their confinement to the home represents gross deprivation – the loss of their ability as mothers to fend for their children. Secondly, these women suffer alienation from mainstream society as they are perceived to be a social and economic burden to the able-bodied. Historically, society has always been prone to negative stereotypes against physically challenged people (Barnes, 1991: 12). The situation becomes compounded when children shun their mothers because they have been deformed by landmines, instead of embracing and assisting them. It implies that landmines strip women of their humanity.

Thus, the impact of landmines as enunciated in the feminist posthuman security theoretical pillar of the agency of things becomes apparent as the impact goes beyond mere physical deformity to include social exclusion and mental torture. This is the secondary yet enormous burden of female landmine victims who endure patriarchal oppression and social alienation as a result of their physical disfiguration. This resonates with Black feminists' deconstruction of the myth of the

‘strong Black woman’ as a form of ableism (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009; Giddings, 2007; Mataka 2000). The myth submits that Black women are distinctively strong, able to endure pain, and overcome otherwise difficult problems because of their innate tenacity. The above interview excerpt by Ms Mukonde has equally debunked this myth as female landmine victims show that they experience physical and psychological pain. It is therefore unwarranted for women to be disallowed disability as this depoliticises their everyday socio-economic security. Thus, a feminist posthuman security approach which inculcates objects/landmines in the everyday socio-economic security equation of female landmines victims unearths new dimensions of understanding the connections between objects, disability and gendered human security.

Lastly, despite all the insecurities experienced by female landmine victims, they still exercise agency in trying to maintain their economic security. Ms Mukonde who has been handicapped by a landmine blast, employs a man and his wife as her helpers as a coping mechanism. In reality, she assumes the position of a master who has servants – a man, thus reversing the normative gender roles as dictated by the patriarchal ideology. Box (2003: 23) notes that, the subordinate status of women have been projected onto the contemporary society with the effect that women have largely remained economically dependent on men. However, in the case of Ms Mukonde, a man depends on her which demonstrates her financial agency despite her physical disability. Without much generalisation, in so far as landmines constrain physically, they provoke agency and resilience on the part of the victims – forming part of an intra-active becoming of posthuman security.

## 5.8 INDIGENOUS COPING MECHANISMS ADOPTED BY WOMEN TO ENSURE THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY

In spite of the constraints imposed by landmines on the everyday socio-economic security of the people in the villages under study, the often-presumed gendered effect of landmines can be reconsidered when one takes into account IKS-based coping mechanisms adopted by women. This section highlights the strategies employed by women which qualify their agency in counteracting the agency and material consequences of landmines in gendering socio-economic (in)security.

One of the strategies adopted by women in Mukumbura was to look for trees with deep-rooted roots. It is claimed that these trees offer hope for fewer landmine incidences as the roots of the trees would have detonated or at least disturbed the underlying landmines in the soil. This was supported by ex-deminers who concurred that big trees that later grew on minefields were likely to destabilise the landmine triggers and minimise the risk of landmine calamity as they will be pushed further underneath the soil over the years. A photo of an extracted landmine shown below (Image 17) detected by means of conventional landmine detectors is proof of their claim.



*Image 17: ERW disabled by tree roots (Source: ZIMAC, 2020)*

This landmine was extracted from an area where one woman used the surrounding land for her garden. She claimed that she was not afraid as the prevalent big trees had ‘cleared’ her portion of land from landmines. This is an example of women having developed resilience against ERW through reliance on unwritten knowledge which can be confirmed by modern technology. This evidence bolsters the limited literature on IKS and human security as it has mostly concentrated on the human dimension and the management of natural environments by humans. Thus, the application of IKS by women in post-war communities with ERW marks the inextricable nexus of the agency of humans and objects/landmines in that – in as much as landmines constrain spaces – humans re-create these spaces through their traditional knowledge to ensure their everyday survival.

Another strategy that women in the two villages employed entailed the use of ‘traditional paths’. These refer to the small roads commonly used in the rural areas across homesteads and between villages. Characteristically, these are narrow unpaved roads which are winding and do not accommodate two bypassing people. However, they can be used by animals such as cattle, donkeys and goats; cyclists and pedestrians. Significantly these traditional paths connect houses and essential areas and services to the villages such as water sources, meeting points and market areas.

Women in the villages of Mukumbura confirmed that they rely on these safe paths as they consider them secure from landmines by virtue of them having been used for a long time. One woman affirmed that “you don’t have to stray from the path; you just have to follow it either to the river, to the garden or to the market” (interview with Ms Rodah, 29/09/2019). It implies if

you stray from the path you are likely to come across a landmine as was the case with some animals that strayed. If analysed through the lens of a feminist posthuman security theory, it can be observed that – whereas objects/landmines exercise agency in coercing or confining people to these safe paths – women in turn embrace the confinement as positive action as this enables them to proceed with their daily economic activities. Despite the insecurity posed by landmines in other spheres, through these traditional paths women have continued with their everyday economic activities ensuring their economic security in post-war Mukumbura.

## **5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter sought to analyse how people in post-war communities with ERW continue to make a living and whether the improvement, stagnation or regression of their livelihoods reflects a gendered outlook. The chapter has analysed how the human-landmine entanglement has culminated in the gendering of socio-economic (in)security in post-war Mukumbura. It has shown how landmines influence socio-economic (in)security through their area-denial effect which deprives people of land for agriculture which is the major traditional form of income in the rural economy. I highlighted that as a result of landmines, agricultural land, the security of livestock which is a source of income at the household level, gardening, and fishing have all been typified by gender asymmetrical relations. Again, the extent to which landmines have resulted in territorial conflicts that precipitate into the economic marginalisation of culturally perceived inferior identities (women), demonstrates how the performativity of objects permeate beyond material to social consequences.

Through a posthuman security lens, the analysis in this chapter revealed how women's economic well-being can be a matter of intra-action or a negotiated affair as objects constrain spaces and activities; whilst women develop resilience through a myriad of adaptation strategies. Despite all the constrictions posed by landmines on people's livelihoods as shown in the chapter, women have embarked on other strategies using IKS to ensure their economic security. This affirms human-object relationality as a worthy analytical focus if gendered human (in)security is to be comprehensively understood. But more so, it also qualifies the possibility and the suitability of a feminist posthuman security framework which enables the undoing of the traditional human-object nexus in understanding how ERW are embroiled in the creation of gendered socio-economic (in)security in post-war communities.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The central aim of this study was to critically analyse how the human-landmine intra-action in post-war Mukumbura shapes and reconfigures (in)security, identities and everyday social relations of people along gender lines. Through a deconstruction of traditional security thinking, I developed a new security approach which recognises gender, non-human objects and contextuality (Afrocentrism) as imperative analytical variables in the understanding of human (in)security. My study also sought to demonstrate how identities, victimhood and livelihoods of people are reordered as a result of the agency of non-human objects/landmines in post-war communities where ERW are still present. All these constituted and informed the major objectives of this study.

Thus, this concluding chapter is organised around three main sections namely, the chapter summary and reflections (Section 6.2); the theoretical and empirical contributions of the study (Section 6.3); and a discussion of the limitations of the study as well as pointers for future research (Section 6.4). The arguments, conclusions and suggestions I submit in these sections affirm that just like humans, objects possess agency, and their entanglement with humans have resulted in gendered (in)security through enabling and constraining spaces and practices of men and women in post-conflict communities still littered with landmines. Ultimately the focus is on relations between humans and objects in various forms, how these interactions actually manifest as intra-actions that are deeply gendered, and having profound effects on the way in which peace

or insecurity is perceived discursively and/or materially in Mukumbura. This relational gendered impact leaves no identity, space or practice untouched.

## **6.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND KEY REFLECTIONS**

*Chapter 1 - Introduction and contextual background:* This chapter provided a general introduction to the study and the incidence of landmines. The chapter also gave a geographical contextualisation of the study through highlighting the incidence of landmines in the case study area of Mukumbura. It also provided the key theoretical influences that informed the study, followed by an articulation of the rationale of the study, the problem statement and research questions, as well as the objectives. Thus, the study sought to fill the gap in the current literature through providing an alternative framing of the human-object bifurcation in the understanding of everyday gendering (in)security and the fluidity of agency in post-conflict communities littered with landmines. Through that, the chapter effectively laid the foundation for what was entailed in the study and what ought to be expected.

*Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework:* The main objectives of this chapter were to develop a theoretical approach for a more holistic and nuanced understanding of how the human-object entanglement influences human (in)security. This was based on a discussion of the evolution of various strands of security thinking, ranging from conservative realist theory to the more critical schools of HS, CSS and FSS. Throughout the discussion, I consistently pointed out the shortcomings of the conventional as well as the more progressive schools of thought. Two major flaws that I highlighted are the general absence of gender as an analytical construct (not to be

confused with gender as an identity marker), as well as the lack of attention to tangible and intangible non-human objects in the theorisation of (in)security. I found that understanding (in)security through these parameters marks an ontological shift from conceptualising security as rigidly state-centric and inherently gender blind, to a deeper theorisation of (in)security that captures the ever-changing incidence of (in)security in post-conflict contexts where humans and ERW co-exist. As such, through the analysis in this chapter, I confirmed the theoretical gaps of traditional conceptualisations of security and my proposition of a feminist security lens grounded in a ‘posthuman turn’ was vindicated.

*Chapter 3 - Research methodology:* The chapter sought to discuss the methodological processes that guided the study and aimed to show how methodology and theory/conceptualisation go hand in hand. My underlying contention was that a study with feminist subject matter should be conducted by means of a feminist methodology, and that is why I consistently and systematically qualified my choices to be aligned with a qualitative methodology that is not only inherently feminist, but that also goes beyond the human to include matter. These theoretical and methodological assumptions guided the practical and ethical decisions that I had to make in the field. The chapter therefore discussed the challenges that militated against effectively accessing data in a patriarchal community which was unsafe due to the presence of landmines. Informed by a qualitative feminist posthumanist methodology, the chapter affirmed the unquestionable need for reflexivity on the part of (feminist) ethnographers doing fieldwork in patriarchal contexts where humans and objects/landmines are entangled. The pursuit of feminist reflexivity aided my methodology as it ensured subjective engagement with both male and female participants in understanding deeper meanings of (in)security that are embedded in those normative social

structures and systems of society that are usually used to classify men and women on the basis of perceived capabilities. The chapter therefore managed to demonstrate the link between a feminist posthuman security theoretical approach and a qualitative feminist methodology.

*Chapter 4 - Landmines and (human) agency: The (re)construction of masculinities and femininities in post-war Mukumbura:* This chapter sought to analyse the effect of ERW in the framing of victimhood and the (re)construction of masculine and feminine identities in pragmatic and theoretical discourses of (in)security with particular reference to the case study area of post-conflict Mukumbura in Zimbabwe. It also offered a discursive analysis of the (re)construction of the ‘Other’ (woman) as opposed to the ‘Self’ (man). The engagement with rich field data informed my conclusion that social (re)constructions and notions of masculinity-femininity and negative stereotypical imaginings are more pervasive in post-conflict communities where people still co-exist with landmines. The findings revealed multiple overlapping identities that would not have been evident if viewed through a traditional state-centric lens. For example, through a feminist posthuman security lens, the study has revealed a transformation of masculine identities into thwarted and ‘sexed masculinities’ as local men just like women in the villages, have been pushed to the domains of subordinate identities as they also view deminers and ex-deminers as possessing a hyper-masculine identity. Besides, the agency exhibited by women throughout the constraints typifying their livelihoods also demonstrates how their perceived femininities become masculinised.

*Chapter 5 - Landmines and the gendering of socio-economic (in)security in post-war Mukumbura:* The main objective of this chapter was to critically analyse how the entanglement

of humans and ERW result in the re-conceptualisation of gender in socio-economic (in)security as there is persistent changes in roles in everyday work at the household and community levels. The chapter achieved this through an empirical analysis of the role of landmines in men and women's everyday economic space and practices and how this has resulted in skewed gendered relations in Mukumbura. The chapter also highlighted how social relations have been altered, with specific reference to unequal and gendered access to healthcare and education. Through providing rich and deeper analysis of the participants' narratives and evidence from the field, the chapter demonstrated the numerous coping mechanisms adopted by the community to safeguard their everyday economic security and livelihoods.

### **6.3 THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

It needs to be stated at the onset that it is difficult to separate the theoretical contribution of the study from the empirical contribution.

That said, in terms of the **theoretical contribution** the following can be argued: The theoretical contribution of this study is seated in the fact that I expanded on limited feminist-posthumanist work (e.g. Hudson, 2018) by framing an alternative conceptualisation of (in)security based on three theoretical pillars, redirecting security thinking away from mainstream/traditional theories of security. As such, Chapter Two constitutes a deconstruction of the traditional conceptualisations of security which have been mainly elitist, to a more comprehensive theorisation of security. The latter goes beyond the state to the individual and his/her surrounding environment/objects (both tangible/landmines and intangible/spirits), and socially embedded

power relations in the broad understanding of human security. I interrogated the efficacy of the traditional theories of security as well as more critical variants to demonstrate the inherent conceptual blinkers that have led to these grand theories' exclusion of the micro (in)security realities in an African context. Much of this thinking, despite coming from a critical vantage point in the case of HS and CSS remains androcentric and blind to alternative variables (gender, tangible and intangible non-human things) in the daily operations of (in)security, such as in a community living with ERW.

The chapter developed a feminist posthuman security approach that recognises gender as a formidable force that dictates everyday relations of men and women in post-conflict communities that are patriarchal. By means of the conceptualisation of three forms of agency, namely the agency of objects, of genders (men and women), and the African context, my research broadened the theoretical scope/base of human security at the micro/sub-state level. It can be diagrammatically depicted as follows:

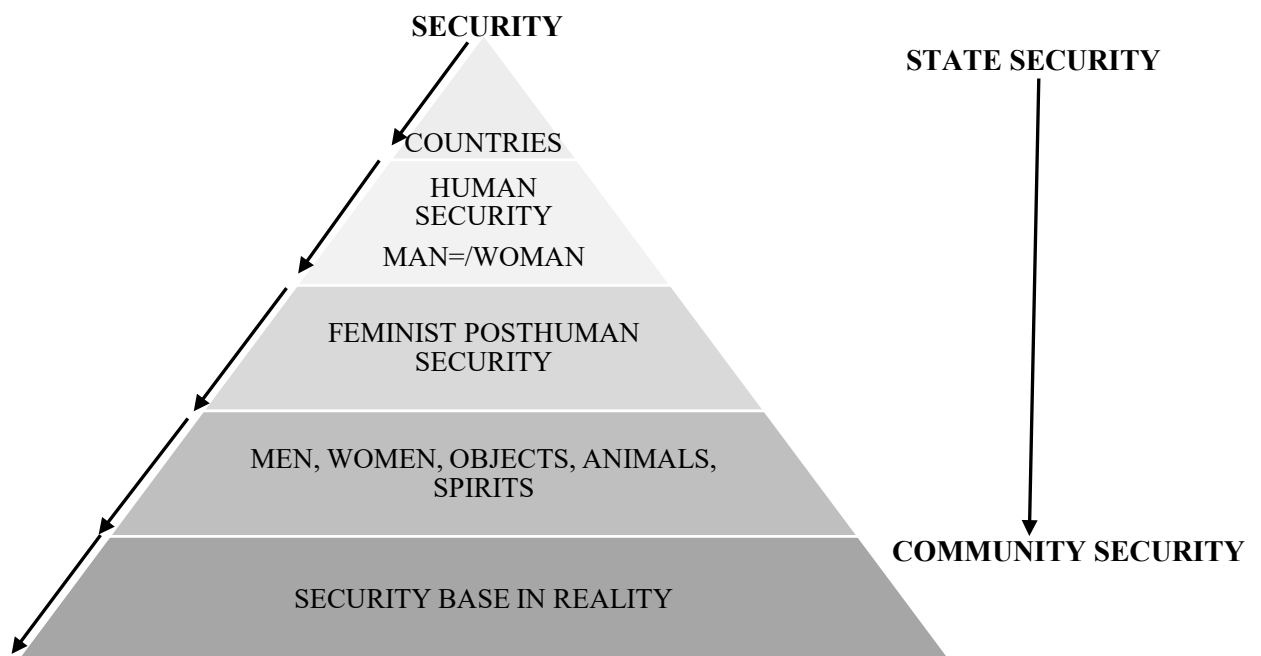


Diagram 1: Showing theoretical transition of security from macro to micro security at the community level (Source: Researcher).

The diagram shows how security initially was conceived as only essential for countries. In this upper echelon of security, security threats were perceived and envisaged to be perpetrated by states against other states, so the security of the individuals was neglected. As discussed in Chapter Two, none of the current security variants was found to be inclusive enough to do justice to the dynamics of a post-war African context, embedded in patriarchy but also deeply traumatised by the after-effects of war through the presence of ERW. In this context, such as in Mukumbura, it is the fluid interplay of men, women, animals, ancestral spirits and objects that ultimately shapes and reshapes (in)security.

In sum then, the main theoretical contribution of the study is its demonstration of a feminist posthuman security approach that challenges gender and identity binaries; foregrounds the agency of non-human objects; and fosters contextuality in acknowledging local/indigenous knowledge production, especially those relating to the security dynamics and issues of the African continent. Its theoretical strength lies in its inclusivity of different forms of knowledge (from global to local and from tangible (see the material effects of objects on livelihoods and physical well-being in Chapters Four and Five) to the intangible (see Chapter Three, Section 3.4).

The **empirical significance** of my research lies in the deep ethnographic analysis and thick description of experiences drawn from the field, i.e. the Mukumbura villages and their people. In Chapter Two, I critiqued the abstract nature of some of these security theories and as a challenge to these, my analysis was rooted in empirical evidence of everyday life of men and women from my fieldwork. Through the representation of the various testimonies, I aimed to present a sensory

experience of what it feels, sounds, tastes and smells like in everyday life in a community living with ERW.

It is only through a case study that one can really ‘see’ the fluidity of gender identities and binaries (ranging from degrees of agency to degrees of victimhood). An empirical real-life sense of insecurity across time and in a particular space also only comes with drilling down to the level of affect, where one can dissect the fears, perceptions and experiences of ordinary people (see in this regard the analysis in Chapters Four and Five). Thus, the everyday lived experiences of selected participants about life before, during and after the war, demonstrate how men and women have intra-acted with landmines and the ultimate effect that this has had on the meaning of security in post-conflict contexts whose landscapes are still weaponised with ERW.

My empirical work was informed by my normative and theoretical choices. I remained epistemologically critical of the hegemony of Western discourses of security that refute the possibilities of, for instance, spiritualities (spirit mediums) as significant variables in understanding (in)security in post-war African communities littered with ERW. I took such Western theoretical inclinations as a theoretical lacuna for a more reflexive Afrocentric human security approach that is in sync with the actual security realities typifying post-war African communities that are still affected by the presence of landmines.

Viewed as a whole, the analysis and findings of this study has addressed five reasons for embarking on the study (see Chapter One, Section 1.5). This research has introduced a critical gender focus to the extant literature on landmines. It has underscored the relevance of landmines

in the broader understanding of temporal and spatial concerns in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction where security is paramount. The fact that landmines have an enduring impact on security after the war, and the fact that I was able to demonstrate this point by means of empirical evidence from the field, can be valuable for a longer-term view of peacebuilding processes. As indicated in Chapter One, the theoretical work on posthuman security is yet to recognise the agency of landmines, and my study makes a significant contribution to this body of literature from a gender perspective. Empirically speaking, by highlighting the everyday insecurities of people in Mukumbura, I have not only added to the sparse literature on landmines in Africa, but also contributed to an enhanced understanding of what constitutes everyday security.

It is a study about the relational effects of matter and people, where they both become co-producers of (in)security within gendered spaces that are amplified as a result of their intra-action and tensions. The complexity of these intra-actions becomes apparent through the case study – fluid and multidimensional in nature, often confirming and entrenching gender binaries, but also thankfully often disputing those dichotomies. My work was set to challenge these binaries, and the combination of theory and case study assisted in producing an analytical synthesis that should be useful to other researchers interested in the study of materialities.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In this section, I briefly highlight the limitations that militated against this particular study and how I circumvented them to ensure the quality and validity of my findings and overall research.

The limitations mainly related to methodology, but I will also make observations on areas in my study which could be expanded in future research.

The first limitation was methodological as the communities under study proved to be rigid and resistant to some of the conventional data collection processes such as recording and taking photographs (see Chapter Three, Section 3.9.3). This negatively impacted on my research as I intended to record the narratives as the participants spoke, and take photographs of objects and interesting areas in real time. This would have aided in validating my ethnography as Kottack (2008: 78) points out that ethnography consists of real time recording of activities for the sake of authenticity and reliability of data. However, in my context, the participants clearly stipulated that I could not record them using any gadget or take photographs. As a result, to cover for that limitation, I had to rely on secondary data for photographs of landmines and some areas of interest in the villages from HALO Trust and ZIMAC reports on demining activities. For the diagrammatic presentation of data, I had to rely on memory and mapping capabilities from where I drew some sketch maps of the physical features of the two villages from my participant observation and transect walks. For the narratives, I had to note down the conversations and arrange them thematically throughout the fieldwork stay.

Secondly, my study focused largely on issues of security, specifically gendered human (in)security, but not specifically on how peace can be built or how such communities can recover post-conflict. The dynamics of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts which constitute an essential component of work done on the African continent forms the larger and more positive backdrop to my study. Future research holds the potential to more explicitly

consider the implications of a posthuman feminist study for building long-term peace and sustainable development, and particularly post-conflict reconstruction as the struggle currently is about failure to reclaim space for civilian habitation and economic production and/or to demilitarise civilian space militarised during the war of liberation. Failure to reclaim land through demining leads to competition for the little land that is safe for economic activities, and in this regard, my work offers an entry point into this important debate.

Thirdly, while my research focused exclusively on landmines as objects, subjects/agents of violence, the theoretical approach can be usefully applied to other matter, such as the Corona virus and the COVID-19 pandemic. While limited posthuman studies on Ebola in Africa (Liberia) have laid the groundwork for this, more can be done. In this regard, a comparative focus between ‘objects’ or across different country case studies with the same ‘matter’ at the centre could be useful. In addition, there is value in the framework for the further exploration of micro-level entanglements of humans and objects, such as computers, cell phones, vehicles, spirits, plants and animals as all these have been seen to be capable of exerting agency (constraining and enabling) which is equal to human agency.

Fourthly, although my thesis was feminist in nature, and therefore ‘in tune’ with power differentials, another more obvious political angle in the form of the governance aspects of landmines and their long-term fallout has not been covered. There is a growing body of New Materialisms scholarship on the power of matter or objects as tools of infrastructural rule, alienating people from the ones tasked to protect them. Landmines seen from this perspective may elicit interesting complementary findings.

Lastly, while I touched on the environmental effects of ERW, I have not placed these implications in a bigger context, of for example, climate change. Here, as well as in terms of matters spiritual, a lot more can be done to enhance our understanding of a secure future that is not anti-human but which takes the environment, ancestors and other unseen entities into consideration.

## **6.5 FINAL REMARKS**

The thesis has demonstrated that mainstream IR theories of security have been deficient in accounting for human (in)security in an African context where people still grapple with the presence of ERW. These grand theories of security have not been only state-centric and androcentric, but they have been hegemonic in denying the possibility of new theoretical lenses that correspond to non-Western contexts. This study thus has deconstructed such crude determinism through the advancement and application of a feminist posthuman security approach that contextually befits the security realities of post-war African communities in accounting for the alteration and gendering of (in)security spaces and practices where humans are entangled with landmines.

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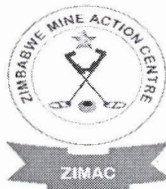
## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: ZIMAC permission letter to conduct research

Appendix B: Interview guide

Appendix C: Ethics clearance letter

RESTRICTED



ZIMAC/

Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre  
P Bag 7720

Causeway

Harare 703278

Mr Tagarirofa

23 August 2019

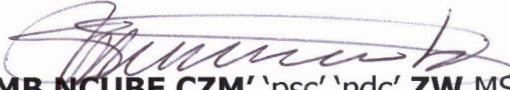
**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF LANDMINES ON MUKUMBURA COMMUNITIES.**

References:

A. Your email dated 07 Aug 2019.

1. This Centre acknowledges receipt of your letter requesting the above subject. We are pleased to inform you that **authority has been granted for you to conduct your research.**
2. We are very eager to share with you in the course of the research any information regarding landmines in the Mukumbura Community. We kindly request that you share with us the outcome of the research.
3. For any further assistance, feel free to get in touch with the undersigned on [zimacaction@gmail.com](mailto:zimacaction@gmail.com)
4. Best regards



  
**MB NCUBE CZM** 'psc' 'ndc' **ZW MSc IS UZ**  
 Col  
 Director ZIMAC

## **Ethnographic Interview Question Guide**

### **Questions**

1. How do landmines influence your everyday security?
2. How do landmines differently affect men and women's identity in the community?
3. Are there any changes in your everyday chores as a result of landmines in the community?
4. In what ways do landmines differently affect men and women's livelihoods?
5. Do landmine victims have equal access to healthcare?
6. What are the coping mechanism you are employing to overcome the effects of landmines in your everyday spaces and practices?

## **Life History Interview Question Guide**

The life history narratives will be guided by the following major question, with the option of probing further for clarification in light of the hypothesis and objectives of the study.

### **Major Question**

Can you narrate your experiences as a man or woman whose life has been shaped by the incidence of landmines before, during or after the war of liberation in your community, giving particular attention to the everyday life events that have directly been shaped or reshaped by these landmines as long as you remember?



**GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)**

01-Jul-2019

Dear Mr Tagarirofa, Jacob J

**Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

**Posthuman security and landmines: gendered meaning-making and materialities in the north-eastern border area of Zimbabwe**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2019/0448/2806**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Derek Litthauer**  
**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

Digitally signed  
by Derek  
Litthauer  
Date: 2019.07.01  
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