

ASSESSING ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF EX-PEOPLE'S LIBERATION
ARMY OF NAMIBIA COMBATANTS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND
VETERAN'S AFFAIRS FROM 2006 – 2022

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ABSTRACT

The history of Namibia, before the attainment of independence in 1990, is characterised by two major wars, that is the war of resistance (1885 – 1908), and later, the war of liberation (1966 – 1989). Following the conclusion of the liberation war, efforts to implement Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) for former combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and exiles from the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) were initiated. The DDR of ex-PLAN combatants was implemented by the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1989. 'Economic reintegration' within the context of Namibia refers to the assistance rendered to ex-PLAN combatants that was meant to support their journey toward achieving economic self-sufficiency succeeding the DDR process. This study assesses the 'economic reintegration' of ex-PLAN combatants in the Ministry of Defence and Veteran's Affairs (MODVA) from 2006 to 2022. The perceived problem discussed is that ex-PLAN combatants in Namibia face significant challenges in economic reintegration and career advancement due to limited education, lack of skills, lingering trauma from war, and inadequate post-conflict support systems, posing potential socio-economic perils and risks to national security and social stability. This study utilised a qualitative research approach, and the data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and was analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings of this thesis indicate that the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in Namibia was faced with numerous challenges, some caused by the stagnation of the country's economy, the region and/or the world economies between 2008 and 2021. The study recommends that the relationship between ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, the government and the ruling party should be positioned within the broader context of

Namibia's political and socio-economic landscape. Finally, the study contributes to the debates on the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA.

Key Words

War of Resistance

War of Liberation

UNTAG

DDR

Ex-PLAN Combatants

Economic Reintegration

DEDICATION

This thesis is devoted to all the members of the Namibian Defence Force, men and women in uniform who are charged with the responsibility of defending Namibia, its people and their valued properties. In addition, it is devoted to all Namibians who played a role in the nation's liberation struggle. Moreover, this thesis is devoted to each and every one who tirelessly made efforts and assisted in the compilation and completion of this dissertation. Lastly, it is dedicated to all my children, in the hope that it sets an example for all of them, that with hard work and faith in God, all things are possible.

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Figure 2: Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, Chief of Namas in 1904 (Courtesy of Namibia National Historical Museum).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	: Africa National Congress
APLA	: Azania Peoples Liberation Army
SMF	: Social Movement Forum
SPF	: Special Pension Fund
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
CCN	: Council of Churches in Namibia
CRT	: Critical Review Theory
DBC	: Development Brigade Corporation
ACORD	: Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
FAA	: Forças Armadas Angolanas (Angolan Armed Forces)
GoA	: Government of Angola
HDR	: Human Development Reports
HDT	: Human Development Theory
HS	: Human Security
IDDRS	: Integrated DDR Standards
IPA	: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
IRB	: Institutional Review Board
ISP	: Individual Support Projects

JMC	: Joint Military Commission
LURD	: Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	: Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NPFL	: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
MPLA	: Movimento Popular de Liberacao de Angola
RPF	: Rwandan Patriotic Front
SCT	: Social Capital Theory
TSNA	: Transitional Safety Net Allowance
UNAMIR	: United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNMIL	: United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNAVEM	: United Nations Verification Mission in Angola I, II, & III
UNITA	: Uniao Nacional para Independencia Total de Angola
MODVA	: Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs
NPC	: National Planning Commission
SFF	: Special Field Force
SIPE	: Socioeconomic Integration Programme for Ex-Combatants
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	: Namibia Statistic Agency

OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OAU	: Organization of African Unity
SWANU	: South West Africa National Union
SAPWO	: South West Africa People's Organisation
UN	: United Nations
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
UNAM	: University of Namibia
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNTAG	: United Nations Transition Assistance Group
WB	: World Bank
WHO	: World Health Organisation
FNCI	: Forces Nouvelles de Cote d'Ivoire
FRELIMO	: Frente de Liberacao de Moçambique
RENAMO	: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
IPMGW	: Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West
MJP	: Movement for Justice and Peace
MK	: Umkhonto we Sizwe

ONUMOZ	: United Nations Operation in Mozambique
PFIC	: Patriotic Front of Ivory Coast
RSS	: Reintegration and Support Scheme
RGPA	: Rome General Peace Accords
CMF	: Commonwealth Monitoring Force
ZANU-PF	: Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	: Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZNLWVA	: Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

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DECLARATION

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Gabriel Alweendo

Date

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

According to Du Pisani, Kössler, and Lindeke (2010), South West Africa or Deutsch-Südwestafrika, currently known as Namibia has a history divided into pre-colonial era and post-colonial era. The time from independence on 21 March 1990 till now, when the country gained independence from South African rule, that marks the end of colonial and apartheid rule, is called post-colonial era, (Journal of Namibian Studies, 2018). On the other hand, the pre-colonial era lasted until the arrival of European colonisers during the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s (Tosh, 2015). Moreover, the pre-colonial era is characterised by two remarkable wars: the War of Resistance (1885 – 1908) and the War of Liberation (1960 – 1990).

The aftermath of both wars has culminated in two perilous compensatory demands. Firstly, the war of resistance was followed by demands for the German government to compensate South West African/Namibians for the genocide and atrocities committed by their colonial forces. Melber (2014) observes that, the discussion on genocide started in 2006 in the Namibian Parliament, and in 2015, the talks with the German government commenced. In May 2021, Chancellor Angela Merkel, representing the German government, officially expressed an apology and took accountability for the genocide. Subsequently she announced that their government would introduce a framework to address the repercussions of this historical tragedy (Lykes & Mersky., De Greiff, 2006). Merkel emphasised that the scheme would include 1.1 billion euros (US\$1.2b) in development aid, while 50 million euros would be set aside for research, remembrance and reconciliation projects. The Namibian government accepted the apology from the German government, but the Herero and Nama communities (who were directly affected by the genocide and felt that they had been excluded from these conversations) saw it to be a betrayal. At the time of writing this thesis, these negotiations are still ongoing. On the other hand, after the war of liberation, in the 1990s, ex-PLAN combatants initiated demands for SWAPO and the Namibian government to compensate them and their families for their contributions and sacrifices made while fighting for Namibia's independence (Metsola, 2015). These demands came in the backdrop of what was widely perceived as a problematic DDR process for ex-PLAN combatants, (Metsola, 2015).

According to the Integrated DDR standards (IDDR), (2006), “disarmament is defined as the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, light and heavy weapons of combatants from the civilian population”. In addition, “disarmament includes the development of responsible arms management programmes”, (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005). Consequently, on the same note, the General Assembly defines demobilisation as “the structured and official release of active combatants from military forces or armed groups”. “The initial phase may involve placing individual combatants in temporary centers or gathering troops in specific locations such as cantonment sites, encampments, assembly zones, or barracks”, (May, 2005). “The subsequent phase includes providing support to those demobilized, known as reinsertion, to help facilitate their transition back into civilian life”, (Secretary General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005).

In line with the foregoing, reintegration is defined as, “a process in which ex-combatants change their identity from combatant to civilian and alter their behaviours by ending the use of violent means and increase activities that are sanctioned by the mainstream community’s behaviours, such as social, political, and economic” (Torjesen, 2013). Further to that, “reintegration has been further imagined to be the social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. Hence, it is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance,” (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005). Similarly, reinsertion denotes the immediate support offered to former combatants during the demobilisation stage, serving as a precursor to the more extended reintegration process (Özerdem & Podder, 2008). This short-term aid typically encompasses financial assistance, vocational training, and essential services aimed at facilitating their transition to civilian life (Özerdem & Podder, 2008). According to the Secretary-General’s note, reinsertion is intended as a short-term measure to meet the basic needs of former combatants and their families (Specht, 2010). This support can take various forms, including financial stipends, food, clothing, shelter, healthcare,

temporary education, skills training, job placement services, and essential equipment (Specht, 2010). He further alluded that reintegration is an extended socio-economic process aimed at sustainable development while reinsertion focuses on immediate financial or material aid, typically lasting up to one year (Specht, 2010). Metsola (2010) describes DDR as a process aimed at fostering security and stability in post-conflict recovery by disarming combatants, disengaging them from military structures, and supporting their social and economic reintegration through access to civilian livelihoods. DDR is the first step in the transition from war to peace by ensuring a safe environment for transferring ex-combatants back to civilian life and enabling people to earn livelihood through peaceful means instead of war (Massimo, 2003). However, Massimo (2003) emphasises that DDR becomes considerably more challenging in post-conflict environments where opposing groups remain deeply divided by longstanding animosities and face persistent security threats. Torjesen (2013) defines economic reintegration as the process of supporting former combatants in their transition to civilian life by equipping them with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to secure a sustainable livelihood.

Thus, the researcher is of the opinion that economic reintegration within the Namibian context means assistance rendered to ex-PLAN combatants that helps them establish economic self-sufficiency after the initial process of DDR. Furthermore, in Namibia, the DDR process was carried out in 1989 by the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Through this initiative, an estimated 40,000 to 45,000 SWAPO-affiliated civilian refugees and approximately 13,000 former PLAN combatants were disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated into civilian life (Metsola, 2015; UNTAG Report, 1990). However, Dzinesa (2017) contends that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the agency mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 435 to

oversee Namibia's transition, focused primarily on the repatriation of disarmed and demobilised liberation fighters from Angolan bases. The responsibility for their reintegration was largely delegated to the newly established SWAPO-led government, resulting in a disconnect between the disarmament and demobilisation phases and the reintegration component of the DDR process (Dzinesa, 2017).

Similarly, it can be argued that by entrusting the reintegration process to a SWAPO Party-led government, UNTAG inadvertently created conditions conducive to the emergence of a patriotic historical narrative that began to shape and influence reintegration policies in post-colonial Namibia (Mazarire, 2019). Consequently, by 2006, roughly a decade later, demobilised ex-PLAN combatants organised under the newly established Committee on Welfare of Ex-combatants/War Veterans, launched a large-scale nationwide protest. They presented a formal set of demands to the Namibian president, which included a lump sum payment of N\$500,000 or N\$31,000 for each year spent in exile, along with a monthly stipend of N\$8,000 for every former PLAN combatant (Metsola, 2010).

Their claims were dismissed by the Founding Father of the Namibia nation, Dr Sam Nujoma, who was SWAPO president at the time, arguing that their demands would bankrupt Namibia and collapse the country's economy (Metsola, 2010). However, the government later agreed to some of the conditions, and this led to the creation of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in October 2006, followed by the creation of the data base for ex-PLAN combatants and all SWAPO exiles, with the goal of resolving matters pertaining to their economic wellbeing and welfare programmes, (Metsola, 2010). The Namibian experience was by no means unique, as transitions from armed struggle to independence in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, and other parts of Africa and indeed globally, were frequently marked by deep-seated mistrust and animosity (Dzinesa, 2017).

Resultantly, it can be observed that the UNHCR-led DDR presented challenges to the effective implementation of the DDR program in Namibia. This is primarily because the responsibility for 'reintegration' was overlooked and delegated to the newly established Namibian government (Metsola, 2010). Metsola (2010) further contends that the government-led reintegration strategies were poorly implemented and problematic. Subsequently, Metsola (2006, p. 119) concludes that, "the failure to reintegrate ex-combatants means that they will continue to pose a potential threat to national security, stability and could force national authorities to implement new reintegration initiatives". Colletta and Muggah (2009) affirm that, more than a decade after the introduction of the UN's DDR standards and the evolution of second-generation DDR, a widespread conviction persists across Africa that effectively addressing the continent's conflicts and crises necessitates substantial reforms in the international community's strategies for peacekeeping and DDR implementation. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) encountered challenges during the DDR process in Sierra Leone, where some ex-combatants attempted to exploit the system by disarming multiple times to claim benefits on more than one occasion. In other instances, challenges arose when certain commanders refused to surrender their weapons, while some female combatants were either excluded or unable to participate in the DDR process due to not possessing arms (Oluwaniyi, 2018). Oluwaniyi (2018) notes that this ultimately led to the collapse of the 1999 peace agreement, prompting armed rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to launch a devastating assault on Freetown, the capital city, and that attack resulted in the deaths of more than 5,000 people.

In a different context, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) illustrates a similar challenge. Despite the disarmament and demobilization of over 200,000 ex-combatants in the early 2010s, numerous armed groups remained active in the country's eastern region by the decade's end, continuing to inflict thousands of casualties annually during

that period (Massimo, 2003). Those armed groups include the National Liberation Force (FNL) - a Burundian rebel group in South Kivu of DRC, the Allied Democratic Force (ADF) - a Ugandan rebel group based along the Rwenzori Mountain of eastern DRC and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) - another Ugandan rebel group operating in areas bordering DRC at north (MONUSCO, 2013). Additionally, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) represent the largest foreign rebel faction operating within the DRC. The group is composed of former officials from the ousted Rwandan government, ex-members of the Rwandan military, and Rwandan civilian refugees (MONUSCO, 2013).

Moreover, DRC is also home to several domestic armed groups, including the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFLC), the Alliance for the Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APFSC), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Armed Forces of the Congolese People (AFCP), various Mai-Mai militias, the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALR), and the M23 movement (MONUSCO, 2013). Although these rebel groups often engage in inter-factional conflict, they primarily direct their hostilities toward government forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A key driver of the ongoing violence is the struggle for control over the resource-rich North Kivu province, particularly its lucrative diamond reserves (Country Report on Terrorism: DRC, 2019). The report further observes that, the fighting and recurrence of conflicts in the DRC is largely due to improper disarmament and a lack of the proper reintegration processes for ex-combatants'

The scale of displacement in conflict zones underscores the limitations of existing peacebuilding and DDR frameworks. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for instance, more than two million individuals were newly displaced during 2017 and 2018 alone, reflecting the enduring instability and fragmentation of armed actors despite

ongoing DDR efforts (MONUSCO, 2012). However, this phenomenon is not confined to the DRC. The Central African Republic (CAR) presents a parallel case, where over the past two decades, more than thirteen international and regional peacekeeping missions and DDR programs have been deployed in an attempt to stabilise the country (UN Crisis Report, 2012). Yet, both contexts reveal a recurring pattern: while DDR initiatives may achieve short-term disarmament or demobilisation, they often fall short in addressing the structural drivers of conflict, such as weak governance, competition over natural resources, and exclusionary political settlements. As such, displacement becomes both a symptom and a consequence of incomplete or poorly coordinated peacebuilding strategies.

Despite the breadth of these interventions, by early 2019, more than 80 percent of the Central African Republic (CAR) remained under the control of armed groups, a situation largely attributed to the deficiencies in reintegration efforts, among other contributing factors (Pichon & Karhilo, 2020). In Côte d'Ivoire, there has been observed progress in such processes. Dzinesa (2017) highlights the pivotal role played by the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire in advancing the government's DDR efforts, which contributed to notable progress in the post-conflict recovery process. Reflecting this success, the UN Secretary-General formally acknowledged the completion of the mission's mandate and welcomed the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 28 June 2017 (Dzinesa, 2017). Regrettably, Dzinesa (2017) states that disarmed ex-combatants allegedly launched a series of attacks in Abidjan and other localities of Côte d'Ivoire just after three months of the end of the UNOCI. The ex-combatants were reportedly threatening to set the country on fire, claiming that the government had yet to pay the full amount of money promised to each combatant as a part of the negotiated DDR package (Dzinesa, 2007). Dzinesa (2007) further notes that this marked the second instance within a six-month period in which former Ivorian

combatants challenged state authority, leading to unrest and instability within their local communities. As reported by UNOCI (2006), the groups responsible for widespread unrest in Côte d'Ivoire included the Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire (FNCI), the Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West (IPMGW), the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP), and the Patriotic Front of Côte d'Ivoire (PFIC).

In the Zimbabwean context, Metsola (2007) notes that maintaining peace during the ceasefire period leading up to the 1980 elections largely depended on the presence of the relatively small Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF), which was tasked with overseeing the truce between approximately 22,000 Patriotic Front guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces. The Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) was composed of military personnel from countries including Australia, Britain, Fiji, Kenya, and New Zealand, as no United Nations DDR framework existed at the time to oversee such operations. Major General John Acland, who commanded the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF), noted that the Australian contingent was specifically assigned to oversee the designated assembly points where Patriotic Front guerrillas had agreed to regroup. Their primary mandate was to monitor and report any violations of the ceasefire. According to Acland, the team documented numerous breaches and instances of intimidation by both parties; however, these disruptions did not prevent the electoral process from proceeding as planned. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) emerged victorious in the elections, leading to his appointment as Prime Minister and official swearing-in on 18 April 1980 (Ndlovu, 2019). On the same day, the country previously known as Rhodesia, was officially renamed Zimbabwe (Ndlovu, 2019).

Following the elections, the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) withdrew from Zimbabwe, transferring full responsibility for the critical task of ex-combatant

reintegration to the newly established government (Lamb, 2013). This mirrored the situation in Namibia, where the withdrawal of UNTAG in 1990 similarly left the reintegration process in the hands of the incoming national administration (Dzinesa, 2007). Dzinesa (2017) suggests that the new Zimbabwe government placed much focus on state-sponsored pensions, but these were not adequate to ensure self-sufficiency, as issues of housing and employment were overlooked. In addition, there is no official record of how many previously landless ex-combatants benefited from the government's land resettlement program since 2000 (Dzinesa, 2017). A number of scholars have concluded that ex-combatants may possess characteristics that make them more susceptible to engaging in various forms of violence such as criminal activity or domestic abuse, especially in contexts where reintegration initiatives are inadequate or unsuccessful (Kingman, 2015).

Clearly, Southern Africa's experiences reveal a discernible connection between unsuccessful DDR processes and the participation of ex-combatants and veterans in acts of violence within transitional societies. This dynamic poses a significant challenge in defining the duration and boundaries of the transitional period (Metsola, 2006). Furthermore, several focused studies (Mazarire, 2023; Dzinesa, 2016; Kingman, 2015) emphasise the need for additional empirical research and comprehensive surveys to better understand the dynamics of ex-combatants' economic reintegration and their potential involvement in violence across Southern Africa and the continent more broadly. These studies suggest that the recurrence of violent conflict in many African contexts is often linked to the failure to effectively reintegrate former combatants following the cessation of hostilities. This paper also assesses the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA and proposes recommendations that might help policymakers and bureaucrats to address setbacks associated with challenges of reintegration as well as assist other scholars who pursue further studies in this field.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study sought to assess the economic reintegration of ex-combatants from the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)'s military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), into the MODVA from 2006 to 2022. The study further examines all reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA and in the process, attempts to ascertain the extent to which such programmes were successful in economically re-integrating ex-combatants back into society. In addition, the thesis spells out the unique individual direct/indirect economic challenges confronting ex-PLAN combatants and evaluates the quality of life of ex-PLAN combatants, as well as their economic well-being in post-colonial Namibia.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Metsola (2006a) characterizes young ex-combatants as a "lost generation," noting that the conflict deprived them of access to education, employment opportunities, and vocational training. He further explains that many individuals impacted by war frequently contend with psychological trauma, substance abuse; particularly involving alcohol and drugs including a continued dependence on weapons and violence as coping mechanisms, as documented in various research studies and reports. Furthermore, Metsola (2006a) observes that once ex-combatants lose their military-based livelihoods, they often face significant challenges in adjusting to civilian life. In a related observation, the UN General Assembly Overview Document A/48/935 notes that male ex-combatants frequently engage in antisocial behaviour within their families and communities following demobilization. This has often resulted in increased instances of economic and social violence, especially sexual harassment (UN General Assembly Overview Document A/48/935). In addition, a survey conducted under the World Bank project

P160272; an initiative that plays a key role in providing technical and financial support to governments undertaking DDR programs indicates that many former combatants lack foundational education, employable skills, and the social competencies necessary for effective economic and social reintegration (UN General Assembly Overview Document A/48/935).

The above suggestion is also applicable and comparable to the experience and context of ex-PLAN combatants in Namibia. Most of them did not receive formal education or vocational skills during the liberation struggle, and as such, many of them found themselves in an economically hostile post-independence Namibia, where unemployment was rife especially for the unskilled among the populace.

Knight (2008) opines that a typical war veteran or ex-combatant is semiliterate at best, is unskilled, has few personal possessions, often has no housing or land and frequently has many dependents. Knight (2008) aligns with scholars like Metsola (2006a) in emphasising the importance of providing ex-combatants with targeted support and humanitarian assistance. This need is particularly urgent given their immediate post-conflict unemployment and the significant loss of time and opportunities they experienced while engaged in armed struggle for national liberation.

Consequently, United Nations (2010) and McMullin (2013a) also submit that there is an observed lack of tertiary education among ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, and this has been a major hinderance to them being appointed to senior posts in the military. This limits their career advancement and economic independence. Additionally, most ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA are older and no longer suitable for further training or promotions, hindering salary increases and career progression.

Further to that, previous veteran programs such as financial assistance grants and adult education (literacy) likely failed to adequately address the economic challenges of ex-

PLAN combatants (Metsola, 2010 & McMullin, 2013b). This oversight most likely contributed to the series of demonstrations by ex-PLAN combatants in the early 1990s and largely in 2006 demanding welfare and employment from the state, (Metsola,2010). Ultimately, it is likely that the majority of former PLAN combatants did not receive adequate economic guidance following the liberation struggle. Consequently, the psychological trauma of war and prolonged exposure to combat-related stress may have contributed to the mismanagement or misappropriation of their financial resources. Recorded symptoms that negatively affect their economic reintegration include health related issues such as drunkenness, stress, depression, mental problems, agitation and Absent Without Leave (AWOL) to mention just a few (Metsola, 2015).

According to the Defence Act, Act 1, 2002 and the Military Disciplinary Code (MDC) enacted in the Defence Act, Act 1, 2002 as amended, (Government Gazette no 2468, 2013), offences such as drunkenness and AWOL are punishable by law, if the offender is convicted. According to Section 14 of the Military Disciplinary Code, any Defence Force personnel who absents themselves without authorized leave or a legitimate justification may be subjected to disciplinary measures, which can include dismissal or discharge from service (Defence Act, Act No. 1 of 2002). Similarly, drunkenness or being intoxicated during or after hours and being incapacitated to the extent that a member cannot perform his/her duties as required, is also punishable by law as prescribed in the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002. These challenges are a clear indication of the problematic nature of reintegrating ex-PLAN combatants in post-colonial Namibia, particularly those serving in the uniformed forces in the MODVA, where discipline is at the centre of the core values. Due to these perceived challenges ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face unique challenges in their economic reintegration, and this study will attempt to unpack the above as noted in the study objectives below.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to assess the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. To realise this objective, the following sub-objectives were formulated:

- a. To examine the extent to which reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were successful in economically reintegrating them into society.
- b. To assess the unique individual direct/indirect economic challenges that ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face.
- c. To evaluate the quality of life for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA by gauging their economic wellbeing in post-colonial Namibia.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that the thesis endeavour to address are the primary and secondary research questions listed hereunder:

a. Primary Research Question

To what extent have reintegration programmes been successful in economically reintegrating ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA?

b. Secondary Research Questions

1. What social and economic challenges do ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA encounter during their reintegration process?
2. How do ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA perceive their economic well-being and overall quality of life in post-colonial Namibia?

1.6 Significance of the study

The lived realities of reintegrated ex-combatants in post-colonial contexts, is a major concern for the post-colonial African governments, the ex-combatants and the societies they are reintegrated into. The criticality of the current study contributes to extant discourses by investigating and assessing the unique economic challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA at an individual level, as opposed to the economic circumstances of all ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. As such it provides insights into the uniqueness of the lived realities of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. In so doing, it is envisaged that the recommendations proposed herein, may benefit the ex-PLAN combatants, employed in the MODVA, policymakers, the public, all relevant stakeholders as well as academics.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Firstly, Buxton (2008) emphasises that reintegration constitutes a multifaceted and enduring process, one that necessitates comprehensive longitudinal analysis to be fully understood and effectively implemented. The researcher is confident that they took adequate time to focus specifically on ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. As such extensive reading of works done by other scholars was conducted in order to mitigate this challenge. Secondly, economic reintegration remains a politically sensitive issue in Namibia, contributing to the limited availability of publicly accessible data on the subject (Mazarire, 2023). Lastly, the military security arrangements and the availability of classified data hamper the explorative nature of the research and will thus also impact the ability to generalise the findings. However, the study was, to a large extent, successful because the researcher was able to gain access to the ex-combatants as he is also one. The researcher identified himself to the respondents by producing his veteran's

identity card, military identity card and was dressed in full military uniform. This in turn created the atmosphere of trust between the respondents and the researcher.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This research was conducted at the MODVA in Windhoek and targeted purposively selected respondents only. The study was also delimited to concentrate on the reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants only, and excluded ex-SWATF and Koevoet personnel. Furthermore, it did not engage much with disarmament and demobilisation aspects of the process. Finally, because of these delimitations, the findings for this study are context specific and cannot be generalised to the rest of the country, as earlier mentioned.

1.9 Definition of major terms

Below are definitions of major terms used in this study:

a. Armed Groups/Rebels

This refers to “groups that have the capacity to acquire and equip themselves with arms for facilitating the use of force to achieve political, ideological or economic objectives. They are thus, not within the formal military structures of a State, State-alliance or intergovernmental organisation, and are not under the control of the State in which they operate” (UN IDDRS, 2006).

b. Demobilisation

Dzinesa (2010) defines demobilisation as “the formal process and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces and groups by releasing them from military service, especially at the end of a war as a result of victory in war or because the crisis has been peacefully resolved”.

c. Dependants

These are civilians who depend on a combatant for their livelihood. These include friends and relatives of the combatant, such as aged men/women and non-mobilised children. Some dependents may also be active members of a fighting force. Therefore, for the purposes of DDR programming such persons shall be considered combatants, not dependents, (Du Pisani, 2010)

d. Disarmament

According to UN Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, (May 2005) “disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light or heavy weapons of combat from fighters and removing them from the civilian population”. Disarmament also “includes the development of responsible arms management programmes” (UN Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005).

e. Economic reintegration

Economic reintegration refers to “a set of support, with actual project initiatives, designed to help ex-combatants exiting from armed groups and conflicts” (Torjesen, 2013).

f. Ex-combatant

“Is a person who has been disarmed, demobilised, reintegrated and registered by sanctioned bodies such as the UN, UNHCFR and host governments under the recipient’s disarmament and militia dismantlement program” (UN IDDRS, 2006). In addition, it also refers to “a person who assumed any of the responsibilities, or carried out any of the activities mentioned in the definition of ‘combatant’, and has laid down or surrendered his/her arms with a view of entering into a DDR process” (UN IDDRS, 2006).

g. Post-conflict

According to the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD), “post-conflict can be described as the time, period or events taking place immediately after a conflict is over” (Cunningham, 2017; Caplan, 2017).

h. Refugee

A ‘refugee’ is defined in the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees “as a person who is outside the country of their origin, and has a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (UNHCFR, 1951). Moreover, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa also defines “refugees as persons fleeing civil disturbances, widespread violence and war in their country of origin”, (UN IDDRS, 2006).

i. Reinsertion

According to the note to the General Assembly (2005), “Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilisation but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools”, (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005). Moreover, “Reinsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs and can last up to one year” (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005).

j. Reintegration

Reintegration is defined as “a process in which ex-combatants change their identity from combatant to civilian and alter their behaviours by ending the use of violent means and increase

activities that are sanctioned by the mainstream community's behaviours, in the realms of social, political, and economic activities" (Torjesen, 2013).

k. Stakeholders

This refers to all local, national and international actors who have an interest in the outcome of any DDR process. This includes participants and beneficiaries, parties to peace accords/political frameworks, national authorities, all UN and partner implementing agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, regional actors and international political guarantors of the peace process.

l. Veteran

A veteran is "a person who was a member of the Namibian liberation forces, provided the person was above 18 years of age on 21 March 1990 or consistently and persistently participated in furtherance of the liberation struggle" (Veterans Act 2 of 2008 p.16-17).

m. War of liberation

Wars of national liberation, also known as 'wars of independence', are conflicts fought by nations to gain independence from a foreign power or coloniser.

n. War of resistance

In military terminology, a resistance movement simply seeks to change government policies through violent or non-violent means.

1.10 Research Ethics

The academic ethics processes is discussed in chapter 3 as part of research methodology

1.11 Organisation of the study

The study sought to assess the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. It is organised into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter presents a detailed introduction and thoroughly examines the study's background. Additionally, it clarifies the statement of the problem, highlighting the study's focus on evaluating the challenges faced in the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants within MODVA. One of the study's key objectives is to propose strategies for the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants through DDR programs. A review of existing case studies in the literature indicates that reintegration efforts have largely been unsuccessful, often leading to the involvement of ex-combatants in violent activities. Additionally, this chapter explores other essential aspects of the study, including its objectives, significance, limitations, and scope. It concludes by defining key terms, presenting the study's structure, and summarizing the main points covered.

Chapter Two: Literature Study and Theoretical Framework. This chapter reviews extant literature that speaks to similar concerns sharing close affinities with the current discussion on the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. The chapter also provides and discusses the major explications of the theoretical frameworks adopted in the study – the Critical Review Theory (CRT) by Sally Shariff (2018), the Human Development Theory (HDT) by Amartya Sen (1997) and the Social Capital Theory (SCT) by Asher Thomas and Vikas Gupta (2018). In this chapter various resources are reviewed, and gaps are projected. In addition, this chapter also critically discusses the methodological limitations of such previous studies.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used to carry out the study. It further outlines the population of the study,

the sampling procedure, research instruments for data collection, the data collection procedure, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Results, Interpretation of Findings and Discussions. This chapter examines the data, presents the study's findings, and demonstrates how the collected data addresses the study's objectives. The results are discussed in relation to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations. This chapter outlines the study's conclusions and recommendations, while also integrating the key findings to demonstrate their alignment with the research objectives.

1.12 Summary

In summation, ex-combatants have, to a large extent, gone through varied traumatic experiences of war, and these experiences make them prone to engage in various forms of violence, such as criminal and domestic violence - if they are not properly and successfully reintegrated back into greater society. An overview of the experiences of ex-combatants within Southern Africa evinces that “there is a link between the gaps in DDR processes and the involvement of ex-combatants in violence within transitional societies” (Dzinesa, 2008). This chapter offers an introduction, contextual background, and an explanation of the importance of assessing the economic reintegration of Namibia's ex-PLAN combatants within the MODVA framework. The chapter further presented the problem statement, the research objective guiding the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, and the delimitation of the study. It also provides definitions of major terms that are critical to this study and concludes by explaining how the study is organised. The next chapter reviews extant literature review and explains the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the aim of the study – an assessment of the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, with a greater focus on their unique individual economic challenges as well an evaluation of their economic wellbeing in post-colonial Namibia. This chapter critically reviews and synthesizes a body of existing scholarship, outlining the key theoretical frameworks that inform the study; namely, Critical Review Theory, Human Development Theory, and Social Capital Theory.

In undertaking both goals, the chapter attempts to contextualise the current study within extant literature as well as explicate how the theoretical framework provides explanatory potential for the current existential realities of ex-PLAN combatants culminating from their economic reintegration in the MODVA. The chapter also identifies and articulates existing research gaps, while concurrently examining the methodological limitations inherent in previous studies.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The assessment of economic re-integration of ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA was explained through the explications of the Critical Review Theory (CRT) by Shariff (2018), the Human Development Theory (HDT) by Sen (1997) and the Social Capital Theory (SCT) by Thomas and Gupta (2022).

The CRT states that “the post-conflict era risks renewed war if demobilised combatants are not properly reintegrated into the society, by predicting the situation from theoretical perspective to the reality” (Shariff, 2018). The ‘critical analysis’ within this theory entails the examination and evaluation of another person’s ideas in a subjective manner. It involves asking questions to participants, whose answers will help one understand an issue or what existing literature says about that specific issue, and the degree/extent of

investigation that has already been carried out. This means that the researcher needs to critically review elements of the economic reintegration programme circumstantially, and not in a generalised manner. This is because such economic reintegration processes depend on the causes of the preceding conflicts, the needs and capacities of ex-combatants themselves, and the overall economic conditions in the post-conflict society (Özerdem, 2012). The theory is deemed fit for this research that sought to critically review and analyse the economic reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatant in the MODVA, their behaviours, their needs and their living in the post-conflict Namibia. In addition, the study undertakes a critical analysis of the formal, as well as informal processes and mechanisms that aim to provide emotional and psycho-social supports to ex-PLAN combatants, and potentially enable them to build relationships with their families and communities within which they returned (Specht, 2010).

The researcher also utilises the explications of the Human Development Theory (HDT) by Sen (1997), who defines “Human Development as the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals, and which facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic wellbeing”. This theory helps in explaining the link between human capital and economic reintegration amongst ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. The UNDP (2015) defines “human development as the process of enlarging people’s choices, by allowing them to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, to enjoy a descent standard of living, as well as political freedom, so as other guaranteed human rights and various ingredients of self-respect”. In essence, economic reintegration initiatives should prioritize enhancing the employability of former PLAN combatants by equipping them with vocational skills and fostering an economic climate capable of integrating a substantial number of them into the workforce (ILO, 2009). The theory is deemed fit as demonstrated by its utilisation by Mazarire (2023) to analyse the economic trajectory of SWAPO exiles and proved to be quite effective in explaining dynamics surrounding the phenomena.

The third theory used in this study, the Social Capital Theory (SCT) by Thomas and Gupta (2018), define Social Capital as “the aggregate of actual or potential resources

which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”. Additionally, the SCT posits that social relationships function as valuable assets that contribute to the growth and accumulation of human capital (Sharma, 2015). For instance, a supportive and stable family setting can foster the educational progress of children and promote the acquisition of sought-after skills and qualifications. This implies that social capital pertains to the networks and relationships among individuals within a given society, which facilitate collective action and societal functioning (Sharma, 2015). In this context, it specifically refers to the relational ties among ex-PLAN combatants and how this can be leveraged for their economic reintegration. Sharma (2015) further noted that “it involves the effective functioning of social groups through interpersonal relationships, a shared value, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity”. Furthermore, he states that social capital “is a measure of the value of resources, both tangible (public space, private property) and intangible (actors, human capital, people), and the impacts on resources involved in each relationship”. Sharma (2015) further asserts that social capital has been instrumental in accounting for the enhanced functioning of diverse groups and the developmental trajectories of different communities. This theory will be key in explaining the role of social networks in reintegration, particularly how these networks influence the economic reintegration of individual ex-PLAN combatants in post-colonial Namibia. Its effectiveness is demonstrated again in Mazarire’s (2023) study, which applied the concept to examine how social capital was a key component in the economic trajectories of former SWAPO exiles in post-colonial Namibia.

Although all three theories are different at the core they help to theorise or explain the process of the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, providing the reader a broader perspective of the different variables influencing the process (of economic reintegration). However, it is important to note that this study pushes against

the masculine perception of military men/women, which often overlooks the humanity of those in the military. In Namibia's case ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA have received little attention, as the assumption has been that because they have jobs, they have already reintegrated economically. Yet many ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA continue to face social and economic challenges, with some being bread winners within their families. Therefore, it will be pertinent to humanise ex-PLAN combatants serving in the MODVA, as people who experience real life challenges and have real economic needs, in order to get a clearer picture of their economic reintegration in the post-colony. Thus, with these theories in mind it is now imperative to examine literature on DDR programmes in Africa to contextualise Namibia's DDR process, with a special focus on economic reintegration.

2.3 Literature study

A sizeable amount of scholarship has provided evidence of how specific aspects of DDR programmes have contributed to the system's ability to halt the presence of active conflict (Gilligan, 2012). In addition, Kaldor (2007) states that, the end of the Cold War saw a global increase in civil wars and conflicts that soon earned the label of "new wars". Kaldor (2007) further observes that the outbreak of numerous conflicts across Africa led to the continent increasingly being associated with state collapse and the emergence of dysfunctional or criminalized governance structures. Moreover, perceived global security threats and the post-Cold War supremacy of liberal values, together with the imagery of state failure and new wars produced a policy discourse (Gilligan, 2012; Kaldor, 2007). This demanded that the international community be active in peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, state-building and that human security be placed over that of states (Kaldor, 2007 & World Bank, 2011).

In addition, DDR programmes, as well as security sector reforms, became an integral part of the above-discussed palette of peacekeeping, conflict resolution and state-building policy instruments (Gleichman et al., 2004). DDR initiatives emerged in the

1980s, and since then, approximately two-thirds of these programmes have been implemented on the African continent, often with the participation of international bodies such as United Nations agencies, the World Bank, and a range of non-governmental organizations (McMullin, 2013a; Muggah, 2010). In alignment with the preceding discussion, the Namibian DDR process implemented by UNHCR and UNTAG between 1989 and 1990, represented the first DDR initiative to be formally endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, pursuant to Resolution 435 (Muggah, 2010). There is a tendency by many researchers to “portray ex-combatants and their movements as a potential threat that could easily relapse into political violence or common crime, as a result of the DDR programmes not being not well or completely implemented” (McMullin, 2013c). The chapter thus, engages with a wealth of perceptive scholarly arguments addressing the reasons for conflict, the motivations of ex-combatants, and their social, political and economic situations in post-conflict settings by various researchers. In such an engagement, the study relates these arguments to the current study’s research objectives, established in Chapter 1 and reproduced below.

- a. To examine the extent to which reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were successful in economically reintegrating them back into society.
- b. To assess the unique individual direct/indirect economic challenges that ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face.
- c. To evaluate the quality of life for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA by gauging their economic wellbeing in post-colonial Namibia.

In the Southern African context, former soldiers have been recognized as a distinct policy constituency across post-conflict nations including Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia where reintegration strategies, veteran affairs policies,

associations, and dedicated ministries have institutionalized their inclusion (Lamb, 2013). The fact is that most of these countries share the historical experience of settler colonialism and all of them gained their independence after prolonged liberation wars, and considerably later than most other African countries, (Metsola, 2006). In fact, ex-combatant reintegration and veteran policies in Namibia, have been a predominantly domestic affair similar to Zimbabwe and South Africa (Metsola, 2015). These two Southern African countries regarded ex-combatants or veterans as groups that needed government assistance such as to be given land, to have preferential access to employment and other benefits as prescribed in reintegration policies, in order to militate against possible recurrence to conflicts (McMullin, 2013c; Wiegink, 2013). In Namibia, ex-PLAN fighters have also, to some degree, received preferential treatment, particularly within the Special Field Force, which recruited several ex-PLAN fighters (McMullin, 2013c). The Special Field Force is a Namibian Police Tactical Unit established in 1995, with the task of providing protection of the borders and government installations, (McMullin, 2013c). Kingman (2000) states that the post-conflict DDR of former combatants was crafted and implemented as part of the broader transition from war to peace and stability, through the management of weapons and sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants as one of the primary goals of these programmes. However, in every instance, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes failed to fully achieve their intended objectives, resulting in varied consequences for security and stability (Metsola, 2006). The following section engages with literature on the distinct scenarios from different parts of Africa and the world focusing on the reintegration of ex-combatants in post-conflict states, commencing with Namibia - which is the focus of the current study. Primarily, “an analysis of the region demonstrates a trend of poorly crafted and implemented DDR processes” (Dzinesa, 2008).

2.3.1 The case of Namibia

According to Garcia (2018) the history of statehood in Africa, in which Namibia also belongs, is unique in the sense that it was initiated by donors, and not by domestic leaders, which negatively impacted the legacies and prospects of democratic governance. This process was characterised by colonialism, the Atlantic Slave Trade and Apartheid which made African politics and historical literature what they are today (Robinson 2002). Therefore, the current study will first provide a brief discussion of historical background of Namibia, followed by other related issues such as repatriation of ex-PLAN combatants and SWAPO refugees, UNTAG's mandate, the DDR programme, government initiatives on reintegration and concludes with an examination of the consequences of the DDR programme in Namibia.

2.3.1.1 Namibia – a short historical background

Niikondo (2006), as earlier on explicated in Chapter 1, submits that “Namibia's history up to independence in 1990, is characterised by two remarkable wars - the war of resistance (1885 – 1908) and later on, the war of liberation (1960 – 1990)”. The first war was fought after “Namibia, then known as South West Africa, was proclaimed a German protectorate by Otto von Bismarck in 1884, who was the Founder and First Chancellor of the German Empire from 1871 – 1890” (Mbembe, 2001). The antagonism started after Namibia was transformed into a settler colony, and the land in central and southern part of the country was forcibly appropriated from the Namas and Hereros, and turned into large white-owned farms, (Bayart, 2000). Moreover, the establishment of German rule involved brutal wars of conquest that killed about half of the Nama and most of the Herero communities (Steinmetz & Hell 2006).



Figure 1, above, illustrates the battle between the Hereros and German colonial force on horses, battling for areas in the vicinity of Oha Makari - Otjiwarongo between 1904 -1907. (Captured by Peter Womack, a German journalist). Source: The book named; Warfare in Germany South-West Africa 1884-1908 by Peter D. Womack

In 1904, the Herero people, led by Samuel Maharero (see figure 1) and the Nama people, led by Hendrik Witbooi (see figure 2) of South West Africa rose up against the German colonisers in the war of resistance (Steinmetz & Hell, 2006). The conflict led to the issuance of an extermination order by General Lothar von Trotha, which authorized the widespread and indiscriminate killing of the Herero and Nama populations. As a result, between 1904 and 1907, an estimated 50,000 to 65,000 Herero and around 10,000 Nama people were systematically killed; an atrocity now recognized as genocide (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2008). The end of this war was considered by most historians to be the first recorded genocide of the 20th century, especially Horst Dreshter, a German historian, who was the first to make a case in 1966 that the German campaign against the Herero and Nama was tantamount to genocide (Kossler, 2015). Genocide is defined as “an act committed with an intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or

religious group and define the magnitude of the crime committed, especially mass murder of groups of people” (Zimmerer and Zeller, 2008).

The Vernichtungsbefehl well known as the extermination order signed by the supreme commander of German troops in GSWA, General Lothar von Trotha, on the 2nd of October 1904 states that the Herero were no longer German subject, any Herero sighted within the territory of GSWA (present day Namibia) with or without a weapon, and with or without cattle would be shot dead. General von Trotha is quoted to have said “I will no longer accept women and children but will send them back to their people or let them be slaughtered and this order is applicable to all Nama too” (Gewald, 1994). In addition to the order, German soldiers were given the right to rape Herero/Nama women (Adhikari, 2008). Additionally, Gewald (1994) states that “General von Trotha has made the following proclamation:

“I, the great General of the German troops, send this letter to the Herero people. The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and stolen, they have cut off the ears, noses and other body-parts of wounded soldiers, now out of cowardice they no longer wish to fight. I say to the people: Anyone who delivers a captain will receive 1000 Mark, whoever delivers Samuel will receive 5000 Mark. The Herero people must however leave the land. If the populace does not do this, I will force them with the Groot Rohr [Cannon]. These are my words to the Herero people. The great General of the mighty German Kaiser”, (Gewald, 1994).

An estimated 10,000 German troops, armed with heavy military equipment, were stationed in German South West Africa to subdue indigenous African populations (Metsola, 2010). While some scholars—such as Sudholt (1975), Poewe (1986), Spraul (1988), and Lau (1989)—have attempted to dispute, downplay or minimize the existence of General von Trotha’s Extermination Order, compelling archival research conducted in Botswana, supported by documentation from the Botswana National Archives, has conclusively substantiated both the order’s authenticity and the German colonial administration’s commitment to its execution. Gewald (1994), believes that this directive and its underlying motivations were central to the mass displacement and eventual permanent resettlement of a large portion of the Herero people in Botswana.

McGregor and Goldbeck (2014) note that the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 led to a shift in colonial authority in German South West Africa (now Namibia), as South Africa, then under British dominion invaded and defeated the German colonial regime. Following the war, the League of Nations granted South Africa a mandate to administer the territory (McGregor & Goldbeck, 2014). Matz (2005) believes that South Africa did not only inherit the administrative frameworks established during German rule but also reinforced and institutionalized them within a more oppressive colonial structure, often harsher than that of other settler colonies. Mamdani (2007) highlights the racialized legal system that emerged, wherein white settlers enjoyed full legal citizenship while Africans were governed through customary laws that severely limited their mobility, residence, employment, and political agency. This legal and social architecture entrenched systemic racial segregation across housing, education, land ownership, and occupational opportunities (Mamdani, 2007).

Figure 2: Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, 1904. Due to his legacy, this image is placed on the Namibia currency in honour of his bravery, idea and efforts to unite his forces to fight the German colonial troops and their administration. (Courtesy of Namibia National Museum). The Namibia National Museum is located in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. It operates across multiple sites, including the Alte Feste Museum on Robert Mugabe Avenue and the Owela Display Centre on Lüderitz Street. These locations house historical, zoological, and cultural collections that showcase Namibia's rich heritage



Crawford (2002) adds that large areas of central and southern Namibia were designated as “Police Zones” for exclusive white settlement, whereas black South West Africans were relegated to under-resourced native reserves, later termed homelands, where they relied on subsistence farming and coerced migrant labour in white-owned economic sectors.

Apart from occasional incidents of resistance to German and British South African rule throughout the colonial period, it was only after “the Second World War that a national consciousness evolved among South West Africans, resulting in full-fledged nationalism in the 1950s” (Wallace (2014). According to Miskarik (2019), the new era begins “when

the liberation struggle war starts after the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was formed on the 19th of April 1960, under the leadership of His Excellency former President and Founding Father of independent Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma, and emerged as the leading nationalist movement, side-lining the predominantly urban and Herero-based South West Africa National Union (SWANU)".

SWAPO initially campaigned for Ovambo migrant workers' rights, being a predominantly northern-based tribe. However, the organisation soon broadened its objectives to encompass national liberation, and explicitly denounced ethnic factionalism (Williams, 2011). Williams (2011) further explains that, during the early 1960s SWAPO was operating in exile from countries such as Angola, Zambia, Tanzania and some friendly countries in Africa. After "unsuccessful attempts to reach a peaceful solution, it resorted to an armed struggle, and in 1966, its military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) engaged South Africa territorial forces militarily" (Melber, 2003 & Hooper, 2013).

While in exile, SWAPO received substantial backing from key allies such as Eastern European nations, Cuba, and the former Soviet Union (Melber, 2003; Hooper, 2013). This support was primarily military and rooted in the broader socialist bloc. In addition, SWAPO benefited from non-military aid provided by other international actors, along with expressions of solidarity from segments of the Western world that endorsed their liberation struggle. Melber (2003) further observes that "the liberation war led to the militarisation of the South West African society, and the northern part of the country was turned into a theatre of war". In addition, tens of thousands of young South West Africans, mainly from Ovamboland or Oshiwambo-speakers, joined SWAPO and the liberation struggle in exile in the 1970s and 1980s in large numbers (Metsola 2011). Metsola further observes that most young people also crossed into Angola, after Angola attained Independence in 1975, to join SWAPO. There were a lot of battles and massacres

committed by South Africa, such as the Cassinga massacre on 4 May 1978, where almost a thousand exiled Namibians lost their lives (Metsola, 2011; Shigwedha, 2011; White, 2019; William, 2010).

The last battle was on 01 April 1989, when the UN struggled to contain the South African territorial forces into their base, because the disarmament program was about to commence for both PLAN fighters and SWATF/Koevoet (UN SG Report, 1990). Finally, the implementation of the United Nation Resolution came into effect in 1989 under the supervision of UNTAG, resulting in SWAPO winning the elections and Dr Sam Nujoma declared the winner and the first state president of Namibia in 1990, bringing an end to the era of wars (UN SG Report, 1990).

2.3.1.2 UNTAG mandate

According to a report of the United Nations Special Representative to the United Nation Secretary General (1989), the UNTAG was a UN peacekeeping force deployed from April 1989 to March 1990 in South West Africa, with the mandate of monitoring the peace process and election there, in terms of the United Nation Security Council Resolution 435. It was composed of four thousand five hundred (4500) civilian components and four thousand five hundred (4500) military personnel totalling nine thousand (9000) (Dzinesa, 2016). Metsola (2013) observes that “the central objective of the UN operation was to create conditions conducive for the holding of free and fair elections that would elect the constituent assembly, which in turn would draw up a constitution that would guide them in their governance mandate and clearly specify the conditions under which Namibia would proceed to independence as a free and sovereign state”. Dzinesa (2011) adds that the process, all of which was to take place under UN supervision and control, would move step by step from ceasefire to transition to

independence all to be completed to the satisfaction of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, who at the time was Martti Ahtisaari. The United Nations Secretary General at the time was Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar (UN SG Report, 1990).

UNTAG's functions and mandate, as outlined in the UN Secretary General's Directive of 1989 to his Special Representative to Namibia included the following:

- "Create a political condition for a free and fair elections.
- To ensure that a major change in political atmosphere took place so that there could be a free and fair election campaign in a fully democratic climate.
- To enable Namibian citizens to freely practice their political feeling without intimidation.
- To monitor the rapid reduction and removal of SA military presence in Namibia, which was an essential pre-requirement for a free and fair election in the country.
- Further monitor the dismantling of SWAT/Koevoet and their demobilisation.
- Monitor the confinement of SWAPO (PLAN combatants) in their bases in Angola.
- To monitor the South West Africa Police (SWAPOL) and control how they perform their duties to allow for free and fair elections.
- Repeal of discriminatory laws, amnesty, release of prisoners and detainees.
- Responsible for returning of all refugees and all returnees on time, to participate in the elections" (UN SG Report, 1990).

UNTAG was monitored by bodies such as United Nations Security Council, International media organisations, non-governmental organisations and the Namibian Task Force in New York chaired by the UN Secretary General (UN, 1989). Ultimately, during a midnight ceremony on 21 March 1990 commemorating Namibia's Independence, the South African flag was formally taken down and replaced permanently with the Namibian national flag (Namib Times, 2018). During the inauguration ceremony, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar formally administered the oath of office to Sam Nujoma, the newly elected president of the Republic of Namibia (Metsola, 2013). Although there were minor incidents here and there, the entire election process

generally free and fair and Namibia's transition is widely considered as one of the most successful UN peacekeeping mission of the late 20th century.

2.3.1.3 Repatriation process

According to the Council of Churches in Namibia (1989, 1990), ex-PLAN combatants and all SWAPO exiles were demobilised and repatriated to Namibia from June 1989 during the transition to independence after the war ended. Shariff (2018) further states that approximately 50 000 SWAPO returnees, including approximately 13 000 ex-PLAN combatants were repatriated back to Namibia from Angola, Zambia and other African countries - including those who were elsewhere in the world. Most returnees arrived by air and landed at Ondangwa, Grootfontein and Hosea Kutako (International airport in Windhoek) airports. The World Bank Report Number 23869 (2002) states that each SWAPO refugee was issued with a repatriation form by the UNHCR as proof of being a refugee. In addition, the same report defines the repatriation form as a document issued by the UNHCR to returning refugees, confirming their intent to return voluntarily to Namibia with the assistance of the UNHCR. It is further used as a return document providing clear information of a refugee and later to be used as the basis to consider them for reintegration assistance once all eligibility criteria are met (UNDP, 2005). A contingent of UN peacekeepers named UNTAG was involved in the transition to independence, assisted by the UNHCR and the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), who jointly implemented a Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RRR) programme for returnees (Council of Churches in Namibia 1989, 1990, 1991; UNHCR 1989).

Dzinesa (2013) explains that there were no active policies on reintegration or rehabilitation in place when the repatriation process commenced in Namibia. Accordingly, the repatriation package provided to Namibian returnees, including ex-

PLAN combatants, comprised a one-time payment of R10, along with basic resettlement items such as an axe, a lasher, two cooking pots, a single bed mattress, two blankets, agricultural seeds, and a variety of food supplies intended to support them for a six-month period (UNHCR, 1989). In addition, it was assumed that the ex-PLAN combatants, returnees and demobilised soldiers would simply go back home and resume life in their local communities simply on their own (UNHCR, 1989). For most returnees (civilians and ex-PLAN combatants), it was emotional to be reunited with their families and friends whom they had not seen for several years, in some cases for decades. However, it did not take long before tensions began to simmer due to several socioeconomic factors, such as the continued unemployment of ex-combatants and differences in lifestyle between returnees and the local populations (Shariff, 2018). Consequently, this resulted in many ex-PLAN combatants migrating to urban or peri-urban areas in search of better opportunities. Dzinesa (2013) submits that, later on the living conditions turned out to be harder and harder, forcing those ex-PLAN combatants to demand employment from the government and the SWAPO party. This resulted in a tug of war between them and their principals, a situation that deteriorated further as discussed intensively in the next section.

2.3.1.4 DDR in the Namibia context

Metsola (2013) acknowledged that following the conclusion of the war in 1989, ex-PLAN combatants underwent processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. Essentially, Metsola (2013) further explains that disarmament refers to the process of removing all weapons of war from the possession and reach of former combatants. The disarmament process of ex-PLAN combatants took place in Angola at the 16th and 18th parallel under the supervision of UNTAG assisted by the government of Angola from the 8th of April 1989, after an official announcement by the president of SWAPO and Commander in Chief of PLAN to disarm (Metsola, 2013). Most of the

disarmed PLAN combatants were kept in Chibemba, a small town south of Lubango, monitored by the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and UNTAG. The opposing ex-SWATF/Koevoet forces were not subjected to the same disarmament process as PLAN combatants but were fully disbanded in 1989 as part of the implementation process of UN Security Council Resolution 435 (Metsola, 2019). Nilson (2005) describes demobilisation as the process of dismantling all combat-related structures and transitioning ex-combatants out of a state of combat readiness by disengaging them from military activities immediately following disarmament.

According to Metsola (2013) ex-PLAN combatants were taken away from their temporary disarmament point (Chibemba) to Lubango, where they joined their civilian counterparts (non-combatant SWAPO exiles) and enlisted for repatriation to Namibia by UNTAG, while their opponents (SWATF/Koevoet), were sent home (society) directly. 'Demobilisation', in short, is just the decommissioning of military personnel (McMullin, 2013c). This process is considered to have been successful, according to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Report of 1989.

Reintegration, as outlined earlier in Chapter 1, refers to the process by which ex-combatants integrate or reintegrate into civilian life, gaining acceptance within social units such as families and communities (Metsola, 2010). This process is multidimensional, involving social, economic, and psychological components (Metsola, 2010). McMullin (2013c) concludes that social reintegration entails the acceptance of ex-combatants and their families by the wider community, along with their active participation in communal activities and decision-making processes on equal terms with other members. Economic reintegration, on the other hand, is considered successful when former combatants attain a standard of living comparable to that of the broader community (McMullin, 2013c). However, reintegration is a profoundly individualised

process, wherein each ex-combatant navigates their return to civilian life in distinct ways shaped by the socio-economic and political context, personal aspirations, available opportunities, and their own temporal trajectory (Shariff, 2018). Torjesen (2013) explains that a broad perspective on reintegration assistance is key to acknowledging the role of both short-term support in the immediate post-demobilisation period, as well as the role of medium and long-term assistance after resettlement into a civilian society. McMullin (2013a) defines resettlement as an act or process of helping someone move to another place to live or an act of moving to another place and live there. In this regard, the World Bank (2002) contends that the success of reintegration is not solely determined by the motivation and actions of individual ex-combatants, but also by the readiness, capacity, and engagement of a broad range of stakeholders. These include community leaders, government bodies, civil society organizations, religious institutions, private sector entities, multilateral organizations, donor agencies, and foreign governments—all operating within the broader political, legal, economic, cultural, and religious frameworks of the country. Resultantly, their joint support efforts can greatly contribute to each ex-combatant's individual reintegration processes. In Namibia, Metsola (2013) contends that the short-term support in the immediacy of the post-demobilisation of ex-PLAN combatants and all SWAPO refugees was made up of the package as listed earlier under the section titled 'Repatriation' in this chapter. Subsequently, medium and long-term assistance after resettlement into civilian society encompasses psychological support (Kingman, 2002). In this context, psychological support encompasses interventions aimed at addressing both the physical and economic needs of ex-combatants, which are considered central to the majority of reintegration programs (Saldner, 2019). Saldner (2019) further emphasises that the criticality of the psychological aspects of these programmes have not been sufficiently addressed and has been a consistent challenge across the DDR programmes. In addition, he concludes that

psychological aspects are a key area towards which, greater research and resources are required. Metsola (2010) observes that in the Namibian context, insufficient attention was initially given to psychological support in addressing the mental health challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants. As a result, there was a lack of systematic assessment to identify those most in need of counselling and guidance for reintegration into civilian society. Consideration of the psychological aspects was imperative as the security sector of the country needed personnel with good mental health, capable of handling arms. This oversight most likely contributed to the series of demonstrations by ex-PLAN combatants in the early 1990s and 2006 demanding welfare and employment from the state. In return the government labelled them as problematic and as a potential threat to state security (Metsola,2010). Owing to concerns over their perceived threat to national security, the Namibian government integrated a number of ex-PLAN combatants into the newly established Namibia Defence Force (NDF) and Namibia Police Force (NAMPOL) in 1990, with subsequent recruitment rounds occurring in 1995 and 1998, primarily as a means of providing employment and ensuring stability. However, the economic status of the country then, dictated that the country could only have a very small army, consisting of 5000 personnel only (MOD, 2002). Over time, the NDF and NAMPOL absorbed approximately 10 000 ex-PLAN, ex-Koevoet and ex-SWATF fighters (MOD, 2002). Metsola (2010) notes that a significant number of ex-PLAN combatants encountered persistent challenges in maintaining sustainable livelihoods. Consequently, a shared sense of grievance and collective identity began to emerge, culminating in a series of protests through which they demanded employment opportunities, financial support, and official recognition from both SWAPO and the government. Similarly, Mazarire (2023) documents many cases of unemployment, poverty and destitution among ex-PLAN combatants in the 1990s and 2000s.

Metsola (2010) observes that the first demonstrations by ex-PLAN combatants was in August 1990, resulting in 18 000 among them being registered on an employment waiting list and reintegration processes. Metsola (2010) notes that several reintegration initiatives were implemented in Namibia, notably the creation of the Development Brigade in 1991, which served as the country's first major and sustained reintegration effort. This initiative was later restructured into a state-owned enterprise, called the Development Brigade Corporation (DBC). The DBC's conception was "inspired by the Botswana Youth Brigades and the skills training centres for ex-combatants in Zimbabwe" (McMullin, 2013). There were also other initiatives, such as the rehabilitation of the war-disabled, and the requirement that companies applying for government tenders to employ ex-combatants (Metsola, 2006b).

The DBC's mandate was to focus on vocational training and impart knowledge and skills that can turn the ex-PLAN combatants into electricians, carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, plasterers and skilled agricultural workers (Melber, 2007). After a series of failures, in fulfilling its mandate, the DBC was decommissioned and disbanded at the recommendation of the Technical Committee on ex-PLAN combatants' reintegration (Metsola, 2010). This resulted in a large number of ex-PLAN combatants being left to their own devices in terms of income, many were seen loitering around in towns and suburbs without employment. Subsequently, demonstrations demanding compensation from the SWAPO led government gained traction, particularly from the mid-2000s (Metsola, 2010).

In response, the government decided to review all those various non-coordinated reintegration schemes, such as the PLAN Veteran Trust, SWAPO Veteran Trust, DBC and the government resettlement programme into a centrally coordinated effort, differing from the initial reintegration programmes (Shariff, 2018). Despite the government's various efforts, the newly established body—the Committee on Welfare of Ex-

combatants/War Veterans, which later evolved into the Namibia Ex-Freedom Fighters and War Veterans' Association—rejected these initiatives, arguing that they did not effectively address the economic hardships faced by veterans (Shariff, 2018). Subsequently, the association presented several proposals and demands to former President Lukas Pohamba in June 2006 (Metsola, 2010). Metsola (2010) further notes that the committee advocated for monetary reparations to ex-PLAN combatants, proposing either a single lump-sum payment of N\$500,000 (approximately €60,000 at the time) or annual compensation of N\$31,000 (around €3,700) for each year spent in exile. In addition to that, there were also demands for a monthly salary of N\$ 8,000 (around €955 at that time) for each ex-PLAN combatant or war veteran. Other additional demands includes raising the retirement age of ex-PLAN combatants to seventy (70) years, free education and medical services, housing, protection from unfair competition in business, appointments at government higher positions, favourable income generating projects, setting up of an ex-PLAN combatants fund, fishing quotas, mining concessions and decent burials (Metsola, 2015). The spokesperson of the group, who was Alex Kamwi at the time, justified these claims by saying: “People question the credibility of us ex-PLAN combatants, but did they ever question this when we were fighting for this country?”, (*The Namibian*, 21 June 2006, p. 1).

Subsequently, representatives of the committee met with President Pohamba at the Namibian Presidential Residence, the State House, where they threatened to stage a sit-in until their demands were addressed. In response, President Pohamba referred them to SWAPO President and former Namibian Head of State, Dr. Sam Nujoma, who is widely regarded by former PLAN combatants as their supreme commander (Metsola, 2006). Nujoma responded firmly, stating that their demands were unrealistic and that meeting them would bankrupt the country and severely damage the economy (Metsola, 2010). In addition, Nujoma questioned their patriotism, accusing them of selfishness and of

seeking to divide the nation and undermine the country's peace and stability (Metsola, 2010). Despite this rebuke, the committee, while affirming their respect and loyalty to Dr. Nujoma, whom they referred to as a father figure and acknowledged as such; remained determined to proceed with a nationwide demonstration planned for June 2006 ('War vets open for dialogue', New Era, 27 July 2006).

However, following a reassessment of Dr. Nujoma's remarks, the government introduced the new Veterans Bill in late 2007, which was subsequently enacted as the Veterans Act in August 2008 (Metsola, 2013). The Act provides for the registration and provision of assistance to veterans and their dependents.

"a veteran is defined as: any person who (a) was a member of the liberation forces; (b) consistently and persistently participated or engaged in any political, diplomatic or under-ground activity in furtherance of the liberation struggle; or (c) owing to his or her participation in the liberation struggle was convicted, whether in Namibia or elsewhere, of any offence closely connected to the struggle and sentenced to imprisonment" (Veteran Act, 2008).

As a result, the government established the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, mandated to oversee, assess, and implement new reintegration programmes aimed at supporting ex-PLAN combatants and all veterans of the liberation struggle (McMullin, 2013). Lastly, some additional government incentives towards ex-PLAN combatant's reintegration are discussed in detail in the following section.

2.3.1.5 Government initiatives

According to Mr Nangolo Mbumba on his address to August 26 House (Namibia Parliament) in October 2010, there were various actions and government efforts since 1990, directed towards addressing the plight of veterans of the national liberation struggle of Namibia, (Metsola, 2010). Mbumba also conceded that the new government had initially made limited progress in addressing the challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the national liberation struggle (Metsola, 2010). However,

the government subsequently recognized the pressing need to respond to their economic and social reintegration requirements. Metsola (2010) highlights that the initial measure involved establishing a committee comprising deputy ministers, alongside the creation of a Socio-economic Integration Fund. Following a renewed registration process for ex-combatants in 1995, the Cabinet delegated responsibility for the matter to the National Planning Commission, which subsequently launched the Socio-economic Integration Programme for Ex-Combatants (SIPE), aimed at generating employment and training opportunities for former combatants and war orphans who had returned from exile. Initially, SIPE faced challenges due to issues with ex-combatant registration and insufficient personnel to carry out the task effectively. At the time, Minister of Finance Mr. Mbumba clarified that the government's intervention was designed in phases—the first occurring before the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the second taking place after its creation. Before the ministry was formed, the government had already undertaken various efforts to support the reintegration of veterans from the national liberation struggle.

- The first intervention was the ***handing over of animals***. The intervention aimed at providing livestock for animal husbandry to older veterans at the time of Namibia's independence faced significant challenges (Metsola, 2010). Poor management and insufficient funds to acquire livestock were major obstacles, which ultimately limited the program's success and its ability to benefit many veterans as intended.
- The second intervention was the ***creation of the Development Brigade Corporation (DBC)*** with the aim of empowering veterans with skills development through training in the fields of agriculture and construction ((McMullin, 2013; Office of the President of the Republic of Namibia, 1998). According to Metsola (2010) this project did not materialise due to the fact that

it was managed in a quasi-military manner without any prior planning of its vision, with no well-defined goals, outcomes and outputs and without a set timeframe. Subsequently, the program lacked proper market analysis. As a result, the DBC was disbanded and discontinued.

- Thirdly, ***the Social Integration Program for Ex-Combatants (SIPE)*** was created with the aim of reintegrating veterans into the civil society and provide them with self-employment opportunities (McMullin, 2013). Metsola (2007) criticises the programme for having been poorly coordinated and lacking clear organisational mechanisms. As noted by McMullin (2013), the Socio-economic Integration Programme for Ex-Combatants (SIPE) played a key role in establishing the Special Field Force, now incorporated under the Ministry of Safety and Security which enlisted a considerable number of former combatants from both PLAN and SWATF. Furthermore, ex-combatants with relevant qualifications were integrated into the civil service.
- Fourthly, the Government offered housing to a limited number of elderly veterans and disabled ex-PLAN combatants, including former Robin Islanders (McMullin, 2013). However, Metsola (2010) and Mazarire (2023) criticises this effort, noting that it benefited only a small portion of the intended recipients and that the provided houses or structures were of substandard quality.
- Lastly, the ***Peace Project*** was created with the purpose of integrating veterans into a number of public offices such as Defence, Police, Correctional Services, including all State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and all civil entities applying for government tenders, (Veterans Affairs Office, 2006). It is noteworthy that those ex-combatants who were integrated into various institutions have continued to derive sustained benefits from the initiative, leading to marked improvements in their quality of life (Metsola, 2010).

The researcher previously indicated that, following the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the government implemented various measures aimed at alleviating the challenges faced by veterans, particularly after passing of the Veterans Act 2 of 2008.

These include, among others:

- A **Monthly Financial Assistance** of N\$2,200 is paid out to unemployed veterans, and to those veterans whose income is below the tax threshold (Mbumba, 2000). Further to that, if a veteran who was receiving a monthly assistance subvention passes on, and is survived by dependents (a spouse and/or children under the age of 18), the spouse is entitled to receive fifty-five percent (55%) of the N\$2,200, and the children are entitled to receive equal amounts of the other forty-five percent (45%) of the same N\$2,200 (which will be equally divided among them) (Republic of Namibia CCDS Report, 2007).
- The ministry further provides **medical assistance** to veterans with health problems related to the liberations struggle. In addition, veterans with physical disabilities are assisted in purchasing prosthetics, mobility aids, hearing aids etc. Veterans with war related injuries are assisted with the cover of medical treatment at government health institutions and facilities (McMullin, 2013). McMullin further acknowledges that from 2009 to date, the ministry has assisted more than 200 veterans with prosthetics, orthopaedic shoes, wheelchairs, artificial legs, spectacles, dermatological treatment, respiratory systems treatments, and other treatments of liberation struggle war-related ailments.
- Through the same program, veterans who are traumatised by the war or by the effects of the war of the liberation struggle, that is, those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), receive **free counselling**. A consultative stakeholder workshop was conducted in order to determine what could be done

in this regard, and how the stakeholders could assist the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in the years ahead (Metsola, 2006).

- **Individual Support Projects (ISPs)**, were implemented as provided for by the Veterans Act, 2008, to a maximum of N\$200,000 (US\$13 431 at the time), per approved viable project of own choice. The ministry acknowledged that the veterans were facing a number of challenges in making their projects viable due to factors such as health, age and a severe lack of skills to manage the projects. A decision was then made by the government to convert the grant into cash of N\$170 000 (US\$11 416). Thus, the veterans now have an option to access the grant in cash, and currently work is underway to process applications made by the veterans, but it is progressing very slow, (Ministry of Veterans Affairs, 2006).
- Mbumba (2000) also explains that there was a **Once-off Gratuity payout** to veterans of the national liberation struggle. Veterans that served between 1959 and 1987, received a gratuity of N\$ 50 000 (US\$ 2889) as per 2008 currency converter index, and those who served between the period 1988 to 1989 received a gratuity of N\$ 20 000 (US\$ 1343). These monies were given out as a token of appreciation to those who are alive today, consideration was given to also consider those who had sacrificed their lives during and after the struggle at an appropriate time, and after a thorough consultation with relevant institutions (Metsola, 2010; Government of Namibia, 2013). Metsola (2010) further states that, this gratuity was received by the majority of veterans, save perhaps for only a few who did not receive the grant due to known or unknown reasons.
- **Educational and Training Grants for Veterans and their Dependents**, which seeks to provide financial support to some veterans and dependents of veterans wishing to further their studies or obtain vocational skills at institutions of higher learning in Namibia. The program, however, is not a replacement of the

scholarship programs implemented by the Ministry of Education, (Government of Namibia 2004). While conducting the research, the researcher established that the application process and subsequent approval of the education and training grant are cumbersome. Added to that, is the challenge of a very limited budget for this scheme.

- ***Funeral Grant and Expenses*** are also provided to ex-combatants to ensure that all deceased veterans of the liberation struggle are buried in a respectable and dignified manner (Metsola, 2015). In addition, McMullin (2013) explains that “the Funeral Grant covers any or all of the following services or costs: preparation of the body, mortuary fees; coffin, wreath, gravesite, transport of casket within the borders of Namibia, cremation fees including urn, columbarium/niche and tombstone”. This translates into a total of N\$20,000 being used for each burial, of which N\$10,000 is earmarked solely for the purchase and erection of the tombstone, while the rest can be used for other services.
- ***Land Resettlement Benefit*** through which the MODVA of Namibia assists landless veterans to get land under the country’s resettlement programme. The acquisition of land is critical as it enables the veterans to engage in agricultural activities such as animal husbandry and in the process, improve their economic standing (Government of Namibia, 2012). The programme has received criticism from several researchers such as Metsola (2010), who believe that the programme was hijacked along the way and benefited other people and not the intended beneficiaries - the veterans. As a result, most veterans are still living in poverty without land on which to engage in viable economic activities.
- Lastly, due to the relative strength of the Namibian state in terms of both administrative capacity and availability of resources, reintegration in the country was predominantly run by governmental bodies and remained relatively

independent of international agencies. This gave the Namibian government considerable room to make its own choices in planning, targeting and implementing reintegration. As such, it was possible for the government to divert from mainstream DDR programmes and attempt to solve the ex-combatant question with broad-based public employment (McMullin, 2013).

2.3.1.6 Consequences of DDR in Namibia

There were notable consequences in Namibia during and after the implementation of the DDR programme. Firstly, the intention to employ ex-PLAN combatants was not solely aimed at providing livelihoods and enhancing economic productivity, but also at fostering direct individual connections between former combatants and state authorities—an outcome that reintegration efforts led by NGOs, international agencies, or informal networks could not achieve (Metsola, 2011). Secondly, the SWAPO-led government effectively consolidated its support base within the public sector, particularly among the uniformed services, through the implementation of reintegration programmes (Metsola, 2010). At the same time, the government laid the foundation for future demands from ex-PLAN combatants by formally recognizing them and granting them the status of veterans of the national liberation struggle (McMullin, 2013). Consequently, the reintegration process also conveyed a contrasting message through a deliberate act of exclusion; signalling to former SWATF and Koevoet fighters that they were not acknowledged as veterans of the liberation struggle, but rather regarded as collaborators who aided the enemy in sustaining its unlawful occupation (Metsola, 2015). Furthermore, the securitisation of ex-combatants conveyed a strong message to both the domestic public and the international community that this was a matter demanding urgent attention from responsible leaders, specifically those with expert knowledge of former SWAPO fighters and exiles, rather than a task for just anyone. In this context, Shariff (2018) argues that the SWAPO-led government positioned itself as both the regulator of

potential violence and unrest, and the guarantor of national peace. As a result, many ex-PLAN combatants have maintained their networks and political identities, successfully transforming these into strategic assets for collective bargaining with the state (Nilsson, 2005). Notably, ex-PLAN combatants and veterans have skilfully and consciously avoided a return to violence, despite initially being perceived as a threat to national peace and security. This restraint has significantly shaped the trajectory of Namibian statehood. Accordingly, Nilsson (2005) concludes that Namibia's reintegration experience reflects effective biopolitical governance and the sound bureaucratic functioning of a modern state.

2.3.1.7 Challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants

Ex-PLAN combatants in Namibia face a multiplicity of challenges. Firstly, most of the war veterans are fifty years and above, and the majority struggle to start viable income-generating projects due to health challenges and the lack of knowledge or skills to run the businesses (Metsola, 2010). Secondly, not all veterans of the liberation struggle have been registered. Thirdly, a number of individuals who were officially registered have yet to receive the N\$170,000 (US\$11,416) cash payment intended to support their individual projects (2023/24 Budget). Moreover, a number of war veterans continued to experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of their wartime experiences, yet access to psychosocial support services remained limited and inconsistent (Metsola, 2019). Lastly, the economic reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the liberation struggle were severely impacted by a series of compounding crises. These included the national economic recession between 2019 and 2020, a decline in raw material prices, prolonged drought conditions, poor soil fertility hindering agricultural productivity, and the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Defence

and Veterans Affairs, 2022; Mazarire, 2023). The following section reviews the literature on the implementation of DDR in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

2.3.2 The case of Angola

Nilsson (2007) notes that Angola engaged in an armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule beginning in the 1960s. During this period, liberation movements such as the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) mounted significant resistance to Portuguese dominance through sustained military campaigns. After the defeat of Portugal in 1975, the two movements attempted to establish a joint transitional government, but they failed to reach an agreement (UNDP, 2005). As a result, they resumed fighting, but this time it was a civil war against each other – a war that lasted for many decades. OCHA Report (2002) explains that the Government of Angola (GoA) and UNITA signed various peace accords in an attempt to end the war. These include the Bicesse Accord of May 1991, the Lusaka Peace Accord of November 1994 and the Luena Memorandum of Understanding (Metsola, 2015).

Under the Luena Agreement, UNITA agreed to demobilise its combatants and form a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, in April 1997 (Dzinesa, 2013). Subsequently, Nilsson (2007) states that UNITA ex-combatants were to be disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated back into society, under the supervision of UN peacekeeping operations - the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola I, II, III (UNAVEM I, II & III) and the United Nations Military Observers in Angola (MONUA). However, UNITA did not fully comply with the demobilization process and declined to implement several critical elements of the agreement, ultimately resulting in its

breakdown (Metsola, 2015). This prompted the GoA to opt for military force (offensive), which culminated in the death of Jonas Savimbi on the 22nd of February 2002 (Metsola, 2015). In the immediacy of this, UNITA conceded defeat and all her forces that were encamped in 36 quartering areas across the country, were formally dissolved in August 2002, (Metsola, 2015). This initiative mirrors the 1989 encampment of all South African Defence Force units in Namibia, carried out as part of the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435, along with the associated processes of disarmament, demobilization, and repatriation of ex-PLAN combatants (Metsola, 2006a). The Angolan civil war was officially declared over, marking the beginning of a new phase focused on the complex challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding and the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life (Parsons, 2004).

As noted by the Department of Comparative Policies (2019), Angola's reintegration process occurred in two stages: the initial phase of "reinsertion" and the subsequent phase of "long-term reintegration." The reinsertion phase focused on addressing the immediate needs of ex-combatants, offering them a safety net upon their return to their communities. This support included essentials such as cash allowances of \$100 disbursed in instalments, demobilization cards, five months' salary, travel costs, household items, land, farming tools, and housing materials (Secretary General, General Assembly note A/C.5/59/31, 2005). The reintegration process in Angola was conducted in 5 steps:

- “1. Gathering information on the needs of ex-combatants (This is a step that was not considered in the Namibian context;
2. Conducting orientation briefing and counselling;
3. Providing subsidies and housing benefits;
4. Social reintegration or sensitisation campaigns; and
5. Economic reintegration programmes” (General Assembly note A/C.5/59/31, 2005).

The DDR process in Angola is regarded as unique, because its provisions are the results of a military victory and negotiations between the GoA and UNITA, with limited roles for the international community, and “no provision for formal third-party monitoring” (Andersen, 2011). Secondly, the DDR programme was administered and funded directly by the government through two key institutional bodies: the Joint Military Commission (JMC), responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the Technical Group (TG), which supported the JMC by developing schedules for the execution of DDR activities (Hitchcock, 2007). This situation is similar to the Namibian one, where UNTAG left the reintegration processes in the hands of the new SWAPO government, resulting in the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans to oversee the economic reintegration of all veterans and ex-PLAN combatants (Metsola, 2013).

Angola’s reintegration was not without challenges. Some of the major challenges included the fact that the anticipated number of UNITA soldiers who arrived in the quartering areas was almost double, because most of them came with their families. This resulted in “enormous logistical problems which the JMC, TG and humanitarian partners were unprepared for” (Lari, 2004). Moreover, there was also a lack of adequate planning and unrealistic timetables, health problems and malnutrition in camps, and inaccessible locations of quartering areas that hampered and prolonged the DDR process (DCP, 2019). Lastly, although the government announced the completion of the initial phases in August 2002, the process was clearly incomplete, as a significant number of ex-combatants remained unregistered and many weapons had yet to be verified (Hitchcock, 2007; UNDP DCP, 2019).

Dzinesa (2017) criticises Angola’s reintegration programme, arguing that it was fraught with complications, largely because the previous phases were not completed. Dzinesa

considers it to have been ad hoc, due to the fact that the GoA closed all quartering areas quickly. Moreover, the GoA was reluctant to meaningfully involve the UN and other international players (World Bank, 2002:35). According to IOM (2017), the reintegration in Angola was further criticised on the basis that it did not go far enough to assist the ex-combatants in terms of sustainable reintegration, vocational training and salaries payouts. Similar criticism is also made of the Namibian reintegration process, within which, the DBC failed to impart knowledge to ex-PLAN combatants as planned. Further criticisms of the Angolan process come from the fact that the cash benefits of US\$ 100 equivalents received, were not market related, and were disproportionate to commodity prices, an issue similar to the case of the R10.00 given to ex-PLAN combatants and SWAPO returnees during repatriation in 1989 (Gomes & Parson, 2003). In conclusion, though there were difficulties in Angola's DDR processes, the greatest advantage was that the peace process was home-grown (World Bank, 2002).

2.3.3 The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Zena (2013) highlights that ineffective or incomplete DDR programs have played a significant role in the recurring cycles of conflict across Africa. He asserts that the success of DDR efforts is closely linked to the evolving nature of United Nations peace operations (Dzinesa, 2019). His observations emphasize the difficulties the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) faced in implementing DDR initiatives between 2004 and 2011, following a widespread conflict involving multiple armed groups backed by Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, as well as forces from Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, which supported the DRC government (Dzinesa, 2019). This "large-scale war has been described as one of the most significant Pan-African conflicts of the century" (Torjesen, 2013). In response to the crisis, several peace accords were signed, most notably the Sun City Peace Agreement facilitated by South Africa which not only paved the way for the 2006 democratic elections but also advanced the DDR of numerous armed factions across

the country (World Bank Report No. P152903, 2013). In addition, Lilli (2014) nods in this direction when he submits that the World Bank, the International Development Association and thirteen other international partners, and the African Union established the Multi-Country DDR Programme in coordination with the government of DRC. The aim was to support former militants through vocational training, reinsertion packages, reintegration packages, and the option for combatants to leave their local militant groups and enlist in the state military, if they so desired (Lilli (2014)).

Due to a limited oversight by the federal government, the programme became vulnerable to ethnic and economic divisions amongst the inducted soldiers. As a result, the troops from rebel groups (mentioned earlier in Chapter 1), deserted and resumed violence in territories like the Kivu, Ngoma, Ituri and Katanga, where the federal government allegedly lacks power and control. Muggah (2019) concurs that the United Nations failed to curtail violence in the eastern region of the DRC, as the mission for DDR became undefined. These circumstances are similar to the Angolan one in which the UNAVEM I, II, III and MONUA failed to curtail violence between the GoA and UNITA. Another challenge was that those interested in reintegrating into the civilian economic sector received different resettlement and reintegration packages from those joining the government armed forces, creating a gap in the overall reintegration packages. As explained in the United Nations Organisation Mission in DRC's DDR Overview Report, Resolution Number 2277 (2016), those who received reintegration and reinsertion packages also received access to exit kits, safety nets, transportation, and assistance from the UNDP and UNICEF, who were also working alongside the World Bank's regional stability program. Notably, the persistence of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo has continued unabated, despite concerted efforts by the United Nations and the World Bank to curb instability through the implementation of DDR programmes (Yvan, 2012). Exit kits are defined as any assistance given to ex-combatants, refugees and war

victims, and they often include subsidies to pay for the cost of initial training required, tools and materials that will support the beneficiary in launching gainful economic activities (UNDP, 2016). On the other hand, safety nets are usually government programmes complementing each other, or public policies that provide temporary protection and assistance to war victims and demobilised ex-combatants. These ordinarily include the provision of housing, land and portions in the economic mainstream (UNDP, 2016). Furthermore, these initiatives aim to tackle the post-conflict security risks associated with ex-combatants who lack sustainable livelihoods or supportive social networks (DRC Ex-combatant Policy Report, 2011). Despite the efforts undertaken by the DRC government and United Nations entities, armed groups such as the Mai-Mai comprised in part of former Hutu genocidaires alongside Rwanda's Interahamwe and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) based in the DRC, declined to engage in the demobilization process (Amnesty International, 2007). As a result, the conflict within the state continued and is still ongoing to date, putting the safety of the reintegrated Congolese at risk – a risk that results from the government's failure to guarantee safety (World Bank Report, 2013). The DRC's reintegration programme has been widely criticized by scholars and practitioners for providing vocational training that was often misaligned with the country's labour market, and for offering income support that was insufficient to sustain proposed projects (Kolln, 2011; World Bank, MDRP Reports; IPIS, 2023).

The above criticism is similar to Metsola's (2006) criticism of the reintegration programme in Namibia, especially in the manner in which the DBC failed to impart to ex-PLAN combatants, knowledge and skills that could translate into job creation or to be employed in the public or private sectors. Metsola (2015) further states that, the one-off payment of N\$50 000 given to ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the liberation struggle, served no purpose, because they were not properly informed on how to utilise.

As a result, money ended up not solving the problems that it was intended to. Another criticism of the United Nations and World Bank's DDR programme in the DRC is the lack of proper monitoring and oversight in region in which civilian Congolese and reintegrated combatants lived, resulting in human rights abuses, violence and humanitarian crises like hunger and disease (Dzinesa, 2017). Overall, the DRC serves as an example of a fragile state in which DDR programmes have failed to effectively end violence (Dzinesa, 2017). The primary difference between the DRC and Namibian contexts is that, in Namibia, the failure of the DDR programme, did not result in a relapse into conflict unlike the DRC.

2.3.4 The case of Rwanda

Shariff (2018) states that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) began demanding for a national identity to unite the country after the tragedy (genocide) of 1994, soon after taking charge of the government. As a result of the genocide, nearly two million Hutus had fled Rwanda into Zaire (presently the DRC), seeking asylum and in fear of retribution by the RPF. Their prolonged presence in the DRC brought war with the Rwandan Patriotic Front, that divided Central and Eastern African countries and, between Rwanda and DRC (Raghavan, 2013). The conflicts extended into the DRC's eastern Kivu province, as well as into Burundi and Rwanda, resulting in the displacement of millions and the loss of countless lives (McMullin, 2013b). In an effort to end this conflict and defuse the situation in Eastern and Central Africa, one of the most common peacebuilding mechanisms implemented across the region was the DDR. As such, the Republic of Rwanda established a DDR programme for ex-soldiers of the Rwanda Defence Force (known as Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), prior to 1994) and the armed genocidaires who still resided in Rwanda, with the assistance of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), (McMullin, 2013b). In addition, this post-

conflict development programme focused on national reconciliation, as well as and DDR provisions.

The World Bank Report No. 19391 (1999) states that the DDR programme was supported by Rwandan Presidential Decree Number 37/01 under President Pasteur Bizimungu, who established the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission. Rwandan reintegration package for militants included; medical counselling, social sensitisation, monetary benefits of U\$900 (as a one-off payment), service allowances, reintegration grants, vulnerability support grants, shelter, nutrition and access to micro loans. It further included education programmes in industries such as agriculture, construction, taxi driving, tailoring, civic education, as well as basic vocational skills - for as long as they maintained a peaceful demeanour across the state (World Bank Report No. 19391, 1999). Furthermore, re-education programmes were included to fight the genocidal ideology called 'ingando'. 'Ingando' is a word that comes from the verb "Kugandika" which means "going to stay in a place far from one's own home, often with a group, for a specific reason" (Purdekova, 2011). Ex-combatants were further given accurate information on micro financing, public health measures, and information on active cooperatives in different industries. According to Matta (2012), micro finance refers to credit scheme targeting people, in this case ex-combatants who are excluded from the traditional banking system. It usually consists of small loans issued by banking institutions to unbanked and underserved ex-combatants and their businesses.

Consequently, the Rwandan Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission provides condensed demobilisation programmes for the families of participating combatants to ease their transition into civil society (Okoli, 2017). Rwanda's DDR has been declared successful, due to the fact that the Commission has received added support and funding from the World Bank through the International Development Association's Emergency

Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme, for as long as Rwanda did not interfere in the DRC's internal affairs (Waldorf, 2009). Despite the international community's involvement, the Rwandan Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission implemented and oversaw the execution of the entire programme, demonstrating a highly effective state-led approach. Building on this, the Centre for the Study of Civil War in Peacebuilding (2011) recognizes that the effectiveness of Rwanda's DDR programmes can be largely attributed to substantial financial backing for peacebuilding initiatives, alongside the government's capacity to deliver comprehensive re-education efforts. These included intensive vocational training and interim financial assistance to support the reintegration of former combatants (Edmonds et al., 2009). Another success factor to consider is that the ethnic identities of mobilised soldiers were not revealed to the rest of the military, in order to prevent tension amongst the two groups. In Namibia ex-PLAN combatants and ex-SWATF/Koevoet's identities are known, a situation which sometimes forms the basis of hatred and enmity (Metsola, 2013). Consequently, the Rwandan government implemented a judicial reconciliation initiative that granted pardons to former combatants who might have otherwise faced criminal investigations for their involvement in the genocide (Edmonds, 2009). Unlike Rwanda, where DDR processes incorporated formal legal mechanisms, Namibia's approach was shaped by a policy of national reconciliation, which explicitly prohibits all forms of discrimination (World Bank Report, 2013). Other researchers such as Waldorf (2009) have criticised Rwanda for failing to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate militias, including displaced refugees, back into Rwandan society. Moreover, Rwanda has faced criticism for its involvement in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a factor that contributed to the withdrawal of financial support for its Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission. Waldorf (2009) also critiques the absence of a formal disarmament component aligned with the country's demobilisation and reintegration efforts, noting

that disarmament was rendered optional by the government. Despite these apparent shortcomings, Rwanda's DDR programme is widely regarded as effective in reducing internal violence, largely due to its domestically-driven design, its approach to the treatment of former militants, and the strong oversight exercised by the government, an element which was absent in the DRC's DDR programme (Waldorf, 2009).

2.3.5 The case of Zimbabwe

Metsola (2013) asserts that with Zimbabwe attaining independence on the 18th of April 1980, the Zimbabwe National Army's inception rendered the liberation armies, ZIPRA and ZANLA, as obsolete because they had achieved their objective of liberating Zimbabwe. Consequently, he alluded that all ex-combatants not assimilated into the Zimbabwe National Army were to be disarmed, demobilised, reintegrated into civilian life, and incorporated into the nation's economy. Following independence, the former combatants became known as Veterans of the National Liberation War in Zimbabwe. They were formally separated from their respective liberation movements such as ZANLA, aligned with the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and ZIPRA, aligned with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) whereby their welfare was placed under the care of the newly established government rather than their original political organisations (Metsola, 2013).

It is generally accepted that in "post conflict situations, there is a need to provide equitable and sustainable assistance to veterans, as part of their DDR into society - and Zimbabwe is not exempt from such prerequisites" (Mutanda, 2020). Zimbabwe's reintegration efforts initially provided ex-combatants with a one-time grant of Z\$400 and a monthly stipend of Z\$185 for a period of two years (Dzinesa, 2006). During the 1990s, then-President Robert Gabriel Mugabe expanded these benefits to include a lump-sum

payment of Z\$50,000 (approximately US\$4,000 at the time), alongside a monthly pension of Z\$2,000 (equivalent to US\$150 at that time) (Dzinesa, 2006). Further support measures included access to healthcare, educational services, burial and funeral assistance, and government-backed funding for individual development projects (Dzinesa, 2017). Notably, these provisions closely mirrored those introduced by the Namibian government for ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the liberation struggle (Metsola, 2010). Despite these efforts, Zimbabwe's DDR program encountered significant institutional and operational deficiencies, which led to the unemployment of nearly 25,000 ex-combatants by 1990 (Dzinesa, 2006). This mirrors the ongoing situation in Namibia, where a number of ex-PLAN combatants remain jobless more than three decades after independence.

Mazarire and Rupiya (2000) believe that the amount given to ex-combatants at the onset of the DDR programme was inadequate and generally fell far short of what was required to adequately assist former combatants to re-insert themselves back into the capitalist economy inherited from Rhodesia. Moreover, there have been concerns raised about the treatment of Zimbabwean ex-fighters, "particularly regarding their neglect and lack of support from the government" (Dzinesa, 2017). Mhanda (2011) and Dzinesa (2017) concur that although there are concerns over corruption, particularly in governance and the distribution of public resources documented in Zimbabwe, there is also documented evidence of state-led initiatives aimed at enhancing workforce capabilities through skills development programs targeting strategic sectors of the economy.

The evaluation overlooked the diverse socio-economic needs of demobilised combatants and insufficiently examined society's preparedness to absorb them, an issue that mirrored challenges encountered in Namibia (Metsola, 2010). In the aftermath of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, the establishment of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans

Association (ZNLWVA) served to institutionalize representation for former combatants, offering a structured platform through which they could seek governmental acknowledgment, advocate for improved welfare, and assert their ongoing relevance within the post-conflict national landscape (Ndlovu, 2019). This initiative was further bolstered by the implementation of the War Veteran Act of 1996, which sought to assess and improve the socio-economic conditions of ex-fighters in the post-independence era (War Veteran Act 1996, Chapter 11:1).

Significantly, the Zimbabwean government has been criticized for its limited engagement of the wider population in the DDR processes for former combatants (Dzinesa, 2017). This lack of inclusivity has prompted concerns regarding the capacity of such programs to promote enduring peace, societal integration, and national stability (Dzinesa, 2017). In response, the Zimbabwean government instituted a Commission of Inquiry, chaired by the then Judge President, Justice Chidyausiku, and comprising senior state officials and high-ranking military commanders, to examine and address the demands presented by former combatants (Dorman, 2004). Dzinesa (2017) is quite critical of Mugabe's decision to award payouts and grants to the veterans, observing that the grants and pensions - including all those packages, were not budgeted for. This ultimately resulted in the collapse of the economy as a result of the weakening of Zimbabwean dollar against the US dollar. The Zimbabwean president's decision widely regarded as having precipitated a major economic downturn has been viewed as bold yet ill-advised, particularly when contrasted with the Namibian approach, where former President Dr. Sam Nujoma firmly resisted ex-combatants' demands on the grounds that conceding to such pressures would jeopardize the nation's economic stability (Metsola, 2013).

Dzinesa (2006) suggests that Britain, the former colonial masters desired to exclusively control, influence and manipulate the short transitional period that would not include a burden of post-conflict peace building role. This would mean that there was nothing like a DDR during Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and the burden was left to the new Zimbabwean government to look after all disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated ex-fighters. Dorman (2004) and Mhanda (2011) ultimately argue that Zimbabwe's efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants have been largely unsuccessful. They further critique international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and their affiliates for their apparent unwillingness to support Zimbabwe's reintegration agenda. A comparable situation unfolded in Namibia, where the early withdrawal of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from the DDR process resulted in the burden of supporting demobilized ex-PLAN combatants falling entirely on the newly established SWAPO-led government (Mazarire, 2019). This continues to underscore the enduring difficulties the Namibian government faces in successfully reintegrating former liberation fighters into civilian society, challenges that remain unresolved decades after independence (Mazarire, 2019).

2.3.6 Challenges and Failures of DDRR Programmes

McMullin (2013c) argues that Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation (DDRR) has become a vital cornerstone of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts both across Africa and in wider global contexts. He further emphasizes that DDRR has been instrumental in addressing the needs of ex-combatants and fostering stability in societies transitioning from conflict (McMullin, 2013a). Furthermore, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, 2022) and the Integrated DDR Standards (2006) describe rehabilitation as the process of assisting war-affected individuals and displaced communities in restoring and rebuilding their lives. This includes social assistance such

as family reunification, strengthening community-based care systems, medical evaluations and healthcare including reproductive health services education and vocational training, psychological and cultural support, as well as economic aid. In the Namibian context, family reunification emerged as a critical priority, particularly given the prolonged absence of some returnees and the fact that many children were born in exile (Metsola, 2013). This meant that they needed to be introduced to their grandparents, families and relatives in general, with an aim of building trust and community. Although the UN has provided the international community with a widely accepted definition for DDRR, each step in the program serves a unique purpose that propels communities toward peace (Muggah, 2008). Ultimately, this peacebuilding process known as DDRR, has experienced challenges, successes and failures in the various contexts in which it has been implemented across the globe, due to a variety of factors and the nature of the conflicts (Muggah, 2008).

2.3.7 Challenges in Economic Reintegration

Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis (2010) contend that one of the principal barriers to securing sustainable peace and economic recovery in post-conflict settings lies in the effective reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. They further observe that, in practice, DDR programs frequently emphasise the initial stages of disarmament and demobilisation, while the reintegration component vital for long-term stability is often inadequately addressed or neglected. This oversight has led to program failures due to weak credibility and the fragile foundations of the peace agreements from which they emerge (Shariff, 2018). Furthermore, Knight and Özerdem (2004) draw attention to a troubling pattern in which declining allocations of financial resources for peacekeeping operations are primarily attributed to inadequate pre-operational planning and foresight. Subsequently, UNDP (2013) believes that the massive and expensive ‘vocational

training' in the reintegration processes does not lead to economic reintegration in a developmental sense. This is largely due to the fact that, in many post-conflict environments, ex-combatants who participate in reintegration training programs struggle to secure gainful employment within the prevailing economic conditions. Furthermore, a significant obstacle lies in the frequent discrepancies between the reported figures of ex-combatants submitted by warlords and commanders and the actual numbers present on the ground (Dzinesa, 2009).

Consequently, Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis (2010) are of the opinion that the slow disbursement of funds by the United Nations and donor organizations hampers the effectiveness of DDR programs. Additionally, the World Bank Discussion Paper No. 331 (1996) highlights that financial aid from the UN and its agencies often neglects the families of ex-combatants and other affected community members, resulting in social inequalities and divisions (Colletta et al., 1996). Schafer (2007) argues that the success of DDR initiatives is largely influenced by shifts in UN peace operations and the organization's commitment to taking action. Furthermore, Torjesen (2013) warns that categorizing ex-combatants as security risks or labelling them as violent and criminal may lead to the denial of their rightful and legitimate entitlements.

2.3.8 Causes of failures in Economic Reintegration

In several African countries, the failure of initial DDR programmes to assist ex-combatants in reintegrating successfully into society, has led to a need for subsequent programmes or interventions to address the same problems (Banfield, Gündüz & Killick, 2006). A significant contributor to the shortcomings of reintegration efforts in post-conflict African states has been the structural and conceptual limitations embedded in the initial design of DDR programs (Dzinesa, 2008). These initiatives "primarily targeted armed individuals, treating them as a distinct group, while neglecting the broader

community, which led to significant segregation and disproportions” (Dzinesa, 2008). Instead of strengthening social cohesion, the programmes turned out to be one of the most divisive factors in communities affected by armed conflict, re-fuelling conditions that had previously led to armed violence (Metsola, 2013). Metsola (2013) concludes that the DDR packages offered to ex-combatants are largely seen by sections of the population excluded from those programmes as morally and economically unjust. In Namibia, this perception is especially relevant due to the preferential treatment given to ex-PLAN combatants (the armed wing of SWAPO) over other former fighters, such as those from the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) and Koevoet. Subsequently, the statement from Metsola (2013) is highly applicable to the Namibian context, particularly in light of the selective and politicised nature of the DDR process and veteran recognition in Namibia.

Metsola (2016) observes that most of the reasons for the failure of reintegration processes are attributed to poorly crafted policies, as well as their poor implementation mechanisms. Devon, et al., (2012) argues that these largely arise from the narrow DDR assumption that training/equipping ex-combatants with vocational skills would translate into them securing gainful employment in the post-colonial economies. Munive (2016) supports Devon et. al.’s argument. and submits that such failures can be attributed to ill-defined assumptions of how reintegration programmes could bring about change. Metsola (2010) acknowledges that re-skilling initiatives have often been implemented without adequately considering available market opportunities, prevailing trends in economic re-empowerment, or conducting a comprehensive labour market analysis. Moreover, the absence of structured counselling services and comprehensive psychological reintegration support aimed at helping ex-combatants recalibrate their expectations, modify behavioural attitudes, and cope with war-induced trauma has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the heightened risk of these individuals

engaging in acts of violence (IOM, 2017). The failure to secure timely and adequate financial resources has been identified as a critical factor contributing to the collapse of DDR programs and the potential resurgence of armed conflict and hostilities (Muggah, 2006). Lastly, the overall peace process, and the transition to nation building, including economic reconstruction, may collapse once ineffective DDR initiatives are implemented.

2.3.9 General overview of DDR programmes

As alluded to earlier on, many programs aimed at the economic reintegration of former combatants have faced significant challenges and, in some cases, failed to achieve their intended goals (Sharif, 2018). Factors such as “inadequate planning, lack of community involvement, insufficient funding, and poor implementation have contributed to these shortcomings” (Sharif, 2018). In particular, there has often been a lack of pre-planning and labour market analysis to ensure that the opportunities offered in the reintegration packages meet the potential and existing employment market opportunities. Based on that evidence, various researchers and academics argue in support of, or against such initiatives based on their assumptions and findings. Some of their arguments are as follows; Victor Odame Asiedu’s PhD dissertation titled “A Study of How Community based Approach to Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) can Contribute More Effectively to Peacebuilding in Africa”, emphasises the fact that, as DDR programmes become increasingly widespread, they have faced criticism for prioritizing the needs of ex-combatants while overlooking the broader concerns of affected communities (Asiedu, 2010). Moreover, he concludes that a major consequence of such narrowly focused DDR programmes is that they sometimes create divisions among community members and strain the entire peacebuilding process (Asiedu, 2010). Asiedu (2010) argues that the limited scope of DDR programs has led academics and practitioners to advocate for a Community-Based (CB) approach during the reintegration

phase. This approach aims to address the resentment felt by community members and mitigate obstacles to successful peacebuilding (Asiedu, 2010). Asiedu's analysis echoes the work of two experts from the Danish Institute for International Studies, who argue that "DDR programmes should comprise communal development projects in order to diminish resentment of ex-combatants from non-combatants in the home communities" (Munive & Stepputat, 2015).

Lamb and Dye (2010) agree with the view expressed in the IDDRS that the timing, sequencing and implementation of DDR processes in a peacebuilding context should be realistic and strictly adhered to, in order to build the confidence of participants and beneficiaries in the process. In addition, they contend that the DDR programmes should not commence until pre-agreed conditions of readiness have been achieved, (Lamb and Dye, 2010). Consequently, the programmes should also recognise the human security needs of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, children, the disabled and the chronically ill people who participated in or were associated with armed forces and groups. Mozambique was used as an example of a country which assessed the situation by recognising the need to address the concerns of former combatants several years after the civil war. This means that all active parties to the conflict must be included in the DDR programmes, in the same manner that they would have been included in the signing of peace agreements.

Michael J. Gilligan, an expert in post-conflict reconstruction and a professor at New York University, further alludes to the fact that, reintegration is believed to be a critical part of the peace process because it links the more immediate requirements of disarmament and demobilisation to the long-term requirements of social and economic reintegration (Gilligan, 2010). Gilligan (2010) continues arguing that the strength of the reintegration component is the most important factor in the creation of an effective DDR programme,

because during conflicts, combatants often do not have economic capital and often turn towards joining militant groups or conducting unlawful activities in order to survive. It is likely therefore that if the reintegration programme is not strong enough, ex-combatants can easily default back into conflict and seek economic refuge from rebel groups, thus contributing to the collapse of peace agreements and the return of violence (Torjesen, 2013). Gilligan's sentiments on the importance of reintegration are further supported by Mark Knight (2010), an Executive in Residence Fellow at Geneva Centre for Security Studies, who argues that former combatants pose a significant threat to the process of peacebuilding in post conflict states if they are not given sound employment opportunities. Gilligan (2010), Knight (2010), and Seethaler (2016) agree that the timely implementation of DDR processes is a critical determinant of their effectiveness, as it directly shapes a post-conflict state's capacity to foster sustainable peace and advance development initiatives. Robert Muggah, a Canadian Political Scientist explains that DDR programmes are often disproportionately focused on disarmament and demobilisation rather than reintegration (Muggah, 2010). Moreover, Muggah (2010) emphasises that managing participant expectations is crucial to the success of reintegration programmes, as misalignments between perceived and actual benefits can generate disillusionment among ex-combatants. This was notably evident in Liberia, where unmet benefit expectations led to public unrest, including instances of soldiers rioting in the streets.

Subsequently, Muggah (2010) further claims that virtually in every country where DDR has been pursued, UN and World Bank representatives have sought (sometimes unsuccessfully), to ensure that national authorities assumed a key role in various aspects of its preparation and implementation. Banholzer's research indicates that much of the scholarship regarding the effectiveness of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration focuses on one of the two categories: the structural components of a state

or the technical components of the programme as a whole, (Banholzer, 2013). Banholzer (2013) further emphasizes that a nation's capacity to successfully implement DDR programs is closely linked to its prevailing economic and political conditions. In addition, he submits that successful reintegration depends on the nation's regime type as well as the health of its economy at the time of peacebuilding. McMullin (2013c) critiques the DDR programmes and governments for lacking clear strategies of how rebel movements can successfully transform themselves or be transformed into political parties, and how their members can become participants in peaceful and democratic institutions. McMullin further notes that debates concerning ex-combatants in Africa, and veterans in the North have remained unnecessarily isolated from each other. McMullin concludes that, there is no need to look beyond Africa when formulating reintegration policies and political processes concerning ex-combatants and veterans in Africa. This is due to the fact that African situations are unique. In Mozambique and Angola, there has been heavier external involvement due to weak state institutions and government oversight. That being as it may, it has been apparent that their politics of veteranhood are, however, based on the legacies of national liberation struggles (Schafer 2007). An example is drawn from the Angolan case where UNITA's Jonas Savimbi had taken advantage of a weak UN mandate and the poor government oversight in some areas, to reignite the civil war. McMullin (2013c) concludes by submitting that, "the AU Concept for Support to the DDR of ex-combatants has been identified as a key area for the African Union's engagement in post-conflict peacebuilding".

2.10 Gaps the current study seeks to address

According to Miles (2017), a research gap is an unanswered question or unresolved problem in a field, which reflects a lack of existing research at a given time, limiting the ability of reviewers to reach a conclusion on a given question. This study argues that the economic reintegration challenges confronting former ex-combatants in Namibia is a

very critical aspect requiring serious consideration, especially in the context of the DDR process. In addition, there is an observed paucity of literature providing a clear understanding of the challenges in the implementation of reintegration process in MODVA (Özerdem, 2008, 2012). In the context of Namibia, scholars such as Metsola (2013, 2016), McMullin (2013a), Dzinesa (2006), and Mazarire (2019, 2023), despite their contributions to DDR scholarship, have not specifically examined the reintegration of former PLAN combatants within the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (MODVA). This creates a knowledge gap that necessitates academic inquiry to address it. The current study aims to fill this gap by examining the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA and identifying the unique characteristics of their reintegration processes.

2.11 Summary

DDR remains a vital tool for stabilising post-conflict societies in Africa and has been a cornerstone of post-conflict peacebuilding. While the disarmament and demobilisation phases have seen measurable progress in many contexts, the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life remains the most fragile and under-resourced component. Its effectiveness is often compromised by poor oversight, inadequate funding, fragmented implementation, and weak reintegration planning. Addressing these challenges requires long-term investment, stronger monitoring and evaluation systems, and a more inclusive, context-sensitive approach to peacebuilding. An overview of Southern Africa's experience demonstrates that there is a link between gaps in DDR processes and the involvement of ex-combatants in acts of violence in transitional societies. The timeframe for the different countries' transitional periods has been prolonged and characterised by a multiplicity of challenges. This is evinced by the fact that many of the countries are still dealing with acts of violence involving ex-combatants, decades after the crafting and implementation of DDR processes, (Metsola, 2006). The

DDR of ex-combatants is a vital step in the transition from war to peace, and no peace process can be successful when armed groups exist and continue to pose a threat to often fragile peace efforts, (Metsola, 2006). In this chapter, the researcher presented broad outlines of the discursive records and practices associated with economic reintegration and linked these processes with current and previous literature that focuses on the reintegration of ex-combatants' in other African contexts. The next chapter presents the research methodology, and is delineated as follows: the research design, population, sample, procedure, data analysis and finally the research ethics. It is in this chapter that the methods of collecting and analysing data are fully explained.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Creswell (2013) defines research methodology as the overarching framework employed to gather data within a research undertaking. He further explains that it encompasses the particular methods or strategies used to identify, select, gather, process, and analyse information pertinent to a given subject of study. This methodology section provides the reader with the opportunity to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. This section answers two major questions: "How was the data collected or generated?" and "How was the data analysed?" This chapter offers a comprehensive outline of the research methodology adopted in the study, encompassing discussions on the research approach, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and procedures, methods of data analysis, as well as the ethical considerations that guided the research process. As indicated earlier, the chief purpose of this study is to assess the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA from 2006 to 2022.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives, as initially established in Chapter 1:

- a. To examine the extent to which reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were successful in economically reintegrating them back into society.
- b. To assess the unique individual direct/indirect economic challenges that ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face.
- c. To evaluate the quality of life for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA by gauging their economic wellbeing in post-colonial Namibia.

3.2 Research Approach

According to Kothari (2004), a research approach is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted, including decisions regarding what, how much, when, where and by what means a research study will be conducted. Simply put, it is a general plan and procedures for conducting research. Grover (2015) defines ‘research approach’ as an “overall strategy and analytical approach that one chooses in order to integrate, in a coherent and logical way, the different components of the study”. The main function of the research approach is to ensure that evidence obtained enables the researcher to effectively address the research problem by means of research questions, logically and as unambiguously as possible (Grover, 2015).

Building on the preceding discussion, this thesis adopted a qualitative research approach, considering it the most appropriate method for gaining insight into the complex dynamics of the reintegration process of former PLAN combatants within MODVA in post-colonial Namibia. This is most effectively articulated by Masson (2002), who describes the qualitative research approach as inherently interpretative because it focuses on understanding, experiencing, and interpreting the social world. The qualitative research approach is further utilised in this thesis as the research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the ex-PLAN combatants’ social wellbeing intimately, and whether the MODVA has policies and strategies in place to address their plights. Masson (2002) further submits that “qualitative research methods of data collection are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced”, and this makes it apt for the current study.

Consequently, qualitative data analysis methods are grounded in interpretative reasoning and explanatory frameworks that seek to comprehend the nuanced and context-specific dimensions of social realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, based on the ideas

alluded above, a qualitative research design is best suited for this research, since the study is interpretive in nature. This explains why the researcher employs the qualitative research approach, which utilises non-numeric data to study human behaviours and their opinion on a given topic.

3.3 Research Design

The Interpretive Phenomenological Design (Hermeneutic Phenomenology), was used as a research design in order to assess the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, and their reaction to current government intervention strategies. Consequently, the qualitative research approach helped the researcher to explore and understand ex-PLAN combatants' experiences and understand their feelings and behaviours in relation to processes aimed at their economic reintegration. The advantages of using qualitative research approach as outlined by Creswell (2014) is that both verbal and non-verbal communication, is likely to expand the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, without being subjective, the researcher will be in a better position to understand how people make sense of how their world functions and their unique experiences in society.

3.4 Unit of Analysis

Chan (2024) states that the unit of analysis refers to the principal subject or entity under investigation, from which conclusions are derived. In addition, it determines the level at which data are gathered and analysed ranging from individuals and groups to organisations, countries, social interactions, or artefacts. Therefore, the unit of analysis of this thesis consists of Ex-PLAN combatant employed at the MODVA.

3.5 Population of the study

According to Bhattacharjee (2012), a population encompasses all individuals or items (units of analysis) that possess the characteristics relevant to a particular study. It represents the complete group from which the researcher intends to draw conclusions about the phenomenon under investigation. Burns and Grove (2003) define “a research population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study having specific defined features in common”. Pursuant to this, the population for this study consisted of one hundred and forty (140) ex-PLAN combatants - amongst which, one hundred and thirty (130) are still working within the MODVA and ten (10) are retired/resigned members. Ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were chosen because they are a group with common characteristics and can be used to represent the entire ex-PLAN combatant’s family in MODVA.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a method that allows a researcher to infer information about a population based on results from a subset of the population, without having to investigate every individual within the population (Taherdoost, 2016). Kothari (2004:110) clarifies that sampling is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. He further opines that it is the statistical process of selecting a subset (called a ‘sample’), of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and statistical interpretations about that population. Thus, it is vital to choose a sample that is truly representative of the population, so that the inferences derived from the sample can be generalised back to the population when needed (Kothari, 2004).

Burns and Grove (2003) also define sampling “as a process of selecting a group of people, drawn from a large population to represent such a population in a smaller size, where a researcher stands in a better position to understand the circumstances surrounding the entire population”. This means that, smaller samples allow the researcher to make broader inferences of the entire population represented. Therefore, the total sample selected for this study consisted of 30 ex-PLAN combatants (10 x currently serving as commissioned officers, 10 x serving as non-commissioned officers (other ranks) and 10 x those who resigned or retired) from the MODVA. The selection criteria for the study on ex-PLAN combatants at the MODVA includes factors beyond just their affiliation with PLAN and their current or past roles. Those factors includes demographic diversity such as age, gender, and regional background. It further considered the availability and willingness of ex-PLAN combatants to participate and taking note of their ranks and experience including years of service in MODVA and in PLAN. Lastly, the selection criteria considers their post-service reintegration by examining those who successfully transitioned into civilian life versus those who remained in military or government roles. The sample was purposively selected, because these ex-PLAN combatants have similar backgrounds, experiences and needs. The aim for using purposive sampling is because ex-PLAN combatants under study share a similar contextual experience of the liberation struggle, and also went through the DDR programmes when they returned back to Namibia. Purposive sampling is also known as ‘relevance sampling’ and is used in qualitative research, and where the researcher selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, purposive sampling enables the researcher to deliberately select cases that exemplify specific characteristics or processes relevant to the research focus (Crossman,

2020). Nonetheless, the selection should not be driven solely by personal interest, but rather be aligned with the overarching aim of addressing the study's research objectives.

3.7 Research Instrument

According to Ruslin (2022), a central objective of qualitative research is to attain a deeper understanding of the human experience, typically pursued through methods such as interviews, surveys, observations, and focus group discussions. Interviews can “either be structured, semi-structured or unstructured”, (Brinkmann, 2014). As such, the primary data in this thesis was collected using semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions. This was achieved by conducting eleven (11) face-to-face interviews and two (2) email interviews with some retired senior ex-PLAN combatants with good knowledge on the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in post-colonial Namibia. The decision to interview 13 participants instead of 30 was based on the researcher reaching data saturation. Similarly, the sample size of 30 participants from a total population of 140 represents more than 20% of the entire population, which exceeds the general methodological guideline that for populations under 500, sampling 10 – 20% is acceptable. Though the study experienced a non-responsive rate of 57%, the achieved sample is still robust for qualitative analysis, particularly as saturation was reached during data collection process. Email interviews were conducted because the retired members were not locally accessible and could only be reached through electronic communication. The interview guide distributed via email was identical to the one used in face-to-face interviews and consisted of open-ended questions designed to allow respondents to articulate their ideas, feelings, and perspectives in their own words. The choice to conduct face-to-face interviews was driven by the objective of gaining an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the key issues related to the reintegration process within the MODVA, as well as the government's interventions aimed at addressing the social and economic welfare of ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the

national liberation struggle. As part of its explorative approach, the study conducted face-to-face interviews over a three-week period, spanning from 6 to 26 May 2023. Magaldi and Berler (2020) point out that the advantage of the semi-structured interview in qualitative research, is that it encourages two-way communication within which both the interviewer and the respondent can ask questions, which allows for a comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics. It further gives them comparable, reliable data – and the capacity to ask follow-up questions. In addition, Brinkmann (2014) claims that the semi-structured interview has zero distractions because, establishing a conceptual framework in advance helps the interviewer and the interviewee focus, prevent distractions and foster a two-way dialogue. In such settings, “respondents get an opportunity to freely express themselves instead of being restricted to responding to a rigid questionnaire” (Yin, 2011).

In this study, every interview was conducted with informed consent from respondents, who willingly agreed to discuss topics relevant to the core objectives of the research. Consent was obtained before the conversation began. Once granted, interviews were recorded using a small electronic voice recorder, while the researcher also took notes throughout the discussion. The use of the voice recorder was essential, as it allowed for playback when needed. In cases where background noise affected the recordings, the researcher relied on the notes taken during the interview to ensure accuracy.

The study also made use of secondary data such as, documentary materials, journals articles, newspapers, protocols, charters, publications, official reports, statements, communiqués and official websites with detailed information regarding the reintegration of ex-combatants, especially in the Namibian context. The researcher utilised both online journals and the UNAM library to obtain the secondary data. Various supplementary independent internet sources were also consulted, and these provided valuable

information that proved to be very important. As a researcher, I believe that the research instruments used in this thesis matched well with the good qualities of a research instrument, viz; validity, reliability, usability, applicability and generalisability. Lastly, these sources have also provided extensive bibliographic and contextual information that complements the primary sources of data. As a result, they also enlightened the research. Ultimately, the participants' responses in this study, complemented with both primary and secondary data, have the potential to drive future research questions and aid in developing a more substantial knowledge base for future studies.

3.8 Data collection procedure

Taherdoost (2021) emphasizes that data collection constitutes a core component of the research process, with primary data representing the most fundamental source of information. He further underscores that data serves as the bedrock of statistical analysis, wherein primary data is regarded as the most direct and unprocessed form. Hence, this study considers the semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. As mentioned earlier in the research instrument section, the researcher planned to interview all respondents face-to-face, and record what they said. The interviews were conducted in Windhoek at the Defence Headquarters with some respondents, while two (2) retired members were contacted via emails. The interviews went well throughout the process, and emails were received back from both of the members interviewed through this method. All interviewed respondents possessed good knowledge of the topic under discussion, and expressed willingness to take part in the study, with hopes that some of their concerns would find the way to the desk responsible for ex-PLAN combatants' welfare. The researcher noted that, the moral for ex-PLAN combatants is still quite high, and they still feel proud to have liberated the country from SA's colonial oppression and apartheid practices. Most of them revealed that, they are dedicated to defending the hard-won independence, regardless of their current plights in post-colonial Namibia. The

researcher learned to interact with various ex-PLAN combatants and gained experience on how to interview senior officers at various managerial levels in the framework of their busy schedules. During the research process, the researcher overcame most of the challenges encountered by being patient, tolerant, and proceeding in a calm and relaxed manner. I was not in hurry and refrained from tardiness and impatience, proceeding at a comfortable pace.

The researcher concurs with Sun et. al (2013), that primary data gathered for the first time directly from the respondents has certain advantages such as:

- **Specific:** Gathering primary data provides the researcher with the flexibility to focus on issues directly relevant to the research objectives, ensuring that the information obtained is precisely aligned with the study's specific needs (Sun et al., 2013).
- **Accurate:** Primary data tends to be more accurate than secondary sources, as it is collected firsthand and tailored to the research context. In contrast, secondary data—particularly from online platforms—may be unreliable due to a lack of regulation and verification. This issue is especially prevalent in journalism, where blogs often disseminate unverified or exaggerated information to attract attention (Sun et al., 2013).
- **Ownership:** Data obtained through primary research is typically owned by the researcher, who retains the discretion to determine whether or not to share it with others (Sun et al., 2013).
- **Flexibility:** Primary research allows the researcher to exercise full control over the research design and methodology, including the selection of subjects and the manner in which data is collected (Sun et al., 2013).

Overall, face-to-face interviews serve as an effective method for researchers seeking to collect in-depth and meaningful data across diverse subject areas (Ongena, 2016). This approach, whether applied in quantitative or qualitative research, enables a more nuanced understanding of the study population by capturing their experiences and perspectives with greater clarity (Ongena, 2016).

3.9 Data analysis

According to Creswell (2013), data analysis is as a process of collecting, modelling and analysing data using various logical methods and techniques, in order to discover useful information. Creswell (2013) further states that the purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data and make decisions based on the outcome of that data analysis. In simple terms, the researcher admits that data analysis is the interpretation of the collected data in a study, which involves organising data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organising themes, representing the data and forming an interpretation of the data collected (Creswell, 2013). This study chose the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the data collected. The reason being that it helps in understanding personal experiences of subjects concerning a person or group of people related to a major life event, experience or situation. In this case it helps in understanding personal lived experiences of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA who went through various situations – from the liberation struggle to DDR into civilian societies in the post-colonial era.

Smith et al. (2012) define Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a qualitative, thematic approach grounded in the philosophical traditions of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography. Originally developed within health psychology by Jonathan Smith and colleagues over two decades ago, it has since become a well-established and widely adopted method in qualitative research. As such, the

analytical process of IPA is concerned with an inductive analysis of each individual's account, and favours a small homogenous sample who share a similar experience, within which the idiographic accounts of individuals can be illuminated while accommodating commonalities across the group (Smith et al., 2012). In this case ex-PLAN combatants are considered to be a small homogeneous group with similar past experience of the liberation struggle, and who they have also collectively experienced the DDR programme.

Data analysis starts immediately after the data collection process is completed. In this process, the notes taken during the interviews were organised and captured, followed by the process of typing and capturing of themes, and marking them accordingly. The transcripts were member-checked for correctness to ensure the accuracy and credibility of data. Moreover, during this process the researcher shared transcripts or synthesized data with participants to verify that their responses have been captured correctly and to confirm the interpretation of their input. This technique helps build trustworthiness in the research findings. Added to that, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews from audio to text, and then commenced with data analysis. Coding was conducted by annotating the margins and highlighting specific sections of the text on the printed transcript. This stage is recognized “as a crucial step in qualitative data analysis, as it is the point at which meanings are constructed” (Flick, 2014).

The researcher used this method of data analysis because of the following distinct advantages: Firstly, there is a bonding relationship that develops between the researchers and their research participants, that is, good rapport is established. Secondly, it gives researchers the best opportunity to understand the innermost deliberation of the lived experiences of research participants (Sun et. al, 2013). Lastly, it is participant-oriented because it allows the interviewees to express themselves and their subsisted experience

stories in the manner, they see fit, without any distortion or persecution (Sun et. al, 2013). Apart from advantages, data analysis in research can face several disadvantages whereby a major issue is the potential for data quality problems, including inaccuracies, incompleteness, and bias, which can lead to flawed conclusions (Rahman, 2017). In addition, Rahman (2017) continues stating that “privacy concerns also arise when analysing large datasets, especially when dealing with sensitive information”. Furthermore, complexity and skill gaps can hinder effective implementation and interpretation of complex analysis techniques. To address these challenges, the researcher engaged in transparent discussions of all research topics, thereby fostering trust with the audience and enabling cross-verification of information to minimize bias and data gaps. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained to document the research process in detail, including data collection, interpretation, and refinement, enabling others to trace the reasoning behind the conclusions drawn. Finally, peer debriefing was considered to solicit critical feedback from colleagues and the academic supervisor, providing an opportunity to challenge and enhance the validity of the findings through constructive review.

3.10 Validity and reliability

Yin (2011) highlights that ensuring the validity of a study and its findings is a central concern in maintaining research quality. He further asserts that a valid study is one in which data are accurately gathered and interpreted, such that the resulting conclusions faithfully reflect the phenomenon being examined. The researcher is convinced that the information collected in this research is valid because the instruments used to collect data were approved by the UNAM Higher Degrees Committee, and all processes were guided by the allocated supervisor step by step. Moreover, triangulation was utilised to ensure

validity in this study. The principle of triangulation is the cross-checking and verifying the findings extracted from data, which allows the researcher to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon. The researcher further believes that the manner in which data was analysed in this research, represents a valid scientific process.

Reliability mostly refers “to the consistency or stability of the measurement over time in order to ensure that the results obtained are accurate, consistent and trustworthy”, (Lane et al 2023). This means that, measuring instruments are considered reliable if they consistently produce the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same thing. In this research the face-to-face interview used are reliable because they produced similar responses from ex-PLAN combatants. In other words, they are instrument that produces the same results. The methods employed in this thesis are indicative of reliable processes, because they yielded the same evidence from different ex-PLAN combatants.

3.11 Research Ethics

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), research ethics are the set of ethical guidelines that guide us on how scientific research should be conducted and disseminated according to governing standards. For authenticity, the Research Ethics Committee at UNAM reviews whether research is ethical enough or not, in order to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of respondents. All respondents participated in the study voluntarily, with their informed consent secured before data collection. They received an ethics-approved consent form from the Research Ethics Committee of UNAM. Prior to the interviews or research activities, participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time without facing any negative consequences. Additionally, permission was granted by all respondents for recording the interview sessions. Furthermore, authorization to conduct the study was obtained from MODVA, with the researcher

expected to uphold confidentiality and safeguard the rights of respondents throughout the data collection process.

Participants received the contact details of both the university and the research supervisor, Dr. Mazarire. To maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher replaced participants' real names with code names/pseudonyms and ensured their identities remained undisclosed, minimizing any risk of employer retaliation or personal harm. This protective approach enabled participants to engage freely and without concern for judgment or negative consequences. Moreover, all audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored on a password-protected computer, with a plan to permanently delete them after five years.

3.12 Limitations

Information-gathering research is often limited by time and resource constraints. Despite working within a restricted budget, the researcher successfully completed all interviews and documentary analysis as planned. However, several factors posed challenges to the timing of the data collection process, such as:

- a. Respondents serving in higher positions were often very busy with the NDF Senior Steering Committee (NDF SSC) meetings, compelling the researcher to reschedule the interviews.
- b. Immediately after the NDF SSC meetings, some of the Senior Officers earmarked to participate in the research went to attend a planned military exercise between Namibia and Botswana which resulted in another delay.
- c. Planned interviews with ex-PLAN combatants serving at lower or junior ranks did not materialise, because there are very few of them stationed at the Defence HQ.

d. The researcher extended the planned interview period, which took place from May 6 to May 26, 2023.

e. The last limitation of the study is that, as proposed earlier by the researcher, reintegration of ex-PLAN combatant in Namibia is a very sensitive topic. As such, most respondents also limit themselves in talking about it. The reason being that information in the MODVA is protected by security classifications, specifying the specific ranks of personnel permitted to discuss information of this nature.

In order to overcome those challenges, the researcher abided to set-up regulations and guidelines as prescribed by the host ministry's policies on information security. In addition, the researcher waited patiently for all participants to submit their responses within their time, freely, and without pressuring them.

3.13 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provides insights into the research methodology used throughout the study. This section is important because it allowed the researcher to justify the reasoning behind the adoption of the approaches used in the study. This is done through the provision of the framework utilised for defining, designing, conducting/collecting and analysing data systematically and rigorously. The chapter further provides a framework used for interpreting the results of the study, and further reiterated the objectives of the study, in order to remind the reader what the study is about. Added to that, the chapter justified the use of the qualitative case study methodology, guided by the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a means of analysing the data collected. The major reason for the adoption of the IPA is that it helps in understanding the personal experiences of respondents. Finally, the chapter deliberated on the ethical considerations and limitations related to the study. The next chapter presents the research findings and analyses the data.

CHAPTER 4

PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines and interprets the findings gathered from semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with experienced ex-PLAN combatants currently serving in MODVA, who were intentionally chosen for this study. A total of thirteen (13) interviews were conducted, seventeen (17) short of the intended thirty (30). This was due to data saturation, as responses became increasingly similar. Another challenge encountered was the limited availability of lower-ranking officers for interviews, due to difficulties in locating them within the Defence Headquarters.

As stated in the previous chapter, the participants interviewed included retired/resigned, lower and higher-ranking ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. In addition, participants were of the ages of 50 and above, comprising four (4) females and nine (9) males. The ratio 4:9 is the precise balance gender representation, because males outnumber females in the Namibian Defence Force in the MODVA. In addition, all interviewed ex-PLAN combatants have worked for the Ministry for at least 26 years. Moreover, the respondents' educational backgrounds vary ranging from primary, secondary and tertiary education. This chapter presents the study's findings and analyses participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights on the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA from 2006 to 2022. The results from the interviews are structured around key themes, with collective perspectives summarized at the end of each section. The findings are organized thematically to address the main research objectives. Furthermore, the analysis is conducted through the interpretation of theoretical and analytical frameworks used in the study, including an evaluation of conceptual themes derived from the collected data to align with the research objectives. Consideration is also given to how the findings compare to existing literature, whether they support or

challenge previous conclusions. This critical aspect of thematic analysis requires extensive reading to effectively identify and analyse emerging patterns (Dawson, 2007). Additionally, the findings are examined in relation to prior studies to highlight how this research contributes to filling gaps in existing knowledge and theoretical perspectives. Special attention is given to any new themes that emerge from the data, ensuring they provide meaningful insights aligned with the primary research objectives.

4.2 Results and research findings

Dzinesa (2015) notes that in numerous conflict-affected states, both perceived and actual socio-economic exclusion significantly contribute to the outbreak of violence and the recruitment of individuals into armed groups. This pattern is particularly evident in many post-conflict developing countries, where limited access to goods, employment, and essential services shaped by exclusionary socio-economic dynamics continues to marginalize specific social groups. Moreover, the research highlights that reintegration processes are inherently complex and necessitate the coordinated involvement of multiple stakeholders including national governments, international agencies (such as the UN and World Bank), civil society organizations (including NGOs and religious institutions), the security sector (military and intelligence bodies), and actors within the private sector (such as business leaders and employers). For in-depth understanding of the results, data was analysed thematically as follows:

4.2.1 UNTAG: Repatriation and economic consequences for ex-PLAN combatants

The researcher notes that Namibia's liberation struggle, spanning from 1966 to 1989, is widely regarded as a protracted conflict (Metsola, 2013). Its conclusion paved the way for the establishment of UNTAG, mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) (Duggal, 1987). UNTAG was tasked with supporting the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in overseeing the registration, disarmament, demobilisation,

and reintegration (DDR) of ex-PLAN combatants and SWAPO exiles returning to Namibia (Duggal, 1987). To gain deeper insights into this theme, the researcher recorded responses from the following participants:

- *Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula (not real name)*

He is a retired senior officer and a veteran of the liberation struggle, and indeed an ex-PLAN combatant. During the interview, Col (Rtd) Ndjambula informed the researcher that he came to Namibia by air on the 5th of August 1989 on a UN chartered aircraft and landed at Grootfontein airport, and later went to Windhoek by bus (Interview script, Ii 01, page 2, 17 May 2023). The security situation in Namibia was volatile at the time, and he states that;

“I was feeling a little bit insecure because the police used to raid SWAPO houses where we stayed and harass us. The police used to come during the night saying that they were looking for weapons, though we did not have any. It was very frightening to a person who was a soldier and then demobilized, and now the people whom you were fighting against are harassing you” (Interview script, Ii 01, page 2, 17 May 2023).

Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula further notes that, for survival, he was depending on his relatives and friends who provided food and other necessities. He was accommodated and stayed in a SWAPO house and was employed to work at the SWAPO National Headquarters in Windhoek - receiving a salary of R250.00 per month, plus free food until January 1991, when he was fully inducted into the Namibian Defence Force with a rank of Captain. At the time the salary for a captain was N\$1400.00. Subsequently, he further narrates that;

“I did not experience major difficulties, but other ex-PLAN combatants who were not lucky to be recruited in the Namibian Defence Force or Police Force were suffering, because nothing was done towards their economic reintegration until 2010 when the government start giving N\$50 000.00 to each veteran and paying

allowances to veterans who are not employed” (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023).

Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula observes that the unique problems facing ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA is that most combatants, are lacking adequate education and academic skills. He continues by explaining that the biggest economic challenge faced by ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA is that most of them are reaching the retirement age, and have sadly not worked long enough to accumulate a decent pension. This is further compounded by the fact is that the majority of them occupy lower ranks within the MODVA, and as such, their salaries are also low which in turn negatively affects their pensions (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). Subsequently, he believes that, while most senior commanders in the NDF are ex-PLAN combatants, they did not do much to take care of their junior comrades especially with regard to promotions. Instead of considering former comrades for promotion, they allegedly tend to promote new recruits. As a result, most ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA are demotivated and disappointed (Interview script, Ii 01, page 5, 17 May 2023). In conclusion, he suggests that the best intervention to help ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA to successfully and effectively reintegrate into society is by imparting knowledge and skills that are practical and can enable them to start a new life in society, and to also give them sound financial assistance.

- *Major General Papa Ngwenya (not real name)*

Major General Papa Ngwenya is also a veteran and an ex-PLAN combatant currently serving in the MODVA as one of the most senior general officers. During the interview, Major General Papa Ngwenya was asked how he returned back to Namibia, and he explained that he was part of the group of ex-PLAN combatants who were left in Angola to take care of, and transport materials belonging to SWAPO/PLAN from Angola to Namibia. He specifies that he returned to Namibia by road from Lubango to Windhoek

in May 1991 together with his comrades (Interview script NAT 01, page 2, 15 May 2023). He submits that;

“I was inducted in the NDF in July 1990 while still living in Angola. Since I joined PLAN I never had an opportunity to revert to the civilian way of thinking and living” (Interview script, NAT 01, page 2, 15 May 2023). Moreover, I was lucky, that when I returned in 1991, I came employed in NDF. However, I have to look after my 56 years’ father who is also a returnee without employment and mostly depends on my mum who was a teacher at that time (Interview script, NAT 01, page 3, 15 May 2023).

Major General Papa Ngwenya, with regards to economic reintegration, believes that there was never a programme in the MODVA until the Department of Veterans was attached to the Ministry of Defence. He emphasises that the programmes within the framework of the Veteran’s Act of 2008 are quite helpful. The major setback, he concedes, is that they were introduced and implemented very late (Interview script, NAT 01, page 3, 15 May 2023). On UNTAG he states that;

“I think there was negligence from the part of UNTAG in the implementation of DDRR process. The U\$10.00 and a few items which were issued to returnees were not able to help ex-PLAN combatants to start a new life” (Interview script, NAT 01, page 3, 15 May 2023).

Subsequently, Major General Papa Ngwenya strongly feels that the Development Brigade Corporation that was initiated by the SWAPO government was mismanaged and collapsed as a result. Consequently, he acknowledges that the co-option of ex-combatants into the NDF, NAMPOL, NCS, and generally as cleaners made a difference. He admits that life was and remains tough for ex-PLAN combatants without or with low income, regardless of whether they are still in service or on retirement (Interview script, NAT 01, page 3, 15 May 2023).

Major General Papa Ngwenya notes that the only practical measure towards economic reintegration implemented by the MODVA was the automatic promotion in early 2000, for employed ex-PLAN combatants. It was followed by the re-posting of former senior ex-PLAN commanders who held senior posts during the time they were serving in PLAN but could not be put at those levels during the induction process in NDF due to structural constraints and other limitations such as illiteracy (Interview script, NAT 01, page 4, 15 May 2023). He further acknowledges that the economic challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA are the same as those faced by other government employees, stating clearly that, ex-PLAN combatants occupying lower ranks are more constrained than those in higher ranks. In addition, the General is disturbed by the ex-PLAN combatants' situation of not having been in employ for long enough period in order to accrue sufficient resources adequate to prepare them for retirement (Interview script, NAT 01, page 4, 15 May 2023). Lastly, he concurs with other researchers such as Mazarire (2023), that the current government interventions are relevant, provided that they are correctly implement.

- *Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany (not real name)*

Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany is also a veteran and an ex-PLAN combatant who was repatriated to Namibia in 1989 and joined the NDF in 1990. He is currently on retirement from service with the MODVA. During the interview he informed the researcher that he did not have difficulties or recordable challenges on arrival in Namibia, because he was employed very early in the NDF with the rank of Captain (Interview script, NL 01, page 2, 18 May 2023). The only new experience he encountered, working for income/salary, something that he was not familiar yet. The second challenging aspect for him, was the purchase of food and consumables, which he considered to have been disturbing at the time, because during the liberation struggle, people were not buying food (Interview script, NL 01, page 2, 18 May 2023).

On direct and indirect economic challenges confronting ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA he said;

“Ex-PLAN combatants are constrained financially due to a lack of means of production to sustain themselves. He continues stating that most ex-PLAN combatants did not receive the benefits due to them, which became a demoralizing factor. Consequently, ex-PLAN combatants were repatriated as mere refugees which cause confusion in the benefits payment for civilians and soldiers. Subsequently, ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA were not given counselling sessions on how to work with money and budgetary aspects” (Interview script, NL 01, page 3, 18 May 2023).

Lastly, he recommends the correct implementation of the Veteran Act, 2008, without favouritism by recovering the benefits wrongly accorded to unqualified people and giving them to the rightful beneficiaries.

- *Colonel Leo Shandunge (not real name)*

He is a senior officer and a veteran of the liberation struggle, and indeed an ex-PLAN combatant still in service with the MODVA. During the interview, Col Shandunge informed the researcher that he came to Namibia by road in 1990 with a SWAPO/PLAN military convoy that brought in armaments (Interview script, Sh 01, page 2, 17 May 2023). He further explains that, on arrival in Namibia he never joined the civilian life but was inducted into the NDF on the 16th of April 1990 - further emphasising that he was not demobilised, disarmed or reintegrated back into society. He explains;

“I went home by myself to look for my family, however the group that was repatriated to Namibia by UNTAG where reintegrated partially, given some basic items and U\$10.00 according to what we were told. I felt that the assistance given to my fellow comrades was not adequate” (Interview script, Sh 01, page 3, 17 May 2023).

Colonel Shandunge further notes that, although he was employed, the salary he was getting was very low. He continues by observing that, in spite of the low salary, he

managed to upgrade his qualifications, and later bought a house and a car, after years of hardship (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). His upgrade of educational qualifications was made possible through funding provided by the Ministry for the education of ex-PLAN combatants, as well as their spouses and children (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). Notable challenges that he observed are similar noted by other respondents. But he singled out the fact that most ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA have no proper accommodation or a decent living place. This means that, a significant number of them have no houses and do not own formal habitable places.

He continues stating that although salaries were low, retiring from active service means a loss of meaningful income. Consequently, he states that the notion of paying ex-PLAN combatants according to years spend within the war zone is discriminatory, because the aim was independence and every individual joined at his/her right time (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). On the same note, he states that all compensatory plans for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were affected by the economic stagnation within the country, caused by severe drought, epidemic etc (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). Lastly, “he recommends that the reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the time of peace should include the allocation of a piece of land to each individual”, (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). Once more, “he argues for authorities to speed-up the disbursement of cash totalling N\$170 000 to qualifying veterans”, (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023).

4.2.1.1 Narrative

It was observed that the two groups (those repatriated in 1989 and 1990), did not experience the same challenges on arrival back in Namibia. As mentioned earlier, the study observes that UNTAG implemented Namibia’s DDR on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1989”, (Mazarire, 2023).

However, the programme primarily facilitated the repatriation of ex-combatants who had already undergone disarmament and demobilisation in Angolan bases, while the responsibility for their reintegration was largely delegated to the newly established SWAPO government, thereby creating a disconnect between the disarmament and demobilisation phases and the reintegration component of the DDR process (Dzinesa, 2005). It was found that by delegating the responsibility for reintegration to the SWAPO-led government, UNTAG inadvertently enabled conditions in which patriotic historical narratives began to shape and influence reintegration policies in post-colonial Namibia (Mazarire, 2023). In addition, the study established that “UNTAG repatriated ex-PLAN combatants merely as refugees and not as ex-fighters” (Mazarire, 2023).

Consequently, the study notes that the reintegration packages given to demobilised ex-PLAN combatants by the new government included an amount of “ZAR10.00 and some basic household items such as an axe, a machete, two pots, one mattress, two cups, various seeds, some beddings and some foodstuffs (provided on monthly basis for six months)” (Metsola, 2010). Most of the respondents interviewed, confirmed receipt of the above items – excluding those who returned back to Namibia in 1991.

The researcher further asked how the community received and perceived them upon returning to Namibia from exile. Colonel Shandunge responded clearly, that on arrival back home, they were welcomed and treated by their families very well and in a jubilant manner, a sentiment shared by most of the respondents (Interview script, Sh 01, page 3, 15 May 2023). Colonel Shindume further informed the researcher during the interview that the community was afraid of them, because of misinformation by the then South African regime that projected them as ghosts and killers. It was confirmed by Maringira and Brankovic (2013) that the apartheid-era South African regime was engaged in disinformation campaigns to undermine anti-apartheid movements, including PLAN combatants. These campaigns often portrayed them as violent or dangerous to justify

oppressive measures and maintain control. Such tactics were part of broader efforts to delegitimize resistance groups and instil fear among the public, (Maringira and Brankovic, 2013).

Regarding the welfare of ex-PLAN combatants, the researcher asked the respondents to narrate their experiences or observations of importance. In response, most of them revealed that some ex-PLAN combatants were employed in the government security sector in the first years of independence (the 1990s), while others came to be employed a bit later - between 1999 and 2006 (Interview script, Ii 01, page 2, 17 May 2023).

The researcher probed further on the direct and indirect challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants. Col (Rtd) Ndjambula explained that there was no counselling planned for ex-PLAN combatants on arrival in Namibia, and during the entire duration of their employment in the MODVA (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023)". Col Shandunge also observes that another major challenge culminated from the fact that, most ex-combatants were employed in low salary earning ranks (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). The study also established that most ex-PLAN combatants were not resettled and have no place to call home. Col (Rtd) Ndjambula informed the researcher, during the interview, that the most challenging aspect confronting ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA is that most of them are reaching the retirement age and have not worked long enough to accumulate viable pensions. It is my deduction that this is an indication or a symptom that ex-PLAN combatants are likely going to continue suffering, especially after retirement. The researcher asked Major General Papa Ngwenya if SWAPO has made promises during exile that it did not fulfil after independence, especially concerning cash benefits and compensations. He expressed ignorance over such and submitted that he was not aware of any such promises having been made during the period of the liberation war.

4.2.2 Reintegration policies in post-colonial Namibia

In responding to the question of whether there were reintegration policies and whether they were implemented successfully by both UNTAG and Namibia's new government, Col Shandunge believed that the major policy encompassing all others is the policy of national reconciliation that authorises every Namibian citizen to settle where ever they want in Namibia, provided that are authorised to do so (Interview script, Sh 01, page 3, 17 May 2023). Col (Rtd) Ndjambula opines that there was no reintegration alternative in UNTAG programme during 1989 – 1990. He revealed that the United Nations policy on reintegration was not clear during the period that Namibian refugees and ex-PLAN combatants were repatriated and reintegrated back into society (Interview script, Ii 01, page 3, 17 May 2023). On the same note, Major General Papa Ngwenya concurs with others, submitting that he is not aware of any policy concerning ex-PLAN combatants' reintegration in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) before it became the MODVA (interview script, NAT 01, page 3, 17 May 2023).

The study further established that all veterans and all ex-PLAN combatants' reintegration activities were handled by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs before the reintegration into the Ministry of Defence, as also explained by Metsola (2010), Mazarire (2023) and others. As of now, there is the Veteran Act no.2 of 2008, enacted to guide the implementation of the reintegration for veterans and ex-PLAN combatants' welfare activities, which include individual projects, grants and their literacy/education programmes. Lastly, as a researcher I noticed that UNTAG and UNHCR failed to monitor, evaluate and follow up on the welfare of repatriated refugees and ex-PLAN combatants, creating room for ex-PLAN combatants to suffer socially and economically (Researcher's observation). Hence, it was detected that donors and the Namibia government's reintegration policies are shrouded by political agendas perceived as giving preferential treatment to ex-PLAN combatants and refugees. There is evidence

that some reintegration policies have disproportionately benefited some ex-PLAN combatants relative to others. And some in the MODVA have not benefited directly, including housing benefits and the allocation of land.

4.2.3 Education/Human capital of ex-PLAN combatants

During interviews. The researcher asked Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany to highlight the direct and indirect challenges faced by most ex-PLAN combatants serving in the MODVA. He expressed that most ex-PLAN combatants never had a formal education during the liberation struggle and are unable to communicate properly in English which is Namibia's official language. Secondly, "the education obtained in exile through international scholarships for post-secondary education and primary school education mainly benefited civilian refugees and few ex-combatants, leaving a large number of ex-combatants with experience in military tactics, guns and weapon handling alone" (Mazarire, 2023). Therefore, one can conclude that some former SWAPO exiles benefited immensely from human capital skills they received during the war, obtained through educational and scholarship opportunities, particularly those who had civilian and non-combatant roles. This would, in principle, leave many ex-PLAN combatants disadvantaged in the post-colonial in comparison to other SWAPO non-combatant returnees. More importantly, it also highlights why many ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face limited upward mobility, as they are often sidelined from promotions due to their limited human capital.

The researcher established that, after independence in 1990, the Development Brigade and later the Development Brigade Corporation was founded to impart vocational skills and training to ex-PLAN combatants. With regards to human capital, Colonel Kamangendja (not real name) submits that "the Development Brigade under the Ministry of Lands, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MLRR) was not properly managed, and it

provided skills that did not match job markets demands” (Interview script, Fc 1, page 3, 17 May 2023). This resonates with the findings by Metsola (2010). It was also established that there were no feasibility studies done the type of skills that were required by employers in the industry at the time. In addressing that concern, Colonel Shandunge informed the researcher that, “as of now there are literacy programmes put in place by MODVA to assist ex-PLAN combatants and veterans to enable them to read and write. Consequently, there is a budget put aside for their academic studies for those who wish to further study, including their children and their dependents” (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). It is important to note that while budgets have been allocated for further studies concerning PLAN ex-combatants in the MODVA and their children, it is predominantly their children who are likely to benefit. This is because most PLAN ex-combatants in the MODVA are nearing retirement. This situation highlights a troubling aspect of the Namibian government's reintegration interventions, which have been implemented nearly three decades post-repatriation. Consequently, many of these interventions have proven ineffective, as they arrive too late to adequately address the needs of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA.

4.2.4 Practical interventions to address the economic plight of ex-PLAN combatants

The study revealed that most respondents’ responses such as those of Major General Papa Ngwenya and Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany concur with concerns raised in the speech of minister Dr Nicky Iyambo, at the time when he was addressing the National Assembly on the 23rd of October 2010, where he states that “veterans' needs are complex and sensitive, because they are from different backgrounds: their needs are different and they are at different levels of development” (Maguire, 2022). Moreover, Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula states that at the beginning there was nothing much done for the ex-PLAN combatants and veterans. However, subsequently, the government realised that there was

a need to address their welfare as a matter of urgency, and hence it devised a number of interventions as a way of integrating them into society, both socially and economically (Interview script, Ii 01, page 3, 17 May 2023). For this reason, various attempts were made to address their plight by introducing several wellness programmes. According to Dr Nicky Iyambo, “government intervention was basically categorised into two categories: the government intervention before the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the intervention after the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs up to its merging with the Ministry of Defence” (Metsola, 2006).

4.2.4.1 Government intervention before the Ministry of Veterans Affairs 1990 – 2006

Before the Ministry of Veterans Affairs was established, the government took several steps to support ex-PLAN combatants and war veterans:

- One of the first efforts involved providing livestock to some retired or elderly ex-PLAN combatants for animal husbandry.
- The Development Brigade (DBC) was then created to equip ex-PLAN combatants and veterans with skills in agriculture and construction through specialized training.
- The Social Integration Program for Ex-Combatants (SIPE) was introduced to help reintegrate ex-PLAN combatants and veterans into civilian society by offering self-employment opportunities.
- Based on recommendations from the Committee of Deputy Ministers in 1996, the Peace Project was launched to facilitate the inclusion of ex-PLAN combatants into key public institutions such as the Namibia Defence Force, Namibia Police Force, Namibia Correctional Services, and State-Owned Enterprises.

- In 1999, the War Veterans Subvention Act was enacted, leading to the formation of the War Veterans Trust Fund, which provided monthly financial support to ex-PLAN combatants, war veterans, and the dependents of deceased veterans.
- Finally, the government initiated a housing program for elderly and disabled ex-PLAN combatants as well as former Robin Islanders, constructing ninety-six houses for designated beneficiaries, with plans for further expansion

Most respondents in this study confirmed that the above interventions are a true reflection of the government's efforts to address the plight of ex-PLAN combatants but criticized them for not properly implemented or failed to address their needs adequately.

4.2.4.2 Government intervention after the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs from 2006 up to its merging with Ministry of Defence

Hifikepunye Pohamba, former President of the Republic of Namibia, through the power vested in him by Article 23, sub section (3) (g) of the Constitution, created the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in October 2006. The researcher established that “the mandate of this created ministry was to coordinate the efforts on all aspects related to addressing the plights of ex-PLAN combatants and all veterans in the country, in order to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the ex-combatants and all veterans of the Namibian liberation struggle are properly addressed and coordinated” (Veteran Act, no 2 of 2008). Before it began implementing its mandate, the first step of the new ministry was to formulate and have an Act of Parliament enacted, replacing the then existing War Veterans Subvention Act of 1999 which was very limited in terms of benefits for the ex-combatants.

The Veterans Act no.2 of 2008 defines, “who qualifies to be a veteran, and makes provisions for their registration to enable the government to determine the number of veterans in the country, determine their social and economic status, and determine their form of contribution to the National Liberation Struggle”. As noted by Colonel (Rtd)

Ndjambula and Colonel Shandunge, the government's initiatives—implemented through the Ministry of Veterans Affairs since its establishment—have focused on facilitating the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants and veterans, a focus also documented by Mazarire (2019) includes the following:

- **Support Package Program (SPP)**

The Support Package Program (SPP) provides the following assistance to ex-combatants/veterans:

1. A ***Monthly Financial Assistance (subvention) of N\$2,200*** which is paid to unemployed ex-PLAN combatants and those veterans whose income is below the tax threshold. When a veteran who was receiving a monthly assistance subvention dies and is survived by dependents (spouse and/or children under the age of 18), the spouse is entitled to receive fifty-five per cent (55) of the N\$2,000 and the children are entitled to receive equal amounts of the remaining forty-five per cent (45) of the same N\$2,000. Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany states that this government effort is progressing slowly and sometimes with delays. My analysis is that, while the N\$2,200 is helpful, it is not sufficient to cater for economic needs of ex-PLAN combatants. I argue here based on the inflation figures as reported by the Central Bank of Namibia, where they indicate the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising and subsequently, the purchasing power of our currency is falling.

2. Under the same Support Package Program, the Ministry also provides ***medical assistance*** to retired ex-PLAN combatants and veterans with health problems related to the liberation struggle. Furthermore, ex-PLAN combatants and veterans with physical disabilities are assisted in the purchase of prosthetics, mobility aids, hearing aids etc. Veterans with war related injuries are assisted with the cover of medical treatment at government health institutions and facilities. Both respondents interviewed and me as a researcher acknowledge and appreciate this effort.

3. Through the same program, ex-PLAN combatants and veterans who suffer from PTSD as a result of the war or the effects of the war of the liberation struggle received **counselling**. On this Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula conceded however, that not every ex-PLAN combatant received counselling, resulting in some members degenerating into negative behaviours such as alcohol abuse, Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL) and many other irregular activities (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). I concur with Col (Rtd) Ndjambula that most ex-PLAN combatants did not receive counselling, because even I personally, am also an ex-PLAN combatant, but I did not receive or get hold of counselling services.

- **Individual Projects**

The government has introduced, funded and implemented individual projects as provided for by the Veterans Act, no 2 of 2008. As a benefit, all veterans are entitled to initiate and implement projects of their own choice to a maximum of N\$200,000 per approved viable project. According to Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula, this benefit is reviewed and was approved to expedite cash to the value of N\$170 000 to each individual who was having an approved unpaid individual project (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). This initiative was most welcome by all interviewed respondents. I acknowledge the idea, and fully support it, but as a researcher I assumed that ex-PLAN combatants are likely to misuse the funds due to the fact that they lack the financial intelligence or experience in budgetary control.

iii. Additional benefits for ex-PLAN combatants and veterans approved by Cabinet

These include “payment of a Once-off Gratuity to ex-PLAN combatants and all veterans of the national Liberation Struggle to the amount of fifty thousand Namibia dollars (N\$50,000) per ex-PLAN combatant or veterans, irrespective of gender, as a token of appreciation to those who are alive today” (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). Respondents also acknowledged, in line with observations by Mazarire (2023) that, by

virtue of their different financial situation, the 50,000 did not serve much, because those who were financially stable were likely to benefit, but it was a drop in the ocean for those without any income as they continue to suffer. Most respondents informed the researcher that, they used the fifty thousand dollars to pay rents, outstanding water bills, school fees for their children and for buying food. They continue arguing that no one could afford to buy or own a house with that amount. Arguably, the N\$50,000 did not significantly address the anticipated socio-economic problems confronting ex-PLAN combatants, as the amount did not match the market prices of the recipients' needs and thus did little to solve the problems at hand.

iv. Educational and Training Grants (ETG) for veterans and their dependents

According to Colonel Shandunge, the aim of the Educational and Training Grant is to provide financial support to some ex-PLAN combatants/veterans and their dependents who wish to further their studies or obtain vocational skills at institutions of higher learning in Namibia, in order to enable them to compete in the labour market and secure employment (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). This program, however, is not a replacement of the scholarship programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education. Once more, this arrangement is in line with the Third National Development Plan (NDP3) that serves as a tool for implementing Vision 2030. However, Mazarire (2023, p.113) states that “the educational grant for veterans of the liberation struggle (a provision under the Veterans Act 2 of 2008) already had a false start, with the fund being hit by recent budget cuts, that led to the new applications being suspended for the last three financial years”. He continues stating that “an obvious consequence of such delays is that former SWAPO exiles and ex-PLAN combatants who would have wanted to study through this grant would be getting more and more advanced in age”. This means that many would eventually abandon the desire to further study as they would be past retirement by the time funding is made accessible, making any such post-secondary

education obtained at that stage, moot in terms of improving their economic circumstances.

v. Funeral Grant

In 2006 Dr Nicky Iyambo unveiled the Funeral Grant for veterans stating that the “purpose of the Funeral Grant is to ensure that all deceased ex-PLAN combatants and veterans of the liberation struggle are buried in a respectable and dignified manner”. He further alluded that “the money for this grant will be paid from the Veterans Fund”. As such, “N\$20,000 will be used for each burial, with N\$10,000 of the said amount earmarked for the purchasing and erection of the tombstone, and the rest is reserved for other services” (Dr Nicky Iyambo, 2006). During the interview, Brigadier General (Rtd) Theophany applauded this grant and expressed hope that it continues, and that consideration be made for an increment in order to match the market prices (Interview script, NL 01, page 2, 18 May 2023).

vi. Land Resettlement Benefit

The Ministry of Veterans Affairs has assisted ex-PLAN combatants and veterans with resettlement through participation in national resettlement programmes, executed by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement. Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula submits that the exercise was not successful due to poor planning, insufficient funding and corruption. He criticised it for having benefited a few or those who are well connected to office bearers, and in some case benefited those who were not supposed to benefit, at the expense of most ex-PLAN combatants who are still suffering (Interview script, Li 01, page 3, 17 May 2023). Although resettlement initiatives are often complex and require careful planning to ensure the wellbeing and rights of the affected populations, I am of the opinion that it is not enough to resettle them. It is essential to provide the resettled with continuous support, in the form of grants/subsidies that assist with and other similar incentives.

4.3. Discussion and analysis

Following the compilation of findings, the researcher proceeds with their analysis and discussion. The demographic profile of respondents reveals that the majority of ex-PLAN combatants are aging, predominantly over the age of 50 and possess relatively low levels of formal education. All of them have served in the MODVA for over 26 years, yet majority of them continue to hold lower-ranking positions. This situation not only impacts their professional morale and job performance but also poses significant barriers to their career advancement and upward mobility within the institutional hierarchy. The above observation validates the earlier research assumption in which the researcher argued that aging and low educational backgrounds have been a huge contributing factor to the limitation to the smooth career advancement for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. Colonel Shandunge also confirmed that ex-PLAN combatants did not get time to engage in formal educational activities during the liberation struggle, and the DBC that was established to impart knowledge and skills among combatants after independence failed to meet their objective, due to poor planning and lack of sound management (Interview script, Sh 01, page 3, 17 May 2023).

The researcher's analysis is supported by Metsola (2010), "who opines that the Development Brigade trained and equipped PLAN ex-fighters with skills that did not translate into job opportunities". Both the researcher and Metsola's (2010) ideas resonate with propositions of the Human Development Theory that "Human Development' involves imparting knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes to individuals, that facilitate the realisation of a sound personal, social and economic wellbeing". The theory is further concerned with the basic development idea, emphasising that the richness of human life should come first from the richness of the economy. In line with the foregoing, as a researcher I also support this idea.

Dzinesa (2017) and Metsola (2015) share the same sentiments, that the Development Brigade Corporation gave vocational skills training to PLAN ex-fighters without having done a feasibility study of what skills were required by employers at the time. Subsequently, PLAN ex-fighters were up in arms with the state after realising that the skills they received could not translate into job opportunities (Devon, et al., 2012). This of course resulted from the narrow DDR assumption that training/equipping ex-combatants with vocational skills would automatically translate into them getting profitable employment in the post-colonial economy (Munive 2016). The researcher found it necessary to align the ex-PLAN combatant's reintegration programme with criticisms of the DRC contexts, in which it was also observed that the vocational training received by most former combatants from the United Nations, the World Bank and Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion (CONADER) was not concomitant to the DRC's labour market, and the income received was not sufficient to sustain the proposed project. It is further observed that the funding was delayed, infrequent and not flexible in within the DRC reintegration programme.

The researcher's analysis indicates that one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Development Brigade (DBC) in Namibia was its staffing and operational structure. In practice, it was predominantly composed of former PLAN members and functioned in a quasi-military style, offering recruits a lifestyle similar to what they had experienced during exile. Additionally, the Technical Committee on Ex-Combatants' report (Republic of Namibia, 1998) highlights that some beneficiaries of previous assistance programs including many former DBC employees were not actually ex-PLAN combatants or freedom fighters. This concern was also echoed by Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula during an interview on May 17, 2023 (Interview script, Ii 01, page 4).

These failures led the researcher to conclude that the DBC was not a sustainable entity, and there was a need to review its mandate.

In addressing the education problem in the MODVA, Colonel Shandunge explained that the ministry introduced the literacy programme to assist ex-combatants and enable them to read and write, (Interview script, Sh 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). The above programme is available and accessible to all members of the Defence Force regardless of their ranks or categories. Moreover, the Colonel further explicates that, apart from literacy, there is a budget set aside for academic studies for ex-PLAN combatants, including their children and dependents, who wish to further study. He acknowledges that the programme is real, because even he himself, has acquired his master's degree through this programme. Given the low educational background of most ex-PLAN combatants, this facility was available but underutilised. Their low education levels stem from their historical context during the liberation struggle, and thus, they should not be blamed for it.

Subsequently, most of the ex-PLAN combatants that the researcher interviewed submit that they were not reintegrated back into the society - especially Colonel Shandunge, but I found this to be in contradiction with existing literature, which also suggest that economic reintegration also entails gainful employment, (Torjesen, 2013). I found it to be a contradicting statement, because most of those I interviewed are gainfully employed within the MODVA from 1990. What the researcher observed is that although some of them have not been resettled, and the promised benefits have not been fully provided to them, therefore, it is arguable that Torjesen's (2013) assertion may not be applicable to all contexts, particularly in Namibia's case, where gainful employment appears not to be an accurate gauge to measure economic reintegration.

The UNHCR's transitional economic assistance to ex-PLAN combatants has been viewed as far from adequate and UNTAG programmes appears to have been rushed and

not well planned, because it did not include the ‘reintegration’ process. This has led to ex-PLAN combatants and veterans to apportion the blame to both the UN and SWAPO Party, for not having done enough during the transitional period, because both of them were responsible for their well-being. One of the most pressing issues that reflects the inadequacies of the Namibian government is the housing crisis among some ex-PLAN combatants, as noted by Colonel (Rtd) Ndjambula in his interview (Transcript, Ii 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). This is because the current MODVA housing policy or government housing scheme gave those occupying the lower ranks very little qualifying amounts for purchasing a dwelling – amounts not competitive to the current market prices. As established during the interviews, none of those in the lower ranks own a house acquired through this scheme, an indication that government interventions in place did not solve or benefit ex-PLAN combatants in terms of housing or resettlement. This assertion did not originate from the lower-ranking participants interviewed; rather, it was put forward by senior officials who took part in the study. Subsequently, it would have been expected that the veterans housing scheme for ex-PLAN combatants would have addressed this issue; however, this scheme has also been slow and benefited a select few ‘well-connected’ ex-PLAN combatants, whilst many deserving ex-PLAN combatants like the lower-ranked soldiers in the MODVA have been largely excluded from the scheme due to the perception that they can afford.

Colonel Shandunge is concerned with the notion of paying grants to ex-PLAN combatants based on the number of years that one spent in the war zone or in the liberation struggle as discriminatory and unjust. During the interviews, most respondents believe that to go for training was not an individual choice, but the prerogative of commanders who decided where each individual was to be deployed. Therefore, one can argue that it is problematic to categorise individuals according to years spent in the

combat zone rather than on ex-PLAN combatants' economic needs in post-colonial Namibia (Mazarire 2023).

Most of the ex-PLAN combatants interviewed were “aggrieved by the lack of career progression, and the prevalent view of considering them as needy, helpless and potentially dangerous”, (Metsola, 2011). The researcher established that the lack of career advancement is blamed on most senior ex-PLAN commanders, who, were not considerate of their fellow ex-PLAN combatants who were their subordinates in terms of promotions. Instead of considering former comrades for promotion, they allegedly tend to promote the younger new recruits, and as a result, most ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA are demotivated and disappointed (Interview script, li 01, 4, 7 May 2023). Arguably, this could be as a result of the junior ex-PLAN combatants' lack of high school qualifications (Grade 12 certificate) as compared to new recruits who possess these qualifications. Unsurprisingly, the new recruits are prioritised when it comes to promotion. Thus, I suggest that this policy needs to be reconsidered due to that many ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA failed to get proper education because of their participation in the liberation struggle rather than by choice.

Further to this, the researcher also established that “most Namibians regard their war experiences to have translated into difficulties in adapting to civilian existence, constituting them as antisocial characters who roam from the countryside to the cities, stand idle on the streets and are prone to drunkenness, crime and incapable of engaging productively in the economy”, (Bartholomew, 2012). According to my judgement, this translates to being one of the current direct challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, as established from the research findings. For example, as earlier discussed, at some point, the labelling of ex-PLAN combatants as idle and unproductive resulted in one of the biggest country-wide demonstrations in 2006. The ex-combatants

were demanding employment in the government, public sector and requesting for the benefits entitled to them to be released. It is evident that without such pressure, their plights would have just been ignored. Consequently, it was only because of that pressure, that President Hifikepunye Pohamba introduced the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in August 2006, in order to address the plights of ex-PLAN combatants and all veterans of the liberation struggle. The then Home Affairs Minister, Jerry Ekandjo also justified the absorption of ex-combatants into the Special Field Force arguing that it was ‘the price we have to pay for peace’ as the ex-combatants could ‘build a bomb out of nothing’ and had the potential ‘to turn this country upside down’. The Technical Committee on Ex-combatants argued that ‘most of the long serving ex PLAN combatants and those with specialised training and colourful military achievements need urgent attention as their patience might develop into desperation with unpredictable results’. Once more, the then Finance Minister Nangolo Mbumba argued along similar sentiments that, “it was the government’s firm decision to address the ex-combatant dilemma once and for all, by directly offering public employment and full integration of ex-combatants into the social, political and economic mainstream of the country as an investment in stability, democracy and above all, peace”. He further urged all public enterprises, chambers, associations and the private sector in general to support the programme through the creation of similar employment commitments.

The Social Capital Theory aptly rationalises the above statements by submitting that a community-oriented reintegration initiative creates social capital and builds trust between former combatants and community members of communities within which they are reintegrating into. As a researcher, I concur with both these sentiments on the basis that they provide a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of reintegration and designing interventions that promote trust, reciprocity, social support, and effective governance.

In analysing UNTAG/UNHCR intervention in Namibia, it is apparent that UNTAG's mission was limited in scope and effectiveness. The reason being that the reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants was not considered or included in any clause of the UN policies, and there were no UN monitoring activities to ascertain the whereabouts of the reintegrated ex-combatants, and how they were coping post-demobilisation. Post-1990, the UN reassessed its DDR intervention mechanisms and established the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), marking a significant evolution in the organisation's approach. The IDDRS lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities and ex-combatants to live together as law-abiding citizens, while building national capacity and cohesion for long-term peace, security and development. The Namibian government's current economic reintegration policies could greatly benefit from the IDDRS framework, especially if it implements targeted interventions to improve the socio-economic circumstances of ex-PLAN combatants in post-colonial Namibia. By doing so, it would also effectively address many of the economic challenges faced by ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, as highlighted in this study.

Another observation from Namibia and other African countries where DDR programmes have been implemented is that there was limited coordination between the various actors in the peacebuilding interventions. For instance, the elaborated psychological reintegration (policies) to assist former combatants to adjust their attitudes and expectations, as well as deal with war-related mental trauma, increases the possibility that ex-combatants may resort to violence. In addition it is also evident that in not dealing with the psychological aspect, the Namibian government was unintentionally setting up many ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA for failure, due to the high numbers of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA who struggled with PTSD, alcoholism, leading them to having several disciplinary issues with the military such as insubordination and absenteeism, which led to many losing their jobs. Moreover, this is not only a challenge

for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, but generally particularly for those who suffer from trauma due to the war.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented and interpreted the findings derived from semi-structured interviews. The analysis reveals mixed results from the policy responses aimed at addressing the concerns of Namibia's ex-PLAN combatants and veterans which have primarily materialised through governmental efforts to meet demands for formal recognition, employment opportunities, and financial compensation. Although formal recognition was achieved, upward mobility, financial compensation, housing and adequate retirement benefits remain largely limited for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA, whilst many of their compatriots outside of the MODVA remain unemployed and continue to struggle to make ends meet.

Over time, ex-PLAN combatant and veteran politics have evolved relatively through a cumulative series of claims and responses, with every major phase starting from demonstrations by SWAPO cadres and ex-PLAN combatants - as demonstrated by such demonstrations in 1990, 1995, 1997, 1998 and again in 2006. Initially, the ex-PLAN combatants, returnees and demobilised soldiers were assumed to proceed and simply restart their lives in their local communities smoothly. However, most of them experienced problems in generating adequate resources to maintain a decent livelihood, and soon began to demonstrate, demanding jobs, financial compensation, and official recognition from the government. Early government responses included a demobilisation gratuity, vocational training, rehabilitation of the war-disabled and resettlement schemes. As these efforts had derisory success, demonstrations by SWAPO cadres and ex-PLAN combatants forced the government to choose a course of action that drastically diverged

from the typical course of reintegration programmes to mass public employment through the creation of the 'Peace Project'.

It is contended that reintegration failed due to factors such as, the rewarding of ex-combatants in grand schemes while completely ignoring non-combatants victims, a mismatch between the economic potential of the environment and the intervention packages and lack of thorough market analysis when conducting re-skilling (Metsola, 2011). Veterans' and ex-PLAN combatants' needs are complex and sensitive, because they constitute a group comprised of persons who hail from different backgrounds. In the early days of the establishment of the new government, not much was done for the freedom fighters, and most ex-PLAN combatants. It is for this reason that the government subsequently devised a number of interventions to address their needs, as a way of reintegrating them back into society, both socially and economically, and this was also a mechanism to curb potential violence. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the process of the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA from 2006 to 2022. The objectives and questions of the study, as established in Chapter 1, reiterated in Chapter 4 and further recollected below, were:

- a. To examine the extent to which reintegration programmes for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were successful in economically reintegrating them back into society.
- b. To assess the unique individual direct/indirect economic challenges that ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face.
- c. To evaluate the quality of life for ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA by gauging their economic wellbeing in post-colonial Namibia.

Whereby, the research questions that the thesis attempted to address are the primary and secondary research questions listed hereunder:

- a. Primary Research Question

To what extent have reintegration programmes been successful in economically reintegrating ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA?

- b. Secondary Research Questions

1. What social and economic challenges do ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA encounter during their reintegration process?

2. How do ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA perceive their economic well-being and overall quality of life in post-colonial Namibia?

The process and circumstances characterising the economic re-integration of ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA were explained through the explications of the Critical Review Theory (Shariff, 2018), “which states that the post-conflict era is riddled with the potential of renewed war if demobilised combatants are not properly reintegrated into the society”. Sen’s (1997) Human Development Theory was instrumental in elucidating how the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and individual capabilities serves as a foundation for advancing personal, social, and economic well-being—each of which plays a vital role in enabling effective reintegration processes. In conjunction with Social Capital Theory, as articulated by Thomas and Gupta (2018), conceptualises social capital as the collective reservoir of actual or potential resources embedded within enduring networks of institutionalised relationships characterised by mutual recognition and acquaintance. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer valuable insight into the nexus between human capital and the economic reintegration of former PLAN combatants within the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (MODVA).

A qualitative methodology was utilised in the study. Policy documents, legislation, books, and journal articles were accessed and reviewed as secondary and primary data sources. Ex-PLAN combatants currently serving at higher posts, serving at lower posts and those who have resigned or retired from the MODVA constituted the sample of the study. Primary data were mainly collected through semi-structured face to face interviews. The research respondents were purposively selected, primarily based on their familiarity with the DDR programme itself, and because as ex-PLAN combatants they share similar experiences of the liberation struggle, and also all went through the DDR programmes when they returned to Namibia from the war.

This study utilised the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the collected data, because of its proclivity in helping one understand, in nuanced manners, the personal experiences of respondents with regards to a major life event, experience or situation. The current chapter provides a recap of the major findings of the study, and the extent to which they responded to the study's objectives. The following section provides a summary of the study's major findings. This is then followed by an outline of the recommendations that the author believes are necessary to improve the processes and implementation of DDR programmes in the future.

5.2 General Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the core research problem, emerging from the contextual background of the study. It explored the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants as a key objective of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives. A critical concern highlighted was the risk that, without effective reintegration, ex-combatants may relapse into violent behaviour or criminal activities. The chapter also clearly articulated the study's research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2 established the theoretical lens through which secondary data was analysed. It then reviewed existing literature concerning the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants within the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (MODVA). The findings underscore that Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes play a critical role in facilitating the transition from conflict to peace, emphasising that enduring peace is unlikely if armed factions persist, as they threaten post-conflict stability. Additionally, by examining DDR experiences in other contexts and comparing them to the Namibian scenario, the chapter offered a critical reflection on the methodological constraints present in the existing body of scholarship.

In Chapter 3, the researcher provided insights into the research methodology utilised in the study, as well as the research design. The population of the study is also defined in the chapter, and consists of retired/resigned, lower and higher-ranking ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA. The use of the qualitative case study methodology in this study is also done. Personal interviews were used to as the primary instrument for collecting data. Data gathered were analysed guided by the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Chapter 4 presented and analysed the data, which reflects the respondents' understanding, perceptions, interpretations and thoughts on ex-PLAN combatants' reintegration in the MODVA. The findings are presented in thematic order seeking to provide answers to the main research objectives. This analysis is guided by the theoretical and analytical frameworks discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. It involves examining conceptual themes that emerge from the collected data while also evaluating their relationship with existing literature. This comparison helps determine whether the findings align with or challenge previous research. A critical aspect of the thematic analysis process is extensive reading, which enables the effective identification and interpretation of emerging patterns within the data.

5.3 Research findings

The deliberations clearly emphasised that reintegration is a complex undertaking, requiring coordinated efforts from various stakeholders. These include national governments, international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, civil society actors including NGOs and religious institutions, the security sector (comprising military and intelligence agencies), and representatives of the private sector such as business leaders (entrepreneurs) and employers. The research notes that the biggest economic challenge facing ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA is that many

are reaching retirement age and have not worked long enough to build viable pensions. Another issue is that most of them are in lower ranks of the MODVA, and consequently, their salaries are low, which negatively impacts their pension accumulation (Interview script, li 01, page 4, 17 May 2023). These factors could lead to ongoing hardship for them and potentially their families after retirement, and could be exploited by political or other agents to destabilise communities in Namibia. It also emerged that their low ranks are due to limited access to primary and secondary education during the liberation struggle (1966 – 1990). Education remains a key factor in securing sustainable employment, and thus, these veterans face significant barriers to integrating fully into Namibian post-colonial society. The researcher also observed that most senior military personnel, including ex-PLAN commanders, tend to promote new recruits over ex-PLAN combatants, which has caused discontent among the latter. This situation could have several implications for Namibia's national security, potentially leading to internal military unrest if ex-PLAN combatants feel marginalised, which could undermine morale and operational effectiveness. Furthermore, it might fuel national instability and political tensions, especially if veterans perceive their contributions to Namibia's independence are being ignored. It also fosters distrust in leadership and creates divisions within the defence forces, making it more difficult for the military to respond effectively to security threats.

The aforementioned aligns with Amartya Sen's human development theory which emphasises the importance of education and how it can lead to higher income for individuals who possess it (Sen 1997). In this case, the absence of educational qualifications explains why ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA have remained stagnant in their career progression, whilst new recruits with formal education have been promoted swiftly, a situation which exposes marginalisation through education in the MODVA. The research further established that most ex-PLAN combatants serving in the

MODVA are not resettled, and they have no land or designated place to live. Mazarire (2023) indicates that the Ministry of Defence Veterans Affairs (MODVA) only allocates housing to veterans considered to be in dire need. This discretionary power held by MODVA officials raises concerns regarding the criteria used for allocation, leading to potential mismanagement and reports of impartiality in the process.

The study further claims that there are government interventions in place that seek to address the plight of veterans and ex-PLAN combatants. These are basically categorised into two categories: the government interventions before the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the interventions after the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs up to its merging with the Ministry of Defence. Thus, unresolved veteran issues could contribute to broader social unrest or political instability in the form of protests, impacting Namibia's national security and overall social stability. It is the opinion of the researcher that veterans and ex-PLAN combatants are often confronted by significant challenges upon their reintegration into civilian life. These include economic hardships, psychological trauma, social stigma and difficulties in accessing healthcare and other support services. Mitigating the challenges faced by veterans and ex-PLAN combatants during reintegration requires a multi-faceted approach and strategies that include economic empowerment, psychological support, healthcare access, community reintegration, policy advocacy, and education or awareness campaigns. Ultimately, these strategies can foster a supportive environment for reintegration, thereby contributing to both individual well-being and national stability. The researcher, therefore, concludes that the existing interventions in place are not effective in addressing all the challenges that ex-PLAN combatants in the MODVA face.

5.4 Contribution of the study

This study contributes to ongoing discussions about the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants within MODVA, offering practical recommendations for economic development planners and practitioners to enhance the socio-economic reintegration of former fighters. It also provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of reintegration programs for ex-PLAN combatants, evaluating their success in supporting their economic re-entry into society. However, further research is needed to explore additional factors influencing the reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants serving within MODVA. Future studies could specifically focus on retired ex-PLAN combatants residing in rural areas of Namibia to gain a deeper understanding of the economic challenges they face during reintegration.

5.5 Recommendations

In this study, the researcher has grappled with the broad concerns of the discursive discourses and practices associated with the reintegration and veteran policies in Namibia and compared these processes to some general categories of reintegration and experiences in other African contexts. The researcher ultimately provides, below, some recommendations in the hope that they will also have an impact on policy and practice in matters that concern processes related to the reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants now, and in the future.

5.5.1 Recommendations to the Ministry of Defence and Veterans' Affairs

a. The MODVA to speed up the compensation of ex-PLAN combatants as outlined in the approved and agreed government initiatives or policy on ex-combatants' reintegration. The reason is that most, if not all, veterans and ex-PLAN combatants are ageing now and may not live to enjoy the benefits of such policies if delays in implementation persist.

b. The MODVA to commence the compensation of ex-PLAN combatants and veterans regardless of employment status. This would address the notion were marginalised lower-ranking PLAN ex-combatants in the military have continually been denied veteran benefits on the basis that they have employment, yet the reality is they are earning a paltry wage, with no prospects of promotion due to lack of formal education, a situation which keeps them economically marginalised.

c. Relations between ex-PLAN combatants, the government and ruling party (SWAPO) to be situated within a broader spectrum of Namibian political and social realities.

d. The Veteran Act and reintegration policies be reviewed timely and amended regularly to match with the economic needs of ex-PLAN combatants on the ground. This is particularly important with regard to veterans' monthly allowances which need to be continuously reviewed due to inflation.

e. The registration and review of database for war veterans and ex-PLAN combatants must be an ongoing process due to the likelihood that there are potentially thousands of veterans who remain unregistered making them vulnerable to continued poverty.

5.5.2 Recommendations to the UN, donors and all involved stakeholders

a. Ensuring sufficient and timely funding for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs is crucial. This requires securing reliable, predictable, and sustainable financial resources, particularly for the reintegration phase, to minimize the likelihood of conflict-affected countries falling back or relapse into instability.

b. UN, Local NGOs and donors must partner with national governments and relevant political parties in planning and implementing DDR programmes.

c. Challenges experienced from other countries in DDR programme implementations need to be considered, to avoid pitfalls when designing DDR programmes.

d. International financial institutions and donors, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, and UN agencies, must close the gap between short-term emergency funding for peace and long-term investment in economic and social development. This includes support for job creation, income-generating activities, and business opportunities for ex-combatants. In many post-conflict countries where the UN has successfully carried out peacekeeping operations, ongoing instability persists due to the incomplete reintegration of former combatants, often referred to as “remnants of war.”

e. Create an AU DDR Resource Centre to support all AU engagements and assistance in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration activities, by ensuring seamless integration with UN DDR capacities for enhanced coordination and effectiveness.

5.5.3 Recommendations to scholars and academics

a. DDR has proved to be complex, time-consuming and expensive, but essential to sustaining lasting peace in post-conflict societies. It is, therefore, clear that further empirical research and in-country surveys are required to further profile the issue of ex-combatants’ reintegration into societies in the broader Southern African Region in general.

b. In Namibia, further study is required to investigate UNTAG’s reintegration entitlements to ex-PLAN combatants and all SWAPO refugees. This is because there is still an assumption that returnees and all ex-combatants were not provided with all the support due to them. This came to light after the Namibia Veterans’ Organisation petitioned the UN on the issue.

c. Finally, proper conflict analysis should be conducted in all circumstances, in order to determine the root causes of the conflict and generate preventive measures to deal with them.

5.6 Conclusion

This concluding chapter consolidates the key findings of the study, which critically assessed the economic reintegration of former PLAN combatants within the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (MODVA) between 2006 and 2022. Building upon earlier chapters that explored the historical context of Namibia's post-independence military structures and the strategic rationale behind reintegration programming, this chapter brings together theoretical insights and empirical analysis to evaluate the extent to which economic reintegration has been successfully achieved.

Through a focused examination of the reintegration schemes implemented by MODVA—ranging from vocational training and pension schemes to entrepreneurial support—the study revealed both progress and persistent structural limitations in fostering economic self-sufficiency among ex-combatants. These findings were contextualized within Namibia's broader post-colonial economic landscape, where access to capital, formal employment, and sustained income generation remain uneven.

The integration of Sen's (1997) Human Development Theory and Social Capital Theory (Thomas & Gupta, 2018) provided an analytical framework that clarified how personal attributes and institutional networks collectively shaped reintegration outcomes. Specifically, the research underscored that human capital development alone was insufficient without the reinforcing presence of social capital—particularly networks of mutual recognition that could facilitate access to resources and opportunity.

Ultimately, this study argues that while MODVA's efforts laid foundational steps toward economic reintegration, future policy design must be more responsive to the socio-economic realities of ex-combatants, incorporating participatory governance structures, adaptive program models, and long-term capacity-building initiatives. These measures are not only central to reintegration but also essential in preventing the recurrence of marginalization and promoting durable peace in Namibia's post-conflict context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SOS-0130 Date: 24 February 2023

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Ethics Committee (REC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the ethics committee.

Title of Project: ASSESSING ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF EX-PLAN COMBATANTS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS 2006 – 2022

Student: GABRIEL ALWEENDO

Student Number: 220075298

Supervisor(s): Dr. TICHAONA TRUST MAZARIRE (North-West University, RSA)

Centre for Research Services

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee.
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee.
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. Zivayi Chiguvare (Chairperson Ethics Committee)

Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research Innovation and Development
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA, Private Bag, 13301 Windhoek, Namibia
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park, Office F224



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Student Name: GABRIEL ALWEENDO

Student Number: 220075298

Programme: MASTER OF SECURITY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Approved Research Title: ASSESSING ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF EXPLAN
COMBATANTS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS 2006-2022.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

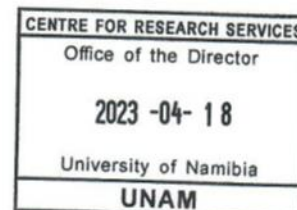
I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees. The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards,

Signature: 

Date: 18 April 2023

Dr. AEE Shikongo, Head: Postgraduate Research Support Services,
Tel: +264 61 206 3129, E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na



APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

INFORMED CONSENT FOR QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Name of Principal Investigator:	Mr Gabriel Alweendo
Name of Sponsor:	Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

I Gabriel Alweendo, a final year student, pursuing a Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies Programme, through the Department of Security and Strategic Studies at the School of Military Science, University of Namibia (UNAM). Like any other Masters programs, students are required to write a thesis (research project) on a suitable topic of interest to successfully complete the program. My topic is “**Assessing Economic Reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs from 2006 – 2022**”. I will give you the information and I am inviting you to take part in this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask me or my supervisor Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire, at +264 816534227 or at email tichmazyezra@gmail.com. (School of Military Science at UNAM).

Purpose of the Research

The study aims to assess the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA to establish whether their economic wellbeing and welfare programs are well taken care of as per reintegration standards in post-colonial Namibia.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation as interviewees, and an interview will take about 20minutes.

Participant Selection

You are requested and approached as a possible participant because you are an Ex-PLAN combatant who went through Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program in Namibia and currently in the government security sector with the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

If you agree to take part in this study, you are going to answer questions during the interview with me to the best of your ability. The researcher will take note and use recording devices to assist in effective data capturing on your permission. Data collected will be stored safely and securely in hard drives for a duration allowed by UNAM guidelines. During the interview, I will sit down with you at the location of choice. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else will be present at the interview place except me the interviewer and you, unless if you need an interpreter to assist you and you are in agreement with this arrangement. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except my supervisor, Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire who by virtue of his position will have access to the information documented during your interview. The researcher will use code words instead of names or personal identities for better confidentiality. The recording and all other materials used will be kept in a safe place and will be destroyed after two months or as per UNAM guidelines.

Duration

The research takes place over one day. During that time, the researcher will visit you for an interview and it will last for 20 minutes.

Risks

The interview will concentrate on assessing the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA. There is a risk that you may feel uncomfortable talking about reintegration procedures and its implementation. But you do not have to answer any questions or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct personal benefits for participating in this study. However, it may largely benefit MODVA, the Public, the relevant stakeholders and add value in academia.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided with any incentive to take part in the research.

Confidentiality

The research in the field of security might be sensitive. All responses will be treated with confidentiality and the collected information will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number is and we will lock that information up with a security lock and key. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except my supervisor, Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire. Data to be collected will be used for the purpose of the study only.

Sharing the Results

Information provided will not be shared with anybody outside the research team and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you once published. Moreover, collected data will be shared with MODVA for data-check to avoid compromises of the national security.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participants are at liberty to choose whether to take part or not in this research. Even if you agreed to take part and change later, you have right to withdraw at any stage freely. One can choose to answer some questions of the study but still remain in the study without any problem. In case you withdraw from the study, you may or may not permit the researcher to use the data.

Who to Contact

For any query regarding this study feel free to contact Mr Gabriel Alweendo, Defence Headquarters – Sam Nujoma Drive, at cell no: +264 816284080 or gabesalweendo@yahoo.com, or my supervisor Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire, UNAM at +264 816534227 or at email tichmazyezra@gmail.com.

PART II: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have been invited to participate in research about assessing the economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA. I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and all questions I have asked, were answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

.....

.....

Name of Participant (print)

Signature of Participant

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Interview to be conducted will last for 20 minutes.
2. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question.
3. The recording will be kept in a safe place and will be destroyed after two months or as per UNAM guidelines.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

.....

.....

Name of Researcher/Person taking Consent (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

APPENDIX 4: INTEVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR EX-PLAN COMBATANTS

Code No..... (To be completed by the researcher)

Name:

Qualification:

Title:

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Kindly be informed that this section is for administration purposes and it is not compulsory, you may opt to not answer

1. Directorate or Training Institution

HR

☐

JOps

☐

NCSC

☐

MS

☐

SOAPS

☐

2. Rank

Pte - Sgt

☐

S/Sgt - WO1

☐

2nd Lt - Maj

☐

Lt Col - Maj Gen

☐

3. Gender

Male

☐

Female

☐

4. Age

18-24

☐

25-30

☐

31-40

☐

41-50

☐

51+

☐

5. Qualification

Diploma

☐

Bachelor

☐

Masters

☐

PHD

☐

6. Years of service

5-9

☐

10-15

☐

16-20

☐

21-25

☐

26+

☐

SECTION B:

PART A: Ex-PLAN combatants serving at higher posts.

1. When and how did you return to Namibia from exile?
2. Upon your return, what was it like to be a civilian again?
3. How did the community received and perceived you upon your return to Namibia from exile?
4. How Do you understand economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs?
5. From your observation, was reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants successfully implemented by UNTAG and the new SWAPO government? Motivate your Answer.
6. How and in what way did you support yourself and your family after returning from exile?
7. Were there practical measures taken by MODVA towards economic reintegration of ex-PLAN combatant?
8. What are the current direct and indirect economic challenges facing ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA?
9. How and in what way has your life changed since you were offered a government job?
10. In your opinion, has SWAPO party fulfilled the promises it made in exile concerning compensation?
11. If you are to suggest, what are the best interventions of integrating ex-PLAN combatants into peace time societies?

PART B: Ex-PLAN combatants serving at lower posts.

1. When and how did you return to Namibia from exile?
2. Upon your return, what was it like to be a civilian again?
3. How did the community received and perceived you upon your return to Namibia from exile?
4. How and in what way did you support yourself and your family after returning to Namibia from exile?

5. When did you first received a government job or gratuity payment? Was it prior to the formulation of MODVA in 2008 or thereafter?
6. How and in what way has your life changed since you were offered a government job?
7. Did the gratuity payments from the government (MODVA) improved your standard of living including your family?
8. In your opinion, has SWAPO party fulfilled the promises it made in exile concerning compensation?
9. According to your observation, what are the current economic challenges facing ex-plan combatants?
10. If you are to suggest, what are the best interventions of integrating ex-PLAN combatants into peace time societies?

PART C: Ex-PLAN combatants who retired or resigned.

1. When and how did you return to Namibia from exile?
2. Upon your return, what was it like to be a civilian again?
3. How did the community received and perceived you upon your return to Namibia from exile?
4. How and in what way did you support yourself and your family after returning to Namibia from exile?
5. When did you first received a government job or gratuity payment? Was it prior to the formulation of MODVA in 2008 or thereafter?
6. How and in what way has your life changed since you were offered a government job?
7. Where you satisfied by the income you were getting from the government and did the gratuity payments improved your standard of living including your family?
8. In your opinion, has SWAPO party fulfilled the promises it made in exile concerning compensation?
9. According to your observation before you left MODVA, what are the current economic challenges facing ex-plan combatants?
10. If you are to suggest, what are the best interventions of integrating ex-PLAN combatants into peace time societies?

Thank you for taking time to answer the questionnaire.

APPENDIX 5: REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O. Box 41707
Ausspannplatz
Windhoek
17 April 2023

Chief of the Defence Force
Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs
Private Bag 13307
Windhoek

Admiral Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN THE DHQs (MODVA)

I, 17048201 Lt Col Gabriel Alweendo, a final year student, pursuing a Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies Programme, through the Department of Security and Strategic Studies at the School of Military Science, University of Namibia (UNAM). Like any other Masters programs, students are required to write a thesis (research project) on a suitable topic of interest to successfully complete the program. My topic is **“Assessing Economic Reintegration of ex-PLAN combatants in the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs from 2006 – 2022”**.

The researcher intends to collect data from ex-PLAN combatants currently in service with MODVA and those who retired or resigned. The objective of the study is to examine whether the reintegration programs for ex-PLAN combatants in MODVA were successful in economically reintegrating them back into the society in post-colonial Namibia. The research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire as the principal supervisor in accordance with an approved research proposal by the School of Military Science Higher Degree Board of the University of Namibia, with resolution number SOMS **HDB/22/11/02** and **Ethical Clearance Certificate No SOS – 0130** issued by University of Namibia Ethics Committee.

Based on the above, I am hereby seeking permission to conduct a study in the MODVA (DHQs) for about one week starting 08 – 12 May 2023. Moreover, the study will include ex-PLAN combatants at managerial, supervision and ordinary levels inclusive of some retired or resigned members.

Therefore, as senior military personnel, I will adhere to all security protocols of MODVA. Furthermore, all the data collected will be solely used for educational purposes and the findings will be brought to MODVA for review before my final submission to UNAM. Attached please find the authorization letter from the University of Namibia and research questionnaire that will serve as the basis of interview. In addition, my supervisor can be reached on the following number for clarity incase. Dr Tichaona Trust Mazarire, at +264 816534227 or at email tichmazyezra@gmail.com.

I attached the approved research proposal, questionnaires, a copy of the ethics clearance letter and the permission letter to conduct such research from the University of Namibia.

Lastly, I am looking forward to a positive response from your office.

Yours Sincerely

GAlweendo

G. Alweendo

Student number: 220075298

(0816284080/0811463656)

APPENDIX 6: CDF APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN MODVA/DHQ



NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Tel: (061) 204 9111

Fax: (061) 204 2124

E-mail Address: edefence@mod.gov.na

Col W Tjiveze

Enquiries: CDF/3/2/5/14

Our Ref:..... Your Ref:.....

Chief of the Defence Force
Private Bag 13307
WINDHOEK

28 April 2023

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

1. The student 17048201 Lt Col Gabriel Alweendo, student no 220075298 studying at the University of Namibia, towards the Masters of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies is hereby granted permission to conduct and academic research at MODVA (DHQ).
2. The research topic is titled: 'Assessing Economic Reintegration of ex-Plan combatants in the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs from 2006-2022'.
3. Therefore, render him your usual support in this regard especially in the area where our internal information is not highly classified. This permission does not allow in any form, hard or soft copy information to publish information acquired through your research interview, without obtaining prior authorization from my office.
4. Attached hereto, are the supporting documents from the institution as a proof of study.

Enclosures: 1. Letter to CDF (from the Institution)
2. Research Proposal
3. Research Questionnaires
4. Research Programme
5. Ethical Clearance Certificate

MK PINEHAS 'G.C.O.E' 'psc' 'BCom' 'MBA'
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE: AIR MSHL

WDB/JG



All official Correspondence must be addressed to the Chief of the Defence Force