The Legacy of Three Conflicts in Zimbabwe

-Trauma and missed opportunites

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Abstract

The study analyses three major conflicts in Zimbabwe during the past forty years through a filter of theoretical models. The study relies on secondary material in the form of articles, books and research reports. The causes of the conflicts, the traumas developed through the conflicts and reconciliation efforts at the end of the conflicts are analyzed. It shows that Zimbabwe is a traumatized nation where reconciliation has taken the form of amnesia and impunity. This has created unattended massive traumas which through the concepts of chosen traumas has been triggering new conflicts. In the recently signed APG document, national healing has been agreed to, and will cover all three conflicts analyzed in this paper. However such a healing process must be part of a broad reconciliation process to reach sustainable peace.

Key words: National Healing, Zimbabwe, Reconciliation, Trauma, Conflict analysis

Characters: 66, 797

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Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
CCJPZ	The Catholic Commission For Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
HRW	Human Rights Watch
GPA	Global Political Agreement
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Interrogation
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

1 Introduction

Conflicts, violence and struggle are common themes in many societies in the world today. History of violence repeats itself as resolutions and promises of reconciliation become too complicated and far-fetched for torn societies to handle. Traumas as a result of aggression are wide-spread and in order for these to be properly dealt with, truth and forgiveness needs to be properly acknowledged. This is the case in Zimbabwe where a form of National Healing is in progress to try to put an end to the spiral of violence that has for so long plagued the county.

1.1 Research Questions

When looking at the three major conflicts in Zimbabwe's history the past thirty-five years: The liberation war, the Matabeleland conflict and the political conflicts surrounding elections during the past decennium, it is clear that national healing is vital. Starting with a conflict between races: the black population against the white colonialists, followed by the Matabeleland conflict being an ethnic war between the Shonas and Ndebeles (the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe) to the present political conflicts surrounding corruption and unfair elections, it is clear that the Zimbabwean population has gone through repeated traumatic events. The problem has been, and remains, that the traumas still living on in past conflicts has not been properly dealt with and thus, this has lead to new conflicts and new violence. In the agreement to establish a Government of National Unity there is paragraph emphasizing the need for a national healing process to cover all conflicts and violence since the start of the liberation war.

My research Question is the following:

What needs to be addressed in the national healing process in Zimbabwe?

The question will be addressed through a filter of sub-questions related to the theoretical models used which will be asked for all three conflicts:

What were the causes of the conflict what kind of conflict was it?

What traumas developed during the conflicts?

Did any kind of reconciliation process take place?

Are the conflicts related? In what way?

1.2   Limitations

In this essay I aim toward analyzing the different forms of National Healing suitable for Zimbabwe. I will not speculate in what should be done, but rather look at the history of Zimbabwe's conflicts and how they were shaped and through that look at the appropriate Healing possibilities. This essay is not aimed toward speculating in what process should be used, but analyses the potentials. Some of the material used is written from individuals who strongly oppose the present Zimbabwean government, and although these views are valued, it is also taken in account that they are biased.

1.3   Theory

To discuss conflict resolution as a starting point for reconciliation is common. The divide between theorists has been between those which see reconciliation as a goal and those emphasizing reconciliation as a process. I will however take my starting points in the conflicts to better understand the base for national healing/reconciliation. A first line of inquiry will be connected to the causes of conflicts. They are important to analyze and understand in order to reach a sustainable solution to them. Conflict is a normal feature of domestic and international relations. The challenge is not to eliminate conflicts, but rather to effectively address them when they occur. Conflicts are neither good nor bad. It is the way conflicts are managed which matters. They can be managed negatively, avoiding addressing the problems as one extreme, and the use of brute force at the other. Conflicts can on the other hand be managed positively through negotiation, joint problem-solving and consensus-building (Nyhati, 2001, p. 10). A major contributor to modern conflict theory is Lewis Coser who first discussed and used the theory of structural functionalism. He states that "Conflict is a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims in conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals" (Coser, 1956, p232).

John Paul Lederach labels himself a social constructionist and presents "the fundamental idea that social conflicts emerges and develops on the basis of meaning and interpretation people attach to action and events"(Lederarch, 1995,p. 8). This implies that he considers conflicts as natural in all societies because they are socially constructed on based meaning and interpretations. This leads to accumulated experience and knowledge. Culture plays an important role in generation of conflicts as it is rooted in shared knowledge and experience among a group of people (Lederach, 1995, p.9). Finally Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot takes on a micro perspective defining conflict as "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from

others in achieving their goals" (Hocker, Wilmot, 1991, p 21).

From these definitions a typology of conflict causes can be made in the following way:

- *Human needs perspective* which assumes that deprivation of individuals or societies to access means for sustaining their basic needs are beyond all violent conflicts (cf Hooker, Wilmot)

- *Relational perspective* assumes that conflicts emanate from interactions between groups with different values, cultural background etc.(cf Lederach)

- *Political perspective* takes its starting point in that power is the center of all conflicts- It is the competition about the control of the state and this can only take place when others are eliminated or disabled (cf Coser)

- *Transformative perspective* considers conflicts as caused by systemic and structural injustice and inequality.(cf Marx)

(Nyhati, 2006, p. 16)

A second line of inquiry will refer to the suffering during the different conflicts. Vamik Volkan is mostly recognized for his theories surrounding *psychopolitical and psychosocial* aspects of large groups in conflict. His concept of large group identity refers to how a group of as many as thousands or millions of people share a sense of identification with each other without even knowing the other individuals. He builds his theories around concepts from individual and (small) group psychoanalytical techniques (Volkan,2006,p.13).*Personal Trauma* refers to when an individual's mind is troubled by a number of external events, and when these events mount up. This results in great anxiety and stress or the exact opposite- a paralyzed mind. The traumas are too much for the individual to handle and deal with. Those affected by this feel a sense of helplessness, as when the trauma is over, it keeps coming back to the person in the form of dreams or flashbacks (Volkan, 2006, 49). Many individuals could also have been exposed to multiple traumas, while personally have been traumatized, they at the same time witness close friends being tortured or killed (Bloomfield et.al, 2003 p.78). *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)* is a widespread phenomenon which refers to when traumas and memories of traumas re-surface and haunts the victim. However, these do not tell the true story of the trauma, but are nightmares that follow the person. *Shared Trauma* refers to that trauma shared with a large-group and the shared identity. This is when trauma is inflicted because an individual belongs to a certain ethnic or religious group, and is usually extremely shameful and humiliating. This can contribute to a loss of family and friends but also the loss of pride and security. This feeling spreads over the whole group. *Mourning*: is a form of grief but at a more silent level. It is the feeling of loss deep within a person which can last for many years. The anger associated with mourning differs from that of grief in the sense that the anger is usually directed toward something or someone, finding a person to blame for their pain. *Perennial mourners* refer to those who have become depressed as a result of mourning. They will never stop mourning, and their pain of losing a loved one will haunt them for the rest of their lives (Volkan, 2006, p51-53). Volkan uses these concepts in large

group analysis when he refers to internal violence, civil wars, or revolutions when whole population's social lives are in turmoil as a result of violence and trauma. Conflicts between different ethnic groups or different large-groups, shows an aspiration to humiliate the other group in order to strengthen their own identity within their group. This shame and humiliation felt or imposed by 'others', creates *massive trauma*. It is inflicted toward members of a large group and is also felt by the others belonging to that group, a feeling that their identity has been threatened. The initial response in order to build up strength and remove that humiliation is revenge. The feelings of humiliation and shame spread quickly within the group, bringing members together to deal with the impact of trauma and strengthen their cultural norms. The act of revenge spurs the conflict and therefore intensifies it. If revenge is not possible the trauma develops into a stage of perennial mourning where the group's victimization is kept alive. This connection and shared mythology of mental representation in the traumatic experience/event, becomes a part of their identity drawing the group closer together. However, new external factors may lead to a change of function of a trauma that may have been dormant for decades. A sudden feeling of revenge may replace the accepted ideology of glorified victimhood. A turning factor is when the members of a large group feel that their identity is threatened. This leads to them turning toward alternative methods in order to keep and strengthen their belief. They will do anything for the group to survive and prevent their identity from becoming tainted. (Volkan, 2006, p122-, 123).

People who have been traumatized or humiliated by another group have a hard time dealing with this psychological trauma. The group is unable to let it go and thus the trauma is passed on to their offspring and the next generation. This strengthens the large group's identity through shared trauma. Volkan uses the term *chosen trauma* when a large-groups massive trauma has been inherited and later used by the next generation (Volkan, 2006, p154). Passing down trauma to offspring and future generations is a common psychological response. The unfinished task of mourning is directed toward the offspring, and this transgenerational transmission is one major factor why un-dealt traumas keep surfacing and cause continuous conflict. Children identify themselves with their parents. Unaware, parents push certain images and memories into their children, using them as a sort of reservoir. The risk and what has happened in many circumstances, is that parents push their traumatized self-image onto their children. The actual memory cannot be transferred as this only belongs to the victim to whom it happened, but their traumatized images can. Through this, parents can free themselves to a certain degree, by transferring the trauma to their child, not carrying the burden alone (Volkan, 2006, 157-160). Volkan discusses the connection between large groups and the effects of massive trauma, and how political leaders can use this form of identification to manipulate their society's shared emotions: "The shared mental image of a massive tragedy that leads to shame, humiliation, helplessness, and, difficulty in mourning over losses within a large group decades or centuries later may become the fuel for new infernos that are deliberately started by people in the name of identity" (Volkan, 2006, 17).

Using identity as a cause for violence has become more common, and it can last for long periods of time, following a population like a shadow never letting go of memories of trauma. When there is a threat against the group from 'others' the current leaders reactivate the group's chosen trauma which at times result in an "exaggerated entitlement ideology" (Volkan 1999, p25). This constitutes what Volkan terms 'destructive leadership' of regressed groups

contrasting reparative leaders seeking reconciliation. Destructive leaders and their propaganda machines often take on a process is characterized and aimed to: " (1) Enhance a shared sense of victimization within the large group following an attack by an enemy group or another disaster, such as an economic one, or even in situations without any visible recent victimization; (2) Reactivate a chosen trauma; (3) Increase a sense of we-ness (large-group identity), but in a regressed state; (4) Devalue the enemy to the degree that dehumanizes it; and (5) create an excessive attitude of entitlement for revenge or reactivate a dormant entitlement ideology" (Volkan, 1999, p21).

A third line of inquiry deals with the processes after the conflicts. Dealing with violence after a conflict in societies is not an easy task. There is much more to take in account which cannot be properly dealt with through politically correct procedures. *Healing* is a cultural-bound process which can be quite complex. Nevertheless, with any process of healing is it "rare for the psychological impact of the past to be completely dealt with" (Bloomfield et al,2003, p1). The ultimate effects of trauma are the destruction of individual and/or the collective structures of the society. 'Healing' therefore comprises a large number of individual, political, social and cultural responses to a traumatic situation and its consequences.A history of violence and trauma calls for a long-term process and patience. This does however not imply that healing is unnecessary; it is an important step toward forgiveness and acceptance which can help communities work toward a prosperous future (Bloomfield, et al, 2003, p1). Mourning is a vital step toward forgiveness. Without this, an apology cannot be received nor given. The importance of the concepts of forgiveness and apology has gained interest within international relations. The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC's) emerged as a form of peace building in post-conflict societies. The TRC's had a breakthrough in Rwanda and South Africa. The process allowed the victims to speak in public about their traumas and grant amnesty to those perpetrators who acknowledged and apologized for their violence. This way of apologizing was seen a significant way in resolving large-group conflicts being it ethnic, national, religious or ideological. In addition, the acknowledgement of what happened is a way of breaking the vicious circle of impunity: *silence* and *amnesia* which are the enemies of justice. However, it is crucial to carefully decide when, to whom and how apologies and forgiveness should be given (Volkan, 2006(II), 12).

Different violent and political confrontations can have unique cultural meanings and therefore specific impacts. It is not only the traumatic event that must be addressed. It is particularly important to understand how the individual (or community) interprets the event when considering a strategy for healing. To understand the context then becomes a crucial starting point (Bloomfield, et. al, 2003, p.78). The process of healing can be emotional processes where the aim is to strengthen cultural and spiritual identity while at the same time restore a sense of wholeness in a community. When looking at various information concerning the concept of national healing, it became evident that it was not a wide-spread phenomenon but rather specific in the case of Zimbabwe. The practice of healing has a significant importance in Zimbabwe's history, and therefore it is important to recognize these ancient traditions in order to find a process which the population can trust. After the Chimurenga Wars (liberation wars), the population turned to healing in order to find reconciliation. The beliefs of haunting spirits is

widespread in Africa, and if nothing is done to please the spirit, usually in the form of healing, it will keep haunting generations to come. It is a social practice that is crucial in the aftermaths of war, no only to re-order society and reach reconciliation, but rather "laying foundations for this process of 're-ordering' through enabling the reconciliation of different experiences and memories and a process of re-establishing collectivity"(Schmidt, 1997, p2). Many theorists and practitioners warn however for limiting reconciliation to truth telling and treating healing as a simple one-dimensional easily attained goal. Instead most handbooks used in practice such as UN, UNDP, IDEA are based on a model by Lederach, emphasizing reconciliation as a long-term complex process. Such a process must contain elements of *healing, truth-telling, restorative justice and reparation.* Such a process could together with educational programs and human rights activities create conditions for peaceful coexistence, trust, empathy and develop a culture of democracy (Blomsfield, et al, 2003,p24).

1.4   Method & Material

This thesis is a case study aimed toward better understanding the conflicts in Zimbabwe and how to find a solution of national healing. I will study three different conflict cases which will be analyzed using the same theoretical filters. This method makes it possible to describe the different theoretical frameworks in detail (Teorell, 2007, s82). I don't aim toward speculating in what should be done but instead get a better understanding of the situation in Zimbabwe in order to see what measures are possible to stop the violence and prevent new conflicts from rising. This essay uses secondary sources in the form of books, articles, newspapers, UN documents and internet sites. These earlier studies gives possibilities to analyze further into the subject (Teorell, 2007, s.91).The sources used vary in order to find as many different perspectives as possible which makes it possible to critically examine the information gathered. The situation in Zimbabwe today is critical, and because of limited access to the country, objective texts are therefore hard to come by. Through this, documents from Amnesty International and the UNDP have been used because they have been granted access to the country and observed recent happenings. Together with these reports, articles and books from authors with different views toward Zimbabwe have been used in order to find a perspective as non-biased as possible. I will analyze my material with the help of three different theories: conflict analysis, Trauma analysis and reconciliation analysis. Through this analysis it is possible to discuss the possible healing processes that can be applied to Zimbabwe, and the difficulty in finding a process that will work.

2 Zimbabwe, a conflict-torn society the past 50 years:

Zimbabwe's history is plagued by many different conflicts. Three major conflicts are significant when looking at the country's short history. During the Liberation War (1973 - 1979) many atrocities took place not only by the white settler forces against the black rural population but also by the liberation forces towards the peasants and not least against rural women. After independence in 1980 a civil war based on ethnic differences started in Matabeleland (1980-1987) with more than 20,000 killed and many more tortured, raped and beaten. Starting in 1998 a spiral of violence has marked the country when an opposition party challenged the position of the dominant ruling party. This violence has characterized the situation in the country during the past 10 years but much augmented during elections 2000, 2002 and 2008.

2.1 The Liberation War 1960-1980

2.1.1 Background, actors, victims, events:

Between 1890 and 1980, Zimbabwe was a British colony under the name of Southern Rhodesia. During these years, the white settlers controlled all of the economy and owned most of the productive land. This land had to a large extent been forcibly take over by the settlers. This meant that the local population had to sell their labour in order to survive. In the 1950's the black population formed their own political parties and suggestions of power-sharing emerged. However, this was denied by the Rhodesians who instead, in 1960, formed the Rhodesian Front and illegalized all resistance toward them. In 1964, the Rhodesian Front declared an illegal unilateral independence from the British. The reaction from the black population was to launch a guerrilla war that would last 15 years, and reactions from the International Community were to impose sanctions. During this time Rhodesia started on a process of apartheid similar to the South African. In 1979, after many failed attempts for cease-fire, Brittan stepped in for peace talks between the two sides. The Lancaster House Agreement was signed and in the first free and fair elections held in 1980 the ZANU PF party won the majority, ending colonial rule in Rhodesia, and the new state of Zimbabwe emerged (Foley, 1995, p1-3).

2.1.2　　　　　　*Traumas experienced and who imposed trauma:*

Imposed traumas by the white-state power

In 1975 the Indemnity and Compensation Act was put into action which allowed for unsanctioned violence as long as it was done for the good of the country and suppression of terrorism Soldiers could use violence on both civilians and opposition knowing that they were protected by the Act. The soldiers "resorted to wanton killings and beatings, collective punishment, destruction of livestock, huts and fields, and interrogation methods including electric shock and immersion in water"(Yap, 2001, p74). There was no luck in defeating the guerrillas and instead their numbers and influence spread. The Rhodesians then turned toward the civilians, suspecting their involvement in keeping the rebellions safe. Their strategies changed, and instead of trying to win over the local population, violence against them increased. It became a matter of routine to impose violence upon them and "the logic was that civilians who supported terrorists, are themselves considered terrorists, and one cannot differentiate between 'supporting' and 'neutral' civilians, the guilt and punishment must be collectively born"(Yap, 2001,p76). A new military strategy started where civilians were placed into enclosed camps-Protected Villages (PV) - in hopes of isolating the guerrillas and cut off their information sources and supplies This was proven unsuccessful as it did not keep the guerrillas out but instead worsened the villagers' living standards with little food and medical facilities. This failure led to an increase in resistance to the white regime and "the PVs caused a tremendous traumatic impact on its inhabitants, who subsequently experienced long term detention, violence and forced urbanisation" (Yap, 2001, p76).

Imposed traumas by liberation forces

As in all wars, the Liberation War in Zimbabwe was definitely not free of brutality. Much violence was inflicted upon the civil society. The two opposing guerrilla forces, used violence in both in the form of harsh interrogations and in forced mobilisation of recruits (Yap, 2001,p102).Deaths were taken place under inexplicable circumstances causing trauma in many different ways The social fabric was destroyed. Informers or 'sell outs' and internal dissidents were usually severely punished especially within the ZANU areas (Yap, 2001, p103). The war was taking a toll on the all involved, especially the civilians. The guerrilla support in rural areas was decreasing. Pressures upon the civilians to provide shelter and food for ever increasing numbers of guerrillas became a huge burden. "Complaints became so frequency and widespread that observers both within and outside the guerrilla movements began to fear a wholesale collapse of rural support". (Rangers 1986, p.386) As soon as the guerrillas took control over an area, they increased violence against villagers as a method to establish authority. The suffering was shown all around and although it affected both civilians and the military, the civilians were the defenceless ones Civilians lived in the constant state of fear and suspicions. Like in most wars, violence became a way of life for the Zimbabweans. (Yap, 2001,p85).

2.1.3　　　　　　*Resolving the conflict:*

The Lancaster Agreement emphasized the importance of settling the war through diplomatic means. All parties were to sign this accord, the Ian Smith Regime, Muzorewa (the new unjust appointed joint prime minister) and the leaders of the Patriotic Front, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. This agreement almost failed to be signed, because of the land issue. Mugabe found it most important, that the land should be given back to the native black population. However, he finally agreed to sign the accord. One important point was that the parties should accept the outcome of the election and that the parties should instruct any forces under their authority to do the same. Also stated in the Agreement was that 20% of the seats in the country's parliament was, during the first ten years, to be reserved for whites. This would help guarantee the safety as well as recognition of the white minority in Zimbabwe. The first free election in Rhodesia, under British supervision, granted Robert Mugabe winner, and the new state of Zimbabwe claimed independence (Lancaster House, 1979).

Promises of Reconciliation

At the end of the Liberation War in Zimbabwe it was up to the new president, Robert Mugabe to put the past behind them in a successful way. After the white rule in Zimbabwe ended, it was time to look to the future and leave the past behind. According to Mugabe, the best way to strive toward the future was to forget the past. In Mugabe's speech a few months after the white rule ended he stated that: "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten" (Huyse, 2003, p34).

2.1.4 *Analysis*

Conflict analysis:

The liberation war was an example of a transformative conflict where initially the colonialists and later the settler government favored the white community. It was a prime example of structural injustice where the White Rhodesians had power over all political and economic systems. They owned all fertile land and all enterprises. The black population had no status or influence in the structure of society and lived greatly subordinate to that of the White population - they were second class citizens. When the settler government unilaterally left Great Britain almost all other English colonies had achieved independence and a liberation war to rectify the structural injustices became unavoidable.

Trauma analysis:

The Lancaster House agreement managed to end racist rule in and managed to stop

the pull toward an Apartheid regime in Zimbabwe. The black population finally achieved proper rights that they had strived toward for so long, and it looked like Zimbabwe would strive toward a prosperous future without racist conflicts. This massive trauma which affected the whole population was resolved. However, the Lancaster House had one major flaw: the land question. According to the agreement, the whites were left with the same amount of land that they possessed before Independence. This included almost all productive land. This was the other massive trauma experienced during the white rule, and it remained unsolved after the Lancaster House Agreement. During the colonial years, the black population experienced trauma both in the way of racist ruling and their non-existing rights in the country, but also through not gaining access to their own land and resources. After Independence, the racist treatment of the black population by the whites was a top-priority in the Lancaster House Agreement. This apartheid treatment was completely abolished, but the land question still remained. By not resolving this issue, the conditions were kept the same and thus the experienced mass trauma remained.

The traumas experienced during the Liberation War were massive. As mentioned above, the Lancaster House did resolve some of these traumas, but there were still too many individual traumas that needed to be taken in account. This was partly taken in account, but only towards those who were directly involved in the war. These included the war veterans many of whom gained high positions in the ZANU government or in the police and army. The civilians however were left to deal with their traumas themselves and no confessions of guilt for murder; rape, torture etc. were forthcoming. Whenever accusations against excesses performed by liberation fighters have been raised they have been forcefully condemned.

Reconciliation analysis

At the end of the Liberation War in Zimbabwe it was up to the new president, Robert Mugabe to reconcile the different groups in the society in a successful way. After the white rule in Zimbabwe ended, it was time to look to the future and leave the past behind. According to Mugabe, the best way to strive toward the future was to forget the past. Mugabe expressed words of forgiveness and a positive attitude for striving toward the future in a unified Zimbabwe without any differences. This was a gesture towards the white community. However, this attitude was lined with self interests and the words of reconciliation were just that; words, false hope and promises that would never be followed through. This would firstly be shown in the bloody massacre in Matabeleland that commenced shortly after Independence.

The bitterness and tensions within the black community demanded reconciliation which was needed in order for a new country to survive. The differences between these groups have been an issue in past history as well as during the Liberation War. The conflict within the black community can be broken down into three intertwining divisions: First of all the ethnic tensions between the Shona, (majority) and Ndebele, (minority). Secondly, the regional question, most regions in Zimbabwe versus the Ndebele district of Matabeleland. Finally the political visions in how to build up the country after independence caused strains (Huyse, 2003, p34). The Lancaster House Agreement signed by both parties in 1979, gave the white population minority rights. These included 20 seats in parliament and access and protection of commercial farmland. In addition to this, all perpetrators involved in the Liberation War were to go unpunished (Ibid,p35).

According to the Lancaster House Agreement, *Amnesia*, or forgetting the past, was

considered the right tactic in building up the new state of Zimbabwe. This benefitted both sides of the agreement because it would draw a line through any human rights abuses that took place by all during the war. It was felt that the new politics of reconciliation would be ruined by bringing up the past and that it would only result in reopening wounds to events that best be forgotten (Ibid, p36). They refused to acknowledge and search for truth of what atrocities that had taken place even though there was much proof of rape, eviction, resettlement and torture taken place in the 1970's. However, no official reports were made (Ibid,p36). The result of this and the effects of amnesia bring a culture of impunity. By not dealing with the past it is not possible to move toward a better future and by not dealing with violent past events; wounds will not heal properly but grow even deeper.

The use of *impunity* in post-colonial Zimbabwe was abundant. It included among other things erosion of the judiciary, political manipulation of the police and silencing independent media and human rights organizations (Ibid, p36). However, the most effective and most questionable element was the amnesty and pardons. The granting of amnesty was a tradition in Rhodesia for a long time time. The act of Indemnity and Compensation stated that the police, army, government, civil service "who had committed crimes 'in good faith' could not be prosecuted" (Ibid, p36). The same came out of the Lancaster House Agreement where they decided to pardon both sides in the war. This use of impunity was manipulated continued to be used by the new government during many occasions pardoning persons who had committed serious crimes.

For the white population, the promise of reconciliation in the 1980's was proving to be accurate. Many Rhodesians got a false sense of economic security, as the first decade following independence there were no redistribution of land and this led to continued social inequality between the black and white populations. They maintained their privileges and the "explicit acceptance of responsibility for the past and for the future was an exception, not the rule" (Ibid, p37).

2.2   The Matabeleland Conflict 1982-1987

2.2.1   Background, actors, victims, events:

Although the Liberation War was over and independence had been gained, Zimbabwe was far from conflict-free, and this is clearly shown by the conflict in Matabeleland in the 1980's. The movement of reconciliation between the black communities was short-lived as word of a plot of overthrowing the ZANU-PF government led to dismissals of ZAPU leaders in the government. The allegations were most probably promoted by the South Africa apartheid government who wanted to see a weakened Zimbabwe (Huyse, 2003, p38). The legacy of the two armies and the tensions between them would play an important role in the events that took place in the 1980's. The conflict between these two parties dates back to the 1960's where personal differences contributed to the split of Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party and the formation of ZANU lead by Ndabaningi Sihole. In the 1970's fights and disputes between these groups were common. Their training differed considerably. ZIPRA- the ZAPU fighting force - was Russian trained which focused on tough military training with well established intelligence network and military utilities. ZANU's ZANLA on the other hand was Chinese-trained. Their training besides military drill also included political work which took place at night with song, dancing and politics in the so- called "pungwes"(CCJPZ, 1997, p26-27).

There has been much discussion of where the disputes between the Shona and Ndebele have its roots. One speculation is that it travels back in time to when the Ndebele arrived in Matabeleland in the mid-nineteenth century and raided Shona villages. Another theory is that the white settlers encouraged this dispute as an instrument of 'divide and rule'. Some point out that this conflict is much more recent and that the ethnic divisions became more apparent during the 1960's liberation movements which highlighted the political and regional divides (Huyse, 2001,p37).

The Shona make up more than 80% of the Zimbabwean population while the Ndebeles constitute only 16%. The conflict raging between 1982 and 1987 was estimated to have killed more than 20 thousand Ndebele civilians. This massacre was committed by the 5th brigade who was trained by instructors from Korea during 1981. The operation, also referred to as "Gukurahundi" the Shona word for "the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring", was executed by soldiers from Shona tribes and sympathetic to Mugabe's regime. The internal war lasted five years and ended with the so-called Unity Accord signed in 1987. This accord meant that the Ndebele ZAPU was swallowed by the Shona ZANU. The Ndebeles do not believe that they benefited at all from the accord. The violence and killings stopped, but they were and are still greatly neglected by the government. Development was only took place in Shona districts. Mugabe feels that it is unnecessary to bring up the past and claims that "if we dig up history, we wreck the nation and we tear our people apart into fractions" (Sokwnanele, 2005, p1).

When such a conflict has been present in a country, it is vital to study how it developed in order to avoid a repetition. There were many atrocities conducted apart from murder such as rape, mass beatings, destructions of homes and entire villages and physical torture of civilians. During the peak of the conflict in 1983 – 1984 the fifth brigade changed tactics to terror to instill maximum fear. The operation was covert and moved from villages to interrogation camps. Survivors tell stories of dehumanizing activities. Electric shocks, rape, excessive beatings, and genital mutilation were frequently used. In addition food denials and forced labor were other measures used. Corpses were to a large extent dumped in mine shafts.(Yap 2001,p.316)   It has become clear from those interviewed that these events in the 1980's did leave deep physical as well as psychological problems. Practical difficulties and legacy problems were a big issue as families were left without shelter, permanent health damage and as a result of physical damage it became difficult to find work, maintain their lands or even perform the easiest chores. Apart from this, hundreds of murder victims have still not been declared dead which enables their children to receive birth certificates and families to gain access to savings accounts or legal inheritance as they cannot present death certificates. In addition, thousands who fell victims or witnessed these horrors still suffer from post traumatic stress, and as a result these difficulties and stress is inherited by their children, passing the trauma on to the next generation, making the conflict still relevant today (CCJPZ, 1997p. 6-7).

The results of the atrocities committed in Matabeleland during the 1980s were so harsh that it led to intense trauma for a large portion of the Ndebele population. In addition it caused an even bigger split between the two ethnic groups. After 1985, the Ndebele regions were met with negligence and discrimination with no recognition of the violence caused and without any guilt or apologies.

2.2.3   *Resolving the conflict*

The promise of reconciliation- a chance to be heard

A small step toward reconciliation was the signing of the 1987 National Unity agreement where issues were allowed to be raised by ordinary citizens. Thousands of civilians wanted to tell their stories and get them recorded formally, even though no compensation was offered. The most anger was directed toward those senior officers who denied that the events in Matabeleland ever took place. Death certificates were not issued or many deaths were documented incorrectly (natural causes of death in diseases rather than murder). All of these testimonies were done voluntarily; however, there were many victims still too afraid to speak out.

The main issue following this conflict, and which is assessed in a report from Matabeleland and Midlands conducted by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, is that the conflict was not, and still is not acknowledged. No dialogue concerning the events that took place was ever conducted, and thus, leaving out these horrible events from

Zimbabwe's history. Only those who experienced the ordeals at first hand know what really happened. This denial is robbing Zimbabweans from gaining access and knowledge to their own history (CCJPZ, 1997 p3).

2.2.4 *Analysis*

Conflict analysis

The Matabeleland conflict could be labelled an ethnic conflict as was fought between two different ethnic groups, the Shonas and the Ndebeles. This would place the conflict in the relational perspective in the typology. In such a perspective groups with different values and culture interacts and compete. This would take the conflict back to the turn of the century more than hundred years ago when the two different groups were competitors for land and resources. However, the conflict between ZANU and ZAPU starting with the breakaway of the former in the beginning of the 1960's is probably the main reason for the conflict in the beginning of the 1980's. ZAPU was originally a nationwide party but after the split it received a more ethnic touch being further apparent during the war. ZAPU operated from Zambia through mostly Ndebele areas while ZANU with bases in Mozambique operated in Shona areas. It is a competition for state power which would make the conflict a political one. Yap maintains that it was a deliberate attempt by ZANU to eliminate the main opposition force in the country by targeting civil society. (Yap 2001,p299). ZANU has a history of dealing with internal opposition in harsh ways and the assault on their coalition partner fits into this picture. Cosers definition that it is "not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals" (see page 5) is fulfilled. The outcome eliminated ZAPU as a party and paved the way for a one party state. The Accord of 1987 has a paragraph with the following wording "That ZANU(PF) shall seek to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe" (Insider, 2004 p.1). President Mugabe had reached his objective.

Trauma analysis

There were unbelievable massive and personal traumas experienced during and in the aftermath of the Matabeleland massacre. This conflict is a prime example of massive trauma. One group the Shonas in the name of identity inflicted massive trauma on the other groups, the Ndebeles. They became victims and humiliated in this ordeal, and it spread quickly in the group, more and more people became victims. The personal traumas were massive. If not killed, many were raped and tortured while at the same time witnessing deaths by loved ones. This type of trauma was shared by many Ndebeles. The loss of their pride and security was felt by everyone, and this frequently returned in the form of PTSD's and mourning. The fact that many were not allowed to say goodbye or even know how and when their loved ones were killed resulted in perennial mourning-their pain will haunt them forever because they never managed to achieve closure. This vast amount of trauma experienced through this conflict is a fact. Many, however, want this violent occurrence to remain forgotten and hidden away, claiming that if addressed it will open up old wounds. However if it is not dealt with, it can never be put aside. Nevertheless,

when it comes to 'opening old wounds' it is not relevant in this specific case as many of those wounds are still open and many still suffer from the events in the 1980's today. This can be closely connected to Volkan's theory on chosen trauma. The fact that many still suffer from this massacre today, makes the task of mourning unfinished. This in turn leads to the trauma getting passed on to next generations. The children of the victims identify with them and their parents remind them of this trauma every day. By doing this, the trauma lives on to future generations, strengthening the large-group identity, and if no forgiveness or recognition can be made, it may lead to violence in the future. Specific rituals and ceremonies can also have powerful symbolic and healing value. A forensic exhumation of people murdered during the conflict took place in the late 1990's. According to AMANI, a Zimbabwean NGO, the exhumations were undertaken "with the primary intention of facilitating community healing processes". In Ndebele belief systems, the spirits of the dead play an essential role in the lives of every family, guiding and nurturing world. If a spirit is not honoured with a funeral and the *umbuyiso* ritual completed, it can become restless and angry, bringing bad luck to the family and the community. Clearly, the symbolic value of the burial and the subsequent rituals were vital to any sense of healing (Blomfield et al, 2003, p85-86).

Reconciliation analysis:

The Matabeleland conflict was never and has still not been recognized by the government. The silent pardoning and detaining without trial has made it possible to keep this massacre hidden. The people in Matabeleland were never given apology or compensated for the immense violence inflicted upon them in the 1980's. The only effort made to allow the Matabeleland victims speak of what had happened was done by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe(CCJPZ) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) through the book "Breaking the silence, building true peace". This book reported on what had taken place in Matabeleland, the victims had a chance to get their voice heard and to a certain extent acknowledged. However, this book was illegally published, and even if the government and the president got the report, it was completely ignored. They still stood by what everyone knows is not true: that the Matabeleland atrocities never took place the war was against dissidents and bandits not the people.

2.3   Political Conflicts 1998-2008

2.3.1   Background, actors, victims and events

For the past ten years, Zimbabwe has been plagued by political conflicts, usually in combination with presidential elections. These conflicts have partly emerged as a result of unresolved conflicts in the past. Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, seen as a national hero after leading Zimbabwe out of colonial rule in 1980 has ruled the country with an iron fist. After signing the Unity Accord in 1987 the following decade saw an de facto one party state develop. ZANU(PF) gained about 95 % of all seats in all parliamentary elections and the president was re-elected twice

unopposed. However, in the late 1990's mismanagement of the economy and rampant corruption led to popular demonstrations and the birth of an opposition party, the MDC. This was the first time the ruling party was really challenged and when the opposition led by the labour leader Morgan Tsvangarai won the referendum on a new constitution in 2000 a decade of gross violence started.

The first targets for the state sponsored violence were the white farmers, most of them staunch MDC supporters. Following the defeat in the referendum government made land acquisition their main priority. The question of land ownership dates back many decades in Zimbabwe. After independence in 1980, the Lancaster House Agreement stated that for the first ten years following independence, there would not be any compulsory acquisition of land by the government (Norman, 2008, 100). This was a bitter proposition for Mugabe who despised that when he came to power in 1980 but tactically accepted it. The white population continued to own most of the productive land. In 1999 a process of land reform started which after the referendum developed into violence against white farmers. Peaceful occupations of farms became violent, directed mainly toward the white farmers but also their workers (summary of political violence, 1). In 2000 the first white farmer was killed.

The next group facing state sponsored violence were members (and voters) of the MDC. The recent elections in Zimbabwe have been violent, corrupt and unfair, and this has taken its toll on the people. When looking back at elections since independence, there has been a common theme throughout the process of which these took place. Organized violence has occurred in different forms, directed toward those who would dare oppose the ruling party. The perpetrators who impose this violence usually get pardoned, protected by amnesties and presidential pardons (Kriger, 2005, 2). It is clear that the necessary conditions for any election in the 2000's to be considered free and fair did not exist, the Zimbabwean people could not cast their vote without fear of the state organized violence. In the aftermath of the general elections 2005 the government undertook a program which became known as 'operation *Murambatsvina'*, or 'operation clean up, restore order, or get rid of the filth'. It was a state-sponsored campaign, and its goal was to suppress political activities and independent economic conducts in urban areas of Zimbabwe. When winning rigged elections through means of violence and corruption, leaders usually impose violence on the civilians to pre-empt possible demonstrations and unrest. This operation led to mass eviction and the destroying of homes and non-governmental businesses. It has been estimated that in six weeks, over 700,000 Zimbabweans lost both homes and occupation, most of these living in poor urban areas (Schöpfer, Tiede, Lang, Zeil, 2007, pg, 1).

The 2008 general and presidential elections took place in a state characterized by a collapsing economy, hyperinflation, a cholera epidemic and rapidly increasing poverty. The election took a different turn compared to the previous ones. There was very little violence leading up to the elections. The MDC won a majority in Parliament but although Morgan Tsvangarai, achieved 48% of the votes compared to Mugabe 43% (and rest less than 10%) a second round was called in the presidential election. The second round should take place in June that same year. This is when violence broke out. ZANU youth and war veterans inflicted massive amounts of violence upon MDC supporters, resulting in Morgan Tsvangerai's withdrawal from the second round. ZANU and Mugabe went along with the election despite massive protests from around the world. The June election was not recognized internationally and Mugabe was not considered elected legally.

2.3.2   *Trauma and who imposed trauma*

The farm occupation which started in 2000 reached its peak in 2002 when the occupation of farms and violence toward farm workers intensified. Over 70,000 black farm workers had to leave their homes and work as they were threatened and beaten by war veterans and ZANU PF supporters. They were traumatized as their livelihoods were totally destroyed as their homes were burned to the ground along with all their belongings. This affected the whole country as crops were destroyed and the country ran out of food (HRW, 2002). There were evidence and witnesses of who committed these crimes within the ZANU PF party, but no one was brought to justice (HR, 2001, p1). Widespread reports of torture and abuse were reported but nothing was done to prevent or acknowledge it. People fled in fear of the violence to try to seek refuge in political headquarters and journalists as well as NGO workers were constantly under threat. Anyone who had any criticism toward the government was seen as opposition (HR watch 2001). The situation went from bad to worse when, in late 2001, the Zimbabwean government introduced a new legislation which would "punish in terms of imprisonment non-violent civil disobedience, criticism of the President and disturbing the peace; and to criminalize all journalism by those not licensed by the state" (HRW, 2002).

The psychological traumas were massive as the violence increased. Zimbabwean's knew from experience in past violent elections that making people disappear "is a powerful weapon against defenseless people who have personal memories of witnessing executions and of being tortured by this government in the recent past" (Summary of political violence, 1). This psychological torture was a powerful weapon, forcing the population into silence and cooperation. Other victims included journalists who reported upon human rights violations or governments short-comings were beaten and threatened. The Daily News newspaper was bombed, as Mugabe felt it was working and reporting in favor for the opposition. International broadcasts such as the BBC and CNN were banned from the country, and international journalists were not allowed into the country (HR watch Zimbabwe 2002). Before and after the elections in 2002 there were reports of unfairness in the elections and the violence inflicted upon the opposition and population was confirmed by electoral observers. The ZANU PF also banned many from voting, threatening them extensively (HR watch zim 2003). Over 1000 cases of torture were reported and many were targeted for their political support of the MDC. The trauma all around the country increased as "this intimidation and political violence created a climate of fear, and impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses" (HR watch 2003). The people knew that the ZANU PF members inflicting violence upon the civilians would get pardoned for their actions and therefore they could impose immense amount of violence without facing the consequences. It was during this time that the food shortages began. It was estimated that over six million Zimbabweans were at risk of starvation in the end of 2002. At the run-up to the elections, the government banned the food aid, and after the elections only distributed to those who were ZANU friendly. The MDC supporters were assaulted if they tried to get food (HR watch 2003). The operation Murambatsvina was imposed without warning and gross human rights violations took place. A Human Rights representative stated that the operation ""was

carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering, and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks" (HR watch 2006). The people were forced to move out of the city, abandon their lives and possessions, into rural areas without access to food or shelter. The Zimbabweans were in grave need of humanitarian aid, but the government obstructed initiations of helping the displaced people. The UN managed to provide shelter in certain areas where people were in most need, but this was very restrained. The government would not allow more help from the international community (HRW,2006).The 2008 elections resulted in state sponsored Human Rights violations imposed by ZANU PF members and war veterans. It was estimated that 180 people were killed, thousands injured and tens of thousands displaced and in need of emergency aid, food and shelter (HR report 2009). The economy has totally collapsed which has resulted in mass poverty with no access to food or health care. This ordeal left thousands of Zimbabweans in extreme poverty and too weak to try to fight back, many tried to leave the country in search for a better life. The trauma increased across the country, much due to fear and starvation, and it became clear that many were in need of psychological assistance (Kubatana, 2005, 1).

2.3.3 Resolving the Conflict:

Once again history repeated itself when President Robert Mugabe granted Amnesty for politically motivated crimes committed between the 1st of January and the 31st of July 2001. This covered the time during the campaign period leading up to the election and the aftermath of the election. This is when most of the atrocities took place, such as murder, rape and numerous human rights violations (HRW 2001). In July 2006, the government launched Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle meaning Reconstruction/better life. This operation was aimed toward helping the many victims of operation Murambatsvina where thousands of homes were destroyed. This was promised by the government but no proper plans were made, and with the massive economic crisis, the operation was doomed to fail (HRW 2007).

The Global Political Agreement between the ZANU PF government and MDC was signed in September 2008 forming a coalition agreement. Article VII- Promotion of Equality, National Healing, cohesion and unity states that: "the Parties herby agree that they shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre and post independence political conflicts (Paragraph C). This has given rise to the discussions on methods of national healing and which would be most suited in the case of Zimbabwe.

2.3.4 Analysis

Conflict analysis

The conflict during the past decade is a political conflict. Ever since the formation of an urban based opposition party, the MDC, the ruling party has used all means to stay in power. Power means control of the State and its resources and the ruling party has used this to enrich them and to buy support. The forcibly grabbing of white owned farms is part of such power maintaining process. The collapsing economy has however undermined the ruling party's power base in the rural area and the widespread public discontent has led to new tactics. The result is a Unity Government but with an opposition party unwilling to be swallowed the same way as ZAPU was in 1987

Trauma analysis

When looking at the state-sponsored political violence in Zimbabwe during the past years, it is evident to see that a leader's propagandistic way of manipulating the society's shared emotions is a fact. After losing the referendum for a new constitution legalizing land expropriation President Mugabe revived – choose- a trauma from the liberation war. Robert Mugabe is using the chosen trauma – the unequal ownership of land - as a cause for violence, This fits very well into Volkan's theories about destructive leadership and chosen trauma with exaggerated entitlement ideology as a base. This is foremost shown in his violent land occupations against the white farmers. He enhanced the victimization that the people suffered before and during the liberation war by the white population-and foremost the question of land. The whites still possessed much of the productive farmlands, and thus Mugabe reactivated a past trauma in order to back up his actions and convince his supporters that a form of revenge was needed. However, this was all a façade of what his real intentions were: to crush the opposition. Mugabe and the ZANU government were for the first time since independence, facing true opposition through Tsvangarai and the MDC. Through this land reform, Mugabe used measures to enhance the large-group identity as a propaganda tool, devaluating the former enemy (the whites), and exaggerate the need for revenge.

The trauma experienced by Operation Murambatsvina was massive. Thousands of people were left without a home and the poverty was rising. As the economy declined so did the access and possibility to get food or supplies. Through the brain drain there was no proper health care a situation which became dritical in view of the cholera epidemic. The people suffering from the consequences of Operation Murambatsvina share this massive trauma inflicted upon them and their lives, but are too weak to do anything about it. If not resolved, their traumas will haunt them and might cause a violent upheaval in the future if their large-group identity is strengthened.The personal trauma experienced as a result of the past political violence is immense. Rape, torture, the feeling of constant fear and being dragged into extreme poverty is a fact for many Zimbabweans today. Their trauma becomes part of their everyday life, resurfacing in the form of PTSD or perpetually mourning what they have seen, witnessed and experienced as a result of violence.

Reconciliation analysis

The same dangerous reconciliation methods of amnesia and impunity has been used during the now decade long political struggle in Zimbabwe. What has surfaced first in the

Matabeleland conflict and now as a triggering chosen trauma – the land question is the unresolved traumas from the liberation war. To sweep them under the carpet as was done in the Lancaster House Agreement was a mistake and lies behind the widespread traumas that haunt the country. According to estimates by Reeler 1 adult in 10 over the age of 30 years reported torture and was suffering from a clinically significant psychological disorder as a consequence (Reeler ,2008,p.2).

3 Discussion and Conclusions

What could be learned from the cases?

The three cases could all be labeled Political Conflicts where violence has been an important tool to gain and maintain power. Volkan's terminology has helped to understand the effects of violence and trauma and to see the relationship between the three conflicts. It seems clear that massive traumas experienced by a large group could resurface as a chosen trauma for creation of renewed violence. This was the case in Matabeleland as well as the violence around the land confiscation. The Zimbabwean society today is a trauma- infected society. Besides the study referred to above by Reeler he gives further evidence of the extremely high trauma rate during the Gukurahundi massacre "it was found that more than 80% of the sample reported torture, and the prevalence rate for consequent psychological disorder was 50% of all adults over 18 years." (Reeler 2008 p.2) Human Rights Forum reported more than 4,500 cases of torture and more than 35,000 cases of gross violence during the period 2001-2008 (HRW 2008) According to Reeler , the government has no national programme for medical or psychological assistance to victims of violence(p.7). A common feature in all three conflicts is the use of amnesia and impunity as reconciliation methods. The question of impunity is still at large in Zimbabwe, and with the latest investigations conducted by Amnesty International, there has still not been any prosecution or investigation into the perpetrators responsible for the state-sponsored political violence. Through the signing of the GPA it was hoped and assured by both sides that those responsible for the violence would be brought to justice. However, this has not been the case and the question of impunity is not prioritized by the government. When talking to the police, they claim that no violence imposed upon MDC supporters were allowed to be investigated. After all these years the fact still remains, that perpetrators are still allowed to impose violence upon civilians without facing any consequences. The victims of violence cannot go to the police as their complaints are not looked into. As mentioned by Amnesty International, this impunity is dangerous and this has been shown throughout Zimbabwe's conflict-filled history. Those who go unquestioned have a license to continue to impose violence as they will always be pardoned. By allowing this to keep happening, nothing will stop violence from reoccurring and this could have grave consequences for an unstable country like Zimbabwe. This new government " is about to inaugurate a plan for national healing but Amnesty International is convinced that without justice there can be no real healing in a country deeply polarized by decades of political violence" (AI, 2009, p3).

This has led to a situation where many of those armed forces who imposed violence in the 1970's were also responsible for atrocities and gross human rights violations in both the 1980's and 2000's. The amnesty they are still striving for is, like perpetrators from Matabeleland "a blanket of amnesty- no truth revealed, no questions asked. However, it has been seen that because this security blanket is given to the perpetrators, they have free rains to impose evil in the future without possibilities of prosecution".(Coltard 2009. p2)

There has been much debate surrounding the need of a national healing process in Zimbabwe after many years of political violence. With the power-sharing which followed the turbulent elections in 2008, the stress of reconciliation is prominent in stabilizing the country. In June 2009, the new government revealed an ONHRI or "Organ for National Healing Reconciliation and Interrogation" connected with the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008 (Harding, 2009, pg1). However, there is still disagreement on what degree these interrogations, punishments and forgiveness should be pursued. Morgan Tsvangirai, the new Prime Minister in Zimbabwe stated that "it is not just saying forgive, heal and reconcile but justice needs forgiveness…and if we do retributive justice, the danger is that we may slide back towards violence" (Harding, 2009, p.1). The tensions in Zimbabwe are immense, and therefore it's important that this process is not rushed and that a model most suited for all is established. Many of those suffered from the political violence feels that the talks of reconciliation give false hope in a Zimbabwe plagued with catastrophe and injustice (Harding, 2009, pg, 2). One major obstacle in finding a model of reconciliation is the amnesties and pardons granted to ex-combatants before and after the War of Independence. This Act is still in motion today, pardoning those terrorizing the opposition knowing they will be pardoned for their crimes protected by the Act (Kriger, 2000,p4). The ONHRI was set up in respect to those victims in pre-and post-independence as well as the in recent political conflicts.

The main debate now is to decide what type of model would compensate victims and if perpetrators should be pardoned or prosecuted (Bhebe, 2009, pg 2). If this process is led by politicians, it is most likely that the political atrocities committed will be pardoned. Therefore it is important that the reconciliation model should be chosen by the people, and as Tsvangirai states "the methods that will be employed for this essential process cannot be prescriptive or imposed upon the people, but must be chosen and endorsed by the people if we are going to achieve the goal of truly healing our nation" (Bhebe, 2009, pg2). It is the people of Zimbabwe who have suffered through these years of conflict and violence, therefore it should be up to them to decide what should be the best way to heal their nation and not leave it up to the politicians responsible for the violence in the first place. Morgan Tsvangirai stresses the importance of remembering the past in order to deal with it and allow for traumas to heal. He feels that "we must look back resolutely to the pre-Independence era, the post-independence Matabeleland massacres and the more recent political violence that has torn at our fabric of our society. Many of our people have suffered under each of the phases of our evolution to the Zimbabwe that exists today" (Bhebe, 2009, pg3). Mugabe on the other hand feels that it's wrong to bring up the past as it would only open up old wounds.

Conclusions

- The National Healing Process must be part of a broad perspective on reconciliation including truth telling, justice, healing and reparation.
- Reconciliation is time consuming and must be given a long time
- Massive and chosen trauma must be addressed to avoid future conflicts

- The process should probably not be driven by politicians as they have vested interests in the process.

The conflicts that have plagued Zimbabwe for the past decades have been complicated and taken its toll on the civil society. Mass trauma is still present in people's everyday life, and if no healing can take place that will acknowledge the perpetrators and give forgiveness to the victims, Zimbabwe is far from a prosperous and peaceful future.

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