



Consequences of Elitist Reconciliation in Zimbabwe and South Africa: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT This paper analyses the reconciliation paths that were taken by Zimbabwe and South Africa after their independence and majority rule struggles. The paper notes that the histories of Zimbabwe and South Africa are similar to each other in some ways: they were both colonized and have similar policies regarding their post-independence political and economic structures. It, however, notes that the post-independence settlements were elitist and alienated the ordinary people who fuelled the struggles, creating a socio-economic and political time bomb that exploded in Zimbabwe and is now threatening to explode in South Africa. The paper uses interviews and documentary research as primary tools for data gathering and is guided by the concept of the 'Appeasement of Avenging Spirits' in Zimbabwean indigenous culture.

INTRODUCTION

Like most African countries, South Africa and Zimbabweans suffered a long period of minority colonial domination, with South Africa experiencing a slightly longer and brutal period than its Northern neighbour. In both countries, various types of protracted struggles had been operative for a long period of time. After the struggles, beginning with Zimbabwe in 1980 and South Africa following in 1994, the leaders of the liberation movements, Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela, proclaimed reconciliation policies. Under the policies, there was a need for instant forgiveness among black, white and coloured races. While this was the case, the actual meaning of the reconciliation policies was that blacks, Indians and coloureds had to forgive the whites unconditionally in Zimbabwe and in South Africa, after the process of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in some cases but unconditionally in other cases.

The concept of reconciliation, as it was conceptualized, was buttressed by constitutional provisions that meant that there would not be much change in the socio-political status-quo. The liberation/independence constitutions were drafted far away from majority of the people who fuelled the struggles. The Zimbabwean independence constitution was drafted in London, while for South African, some of the known places where it was drafted include London, Lusaka

and South Africa (Pilger 2008) (with most of the meetings, ranging from the 'Talks about Talks' meetings between Nelson Mandela and the National Intelligence Service (NIS) leadership to the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) (I and II), held in high secrecy) but without the participation of ordinary South Africans. In short, there was limited input into the final liberation agreements and the reconciliation policies from the most critical constituency in the struggle, the blacks, Indians and coloureds, whom the leaders had purported to represent.

While the resultant elitist reconciliation policies had been in vogue for some years, it was not long before the cracks started, and the whole process began to crumble. In Zimbabwe, the peak of the failure of the reconciliation model was observed in the beginning of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and the subsequent indigenization laws. In South Africa, the cracks widened during the era of President Thabo Mbeki and continued to increase under the leadership of Jacob Zuma, and Cyril Ramaphosa. The calls for radical economic transformation, radical land reform programme and the clamour for the resignation of President Jacob Zuma, which in some cases turned racial, are signs of a time bomb that is nearing explosion. The ascension of Cyril Ramaphosa to the presidency was also met with calls by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in 2018, to amend section 25 of the South African constitution and create more

legal space for land expropriation without compensation (EWC). Section 25 was described by the Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture (2019: vi) that; “More importantly is the recognition that the current framing of Section 25 of the Constitution is compensation-centric and focused, a fact which is hardly surprising given the fact that expropriation as a concept is imported from foreign and international law that does not separate compensation from expropriation.” The property rights laws to which the section was a bedrock, were seen as skewed in favour of market driven capitalism and against issues of social justice (Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture 2019).

Using critical analysis of historical writings, opinion and journal papers as well as informal interactions with members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association and ordinary Zimbabweans who experienced the liberation struggle period to the independence era, this paper argues that the socio-political problems faced by Zimbabwe and South Africa are a result of elitist imposed reconciliation policies.

Objectives

This paper seeks to determine whether South Africa is following in the footsteps of Zimbabwe, in light of the similarities in the proclamation of the reconciliation policies and the subsequent laws guarding gains and losses (classified as protection of private property without a holistic review of how the private property was acquired). Using a comparative approach between the African social justice and reconciliation models and the European (Roman-Dutch Law) models on issues such as murder and theft of property, the paper argues that the adoption of European models and the negation of African models could be one of the reasons for the failure of reconciliation in post-independence Zimbabwe and South Africa. The use of the Shona concept of appeasing avenging spirits is not meant to argue for an exclusive supremacy of a single model but to provoke other scholars to bring up other African models/concepts to challenge the status-quo’s presumption of the supremacy of the European models above the indigenous models in African socio-political matters.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

An Overview of the Concept of Reconciliation

“Reconciliation implies a process, that of restoring the shattered (social) relationship between two actors. The adjective *social* indicates that the emphasis is on a group, and not on individual reconciliation” (Kumar 1999: 1). Furthermore, Bloomfield (2003: 12) states as follows:

Reconciliation is an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing and so on. At its simplest, it means finding a way to live alongside former enemies – not necessarily to love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them, to develop the degree of cooperation necessary to share our society with them, so that we all have better lives together than we have had separately.

The process of reconciliation should not be viewed as a straightjacket in which prescriptions for one society can be uprooted and transplanted onto another society. It should be a process that seeks to respond to the nature of the crisis to be solved. In doing so, it must be rooted in the culture of the groups concerned, with particular emphasis on the aggrieved group. Such groups must have an input in the process so that they own the process and accept the outcome as their creation. Desmond Tutu in a foreword to Broomfield et al. (2003) aptly captured the needs of a reconciliation process, stating that it “involves a very long and painful journey, addressing the pain and suffering of the victims, understanding the motivations of the offenders, bringing together estranged communities, trying to find a path to justice, truth and, ultimately, peace.”

One of the essential aspects of Desmond Tutu’s characterization quoted above is the issue of justice and truth. According to Merriam-Webster (online) dictionary, justice refers to “the maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.” The application of justice refers to the settling of issues equitably based on moral principles. It then follows that there should be consultation between the offenders and the victims, and resolutions that are acceptable to both parties as fair reparations for the committed atrocities should be reached.

From the above discussion, reconciliation should be seen as an inclusive process and not a preserve of the political or societal elites. Concurring, Bloomfield (2003: 11) puts forward a vital assertion that reconciliation is not a preserve of politicians and the deal-makers but applies to the entire population concerned because “the relationship which must be addressed is not simply that between parliamentarians or leaders, but between whole communities. It is entire communities who have to begin to reorient themselves from the adversarial, antagonistic relations of war to more respect-based relations of cooperation.”

These salient factors might not have been taken aboard in the political transitions in Zimbabwe and South Africa. While the struggles for independence in these two neighbouring Southern African countries were inclusive and mobilized the participation of majority of the populations, who had suffered inhumane treatment and oppression by the colonial minority, independence negotiations and the reconciliation agreements were highly exclusionary.

The African and European Reconciliation Models: A Comparative Analysis

The imposition of reconciliation models of European type creates a false picture that Africans were barbarians who had no mechanism to heal societies after a crisis. This is a fallacy given that Africans had many mechanisms with which healing was achieved to a greater degree and extent (Dodo et al. 2012: 93). The African models also had deterrent mechanisms, which limited the prevalence of criminality in a society.

One of these critical models was the system of “Kuripa Ngozi”¹, in the Zimbabwe Shona culture. The concept of Ngozi as viewed in the Shona culture, specifically the Zezuru bloc, means restoration on a wrong committed. While the wrong might have been committed by an individual to another individual, due to bloodlines, the crime rests on the kinsmen of the committer/villain. The victim is not a single individual who is directly wronged, but the kinsmen of the individual become victims as well. Ngozi is “a crime of violating the sanctity of a property, including human life as well as assets, and its consequences are still literally referred to as Ngozi” (Kari-

manzira 2013: 49). There are different types of Ngozi, namely, marital, ethical, transactional, colonial and archetypal Ngozi (Karimanzira 2013). All the types of Ngozi refer merely to an unethical/immoral conduct that an individual may commit against another.

Of interest to this paper is the ethical, archetypal and colonial Ngozi. The ethical Ngozi may be seen in a case where a child abuses his/her mother physically, verbally or otherwise. In this case, the child will suffer calamities given that such behaviour angers the spirits of the land, including the Higher Spirit (God). When the calamities occur, the child should confess his/her actions and pay reparations as a sign of expressing remorse, and the mother should accept the reparations as a sign of forgiveness, after which the situation returns to normal. In most cases, the child goes through a humiliating process of dressing in rags or acting like a mad person (*kutanda botso*). This might serve as a deterrent and teach those who see him/her that parents, specifically mothers, deserve unreserved respect in the society typically because of the gruesome processes they undergo during pregnancy and child-rearing.

Archetypal Ngozi refers to cases of murder. In these cases, the murderer could confess before calamities befall his/her kinsmen so that the process of reparations is undertaken. If no confession is made, calamities may afflict the murderer or any one or more of his kin, which forces the family to request fortune-tellers to inform them of the cause. After establishing the problem, the family approaches the family of the victim, confesses and initiates the process of reparations, which involves a virgin girl from the murderer’s family marrying a man in the deceased’s family. However, in contemporary times, human and female rights activists view the process as victimization of innocent girls (Karimanzira 2013) (this is a broad discussion that is beyond the scope of this paper). Nonetheless, the process had a deeper meaning than just using an innocent girl as a means of blood payment. It was a process that was meant to restore the lost life in the family of the deceased, given the sanctity of blood, and to unite the two families through bloodline (marriage and children that will be born). After the marriage, it was envisaged that it would be hard for the families to remain rivals

given that they have newly become an extended family. Using this process, an authentic and meaningful reconciliation is realized between the two families/societies.

Colonial Ngozi encompasses all the forms of Ngozi referred to above. It was the abuse on a society by mistreating elders in front of their children; it came with murder, unethical transactional practices and expropriation of land unfairly. According to the Kuripa Ngozi model of reconciliation after colonialism, the colonizers are duty bound to confess, pay reparations and ask for forgiveness while showing remorse. The nature of the process should not be viewed from the perspective that those who committed the crimes are long gone because the crime runs in the bloodline, and in the cases of Zimbabwe and South Africa, the bloodlines even inherited physical estates acquired through the process of committing Ngozi. In short, Kuripa Ngozi was a process that accounted for truth and justice for the victims and reunites the divided parties.

Contrary to the African (Shona) system of reconciliation and peace building, the European models, primarily those hinged on the Roman-Dutch law, are centred on the individual and individualism. The burden of a crime is borne by the individual who commits it. If that individual passes on, the crime no longer has value. Even in extreme cases of murder, the crime gets associated different forms of review. In most cases, the crime is seen as a state crime, and the 'criminal' accounts to the state (government) and not to the family of the deceased.

Regarding the land issues in Southern Africa, while the Roman-Dutch Law criminalizes the purchase of stolen property, the principles governing such law were not applied in both Zimbabwe and South Africa given that measures to mask the unjust takeover were put in place. These measures included the use of fraudulent treaties meant to portray a contractual agreement in the takeover and the use of the laws of conquest that were alien and unknown to Africans. The use of double standards in the application of the Roman-Dutch law in the colonization phase rendered it deficient in dealing with colonial injustices in current times as it was also applied then to justify, legalise and legitimize the injustices.

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Alienating the Major Constituency

After attaining independence and majority rule in 1980, the Zimbabwean government led by the then Prime Minister and former President, Robert Mugabe, proclaimed a policy of reconciliation. Soon after winning the first democratic election in Zimbabwe in March 1980, Robert Mugabe gave a victory speech, in which he stated as follows:

I urge you, whether you are Black or White, to join me in a new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget. Join hands in new amity and together as Zimbabweans trample upon racialism, tribalism, and regionalism, and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society as we reinvigorate our economic machinery.

In the same speech, Robert Mugabe stated that his new government had no intentions to "interfere unconstitutionally with the property rights of individuals." The constitutional rights that Mugabe referred to were influenced heavily by the British government in the independence negotiations, and there was no input from ordinary Zimbabweans and ordinary war veterans, who were in different guerrilla bases outside the country and later came back to Zimbabwe during the period of the negotiations. The new Prime Minister went on to call on Zimbabweans to "turn their swords (guns) into ploughshares" and transform from a divided nation at war to a single nation cooperating for development.

The call to reconciliation was noble given that one of the primary tasks facing the government was nation building. There was need for all people living in Zimbabwe to embrace each other in a just and civilised manner that negated tribalism, regionalism and racism. However, the failure to have widespread inclusive consultations in most cases destroys good models, especially when the majority disowns such models. Hence doubts arise as to how the majority of Zimbabweans, specifically the ordinary urban and rural citizens as well as the ordinary former guerrillas, perceived and understood the proclamation of reconciliation and upholding of an anti-majority status quo.

The Second *Chimurenga/Umvukela*², from 1972-1979 (Sadomba 2008), sought to redress socio-economic and political dominance of majority of blacks by the minority whites. While political democracy was of significance, it was seen as a means to achieve social and economic emancipation as well as regain humanness by majority of blacks. Cabral (1966: 9-10) argues as follows:

The national liberation of a people is the regaining of the historical personality of that people, its return to history through the destruction of the imperialist domination to which it was subjected. We have seen that violent usurpation of the freedom of the process of development of the productive forces of the dominated socio economic whole constitutes the principal and permanent characteristic of imperialist domination, whatever its form... We can, therefore, conclude that national liberation exists only when the national productive forces have been completely freed from every kind of foreign domination.

From Cabral's viewpoint, liberation can only be realized when blacks have transformed from political to socio-economic independence. This, however, should not be pursued through violent revenge attacks. A process is, however, needed in which the whites who have inherited the *Ngozi* of their forefathers, both physically through the land ownership and other economic gains and non-physically because of kinship, have to come down and seek forgiveness than push for a lopsided reconciliation. The proclamation of reconciliation and adherence to the status-quo establishing property rights in the Lancaster House Constitution was, therefore, a negation of the liberation struggle. That the ordinary citizens, specifically the rural folks, were not in support of the reconciliation policy can be deduced from the land invasions that were witnessed soon after independence (Moyo 2004).

Majority of the ordinary guerrillas who had executed the war and introduced the party to ordinary peasants in the rural areas were not consulted during the processes of negotiations. The fighters were only informed that the war had ended and that they will be at assembly points for some time, after which some got conscripted into the national security forces, others

into government departments, while others had to return to their homes, depending on one's educational level (Dzinesa 2006). One former guerrilla stated that several freedom fighters had planned to revenge the ill-treatment they had suffered at the hands of the whites and only stopped because their leadership informed them that they had forgiven the whites.³ Several blacks also harboured the feeling of revenge across the country and were only restrained by the law that proscribed such attacks. However, some revenge attacks were meted out on whites and blacks who were found as having collaborated with the whites in the domination of other blacks, like the police officers.⁴ While the law managed to bring sanity, it only created cosmetic peace. The peace between blacks and whites was also sustained by counter attractions, like the Matabeleland disturbances that came up soon after independence and, later, by economic hardship that came with the promulgation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1990s. However, the land question, which was at the heart of the racial conflict, remained unresolved.

It was only a matter of time before things got out of hand. The land occupation of 1998 by Chief Svosve in Marondera district became the spark that lit the powder keg that had been growing since independence. Black Zimbabweans had gone to war to achieve their humanness primarily through the equitable redistribution of land and other economic benefits. Moyo (2004: 204) notes that,

In 1997, the more high profile community-led land occupation approach seemed to emerge, and isolated land occupations started to occur, with the explicit aim of redistributing land from white farmers to landless villagers and war veterans. These occupations augmented existing low profile land occupations, which had remained throughout the country.

This was, therefore, a rebellion by the masses against the government's reconciliation policy and broadly against the Lancaster House status-quo preserving the agreement.

The proclamation of reconciliation and, broadly, the adoption of a Westminster and status-quo preserving Lancaster House constitution meant that Zimbabweans would not realize the benefits of the revolution they had sacri-

ficed a lot for. The clauses in the constitution, which needed moderation, indicate preferential treatment for the white community, a situation that limited, if not negated, the primary reasons why Africans sacrificed lives and other materials for freedom. While the Africans accepted the terms due to the euphoria of independence, it was a matter of time before tempers would flare up due to the lack of an inclusive and meaningful reconciliation process.

The significant issue that affected the elitist reconciliation model in Zimbabwe was that while the blacks felt hard done by the whites, to whom the olive branch had been extended, the whites did not view reconciliation as a compromise regarding which they had to also reciprocate by acknowledging the change in the status quo. Majority of whites took reconciliation as the continuation of the status-quo. In many cases, white farmers continued to mistreat black farm workers. In a popular video, former ZANU-PF spokesperson, Edson Zvobgo, had to visit a farm to warn a white farmer against ill-treating farm workers. In other cases, white farmers allegedly continued to refer to their farms as Rhodesia. Before the Fast Track Land Reform programme and Mugabe's extensive campaign that whites were not superior in any way to blacks, the term *murungu* (vernacular for white person) evoked fear and respect among black Zimbabweans no matter their status. This fear was not only due to the racial culture of the colonial era but also the continued dominance and near brutality by the whites, especially on farms in the post-colonial era. Mugabe and ZANU-PF's opting for reconciliation can also be described as the slow morphing of liberation movements into neo-colonial forces (also see Sadomba 2008).

South Africa: A Comparative View

Following in Zimbabwe's footsteps, the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, led by Nelson Mandela, had agreements with the Apartheid Nationalist Party for reconciliation. The difference between the two is that in Zimbabwe, there was no truth and reconciliation commission, while in South Africa, there were CODESA talks, which later influenced the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was headed by Desmond Tutu.

CODESA deliberated on the vital issues of governance in South Africa. The Nationalist Party led by F. W. De Klerk initially attempted to frustrate any effort by the ANC to win outright majority rule by pushing for the adoption of a federal state that gives veto powers to the minority and proportional representations (Klein 2001). However, when it realized that it was failing on the political front, the Nationalist Party worked hard in maintaining the socio-economic status quo with cosmetic changes as well as protected those who committed gross human rights violations in defending the apartheid regime (Klein 2001). Given that all nationalists concentrated on political concessions, the ANC and other liberation movements failed to consider the socio-economic and public justice issues, hence the post-independence outlook in which the reconciliation process was elitist.

The commission was established in line with the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission considered conflicts dating from 1 March 1960. The Commission was mandated (by Chapter 2(1) of the Act) to establish a complete picture of the human rights violations, facilitate the granting of amnesty to those who disclosed the truth relating to acts associated with political objectives, establish and make known the fate or whereabouts of victims, restore the human and civil dignity of such victims by granting them an opportunity to relate their own accounts of the violations of which they are the victims, and recommend reparations.

While the commission was seen as a way of facing people's past without dwelling on them and concentrating on the future, it was merely a compromise that was undertaken by the ANC negotiators and the Apartheid regime at Kempton Park in South Africa that there should be amnesty for those who committed heinous crimes under the apartheid era (Desmond Tutu's letter to the Sunday Times of South Africa of 4 December 1996, cited in Norval 1998: 253). Like other negotiations that were made between the Apartheid government and the ANC, the meeting was secretive, and there were no meaningful consultations with the ordinary citizens who bore the heaviest brunt of the apartheid government's brutality (sahistory.org.za 1990).

The process was also questionable given that it laid down the date of 1 March 1960 as the date from which the atrocities are to be considered. What it meant was that the negotiators agreed that colonial atrocities in South Africa could be dated back to the given date. The date could have been chosen given that it was when the apartheid regime undertook the infamous Sharpeville massacre in March 1960. While this could be the case, the Sharpeville massacre was only one massacre among many documented and undocumented massacres. Such an acceptance, for whatever reasons, is a negation of the history of colonialism in South Africa. Colonialism started with the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck and his team of Dutch sailors in the early 1650s. Hence, giving the commission a cut-off date was itself a negation of reconciliation.

On another front, the process called in some people who were chosen to give their sides of the story. However, the South African colonial system did not affect certain specific individuals or groups of individuals. It had blanket laws and policies that emasculated blacks, Indians and coloureds. The effects of the system meant that blacks lost their humanness, and consequently, they always feel inferior to whites economically, socially and politically. Failure to substantively address such issues has seen blacks continuing to be second class citizens socially and economically.

On another front, Sadr (2013) points out that the process placed the more significant burden and responsibility on individuals for crimes that were perpetrated on behalf of the state and advanced the socio-economic and political dominance of the white race against other races that were regarded as inferior. Such a classification exonerated other whites who saw themselves as innocent even though they were beneficiaries of the segregation policies and laws. Under the Ngozi concept, all South African whites who benefitted from the apartheid system would have had to accept responsibility and work towards total healing of the society and the eradication of the racial divide.

As a result of the above, South Africa only managed to postpone racial tensions. The racial tensions were delayed in part due to the respect South Africans, including blacks, whites and coloureds, had for Nelson Mandela. With the

death of Mandela, the symbol of South African unity was crushed. There have been louder calls for land redistribution. The death of Mandela is connected to the rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), an opposition political party led by former ANC Youth League Chairperson, Julius Malema.⁵ The party's message is premised on the need for a radical land reform process, even suggesting the Zimbabwean Fast Track model, and other pro-black radical economic adjustments.⁶ The fact that the EFF managed to command a considerable influence, as seen by its acquiring of 25 seats in the National Assembly and a number of seats in national council of provinces as well as becoming the third largest party in South Africa, in a few years of its formation is a sign that its calls for radical transformation has the support of the South African population.

To counter the EFF narrative, the ANC has also begun to call for radical land reform and the dumping of the 'willing buyer willing seller' policy, which has seen land reform in South Africa progressing at a snail's pace.⁷ The shift in approach by the ANC signals a return to the principles of the South African struggle, especially as captured in the Freedom Charter (1955): "Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended. Moreover, all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger". The ANC had been an inclusive party that embraced all races but was predicated on the need for equitable distribution of resources (Freedom Charter 1955). However, after several talks that were undertaken by the leadership and the apartheid government, the ultimate freedom was a watered down one. One that merely sought to protect the status-quo and give political leadership to blacks as was the case in Zimbabwe. Based on these negotiations and the subsequent reconciliation, only the political elites got to join the ranks of the national elites, while those who suffered under colonial rule continued to occupy the bottom rungs of the socio-economic ladder, as they did during the colonial era.

On the land question, the situation in South Africa resembles the situation in Zimbabwe during the pre-Fast Track Land Reform Programme period. The South African state's position concerning the land reform is captured by Cousins (2017), that is, the ANC government stance is

that of ‘distract, deceive and divide.’ The state uses the land reform agenda to distract the population from questioning its misdoings; at the same time, it deploys land reform rhetoric to deceive the masses that it is a pro-poor government. Moreover, finally, it uses the land reform to divide its opponents who hold different views on the land reform. If one pays attention to Cousins’ schema, it resembles what transpired in Zimbabwe during the pre-land reform and post-land reform periods. The land reform was used as a trump card by the ruling party (ZANU PF), that is, as a political campaign tool to suggest that it is a pro-poor party, despite its shortfalls. However, in South Africa, it may be challenging to have a radical land reform because of the white capital. In South Africa, whites are more dominant qualitatively and quantitatively as far as land holding is concerned. White commercial farmers in South Africa hold 83% of the land (Chambati 2015) and have significant commercial farming investments more than what the former commercial farmers in Zimbabwe had. Additionally, the South African economy is more industrialized, so if one pays attention to the simmering politics of the land question in South Africa, it would be discovered that the issue has now been more or less reduced to a labour question. In this context, landless peasants are being interpreted in the mainstream media as jobless; therefore, what is more urgent is to provide work for them and not the land per se. Furthermore, the narrative advanced in popular media and other debates is that the South African land question is more or less an urban only question, as seen through rapid squatter settlement. This narrative is made to debase a broad-based land reform, such as that which happened in Zimbabwe.

Apart from the EFF, the racial and socio-economic dominance was challenged by university students in the famous students’ uprising that kicked off with the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ protests at the University of Cape Town and spread to other universities in South Africa in 2015. The students uprising should not be seen as a simple ‘kids rant’ against statues. It was an uprising against white racial domination, which the students saw as being represented by the effigies of the former colonial masters who continued to be venerated more than 20 years into majority

rule (Laurore 2016). The battle was later taken to Pretoria University against its language policy, which the students argued gave superior treatment to Afrikaans (Rushwaya 2016), which resembles the oppression and suppression of blacks by the whites of Afrikaner descent (Silva 1997).

The South African leadership, like the Zimbabwean leadership before them, might have thought that acquiring political power would make all the adjustments smooth and straightforward, due to political control. What they failed to learn from Zimbabwe is that economic power had powerful leverage against political power, and Zimbabwe faced a severe predicament after the Fast Track Land Reform Programme as there was massive ‘capital flight’ from the country (Moyo and Yeros 2005).

The South African case is also complicated by the failure by several whites who directly and indirectly benefitted from apartheid policies to acknowledge reconciliation as a compromise. Such an acknowledgement would drive them to come down from their racial heights and meet with blacks in national reconciliation. As was the case with their Zimbabwean counterparts, they took the process as a change of political leadership and continuing racial, socio-economic dominance. Regarding the CODESA negotiations, Klein (2001: 199-200) notes that,

South Africa’s whites had failed to keep blacks from taking over the government, but when it came to safeguarding the wealth they had amassed under apartheid, they would not give up so easily. ... This plan was successfully executed under the noses of ANC leaders, who were naturally preoccupied with winning the battle to control Parliament. In the process, the ANC failed to protect itself against a far more insidious strategy—in essence, an elaborate insurance plan against the economic clauses in the Freedom Charter ever becoming law in South Africa.

Some studies have shown that the South African socio-economic system is still racially stratified, with whites still at the apex of the socio-economic ladder, a situation that represents the remnants of apartheid. Pilger (2008, 2012) notes that the political changes of 1994 had relatively little effect on the socio-economic lives of South Africans across the racial divides. Also,

as F. W. De Klerk puts it in an interview with Pilger (1999) in response to the assertion that majority rule only had cosmetic changes to the socio-economic lives of whites and blacks, "It is true that our lives have not fundamentally changed. We can still go to the cricket at Newlands and watch the rugby." With these kinds of testimonies and the rising tempers, the South African government together with other social partners, like the civil society and the academia, should make effort to redress the situation before some vigilantes take it upon themselves to kick start the redress, which in most cases will be violent and lead to an economic nosedive to the detriment of all.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to provide answer to the question on whether South Africa is following in the footsteps of Zimbabwe's socio-economic troubles that were brought about by the effects of elitist reconciliation policies and processes. Zimbabwe managed to maintain its racial peace because of some reasons, which include the use of the law to suppress emotions, the Matabeleland disturbances and economic challenges that faced the country in the last decade of the 20th century. Such peace was not sustainable because it was not accepted by ordinary people and the Whites. The reconciliation, therefore, entirely crumbled in the post-2000 era with Black Africans engaging in high-intensity land occupations that forced the government to accede to popular demands and instituted the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

South Africa followed in Zimbabwe's footsteps by promulgating a reconciliation process at the attainment of majority rule. Like the Zimbabwean process, the process was elitist as it was negotiated in secrecy between the ANC and the apartheid government. The difference between the South African and Zimbabwean processes is that in South Africa, attempts for inclusion came through the Peace and Reconciliation Commission. However, the process was flawed as it centered on amnesty and reparations only to those who had claimed direct suffering and brutality from the apartheid government.

As was the case in Zimbabwe, while blacks were more restrained by the law and displayed

goodwill in accepting a peaceful co-existence with the whites without retributions, like land redistribution, the whites took the extension of reconciliation as an acceptance of weakness on the part of the government and the blacks in general. Whites have not been forthcoming in releasing some of the land they own for a comprehensive land reform. A number of them argued that what is essential is production and not racially equitable land ownership. The whites in these cases fail to understand that to blacks, land is not just one of the means of production but a cultural and emotional asset.

The widening of the cracks of elitist reconciliation in South Africa is symbolized by the rise in calls for a radical land reform based on expropriation without compensation and a national reform that is equitable; students' uprisings, such as the famous Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall uprisings, are indicative of such calls for reform. The South African government still has some time to have a relook into the reconciliation model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having not suffered a radical land occupation movement, and having started discussions on expropriation without compensation (EWC), the South African government should continue the consultative process. However, the government should maintain firm control and guard against emotional land occupations which come with disruptions in production and destruction of farm assets, and in some cases loss of lives.

The white land owning community in South Africa should also understand the clamours for land and partner the government in solving the crisis. The community should always know that in cases of land occupations, it is not only the country that suffer in general, but they will have direct losses which they can help avoid by partnering the government in creating a just social and constitutional order and working to preserve it.

In Zimbabwe, while the land was acquired, the government should continue to engage the internal white community as part of its re-engagement efforts. Note should be taken of the fact that some of the farmers were Zimbabwean nationals who were born and grew up in the

country. Land audits should be held in which part of the lands found idle or where some elites have more land against the policy provisions should relinquish some to the former white farmers and create national racial harmony.

NOTES

- 1 The Shona vernacular used can be translated as 'appeasing avenging spirits'; it is used almost exclusively after a family member commits a murder.
- 2 *Chimurenga* (Shona)/*Umvukela* (Ndebele) are dominant vernacular words that were used to describe the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe. The first of these struggles was waged in 1896/7, soon after the establishment of colonial dominance in Zimbabwe by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) on behalf of the British Monarch.
- 3 Anonymous former freedom fighter, Interview at Marondera, 15 April 2017
- 4 Anonymous former freedom fighter, Interview at Marondera, 15 April 2017
- 5 The EFF was founded in July 2013, the same year that Nelson Mandela died. The birth of EFF and the death of Mandela were separated by the only month given that Mandela passed on later in December.
- 6 According to the EFF's founding manifesto, the peoples of South Africa are still suffering from the colonial yoke that was introduced in 1652 at the arrival of colonialism. The ANC government has failed to meet its promises on land reform and social transformation. The EFF, therefore, envisage the expropriation and nationalization of land only to be given to those who can work it on a 25-year lease model. The manifesto also envisages the nationalization of strategic sectors, like mining, for the benefit of all citizens.
- 7 The ANC on its 53rd National Conference in Mangaung (16-20 December 2012) resolved to radicalize land reform process through, among other means, the dumping of the 'willing buyer – willing seller policy and enacting of land expropriation laws. On another note, in his address to parliament on 2 March 2017, South African President, Jacob Zuma, stated that there was need to amend the constitution through unity among all black legislators and allow for land expropriation without compensation and redistribute it to landless blacks.

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