

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises key arguments and conceptual threads advanced in this thesis regarding the adoption and implementation of non-violent resistance as a political strategy and normative ideology by the MDC in Buhera South Constituency.

It is clear from the findings of the study that the predicament of systematic violence Zimbabwe faces is partly as a result of the residual effects a long history of colonialism coupled with the unfinished problems of decolonization. The chapter also argues that the 1980 reconciliation programme advanced by Mugabe left a myriad of unresolved issues and was rushed without due regard to the problematic nature of state building. The independent government which came into being in 1980 failed to undo the legacy of colonialism through legal reforms and social reforms. This created a complex problem for opposition political parties. Finally, the chapter stresses the need for the adoption of nonviolent resistance to achieve lasting peace and development. In other words, nonviolent resistance is the panacea for human security and development.

The research has sought to advance new frontiers of knowledge in the field of nonviolent resistance and to interrogate its applicability in the present political system in Zimbabwe. The research has striven to understand the Zimbabwean problem of violence and how it could be solved without resorting to political violence which hinders development. The research demonstrates that the culture of violence and impunity can be overcome with nonviolent resistance. While there were flashes of violence in its own politics, the MDC approach to national politics reflects that nonviolence can advance goals without compromising human security. It takes a cue from African countries which have resorted to violence as a response to state-sponsored

violence and concludes that no matter how aggressive an incumbent government can be, using violence to solve political problems has far reaching effects in economic, political and social development.

This study has brought to the fore the fact that violence is a pervasive feature in Zimbabwean politics therefore the adoption of nonviolent resistance is a panacea to this predicament. To those in power, violence is used as a guarantor and systematic weapon aimed at sustaining and maintaining the grip on power. Since 1980, Mugabe has devised various orthodox and unorthodox means to maintain power. While preaching reconciliation, he somehow managed to harness each opportunity to centralise power. Nonviolent resistance is useful in providing conditions necessary for political transformation and ensuring that human security and development can be achieved. The theory of nonviolence shows a shift from this violent politics to politics of reason.

The analysis in this study concludes that violence in Zimbabwean politics was a result of the intensification of colonial practices, lack of political tolerance and the need for power retention at all costs. The study found that since 1980 violence has been a dominant feature of Zimbabwean politics. The victors in 1980 wanted to create a single party society. This partly explains the violence that has been witnessed such as the infamous Gukurahundi killings of 1983-1987 and the 1990 electoral violence. The thesis noted that Mugabe used a two-pronged approach to subdue enemies notably violence followed by unity agreements such as the Unity Accord 1987 and the GNU 2008. Thus, peace agreements which followed after the violence were on Mugabe's terms.

The study traced the origins of the MDC. The MDC was formed within the context of political violence and repression. The MDC was formed as a result of the failures of ZANU-PF to provide basic life necessities

and foster conditions necessary for human flourishing. The MDC presented itself as a peace-loving political party. It cites nonviolent resistance as one of its core values. However, within its ranks the MDC also exercised violence. Tsvangirai was intolerant of those opposed to him. This violence led to splits in 2005, 2014 and 2018 when Nelson Chamisa took over. Rather than solving their issues peacefully, the MDC degenerated into violent factional politics. The study critically looked at the MDC values since its formation and whether the values have been adhered to. To a greater extent, it adhered to its values but however failed in its internal democratic processes.

This thesis provides the empirical evidence of the attempts by the MDC in pursuing nonviolent struggle against dictatorship. The major findings are that since 2000, the MDC has been a victim of endemic and systematic violence orchestrated by ZANU-PF. This violence was perpetrated in different forms namely structural, direct-physical, and psychological. However, the MDC responded to the violence through gratuitous acts of peace. The MDC used various methods of nonviolent resistance such as songs, dance, strikes, mass mobilisation, rallies and radios to counter that. The MDC showed the supremacy of peace in confronting and dealing with those who relied on might rather than brains.

The study is central in explaining the concept of human security and development. This concept is the central aspect of development. It shows how peace is a prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable development. In the case of Buhera South Constituency, the failure to develop in the period under review can be attributed to recurrent violence. Violence led to displacements, death, forced migrations and the general decline in economic output. While violence disrupted life activities, thereby affecting development. In Buhera South Constituency, with less economic resources the disruption of the agriculture which is the backbone of their economy also affected fees payment and food security among the disparate and poor members of

the community. The chapter has shown the impact of the adoption of nonviolent resistance in Zimbabwe. This helped in gauging whether nonviolent resistance is an option in violent prone areas. It showed that violence is not an option as it leads to more violence. Nonviolent resistance in the end helps in maintaining human security.

This thesis has amply demonstrated that violence is a threat to human security and development. The thesis argued that while violence has been predominantly used to solve problems in Zimbabwe dating back to the advent of colonialism in 1890, the liberation war and the postcolonial state, it has affected human security and led to insecurity in affected communities. The research argued that this long history of political violence left a legacy of violence in Zimbabwe. It was shown that the violence during the liberation struggle and within the liberation movement was extended beyond independence. However, nonviolent resistance by the MDC sought to ensure the respect for human security through the advancement of rights based politics.

It has been noted that once liberation movements feel that their power is threatened, they resort to violence and create binary politics of allies and enemies. In the case of Buhera South, the MDC became the enemy that needed to be crushed. The MDC, except for isolated cases, has resorted to peaceful means to confront the dictatorship of ZANU-PF which saw the party undertake a series of nonviolent means to conflict transformation. What was also highlighted as problematic was the overlap of colonial patterns of power into the post-independence period through the inheritance of colonial legislations and norms and values. The research demonstrated that Zimbabwe has remained ensnared in colonial matrices of power. This has partly explained the ensnarement of Zimbabwe in political violence since 1980.

Violence threatens human security. Human security in this case is the freedom of choice and living a sustainable life free from life

deprivations. In Buhera South constituency, people were deprived of their basic livelihood amenities which created and worsened poverty conditions. Anyone seen as an 'enemy' by ZANU-PF was deprived of basic livelihood amenities. Discussions with MDC party members in Buhera South showed that their lives worsened due to deaths of breadwinners, deprivations of farming implements and forced migration of breadwinners. Those who migrated to South Africa for instance, did not return, leading to the breakdown of their families that remained behind.

This study has analysed the conditions that enable the development of the idea of nonviolent resistance as a means of resolving conflict and how this practice of conflict resolution manifests itself in practice. The research found out that nonviolent resistance was advanced as a practical realisation that the use of violence to advance political goals was not what the MDC stood for. The MDC advanced nonviolent resistance realising the futility of violence against ZANU-PF. To them the Gukurahundi disturbances of 1982-1987 were an episode in the history of Zimbabwe which could not be repeated. The study also found out that the MDC believed in nonviolent resistance as a shift from the pervasive politics of violence and antagonism. As a constitutional advocate, the MDC wanted to remove constitutional bottlenecks to political participation in Zimbabwe. The study concludes that constitutionalism was part of MDC politics though within the movement traits of violence against its members were apparent.

The research found out that the methods used by MDC in countering ZANU-PF violence and propaganda succeeded to a greater extent in solving the culture of violence and impunity in Zimbabwe. The internationalisation of the conflict through international lobbying at SADC, AU and UN summits by MDC members was a master stroke in exposing ZANU-PF violence to the entire world. Targeted sanctions

imposed against ZANU-PF officials and companies which supported them forced ZANU-PF to negotiate with the MDC.

This thesis has also brought to the fore the fact that the GPA lessened the level of violence in Zimbabwe's elections. Since 2013, ZANU-PF has come up with new methods of electoral malpractices to win elections. The study notes that while the GPA crafted an Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation, this organ failed to fulfil its mandate due to political interference and the lack of political will by the elites. The study noted that all the agreements were not people centric but elite agreements which cultivated a culture of impunity and violence. These agreements did not address the fundamentals of conflict but protected the perpetrators of violence. They were generally followed by general amnesty and presidential pardon for those who committed crimes.

The study established that the GPA created a platform for dialogue in Buhera South. After Mugabe and Tsvangirai began working together in the inclusive government, most people divided by binary politics did the same in the constituency. The GPA was a triumph of nonviolence over polarisation and violence in Zimbabwe.

The study contends that the adoption of nonviolent resistance saved the country from far worse situations as the examples of African countries which resorted to violence has shown. In the case of Buhera South, the resort to violence by both sides could have flared into a full blown civil war which could have engulfed the nation and probably the region. Drawing from examples such as Libya, Somalia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria where Boko Haram is wreaking havoc, the use of violence by both sides has destroyed years of attempts at peace. Post conflict reconstruction is a difficult process. In instances where violence was adopted as a resistance strategy, there was destruction of property, homes and livestock. The resort to

nonviolence led to SADC and AU putting pressure on political leaders to opt for a negotiated settlement. In fact, after 2013 the level of political violence subsided.

This study makes a strong case for the respect of human security to achieve peace and development. The approach adopted by the MDC to stick nonviolent means, as a political normative ideology, shows that there is need to pursue peace in the face of adversity. Nonviolent resistance is the panacea to achieve lasting peace and to enhance the human security of the individuals, communities and nation at large. The MDC through its adoption of nonviolent resistance sees peace as a prerequisite to development.

This study is in tandem with Abutudu's observations (2005:107) who claims that "there is a strong developmental component to the concept of human security... human security relies on enhancing people's capability to qualitatively improve their lives. It seeks to protect against the 'menaces' that may diminish living a fulfilling life." Human security gives essence to human life. It stresses the need for state and state actors to value peace to achieve wholesale development. Using the case of Buhera South constituency, human insecurity has had catastrophic effects such as death, injury, lost property, forced migrations and family disintegration. Political violence deprived people of their security, health, livelihood and education. Nonviolent approaches by the MDC, in a way, saved the constituency from descending into the abyss of violence. The research has shown that coercive force is not the answer to the challenges of electoral politics, but rather the power of the people.

While violence seemed to have worked in the past, the fear and aura of invincibility of ZANU-PF seems to have waned as people in the constituency are now openly discussing politics and showing where their political allegiance lie. The hallmark of nonviolent resistance is

persistence and not a resort to violence as pointed out by Tendai Biti during the Mothlante Commission:

and remained steadfast in the quest for peaceful democratic change in our country (Mothlante Commission, 2018: 1152).

The research concludes that nonviolent resistance must be seen as an imperative revolutionary exercise in the quest to achieve inclusive and substantive human security, peace and development. It is relevant for conflict transformation and management. Nonviolent resistance saved Buhera South constituency from further degenerating into destruction, despair and retarded development.

The research has contended that nonviolent resistance is the sole viable panacea in achieving sustainable peace and development. The practice of nonviolent resistance should form the basis for human security-centred democratic movement as war is destructive. However, nonviolent resistance should be properly propagated. Nonviolent resistance needs to be mainstreamed and incorporated into training manuals for practitioners to avoid ambiguities in its implementation. Considering the recurring violence in Zimbabwean politics, nonviolent resistance and the various methods which can be used should be the political philosophy of all movements across the political divide. In the case of Zimbabwe, nonviolent resistance has exposed the ruling party's propensity for violence. As argued by Sharp (2005: 12), "the extremely widespread practice of nonviolent struggle is possible because the operation of this technique is compatible with the nature of political power and the vulnerabilities of all hierarchical systems".

The research advocates for a human-centred approach to development. One notable finding from the research is that poverty and underdevelopment create a disempowered population which can easily be taken advantage of by power hungry politicians. In Buhera

South Constituency there is rampant poverty which exacerbates conflict as people fight for scarce resources. Generally, there are no meaningful economic activities other than subsistence farming which does not yield much since the area is in the drought prone ecological region five. Those from poor households are the most active in politics. They are most likely to be taken advantage of by politicians who can easily buy their loyalty and use them to advance their political interests. They forego family relations for the sake of a cup of rice. The best empowerment tool under the circumstances is education. However, without any vocational training centre in the Constituency it is increasingly difficult for Ordinary Level graduates to find meaningful employment and empowerment projects. Empowerment can be defined as “strategies that enable people to develop their resilience to difficult situations” (CHS, 2003: 10). These have also fallen prey to political vultures who have nothing to sell but violence. It is recommended that education and empowerment can be deployed as tools to help the youth to engage in developmental activities for sustainable livelihoods. This will enable people to find approaches within their context to enhance human security and development.

It is recommended that mapping and analysis of problems affecting poor communities be thoroughly carried out. Development agencies are recommended to establish participatory processes for the protection and promotion of sustainable and inclusive human security and values. Vulnerability assessments need to be conducted to find lasting solutions to poverty reduction in the area. There is need for a people centred approach to development which must take away people from violent and unproductive politics. The donor community needs to implement the bottom-up approach in Buhera to effectively deal with the crisis of poverty in the area. Those in the legal fraternity such as the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and the Legal Resources Foundation, need

to help victims of violence and forced displacements in suing for damages. This will mitigate the recurrence of violence and deprivation. The study recommends that a post conflict strategy be put in place to ensure reconciliation and rehabilitation. The Unity Accord of 1987 and the GNU of 2008 failed to provide a comprehensive, broad-based platform for national healing and reconciliation. Politicians need to devise effective strategies on reconciliation and rehabilitation so that people within communities can coexist. It is paramount to have transitional justice where there is reconciliation coupled with justice and compensation. Madenga (2016) observes that, “there is need to go beyond mere documentation and analysis of the forms and extent of political violence, and engage the alleged perpetrators and victims in the search for preventive mechanisms”. Without preventive measures and justice there is likelihood of human insecurity. Looking at Mugabe’s rule, it is important to note that the various Clemency Orders he granted on perpetrators of violence since 1980 have led to a culture of impunity which has been inherited by later generations. Data from the study showed that victims want revenge while perpetrators grudgingly apologised, this is a recipe for future conflict bearing in mind that 2023 elections are around the corner.

In the pursuit of change, nonviolent practitioners should have an ideological underpinning in which training of all should be a priority. Training helps in creating a universal system where the leadership and the supporters are on the same page. Massive training of supporters can also help influence the antagonistic parties in the communities to change tactic. In the case of Zimbabwe, the population is largely rural and tied together by history, ethnic and other relations which can be useful in recruiting enemies to the other side. What should be taken note of is that violence in Zimbabwe has been perpetrated by close relatives. Training members on nonviolence helps in recruiting opponents into the philosophy of nonviolence. This training is important in countering provocations by the other side. Findings from

this research show that ZANU-PF is the master of provocations and denialism. In other words, it does not own up to its transgressions. Munemo argues that training “decolonizes the mind, for it is in the mind that decolonial struggles are first won. Freeing the mind allows for the development of strategies of circumventing coloniality by creating a new political order uncontaminated by coloniality” (Munemo, 2016: 253). Coloniality in this case refers to the embedded colonial traits adopted by ZANU-PF after independence which have promoted violence and violent politics.

The study recommends that leaders should exercise strategic thinking. Clear strategy thinking sends clear signals in the struggle. The lack of clear signals led to violence within the struggle in 2005, 2009 and 2013 following the splits. The lack of strategy created a two-tier policy where violence was meted out on the opponents of the MDC leadership while nonviolence was the practice against ZANU-PF. Strategic errors made by MDC include the failure to create a well-crafted ideological message crosscutting the political divide; failing to provide a clearly defined land policy which resonated with all, and the failure in their ideological propaganda. The splits in the MDC also exposed the party to internal frictions. From 2005 when the party split the MDC was fighting on two fronts against ZANU-PF and its former members which rendered it structurally and ideologically weak. The 2008 election results proved that the party could have won the elections if it did not split. While they tried to unite towards the 2008 presidential run off, the playing field was no longer even. The MDC failed to mobilise on a large scale during its attempt for the 2003 mass action because of a lack of a clearly defined strategy.

The culture of violence in Zimbabwe needs to be looked at holistically. There is need for proper healing and reconciliation if Zimbabwe has to end violent politics. Lessons should be drawn from the Lancaster House Conference and Constitution of 1979, the reconciliation policy

of 1980, the Unity Accord of 1987, the GNU of 2008 and even the 2017 New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. There is also need for transitional justice mechanisms to attain lasting peace. As pointed out by Mashingaidze, 'Zimbabweans have failed to heal and reconcile after major crises, because their national leadership has accorded premium to the state-sanctioned ideal of forgiveness without truth, and reconciliation without justice' (Mashingaidze, 2010:21). Critiquing the GNU Mashingaidze contended:

For truth and justice to take place, there should be strong moral rejection of the former regime, and a clear consensus that its system was bad and its agents guilty of moral wrongs. There should also be a clear definition of what was wrong with the past. The Inclusive Government is in reality, however, a case of transition without transformation. ZANU (PF)-aligned functionaries still control the police and army, the Attorney General's office, the reserve Bank and provincial governance. There is also no clear definition or understanding of what went wrong in the past (Mashingaidze, 2010: 24).

There is need to reform government structures to reflect the desires, aspirations and demands of modern politics. As pointed out by Madenga (2017: 345) "the State has the sovereign mandate to ensure positive peace and security as preconditions for wholesale development". There is need to end various prerogatives for mercy issued by the presidency to perpetrators of violence. These clemency orders have been abused by repeat offenders who, upon their release, meet out violence against their former victims. This has created a culture of impunity in politics.

The research recommends inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive National Dialogue which is not only limited to political parties but to the generality of Zimbabweans through various interest groups. The previous dialogues have failed to proffer a lasting solution to the scourge of violence in Zimbabwean politics. For example, the Unity Accord of 1987 created 'false' peace in Zimbabwe. Mugabe used it to

further entrench his hold on power considering that soon after he created the executive presidency and vigorously campaigned for the one-party state. The Accord created politics of intolerance. As for Mugabe anyone who opposed him, as Tekere did in 1990, became an enemy of unity. All the mighty of the state descended upon him. On the other hand, Nkomo reflected signs of capitulation against the mighty of the state as he signed the Unity Accord to ward off violence against his supporters. This also applies to the 2008 dialogue between Tsvangirai and Mugabe. With these lessons, new frameworks for dialogue should be used. The post 2018 period has seen calls for dialogue in Zimbabwe grow louder. The Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD) instituted by Emmerson Mnangagwa is an attempt to initiate dialogue among the contesting presidential candidates in 2018. This platform has been looked down upon notably because those participating got miniscule votes in the plebiscite. Thus, they clearly did not have the mandate to represent anyone. It seems the whole ruse was a search for legitimacy by Mnangagwa. Future dialogue should first deal with the past before rushing to elite pacts. Elite pacts protect elite interests which leads to cover ups of past misdeeds or position led agreements.

There is however, need to guard against proxy interest groups which are politically aligned to major political parties. The year 2000 has witnessed binary NGO's representing either the MDC or ZANU-PF interests. This has created problems for civil society groups in Zimbabwe. The dialogue should also include the security sector in Zimbabwe mainly the army which has been deeply loyal to ZANU-PF. The dialogue should remove the stockholder syndrome of the army in politics; this will also remove the Mgagao culture of the military in ZANU-PF. The Mgagao culture stems from the ZANLA active involvement in the ZANU-PF coup which elevated Mugabe to the leadership of ZANU-PF in 1977. From 1977 the army has become the main component in ZANU-PF and mainstream national politics.

Dialogue leads to truth telling, reconciliation and justice and, ultimately, leads to sustainable and enduring peace. Issues to be looked at should include, but not limited to, the residual effects of colonialism and colonisation, liberation struggle, struggles and violence within the nationalist movement, the policy of reconciliation, Gukurahundi, violence against the MDC and the removal of Robert Mugabe in the 2017 military led uprising. These issues have not been properly canvassed and addressed and have become a source of discontent in the Zimbabwean political discourse such that the peace dream has become elusive. The envisaged inclusive dialogue should be presided over by eminent personalities in the world who are neutral to the Zimbabwean problem. This will be a departure from the Thabo Mbeki led initiative where he was accused of siding with ZANU-PF. This dialogue will be a panacea to the development challenges Zimbabwe face as peace is the key to the attainment of development.