



National Healing and Reconciliation's Contributions to National Security: The experiences of Zimbabwe since independence

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Abstract: *National healing and Reconciliation in its current form has become the most important unanswered political question of the post Africa colonial state primarily because of its inability to answer holistically to the African complex conflict situation. It is because the neoliberal reconciliation adopted only seek to answer superficial challenges posed by contemporary conflicts without attending to the bigger question of the cultural and structural challenges of conflict created by slavery and colonialism. Africa cannot achieve full reconciliation unless the structural conditions that gave birth to this current post independence violence has been attended to. Reconciliation models espoused in the bulk of academic literature has been fashioned along neoliberal trajectory to deliberately avoid dealing with structural challenges that has been poised by the slavery and colonialism. Hence, the holistic model of reconciliation which begins with the decolonisation process is the only basis and means by which Africa can enjoy sustainable peace which is a pre-requisite of national security. With this in mind, this paper focused on the reconciliation attempts adopted by various Zimbabwean regimes beginning with the end of the war of the liberation. The paper concentrated much on the negotiated peace settlement which the authors considered to be key efforts made to bring national healing from various ugly episodes that the Zimbabwean population went through. To achieve this, this study focused on document analysis and discussions with key informant respondents from relevant political, academic and historical circles familiar with the issues discussed. As part of its findings, this paper realised that negotiated peace efforts as well as national healing in Zimbabwe are affected by political will, polarised Zimbabwean community, external interferences, natural disasters and many more. This paper recommends that that sustainable peace cannot be guaranteed in any post conflict society unless a holistic and contextual model of national reconciliation has been adopted.*

Keywords: *National Healing; Reconciliation; Peace; security; Zimbabwe.*

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INTRODUCTION

National healing and reconciliation as transitional justice approach to peacebuilding has become, to date, a highly functional phenomenal Africa post-colonial state. This came as a result of a need to for democratic transitions to copy with the past of either full-fledged armed conflicts or political and ethnics violence. This approach has been in existence as early as 1980s and 1990s after the Cold War. Zimbabwe as a country, though acknowledged the need for reconciliation in 1980 by mere pronouncement, missed the opportunity by not developing a holistic reconciliation framework to address injustice caused by the war of the liberation. A first attempt was only realised at the formation of the GNU with the establishment of the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation (ONHR). As a result of political bickering and external interference, the process didn't take off in earnestness. With the enactment of Constitution Amendment (NO. 20) Act of 2013 and the operationalisation of the NPRC Act in 2018, an

opportunity to operationalise a robust reconciliation framework was put in place.

Reconciliation has become the most important, but unanswered political, question of the post Africa colonial state primarily as a result of its inability to answer holistically to its conflict situation. For instance, countries like Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, Thailand, Sierra Leone and Cote D'ivoire among others have adopted this aspect to nation building. These were some of the experiences shared about reconciliation at a United Nations Security Council Open Debate Meeting in 2018 where the need for reconciliation to evolve in order to reflect the growing complexity of contemporary conflict was stressed. For example, in Ivory Coast, the Commission noted that root issues that include land ownership was key to reconciliation. Where as in Sierra Leone, the government established the (Wan Fambul) One Family Framework grounded in the belief that until Social ills of underdevelopment imposed by colonialism are taken away from the citizens door step the nation cannot move together (Højbjerg, 2005). In Ireland, it was

noted that silencing the gun, though fundamental, was not adequate enough to bring societies together. Unfortunately, according Hayner, 1994), reconciliation adopted has produced mixed reactions which are primarily unfavourable and unsatisfactory (Hayner, 1994).

An analysis of the UN Security Council Open Debate shows that that the neoliberal reconciliation adopted only seek to answer superficial challenges posed by contemporary conflicts without attending to the bigger question of structural challenges of conflict created by slavery and colonialism. Africa cannot achieve full reconciliation unless the structural conditions that gave birth to this current direct violence has been attended to. Moreso, reconciliation models espoused in the bulk of academic literature has been fashioned along neoliberal trajectory to deliberately avoid dealing with structural challenges that has been poised by the slavery and colonialism. History shows that reconciliation, though complex, is quite possible. However, it cannot afford to be a one size fits all, but each society must find its own path. Being informed by a) the historical background of the country, B) the nature of the political struggle engaged, c) the prevailing political context, e) the nature of the political transitions, e) and the geopolitics of the country. Hence, the holistic model of reconciliation which begins with the decolonisation process is the only basis and means by which Africa can enjoy sustainable peace which is a pre-requisite of national security of any given country.

Contextualising reconciliation and national security

There is little agreement in the growing academic literature as to precisely what reconciliation in the context of truth commissioning means, how to measure it, or how to promote it. In the first place, it needs to be stressed that reconciliation is not an event that can be legislated or governed by a law Secondly, the spirit that underpins any conceptualization or theory of reconciliation attempts to capture and communicate the idea of the bringing together of divergent and opposing views and opinions. It incorporates the (re)uniting of people, of groups, or of society in harmony. This is to be understood, minimally, as tolerance and the forbearance of differences and divergences at the individual as well as the collective and national levels. It means the acceptance that in a democratic society, it is legitimate and even important to disagree, but not to subvert the government. In this sense, reconciliation and democracy suggest a set of rules or a legitimate societal “patterning” in which all (or the great majority) of the players agree

that such rules are in their common interest and must therefore be abided by (Elster, 2004). In fact, democracy depend upon the basis of the philosophy of social contract as propounded by John Lock and Thomas Hobbes. An overall distinction is made between two forms of reconciliation; that is, between individual reconciliation and national, societal, or so-called political reconciliation. This is the third matter that needs attention. At one level, the former is both infinitely difficult and complex as well as more probable within the context of an institution like a truth commission.

Security on the other hand is considered to be a highly contested concept. Yet, it is almost instinctively understood by all at the ontological level to, at the very least, refer to survival as the most basic value to be secured or protected. Without survival, no other values have any meaning. This paper does not seek to deal with the vast literature on security or the changes to the concept in the post-Cold War era. Suffice it to note that the Cold War military-political definition of security, which privileged the state, has been broadened considerably, allowing for the development of the idea of “human security” a definition that places people at the centre of security, but also allows for the state as a referent object. Security, as Buzan defined it in his seminal work, means “freedom from fear.” It is the condition of not feeling threatened, and the process, according to McSweeney, (1999), through which resources are organized to remedy vulnerabilities. The state is instrumental in providing and building security. At the national level, the state protects its sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the domestic level, societal security is supposed to protect economic and individual security by adequately providing the equitable distribution of wealth and resources. Societal security has as its main agents the internal security forces of the state, such as the police, intelligence services, and the military. In the case of state failure to provide security, citizens turn elsewhere.

Principles of Reconciliation

According to Murithi (2019), the broad elements of the idea of reconciliation, which remains contested and is not subject to simplistic categorisations, due to its multi-disciplinary and multi-level nature. (Philpott, 2012) argues that these elements should be practical in nature to give reconciliation a political expression. For the purposes of this study, the following principles of reconciliation were given attention:

Truth recovery

Determining the truth relating to past violations; another dimension of woundedness is the common experience of victims being kept in ignorance about the political source of the injustice they have suffered. “If they can just show us the bones of my child. . .” the mother of a missing political activist in South Africa exclaimed.

Justice

Administering accountability for past violations through restorative and retributive-criminal justice;

Reparations

Pursuing redress for the victims of past violations;

Institutional Reform/Restoration of human dignity

Reversing the dehumanising aspects of past violations;

Acknowledgement

Official acknowledgement of past atrocity and injustice is important for working with individual traumatic experience because it validates past experiences and may help restore dignity and self-esteem. The status of being a citizen and a bearer of a right to self-determination is a fundamental dimension of right relationships in the social order. Building just institutions begins to restore this political dignity. Political injustice wounds the victim’s very person. This dimension includes much harm, including death; the loss of family and friends; permanent bodily impairment; sexual trauma; the loss of economic independence, to mention only a few. These need to be acknowledged at the very least. Re-establishing relationships based on human equality and human freedom: mapping a pathway towards healing deep divisions, premised on the acknowledgment of a shared humanity (Neyzi 2021).

Apology

Being wounded also has to do with the perpetrator’s apparent impunity. This is a political injustice communicated by the temporary triumph of the offence against the victim’s dignity represented by the act. As well as harm to the victim this is an attack on the shared values of a just political community. An apology would begin to rectify this situation.

Forgiveness

Finally, political injustice inflicts wounds on the perpetrator himself. This diminishes the wrongdoer. Perpetrators carry spiritual wounds, and they need to be

forgiven lest they go on to commit further political injustices. Several questions attach themselves to the last-mentioned practice of forgiveness, because critics complain that this confuses the public with the private in its effort to accomplish changes in the heart (Philpott 2012). One question is whether forgiveness unjustifiably sacrifices retributive justice for a cheap alternative. Another is whether forgiveness sacrifices truth. There is a complex relationship between truth and reconciliation. In its most ancient meaning reconciliation connotes a comprehensive restoration of right relationships. Parties involved regardless of their differences should have one thing in common that is addressing the legacies of socio-economic exploitation and injustices, including gender-based violence (Handl, 1997; Kopstein, 1997; & Dodds, 1999)

NATIONAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN ZIMBABWE

National healing and reconciliation characterised the historical developments in Zimbabwe from before the attainment of independence to date. However, the means and methods adopted differed depending on a wide range of factors which were mainly due to prevailing circumstances. For instances, the 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia negotiated peace settlement and the Lancaster house conferences mainly focused on dealing with the war driven differences between the indigenous Zimbabwean population and the settler rule population that had waged a war against each other for more than a decade. Going forward, this section shows that the following negotiated peace settlements were much influenced by the desire to solve some domestic hiccups influenced by the tribal as well as political terrain characterising the Zimbabwean society. This section examines the various attempts by various Zimbabwean regimes to bring a closure to the ugly situations such as war, that the Zimbabwean population went through. In that vein, this section examines these peace settlements or national healing and reconciliation efforts in their various forms assessing their successes and failures.

The Zimbabwe-Rhodesia negotiated settlement

Although history can say a lot about negotiated settlements that have been agreed upon, the most notable was the 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, an internal settlement made between the ruling white minority party, Rhodesian Front, (RF), led by Ian Smith, the then Prime Minister of Rhodesia, and some black movements including United African National Council (UANC) led

by Abel Muzorewa, Zimbabwe National African Union (ZANU) led by Ndabaningi Sithole and United National Federal Party (UNFP) led by Kayisa Ndiweni. The peace settlement resulted in Abel Muzorewa becoming the substantive Prime Minister for the following six months, (Dougherty, 1971 and Dashwood, 2002).

The 1979 peace settlement was intended to end the protracted 15-year war between the Smith led government and various armed indigenous liberation movements. The mounting pressure from the international community demanding the white settler government to allow for majority rule had reached peak. This was coupled with the ongoing negotiations between United States (US) and Britain with Rhodesian Front to allow majority rule, even though the negotiations were guaranteeing white interests. Pursuant to that, in March 1978, in a vain attempt to return to international legality, stay in control and direct unfolding events, the RF came to an internal settlement of the crisis with conservative black leaders.” (Fisher, 2010, 5). The white dominated government conducted elections which saw some limited indigenous blacks being granted limited civil rights to participate in the elections. Through the elections of 1979, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the leader of UANC was elected Prime Minister in a campaign that effectively excluded the main liberation movements namely ZANU and ZAPU (Waddy, 2014:1)

The negotiated settlement was a power sharing arrangement that protected the white minority interests and gave them a glass like reflector that would highlight them as saviours of the black majority and have international recognition. In this light, the white supremacy elevated Abel Muzorewa as the country’s first ever black Prime Minister with some of the black people getting some positions in the government. However, it is important to understand that this settlement only lasted for six months between April 1979 and December 1979).

The Zimbabwe-Rhodesia of 1979, managed to bring a temporary cease fire, and provided some of relief to the ordinary people in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) and in the reserves. This is because the war directly affected people in two ways, the freedom fighters who sought shelter, food and clothing would normally do harm to the community especially those who did not comply naming those sell-outs (Reeler & Matyszak, 2011). On the other hand, the Smith regime soldiers terrorized the same communities in search of information leading to the capture and killing of freedom fighters.

The temporary peace created some breathing space for communities to look for food and other activities. However, the temporary relief was short lived as the front-line parties namely ZANU and ZAPU were not part of the negotiations and resorted to continuation of the struggle.

It is pertinent to note that the negotiated settlement was intended to provide a peaceful transition to majority rule on terms not harmful to white Rhodesians, in theory. However, the idea behind was to portray the white racist government as considerate and ease the pressure mounting from the international society (Dashwood, 2002). Fisher (2010:5) explained that major obstacle was the quest by white settler to maintain white dominance, “establishing Rhodesia was a display of white dominance whereby the settlers located themselves at the heart of the nation namely, the freehold areas of the countryside and towns, spaces in which the black majority enjoyed only tenuous rights” (Fisher, 2010: 5). The minority whites never wanted to share the state resources and this was quickly realized when Muzorewa was mam to many major issues including the Land and discrimination issues that prohibited free movement of blacks into urban areas without consent from their whites authorities and affecting the blacks hence labelled a puppet of the white administration and a traitor towards the independence of his own race.

The Lancaster House Agreement

The Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) of December 1979 was key and a game changer to the country’s politics. The negotiated settlement indirectly protected the white minority whilst opening the doors for majority rule and democratic space. The LHA was a negotiated settlement that was hosted and facilitated by the British government under Margret Thatcher as the colonial master under the Common Wealth. The negotiated peace settlement saw the front-line parties (ZANU PF and PF ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government negotiating for a cease-fire. The agreement was the first to successfully end the liberation war and opened doors to majority rule through an election that allowed for a one man one vote. It is often accredited to bringing the first ever free elections which the majority black people voted for the first times elevating Robert Mugabe as the first ever black prime minister in the new Zimbabwe. According to Chung & Kaarsholm (2006:242) some of the agreements reached include:

- “to accept the authority of the British Governor;
- to abide by the New Independence Constitution;
- to comply with the pre-independence arrangements;

- to abide by the cease-fire agreement;
- to campaign peacefully and without intimidation;
- to renounce the use of force for political ends; and
- to accept the outcome of the elections and to instruct any forces under their authority to do the same”

It was further agreed that on the voter's roll there would be a special provision for separate minority representation in Parliament, the White Voter's Roll, to consist of and including Whites, the Coloured and Asians. This was despite that there whilst there would be a Common Voters Roll on which everyone would be enrolled all voters. This meant that there was a special portion for white minority protection in the parliament. In the Senate, for instance, it was agreed that, there would be a Senate of 40 members with a special 10 Senators elected by an electoral college consisting of members of the House of Assembly elected on the White Voters Roll. Also, in the House of Assembly consisting of 100 members, 20 members were to be elected by voters on the White Voters Roll. This agreement, although not in favour of the front-line parties, made significant positive moves towards democratizing the political space. However, amongst other critical issues, one stumbling block was the issue of land compensation and redistribution which the front-line parties were pressured to stop for the first 10 years. Although the agreement provided for relief fund to compensate farms from willing white sellers in the first 10 years, the agreement was that the black administration would not do any radical land policies at least to guarantee safe passage for the white commercial farms to which the whites argued to have invested much into.

The country peacefully held its elections and was renamed a republic with its Independence Day set on 18 April 1980. The black majority had, for the first time, got their freedom from white discrimination and oppression. The negotiated settlement successfully brought a new revolution making Zimbabwe another successful story of decolonization and as a case in point for South Africa which was still battling apartheid.

The Unity Accord

The infant newly established republic had more cracks that needed to be mended before it could develop. In 1987 the country sealed off another negotiated settlement known as the Unity Accord between the elite revolutionary parties, ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. The two parties culminated into signing a cease fire agreement which saw the two political parties merging into one big ZANU PF. Although some have described it as a PF

ZAPU takeover by ZANU PF. The settlement saw the administration establishing two vice presidents one old ZANU PF and another of PF ZAPU descendant. The first vice president from ZAPU was Joshua Nkomo whilst Mugabe was the executive President from being the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's office was removed.

The newly established nation was quickly plunged into another conflict between the rival patriotic front parties in quest to gain access to state resources and power. The conflict which continued to distract from service delivery to the ordinary people, as resources were channelled to the conflict between elite political parties. (Coltart, 2017). The battle was between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. It might be recalled that before the Second Chimurenga, the main Black Nationalist organization in Southern Rhodesia, ZAPU, was torn apart in 1963 (Bowman, 1973). The splinter group became known as the ZANU. Though these groups had a common origin they gradually grew apart, with the split away group, ZANU, recruiting mainly from the Shona regions, while ZAPU recruited mainly from Ndebele-speaking regions in the west (Barker, 2014,). The groups however are believed to have grown rivalry on tribal grounds (Coltart, 2017).

One argument as a major cause for the conflict is that ZANU PF under Robert Mugabe sought a one-party state. The invitation to PF ZAPU leader Nkomo to join the government soon after independence was a way to swerve PF ZAPU to ZANU PF. Coltart (2017) highlighted that in hindsight Gukurahundi primarily sought political rather than military objectives. Mugabe had sought a one-party state since attaining power. He often than note expressed the multiparty system as a luxury, thus he actively sought to wipe out PF ZAPU which was the only strongest opposition to his rule (Barker, 2014). This explains why the Fifth Brigade's tactics of not going after dissidents but villagers appear that their primary motivation was to wipe out ZAPU's support base, and to intimidate the would be ZAPU followers not to continue supporting it (Coltart, 2017). However, the depth of the atrocities were extreme as ordinary people lost their lives and homes.

However, the conflict was seen by white racist government in South Africa as an opportunity destroy the new black government (Coltart, 2006). This is because it is alleged that South Africa's apartheid government used Central Intelligence Agencies of Zimbabwe, namely, “Mac Callaway and Kevin Woods as double agents to

further stir the conflict between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU, by spreading malicious rumours that PF ZAPU wanted to dethrone ZANU PF (Coltart, 2017). The South African agents sabotaged Inkomo barracks, destroying \$50 million worth of ammunition and equipment Feb 1981”, (Coltart, 2006, p XV).

The same counterfeit was reported to have sabotaged ZANU PF headquarters in December 1981, (ibid, p XV).

The tension between ZANU PF and ZAPU was also aligned to a historical background of tribal conflict. It is noteworthy that the feud between Shona and Ndebele, dated back to the arrival of the Ndebele people led by Mzilikazi in 1837 from South Africa, escaping from King Tshaka. Mzilikazi used his army’s great fighting skills to conquer and command large territories thereby dispossessing the indigenous people who lived north (Bowman, 1973). The Ndebele used their skills to continuously raid the Shona kingdoms off their farm produce and enslaving able bodied men and women to work on their farms. Some Shona groups who were weak to fight had negotiated settlements which resulted in them paying tribute every year to Mzilikazi in fear that he would wipe-out the whole kingdom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). The ethnic fight did not end it was witnessed again during the liberation struggle, during training in Zambian camps. ZANU’s ZANLA forces migrated to Mozambique as they constantly had direct conflicts with ZAPU’s ZIPRA forces in the training camps (Coltart, 2017).

This ethnic conflict thus remained a cause for concern between Ndebele and Shona people. When the country gained independence in 1980, mistrust between the two rival militant parties made it difficult to integrate them as a unity into the national Army, subsequent to the Lancaster House Agreement. “The tension between reached a high point when in February 1982, there was discovery of arms caches in

Matabeleland leading to the arrest of ZIPRA high commanders and expulsion of ZAPU leaders from cabinet” (Coltart, 2006, p XV). “ZANU-PF openly accused ZAPU of plotting another war and ZAPU leaders were arrested or removed from cabinet” (ibid, p XV). Although treason charges were levelled against some ZAPU members as the instigators, the treason trial of Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku failed to prove a case against them in 1982, (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012; and Coltart, 2017). To this enlightenment, some,

ex-ZIPRA members fled to exile and abandoned the army, in pursuit to protect their lives, whilst most of their most of their leaders were either in detention or in exile (Coltart, 2017). There were major outbreaks of violence carried out by ZIPRA against the civilian population (Coltart, 2006). For instance, former ZIPRA elements attacked civilian areas in Zvishavane, Kadoma and Bulawayo (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

It can be said that the newly inaugurated government dominated by ZANU-PF did not represent local demands of land redistribution and other unfulfilled promises in the Matabeleland region (Raftopoulos and Savage, 2004). It is also believed that the conflict was fuelled by Rhodesian ex-agents and South African Apartheid government who supported some of the rebels in Matabeleland region further undermining the efforts of reconciliation (Raftopoulos and Savage, 2004). “Robert Mugabe, then Prime Minister, signed an agreement with North Korean President Kim Il Sung in October 1980 to have the North Korean military train a brigade for the Zimbabwean army” (Sachikonye, 2003, p 28). The brigade known as the Fifth Brigade/Gukurahundi Brigade had members drawn from the 3500 ex-ZANLA troops (Raftopoulos and Savage, 2004). The regiment was straightforwardly subjected to the Prime Minister office. The regiment was sent to the Matabeleland between 1983 and 1984 In January 1983. The detachment’s orders evidently determined a quest for ZAPU officials and veterans of its furnished wing, ZIPRA. Seizure or detention by the Fifth Brigade was arbitrary (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

In 1987, the two rival parties reached negotiated settlement termed the Unity Accord between their leaders, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. This effectively unified PF-ZAPU and ZANU PF into the new ZANU-PF (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Thus, the subsequent years, the new administration pardoned all who participated in the Gukurahundi. Likewise, ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo encouraged them to surrender their weapons (Coltart, 2017). Resultantly, Unity Accord brought peace, but many wounds and issues that remained unsolved. It is worth noting that the Unity Accord managed to bring back the much-needed peace, but however failed to bring the necessary healing and compensation for the victims, although the perpetrators were granted full amnesty and pardon (Coltart, 2017). Also, the ethnic nature of people had calmed down such that Shona and Ndebele could travel to any place without fear of being knifed down (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Some of the provisions agreed upon included:

- That ZAPU-PF and PF-ZAPU have irrevocably committed themselves to unite under one political party
- That the unity of two political parties shall be achieved under the name Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF)
- That President Mugabe shall be First Secretary and President of ZANU PF
- That ZANU PF shall have two second secretaries and Vice-Presidents who shall be appointed by the First Secretary and President of ZANU PF
- That ZANU PF shall seek to establish a socialist society in Zimbabwe on the guidance of Marxist Leninist principles
- That ZANU PF shall seek to establish one-party state in Zimbabwe
- That leadership of ZANU PF shall abide by leadership code
- That existing structures of ZANU PF and PF-ZAPU shall be merged in accordance with the letter and spirit of this agreement
- That both parties shall, in the interim, take immediate vigorous steps to eliminate and end insecurity and violence prevalent in Matabeleland
- That ZANU PF and PF-ZAPU shall convene their respective congresses to give effect to this Agreement within the shortest possible time and
- That, in the interim comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe is vested with full powers to prepare for the implementation of this agreement and to act in the name and authority of ZAPU PF.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA)

The failed 2008 harmonised elections culminated into an emergency crisis for human rights which necessitated a negotiation between the rival ZANU PF and MDC. The structure was mirrored to the Kenyan Government of national Unity of 2007. African Union tasked its sub regional organization SADC to invest in an emergence conflict resolution, which saw Thabo Mbeki, the then South African president, taking over the negotiations as the principal mediator between the rival political parties.

The GNU was established in 2009 following the signing of the Global Political Agreement of 2008. The GPA was the founding document that laid out how GNU was to operate as a shared power structure. Such as the 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC was subsequently elevated as the Prime minister whilst Mugabe remained the executive president. It is pertinent to note that, the prime minister's executive powers were

only in theory and confined as the head of parliament leaving Mugabe with absolute control (Coltart, 2017).

The GNU was a direct result of the failed elections of 2008. What is more critical about the 2008 harmonized elections is that the process of vote counting was somewhat not clear. Hence the election seemed was flawed (Mukhuhllani, 2014). Resultantly, the presidential election results took over a month to be announced after the first round. The inability to discharge results was unequivocally reprimanded by the restriction MDC, which ineffectively looked for a request from the High Court to constrain their release. After the recount and the check of the results, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) reported no one had garnered the required 50% +1 vote, as Tsvangirai had a total of 47.9% of the vote whilst Mugabe garnered 43.2%, requiring a runoff (Chagonda, 2015). In spite of Tsvangirai's proceeding with cases to have won a first round greater part, he chose to take an interest in the runoff.

The period that changed a ton of things is the period following the first round which was set apart by substantial political viciousness. ZANU-PF and the MDC reprimanded each other's supporters for executing the brutality. Albeit western governments and noticeable western associations accused the ruling ZANU-PF for the savagery as it was still in government with the command to bring harmony and rational soundness (Chagonda, 2015). On 22 June 2008, Tsvangirai pulled back from the run-off, depicting it as a fierce trick and saying that his supporters gambled being executed in the event that they decided in favour of him. The second round proceeded with Mugabe as the main and only candidate effectively taking an interest applicant, despite the fact that Tsvangirai's name stayed on the voting form (Chagonda, 2015). The post-electoral violence, which was intense, forced interventions from the AU through SADC. This led to the negotiations and the possibility of another government of national unity, this time with active opposition.

Global Political Agreement Supported and ensured by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) as an "African Solution to an African Problem", the Inclusive Government was intended to be an examination in national soundness and democratization, with the GPA giving the hypothesis of progress that impelled and directed how the administration would work and what it ought to have accomplished (Raftopoulos, 2013). To put it plainly, the GPA hypothesis was predicated on the

speculation that, a comprehensive way to deal with overseeing and critical thinking by the three significant ideological political parties spoke to in parliament. This would bring about the decrease of political flimsiness, capture of the financial free-fall, stop the helpful emergency, and establishment of equitable changes and for the most part giving a comprehensive way to deal with the goals of the Zimbabwean emergency.

The Global Political Agreement marked on 15 September 2008, authoritatively brought together the three principle political parties into one government and along these lines the truce of political viciousness. The three articles, ZANU-PF, MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mtambara conceded to settling the difficulties confronting Zimbabwe after the contested political race consequence of 2008 (Raftopoulos, 2013). It is appropriate to take note of that Mbeki's peaceful discretion made the dealings to shared force increasingly drawn out. Just a couple of days after the understanding was marked, Mbeki had to leave as President of South Africa by his party, the ANC (Raftopoulos, 2013). This raised extra worries about the eventual fate of the understanding, it was indistinct if Mbeki would keep on going about as mediator, and it was hazy if South Africa, under new authority, would remain so vigorously associated with settling Zimbabwe's political circumstance (Reeler, and Matyszak, 2011). Round 3 of the negotiations which began on 9 September brought the consensus and signing of the GPA. The trio quickly moved up to forming the Government of National Unity. Major GPA agreements amongst others include:

- Mugabe would remain the President with full executive authority and Commander in Chief of the Army;
- Tsvangirai chairs the Council of Ministers and is the Deputy Chairperson of Cabinet. He also among other responsibilities, shall have the responsibility to discharge the functions of the Leader of Government Business in Parliament;
- A new home-grown constitution was to be drafted within 18 months; following a referendum on the new constitution;
- Harmonized elections were to be conducted no later than three months from the date the new constitution was done; and
- The MDC and ZANU PF were to share the ministries evenly (GPA official document: Article 20)"

The GNU subsequently then kicked off with many obstacles as mostly ZANU PF who remained with

key powerful portfolios continued to undermine the structure. Criticism often rounded up how Tsvangirai's position of Prime Minister's position merely was of a puppet parliament leader as Mugabe continued to use his powers in favour of ZANU PF without consulting his counterpart (Coltart, 2017). Thus, the conflict never really died down as perpetrators mostly from ZANU PF supporters and members continued to unleash terror seriously undermining human rights. More so the GPA's most articles remained untouched especially on national healing compensation and prosecution (Reeler and Matyszak, 2011). The victims were never compensated and the perpetrators are still free causing havoc even in present day Zimbabwe. The GNU could just be seen as merely a political agreement with no beneficial facts to the ordinary people's livelihoods. Critics often argues that the platform was merely a reorganizing structure for the political parties, using the state resources to maximize on political campaigns and gaining political mileage for the 2013 harmonized elections whilst using the platform to decamping each other and play the blame game with no benefit to the ordinary people in the streets (Barker, 2014). However, in the absence of direct conflict, some peace is realized especially in urban spaces, the country recovered temporarily economically through unofficial dollarization. There was food in the shops and energy was back in industries in all its forms, fuel, electricity and LPG gas. Resultantly that provided temporary economic relief to the people of Zimbabwe. Also, it is argued that GNU completed its mandate of bringing a new home-grown constitution, although its validity in terms of capturing people's concerns and suggestions remains another debate.

POLAD and the second Republic

The negotiated settlements strategy was applied again in the contemporary new dispensation in 2019 shortly after the long serving president Mugabe was ousted during a military assisted transition. The follow up 2018 harmonised elections saw Emmerson Mngangwa rising as the second president of the country. Thus, the newly elected government installed a new inclusive political dialogue forum inviting various political parties to spearhead political transformation. The dialogue platform, known as the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD), saw almost seventeen opposing political parties joining the ruling ZANU PF in political transformation initiation that commenced in May 2019 (Sixpence, Chilunjika and Sakarombe 2021). The main stumbling block to the forum was the fact that the biggest opposition, MDC Alliance, refused to join the dialogue arguing that, the dialogue was a strategy by the ruling

party ZANU PF to weaken the opposition influence and possibly thwart any uprising against it. Although the dialogue was meant as an advisory board to oversee government activities, the MDC Alliance viewed the strategy as a way to force it accepting President Mnangagwa and recognising as the legit winner of the election.

The reasoning behind the grant forum was to make a follow up to the GNU of 2009/13 which had bargaining powers. Lessons learnt during the 2009 GNU had brought temporary relief to the country's socio-economic and political environment as most stakeholder were directly participating in the government. Ibid noted that the machinery with POLAD was similar in that all relevant political stakeholders would converge and form an advisory board to back up the government on sensitive decisions, opinions and recommendations. More so, it was a strategy to lobby for international sympathy and increased bargaining powers for the developing country in need for investments and loan facilities. All factors equal, the strategy was a positive stance, as it would not only make the second republic noticed, but would create platforms for other opposition party sympathisers to come on board and assist the country, such as USA would be encouraged to remove ZIDERA Act and other economic sanctions.

The dialogue can be criticised as a mere decorative platform for political players who lacked relevance in the elections. This can be argued in that all the other political parties which joined POLAD had not garnered any representation in the parliamentary elections and had lost the presidential elections like wise. In that respect the main opposition political MDC Alliance that garnered 44.4% of the presidential votes and 88 parliamentary seats didn't turn up (Heal Zimbabwe Trust, 2019). Again, the notion of negotiated settlement is tested on a litmus paper as the question of inclusivity is used biasedly by excluding all relevant stakeholders. These of which form the bulk of the community influencers such as community leaders, civic organisations and main opposition party that has the biggest following. Thus, the notion of negotiated settlements has become a common norm in Zimbabwe socio-political realm.

The coalition can be explained using the game theory under positives sums. Most of the political parties who joined the POLAD had lost the elections and most of them did not win any parliamentary seat, except for ZANU PF the master minder with majority 179 seats and

MDC-T led by Thokozani Khupe, with only a single parliamentary seat. Hence the coalition brought back their continued recognition and benefits guaranteed by the government. The platform also provided protection for weaker political parties who are using the forum for publication and gaining more audience. It is a positive sum strategy for ZANU PF who now can manipulate and control the other opposition parties to its advantage. The outcome becomes more pronounced that ZANU PF can easily influence opposition parties and drives them towards their agenda and goals.

Although POLAD is an inclusive forum with an invitation to all participants, the main opposition MDC Alliance did not join. This is because they argued that President Mnangagwa stole the election. They stand their ground that there were major irregularities that would warrant a re-run of the presidential elections, even though the constitutional court dismissed their objection (Mandikwaza, 2019). This can be argued to be ruthless and greedy in that it fails to recognise the elected president hence refused to join the POLAD. In addition, the move is viewed as a mere selfish strategy on the part of the MDC Alliance whose continued refusal created more problems for the electorate who voted for them as they wish for an inclusive political dialogue (Gruzd and Labahadur, 2019). Again the negotiated settlement was tested as participants have showed tendencies of forwarding selfish interests and personal gain as well as gaining political mileage.

Other criticism bestowed on the POLAD is that, it is a mere political platform created to legitimise the government led by ZANU PF which is alleged to have turned around into a second republic through the military assisted transition, otherwise referred as a coup det tat. It is assumed that the Mnangagwa-led government opened doors to opposition politics in a bid to send positive advances to the international community to accept the new dispensation. This was viewed as a strategy to allow the country to be back on world rankings and become a portal for investments and foreign direct investments. This could open doors of communications and the removal of personal and economic sanctions. On a crucial note MDC Alliance was a key strategy as it would lobby for the abolishment of ZIDERA Act by USA, there by setting Zimbabwe in a new course.

However, there are opportunities that have been realised by the coalition of political parties POLAD, especially in the respect of recommendations to the government on socio-economic issues affecting the

ordinary citizens. Although government does not respond in the intended way, it has been sensitised on various issues that are affecting the public. These issues include gross human rights abuses by public office bearers. Also, POLAD's influence spearheaded the fight for anti-corruption within local departments and way other issues that have been affecting the ordinary citizens (Mandikwaza, 2019). However, the ruling party has continued to uphold its interests and use the platform to silence and thwart negative voices that are seen as a threat to their existence.

The Zimbabwe National Healing and Reconciliation Commission

The experiences of Zimbabwe in peace and reconciliation from 1979 through to the post election conflict of 2008 resulted in a greater development which saw the establishment of a new constitution in 2013. It is the 2013 constitution that then housed the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) that came into effect thereafter. The establishment of the NPRC was informed by the provisions of article 7 (1) (c) of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which mentioned issues of transitional justice

The nature of mandate of the Peace Commission

The nature of the mandate of the Peace Commission is reflective of the post 2000 Zimbabwe bipolar ideological and political contestations. Peace Commissions traditionally have been formed primarily to execute mandate that are inclined to the resolution of past conflicts (Hayner 2010). In countries where they have discovered the need to extend the mandates from resolving past conflicts into present and future peace building programmes, they have first to resolve the past conflicts and put them to closure. It is on the basis of putting closure of past conflicts that provide the basis and framework for future building. Currently the programming is haphazard as the Commission is grappling both with past issues and future peace building programming concurrently. It is very difficult to invest in positive peace without decisively dealing with past conflicts. In other countries after resolving of past conflicts they put closure to such issues by disbanding the old Commission before coming up with a new Commission with a new name and a fresh mandate that speaks to the future for instance the case of Sierra Leone. It is common cause that resolution of past conflicts should be given priority as an ability to copy with the past will naturally unlock future sustainable peace.

This has not spared the process either even as the Commission thrives to implement its programs and activities, the other believes in the supremacy of the devastating impacts of the War of liberation struggle while the other pushes for the supremacy of post-independence disturbances. The other opts for homegrown and local ownership of all of our approaches to peacebuilding, the other seeks for the internationalization of the Zimbabwe conflicts using western and neo liberal approaches to national conflict resolution. In addressing past conflicts, the other group has been preoccupied with the need for criminal prosecutions whereas the other group with the need for healing, unity, reconciliation and national cohesion. Therefore, if the same forces continue to wreck the process and the operations without exercising checks and balances on the outcome, the implications and consequences might be grave and disastrous with a potential to cause chaos, anarchy and despondency. The mapping and scoping of Zimbabwe conflict situation has continued to generate a lot of unnecessary attention and contestation both from the local and international players at the behest of yester year colonial forces.

Even as it is abundantly clear that the Gukurahundi issue existed at three levels where its source and origins existed first at the international level, second at regional and lastly at the local level, it is common knowledge that Gukurahundi conflict was a proxy war between the West and the East. Despite Britain and West being regarded as the champion of Human Rights and democracy, the west's explicit support of the tourist without addressing any issues to do with violation of human rights was seen as their explicit support and tacit approval of the crackdown of dissidents at whatever cost. It is surprising that the same countries which were known of the deafening silence on the Gukurahundi because of the change in geopolitics have isolated Gukurahundi as a priority conflict for the post independent Zimbabwe national healing process.

In trying to resolve past conflict and putting in place peace building activities for sustainable future, this activity cannot be done outside the understanding of the conflict history of a nation. The following historical factors should be taken into consideration in order to understand the current conflict. These factors include the pre-colonial context, the colonial context, the war of liberation and post-independence context. The understanding of geo-politics is key in any peacebuilding work. This is because all the conflicts can be traced to external hands of different actors in the

region and internationally. Regional and international politics unfolding has a bearing on a countries' national peace and security. The political context within our boundary is informed by ideological contestation between the East versus the West which is manifested at political party level. The contestation has not spared the NGOs either way as a donor funds being used are an instrument of a foreign policy of other powers. The regime change agenda has been set as a criterion to choose the NGOs which are eligible for receiving the donor fund. The nature of peacebuilding programming is informed by the ideological thrust of the dominant party.

Recommendations

Negotiated settlements as they are much conflict resolution can also be used as strategic tools for socio-economic and political capabilities. The paper recommends inclusivity as a strategy that can be used to forge relations able to lobby for the enhancement of livelihoods of the ordinary people. These institutions are places that can be used to entertain various thoughts opinions and suggestions that are directly a concern for the ordinary people and the country at large. If used strategically they can forge permanent peaceful platforms that will guarantee democratic methods. Furthermore, inclusive platforms are designed to incorporate all stakeholders within a community. This would guarantee the important matters affecting the communities and societies are dealt with. These are good especially for developing countries whose nations are still in the democracy infancy, hence would make them look stable and more investment appealing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Zimbabwe has subjected itself to negotiated settlements as a better conflict resolution strategy. Although their significance and effectiveness has remained questionable, the structures have indeed brought immediate peace. The paper managed to highlight how the country's history has been shaped by negotiated agreements and dialoguing as a means to end civil conflicts often with detrimental results to the ordinary people. Thus, negotiated settlements are structures that can be oiled to make them more permanent in future given that they have been largely appreciated to bring peace even though the peace is not sustained for longer periods of time. The Zimbabwe-Rhodesia felt because it lacked support from the two front line parties who commanded largest support, whilst the 2009 GNU was met with political elites who sought to satisfy personal interests and gaining political mileage hence rendering the institution weak and just a platform

for blame game without effective mechanism to develop the country. The history of these settlements provides us with more critics as how to make the structures strong for future purposes, as the continued civil unrests in Zimbabwe are prompting for more permanent solutions that can curb gross human rights atrocities, and bring democratic policies that favour majority rule. But before any prosperity can be realized, Zimbabwe needs to formulate better negotiated settlement structures based on the four that have already left a failed mark.

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