

Influence of Reflection in Conflict: Analysis of Selected Ndebele Cases, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The research explored how reflection may serve to renew and drive emotions in a long aggrieved people. The qualitative study following a case centred approach employed two cases from Manicaland and Matebeleland provinces which involved participants expressing emotions. Verbal reports from the participants were transcribed using Conversation Analysis (CA) which helped assess interaction between the parties in the selected cases. The study established that reflection drives ethnic and political perceptions to an extent that there are hidden hostilities within some communities. It established that reflection driven by emotions and hostility is more dangerous than that influenced by the desire to nurture a cause and celebrate an event or activity. It is concluded that the inter-ethnic latent conflict needs formal acknowledgement in-order to heal the wounds and that reflection zooms the past incredibly and politically dangerous.

Keywords: Reflection, conflict, ethnicity, acknowledgement, remembrance, peace.

1. Introduction

Sometimes we wonder why people fail to forget their past for the good of their future. We then wonder why the same people also fail to forgive even after tens of years. At times there is also a wonder on why there are some traditional stories which are said to be a definition of a people; they transmit a community's past experiences, trials and tribulations and in some cases their enemies and grudges for future settlement. What we may not be seeing is a clear correspondence between what is stored in the people's minds with regards to their past experiences and their approaches to conflict resolution. What it simply means is that the mechanism that they adopt corresponds with the gravity of the hatred and animosity that they have for the other part. This study sought to explore how reflections in a person's life may serve to renew and drive emotions in a long aggrieved people. The study was anchored on the concept of traditional conflict reminders that operate in a subtle manner, which is difficult to push away as it is driven by serious past wrongs and hostilities.

2. Background

There are instances when a community or an individual keeps thinking about a painful past incident so much so that forgiveness becomes difficult. Such instances have been witnessed in a post-conflict situation. In Zimbabwe, the people of Matebeleland and the Midlands region are an example following the infamous 1982-87 *Gukurahundi* atrocities (CCJP, 1997). *Gukurahundi* is a Shona term for the first heavy rains that wash out all the dirt heralding bountiful harvest, food security and a healthy community. To put the situations into the rightful perspective, two emotional cases are used as given below.

It is important to understand the relationship that exists between the Shona and the Ndebele groups. The Shona groups inhabited in the then Zimbabwe earlier than the Ndebele who only joined in the 1830s fleeing from the *mfecane* war in the Zululand (Bhebe, 1979). On their arrival, they raided beautiful women, cattle and land from the Shona. For those actions, the Ndebele have never formally apologized. During the second liberation struggle, there were also divisions based on ethnicity but largely on salient vengeance for past wrongs (Mudenge, 1986). Therefore, the crises that were experienced in the independent Zimbabwe perpetrated by the Shona against the Ndebele are to some extent, related to the historical conflicts stretching to the 1830s (Dodo, 2014:97-114).

2.1 Case 1

"Between October 27 and November 16, 2008, the Zimbabwe security services launched an anti-panning operation in Y mining fields. This operation followed a massive flooding of people into the mining fields to look for the minerals illegally. On this date, a helicopter rounded up 21 panners who were subsequently arrested by the other security details on the ground. Upon arrival at the security camp, the commander-in-charge (CIC), after ordering them to kneel down, asked their names before he shot at close range 15 of the 21 on the forehead. He was immediately arrested and charged appropriately. In the military court, the accused indicated that all the deceased were of the same Shona ethnic group and had deliberately shot them because '*their relatives had killed his during the Gukurahundi*'. He was acquitted"

Some of the excerpts from the conversation;

Jury: Why did you kill?
Accused: Ahh, if you look at all the deceased.....
Jury: Is that.....?
Accused: Ummm.....
Jury: what were you feeling.....?
Accused: I killed them because their..... mine... [Characterised by outbursts]
Accused: (showing no remorse) No acknowledgement or compensation has so far.....

2.2 Case 2

“This follows my two hour lecture to a class of 158 students drawn from around the region at X school in 2011. The lecture was on conflict resolution and in particular the *Gukurahundi* crisis. Little had I realized that 24 years later, the memories of the period were still lingering in the minds of the affected. As the lecture progressed, students became gradually inactive and passive with some leaving the lecture hall. After nearly half the class had either left or become inactive, I then realized that something was wrong before I ended the lecture hoping to talk to individual students separately. After the lecture I briefed the head of programme who then narrated what the students had reported to him;

‘The lecturer was talking about the Gukurahundi, which rewound our horrific past, a past which robbed us of our parents, family members and education opportunities. Upon reflection, we failed to stomach the lecture and so decided to leave. It really hurts us’

Some of the excerpts from the discussions;

Lecturer: Innocent productive men were killed by.... The soldiers would patrol around the villages and.....

Lecturer: Can anyone tell us about.....?

Students: [silence]

Lecturer: What’s wrong in this hall.....?

Students: [Silence]

Lecturer: Nomaqhawe, come tell me why you all look miserable.

Nomaqhawe: Your topic today. Your topic is reminding of..... [All the students who spoke were characterised by intermittent outbursts]

Head: what really happened? [Head to the students]

Students: the lecturer was talking about the Gukurahundi, which rewound our horrific past, a past which robbed us of our parents, family members and education opportunities. Upon reflection, we failed to stomach the lecture and so decided to leave. It really hurts us.

Head: Ok, let me talk to.....

Head: Would you explain what transpired in the.....? [Head to the lecturer]

Lecturer: Yaa, as I was presenting a lecture on..... students began to.....

The reflections that are made by people in life sometimes take them back in time such that they feel or sort of go through the real experiences of the day when they were inflicted pain. The commander in charge who shot 15 arrested panners still had vivid memories about the 1982-87 crises and had for a long time waited for such an opportune time to retaliate the massacre of his people. Similarly, the students who expressed pain and dislike of the events leading to the demise of their relatives were all not yet born when the atrocities were committed. This means that they were reacting to the stories told by their elders. However, what is important is the fact that the atrocities had affected them in some way. There were elements of reflection in the two cases cited above.

3. Methodology

This paper is a case centred study inspired by an emotional response of the students in a conflict resolution class in Matebeleland province in 2011. It is qualitative in nature and employs data from the cases that were taken from Manicaland province and Matebeleland South province in 2008 and 2011 respectively. The cases have not been documented but are real. However, for the purpose of this study, the actual names of people, security organisations, the school and the concerned individuals have not been disclosed for ethical reasons. Two cases were used in the study to help situate the problem. The accused in Case one is of Ndebele ethnic group and aged over 40 years, the victims were Shona while the jury was mixed. In Case two, the lecturer was Shona, 140 of the 158 students were Ndebele while the head was coincidentally of mixed. Of the 140 students, 98 (70%) had Ndebele names which relate to war, suffering, death or oppression. All the students in their first year of studies were aged within the age range of 20 and 24 implying that they were born between 1987 and 1991; the period immediately after the end of the atrocities. Gender distribution was 86 (61.4%) female and 54 (38.5%) males.

A narration of the proceedings of the court session by one of the arresting details and verbal reports by 140 students and the head’s report were transcribed for further analysis. Conversation Analysis (CA) was employed to help assess interaction between the parties in the selected cases; the jury and the accused and the lecturer, head

and the students respectively. CA allowed the research to identify messages and actions that carried hate, vengeance and anger elements and participants' feelings towards violence perpetrators. This method is called case-centred research (Riessman, 2002:152–170). The use of case-centred research developed by Mishler (1986:233–255 & 1999), is ethnographical and anthropologically oriented. By recounting cases, it is possible to underscore the feelings and trauma experienced. In the study, two cases were used to elucidate the seriousness and gravity of hate and hostility buried in the minds of the parties. Case-centred research in the field of anthropological studies was introduced by Riessman (1993; 2002:152–170).

To analyse data, the following questions were created and answered progressively;

1. What happened to the participants?
2. When did that happen?
3. Why did it happen?
4. Who caused it?
5. What were the implications to the victims?
6. How has that past come to the fore again?

3.1 Conceptual Explanation

The study, coming from a background of long-held hostilities and lack of acknowledgement of past wrongs, sought to explore the use of feelings and how emotional reflections have impacted on the social and political relationships within the ethnic groups in Zimbabwe post-independence. To clearly achieve the objectives, basic concepts around conflict analysis, conflict resolution, acknowledgement and morality, outline the pace and direction of the arguments. These concepts however lean on a teleological theory, Ethical Utilitarianism, which argues that an action is right if it encourages a greater balance of good over wickedness for the majority (Wald *et al*, 2001:221-234).

4. Analysis

4.1 Conflict

The study of conflict came as a response to efforts by functionalists who argue that society is made up of parts which perform specific functions for the survival of the entire unit. Some of the early functionalist gurus; Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons argue that society is interdependent thus functional. Those who study and believe in conflict argue that society is defined by perpetual conflicts that emanate from competition and exploitation at various levels; the family, community, nation or the international system (Burton, 1990; Lederach, 1997). However, for as long as humanity believes in the perpetuity of conflicts in society, it never seeks to devise means of ending it.

The inevitability of conflicts in society is caused by the diversity of personalities and their interests and aspirations. Whenever people, animals or nature differ in their aspirations and goals, struggles for the control of the prevailing situations are experienced usually leading to either transformations or fatalities and destruction. It is the fatalities and destruction that the study refers to as conflict as conflict has naturally transformed situations either for the better or bad. Generally Burton (1990) views conflict as a struggle for gains. The idea of conflict contextually emerged after individuals who had long left behind some horrific incidences were then reminded of same by some almost similar events. These events might have been progressive but still reminded of a long forgotten and abandoned situation.

In the study of reflection as a conflict driver, conflict is seen from an intra-personal perspective whereby an individual gets into a conflict within him/herself over clashing interests. Different scholars have identified various forms of conflict as intra-personal, interpersonal, intergroup and international (Mitchell, 1981; Avruch & Black, 1987:87-96; Kriesberg, 1991:400-417). This is usually seen in a person who fails to make a decision from a variety of them. The other aspect of a conflict is when a person is reminded of some past nasty moments and begins to feel emotional. These emotions allow an individual to hate and get angry either at someone or over some other incident. This is a dangerous kind of conflict as it to some extent, borrows from the psychological instability platform in human beings. It often leads to mental lapses and fluctuations due to frustrations and anger (Goodman, 2004:1177–96, Boothby *et al*, 2006:87–107). This is the kind of conflict which lives in the memories of most people who would have gone through severe traumatic stressors such as seeing a loved one being killed or raped. This form of anger lives in an individual until such moment when he/she gets an opportunity to vent it out through some emotional and fatal means. The commander-in-charge who killed 15 illegal panners might have been affected by the same emotions considering that he harboured the hate feelings for 20 years. It is also evident that some of the jury members either shared the same emotions or that they appreciated the level of intra-personal conflict that was in his mind and memories. Similarly, the 140 students who expressed their discomfort at the lecture on *Gukurahundi*, had the same emotions such that had they been afforded an opportunity to retaliate, they might have done so happily. It was evident that while some might have forgiven the perpetrators, their memories still carried some elements of vengeance. Their forgiveness had some reservations, which made

the forgiveness very dangerous and explosive. It also made the people a time-bomb as they could engage in anything retaliatory given an opportunity. The case of the students explains what happened, the implications of the past to their lives and how the memories resurfaced but is silent on the perpetrators of the killings of their people.

4.2 Reflections

Reflections are the vivid memories that come into people's minds concerning some past activity or event. The activity might have been 'forgotten' but the reflections frequently bring them back thus refreshing the thoughts and feelings. In other circles, they are understood as schema, which is a past experience helping one to appreciate or understand the present situation (Rupesinghe, 1999:67-76). It works like a flash back where one fails to grasp a story till towards the end when he/she starts to recall having seen/heard/experienced a similar activity. Given a story that starts with a flashback, some people may experience some preliminary understanding of problems and during later recollection will then recall the flashback in its right setting towards the end of the story. A schema is usually defined as the anticipation people have about the parts which should come about in stories and passages and the connections which ought to ensue amongst the parts. These anticipations can be defined schematically as setting, beginning, development and ending (Mandler & Johnson, 1977:111-51).

When people reflect, they have basically two situations that they bring forward; good memories or bad thoughts about some past events (Mandler & Johnson, 1977:111-51 and Rupesinghe, 1999:67-76). Once they reflect, they also bring various individuals into the equation though for various roles; perpetrators, behind-the-scene influencers, sympathisers and co-victims. The various roles played by these stakeholders determine the amount of hate and anger that they also receive from the reflecting individual. The allotment of hate and anger is instantaneous; with the flash of an incident in one's mind, the allotment immediately takes place. Therefore, reflection, (Lindo-Fuentes, 1999:339-351) while it may be regulated externally, is involuntary and non-selective. In the two cases, both participants reflected producing bad memories and in the process vented their anger on completely unrelated individuals. In the case of the students, the lecture reminded them of some past events. After the lecture, of the students who walked out, 40 (29%) indicated that they were being reminded of a horrific past that had robbed them of important family members with 48 (34%) having directly lost their fathers. Their reports were all defined by an intermittent use of the words like '*thina* (we), *ngapha* (here), *okwethu* (our) and *thina* (us)' showing an element of great concern about their communities and existence as '*them*'. From the participants' use of such words; '*thina* (we), *okwethu* (our) and *thina* (us)', emotions and reflections bring an aggrieved community together against a common enemy.

Reflection (Lindo-Fuentes, 1999:339-351) is a practice that has defined people's lifestyles and has directed how people interrelate with each other. It is not only about bringing forward long forgotten incidents but also about recognition, noticing and description. The three aspects are about one's ability to pick and appropriately place memories about anything so that they may be used either progressively or for retaliatory purpose.

4.3 Morality as a Regulatory Mechanism

Morality is generally understood as a set of values intended to control human co-existence. It is a set of values with which society regulates the extremes of human beings in the community. Societies do not intentionally legislate morality; rather they only find themselves in it (Lakoff, 2002). However, this does not mean that individuals are not allowed to question the morality of the society. It has to be put clearly here that morality is social in purpose because it regulates human peaceful co-existence and that it cannot be applied by force or intimidation.

Morality as a social regulatory element has seen the application of such teleological theories like Ethical Utilitarianism, which argues that an action is right if it encourages a greater balance of good over wickedness for the majority. Wald *et al* (2001:221-234) argue that while morality has always encouraged people to be good and behave well, it has sometimes seen some conflicts as good and progressive for as long as they seek to build peace and order in society. The case of the CIC questions the actions of killing people in his region, begs to know who perpetrated the violence and to some extent presents the implications of keeping the past unaddressed. However, the case does not answer how the past comes to the fore. All the 140 students (100%) roundly condemned the atrocities in the region pointing out that the act was immoral. Over 50 (36%) of them showed signs of depression as their speeches were defined by such words and actions; '*Ahh* [low tone], *well* [pulled pronunciation], *I wish*, and drowsy face, lethargic eyes, dejected facial appearance, squelchy eyes and absent mindedness' The moral lesson in both cases is that killing, falsehoods and oppressive tendencies are bad and that if you kill or lie, your past may catch up with you later in life. This is when John Burton (1990) says conflicts are necessary and people need them as much as they need sex. It is the 'Y mining fields' conflict that exposes the suppressed feelings of the CIC and probably representing several others.

4.4 Remembrance

Remembrance and memory are critical elements in forging peace and harmony especially in post-conflict situations. These are broad processes that keep the memories of the affected calm and contained in the interest of peace. The process of remembrance includes a significant constructive element: people use what has been recalled together with their pre-existing schemata to try to reconstruct the original. The pre-existing schema defines meanings to anything and everything (Lindo-Fuentes, 1999:339-351).

Meanings are fundamental to human relations because human behaviour is a consequence of a response to certain meanings attached to particular circumstances, objects or events. Therefore, Rupesinghe (1999:67-76), Fordred (1999:11-15) and Honwana (1999:4-13) argue that what people make of a past event is shaped and defined by what the generality of the society decipher from their leader's pronouncements. There are instances when people are pushed to remember incidences that are nasty and conflict-provoking instead of those that foster peace and unity. Events and incidences that are remembered have attachments that are defined and explained variedly and the memories that they carry impact differently on various societal groups. 58 students (41%) revealed that they used names to remember their soiled past as they revered indigenous names. Others are names that evoke different memories though there are various means through which remembrance may be effected; story-telling, songs, writings and education amongst others (Fordred, 1999:11-15). Such Ndebele evoking names that were selected from some of the students include the following: *Mpiyakhe* (war), *Soneni* (What wrong did we do?), *Sifelani* (why kill us?), *Sifo* (death), *Sekwanele* (It is enough!), *Mhlupheki* (suffering), *Hluphekile* (suffering), *Nkululeko* (freedom) *Mehluli*, *Sibangani*, *Sibangilizwe*, and *Qalani*, *Nomaqhawe* (heroes), *Qhawe* (hero), *Sihlengisizwe*, *Sonqobile*, and *Mlindeli*, *Sidanisiwe*, *Sindisiwe*, *Vusa*, *Velemipini* (war), *Mhlawempi*, *Mpiyabo*, *Felekudeni*, *Phindamshaye*, *Mafavuke*, *Nokhuthula* (peace) *Nothando* (love) and *Sidanisile* amongst others. Some of the names remind of suffering, war and death, others actually encourage endurance and determination while others talk about peace and love. Therefore, it is evident that the Ndebele communities do not only remember but live with the past. From the analysis, it is observed that the use of such terms as; '*us, we, here, our land, our tribe and leave us*' was common. This to some extent shows how isolative and ethnic the students had become and that most of the students' speeches were characterised by spasmodic flare-ups expressed in Ndebele.

What might have evoked the past memories in CIC is not clearly shown from his statements except probably just seeing how people are being treated by the authorities on the ground with regards to economic, political and social services. With the students, it is clear that besides the literature, the mere presence and the administration of the education programme by largely Shona people and the presentation of the lecture on the atrocities by a Shona lecturer were the main reminders of a bad past on the part of the students. While the lecture was presented sincerely, it was so deeply researched that the memories that were evoked took the students way back in time reminding them of their lost, missing and tortured relatives and their disturbed lives: educationally, socially, politically and culturally.

4.5 Misrepresentation

The way information is passed on to lower generations plays an important role in shaping the way people see others and how they think about others' belief systems. Denis McQuail a media expert posits that the media has an obligation to report impartial and balanced stories (McQuail, 1979:70-93). However, the media sometimes fails to play its objective reportage role and end up misrepresenting what would have really transpired on the ground. Other scholars (Lerner, 1958; Said, 1997) call it distortion. An important observation in misrepresentation is that imprecisions are systematic: sometimes people distort stories to suit their own cultural stereotypes. Misrepresentation could present something like '*some nasty fluids dripped from the mouth*' whereas in the original story or event it was '*he vomited*' or a boat in the original story is described as a canoe in a latter version.

Actually, it is not only about the transmission of information which matters, the form of education also influences the type of information to be transmitted, the parties involved in communication and to some extent, the ultimate intention of the messages. According to one scholar called Pierre Bourdieu, knowledge is at all times inclined in favour of a particular class culture (Said, 1997). Therefore, whatever information is passed down to other people and generations, it is intended to deliver a particular objective; to bridge hostilities or the fuel hatred amongst communities. It is also meant in the majority of cases to satisfy the desires of a particular group of people in society.

Other scholars have argued that misrepresentations are a result of various factors which include; stereotypes, ignorance, profit-seeking and mistakes. Whatever the motive for peddling falsehoods, the long term implications are devastating; they may cost lives or rob others of their beloved ones (Lerner, 1958, Said, 1997). The CIC and 124 students (86%) covertly challenged the manner in which the *Gukurahundi* crisis has been either handled or documented raising serious issues to do with mistrust and dishonest. CIC felt that the affected parties in the crisis had not been adequately talked to concerning acknowledgement of the existence of the crisis, compensation,

apology and reconciliation amongst others. With 102 students (73%), the analysis established that the way the crisis has been incorporated into the syllabus, to some extent seeks to distort the truth about what transpired on the ground thereby raising the same mistrust charges. The analysis also deduced that the participants were feeling alienated and discriminated so much so that they had prepared themselves for a clear ethnic divide. The subject comes as part of government efforts to produce a loyal and patriotic graduate who knows how 1980's political independence was attained and not an acknowledgement that there has been a political mishap in the history of independent Zimbabwe. The statements by the students also point to non-existence of formal documentation and lack of any form of memorial artefacts for the dead people.

4.6 Acknowledgement of the Wrongs

Acknowledgement is an approach which is supposed to be the first step towards conflict settlement. Indeed it is, provided it is taken as a building block in the establishment of effective alternative conflict resolution processes like negotiation, mediation, and adjudication. Borisoff & David (1989:201) note that before parties sit to talk, there has to be an element of acknowledgment and recognition of their issues with each other.

Whenever a conflict manifests, the parties involved should accept the existence of the differences in the way they see things at hand. Both parties must also appreciate their weaknesses and be ready to be guided and corrected by the other parties. The jury in the CIC case acted in a manner that showed their acceptance of the existence of a conflict during the *Gukurahundi* crisis. The fact that they tolerated CIC's emotions is a sign of acknowledgement. Similarly, CIC's killing of innocent non-Ndebele panners was also an acknowledgement gesture on the existence of an ethnic conflict caused by a long committed atrocity. On the part of the students, 62 (44%) pointed out that very little had been done on the ground to show acceptance of the wrong by the parties while four (3%) expressed satisfaction on the efforts so far made by the parties. It was also noted that silence (Dodo et al, 2012:iv) on the part of the government with regards to the existence of the crisis had strengthened the participants' resolve to unite as an alienated group that continually referred to itself as '*we, us, here and our*'.

4.7 Resolution of Conflicts

Referring to the study's definition of conflict cited above, there is need to end any identified conflict otherwise people live in fear of retaliation and attacks by their rivals and former victims. The study therefore takes conflict resolution as the address of circumstances that create a hostile operational environment so that psychologically, people's concerns are resolved sustainably and permanently. What therefore matters in this regard is how conflict resolution is appreciated and its methods are comprehended by the parties concerned. Depending on the nature of the conflict, various methods of conflict resolution may be used. Burton (1990) describes conflict resolution as an initiative that changes people's relationships by availing solutions to the problems which led to the conflictual conduct in the first place. This means that the anger in the commander-in-charge and the students has to be addressed appropriately to allow the transformation alluded to by Burton. With regards to the students' grievances about an emotional lecture, it was imperative that the lecturer empathise with the students so that they could feel to be part and parcel of the lecture. The lecture could and should not be avoided. Rather, it is the approach which needs to be revisited so that the learners appreciate the essence of the discussion.

From conflict analysis, these excerpts from the commander-in-charge and the students; *Accused: Ummm....., Students: [silence]* show that the commander-in-charge was not expecting any sympathy as he showed no remorse. His responses clearly showed that he was satisfied with his actions '*representing all the affected families*' when he shot the non-Ndebele panners. Similarly, the silence by the students is an indication of deep anger and emotions. Further to the above, Laue (1990:257) posits that conflict resolution is expected to address a minimum of three fundamentals: 'the causal issues and not just external indicators or signs, collective resolve, and attainment of some amount of contentment for the involved parties'. Laue realizes that in the absence of a sustainable attendance to the conditions around parties in a conflict or a conflictual situation as indicated by the students, there may not be an effective resolution to conflicts.

5. Discussion

Some of the early functionalist gurus like Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons argue that society is interdependent thus functional. Indeed, the actions by CIC and the students helped to bring to the fore the long suppressed feelings in some group of people. They helped to identify a latent conflict which awaits resolution. It is the study's observation that some reflections though conflictual, actually help expose societal challenges that might have existed for years without detection.

It was established that the parties' reflection on the past clearly reflects lack of acknowledgement of the existence of the *Gukurahundi* crisis which did cost thousands of lives. This lack of acknowledgement naturally points to the depth of reflection by the people which is heavily influenced by how the authorities represent what might have transpired on the ground. The fact that first heavy rains intentionally wash out all the dirt heralding bountiful harvest, food security and a healthy community suggests that the Matabeleland massacres that are so

difficult to forget and forgive were intentioned. Therefore, the path to healing demands intentioned actions of building inclusive communities. Any lack of acknowledgement or misrepresentation of the facts fuels hate, anger and emotions in the people.

The study established that reflection on the past naturally produces two contrasting situations; the bad or the good. However, in the case of a conflict that has been suppressed and never formally acknowledged for over 24 years, the resultant situation is animosity and vengeance as witnessed in the students and CIC cases respectively. In the case of the CIC, 15 innocent lives were lost. Reflection also ignores the general belief that with time emotions simmer. Sometimes, depending on how either a conflict or feeling is being suppressed, concerned parties may derive anger from its non-acknowledgement. Sometimes, as argued by Rupesinghe (1999:67-76), it is how the information is passed down to next generations that define the nature of receipt and acceptance. It is therefore the study's finding that reflection, manifesting as either bad or good needs to be handled well and morally, in a manner that sustainably keeps away possible recurrence of conflict. It is important to point out that reflection driven by emotions and hostility as evident in the study participants is more dangerous than that influenced by the desire to nurture a cause and celebrate an event or activity.

The study also established that there is need for formal memorial artifacts as a way of addressing bad past. In the absence of a formalised system of remembrance, concerned parties may resort to the use of other means like names, events and activities that continually remind them of some bad past and whose resolution probably requires some retaliatory approach. In the case of the *Gukurahundi*, the study shows that there are serious hostilities in the people of the affected region so much so that given an opportunity, they will retaliate. As previously noted by Lindo-Fuentes (1999:339-351), the affected people feel that they lost their relatives, lost bread-winners, lost parents, missed educational opportunities, lost homes and lost identities. The use of such words and actions: *Ummm* [low tone with doubt], *Ahh* [low tone], *well* [pulled pronunciation], *I wish, we, us, here, ours* and drowsy face, lethargic eyes, dejected facial appearance, squelchy eyes and absent mindedness' were observed in over 100 students (71%). The study acknowledges that most of the students were depressed, with their speeches and interaction characterised by sporadic outbursts and signs of antagonism and suspicion. It is the study's conclusion that the continued use of '*I wish, we, us, here, ours*' promotes *ethnicism*, nepotism, *totemism* and serious divisions that are a threat to social and political security in the long run.

The study also observed that whenever a conflict manifests, the parties involved should accept the existence of the differences in their perceptions so that they find a common position. This will then allow all the parties to open up on their inner feelings and avoid bottling hate, anger and emotions. It is also noted that the actions by the students and CIC were an acknowledgement gesture on the existence of a deep ethnic conflict caused by a long committed atrocity. This therefore requires attention if the noted latent deep conflict is to be permanently and sustainably resolved. As a concluding remark, students from the affected region should understand that if the *Gukurahundi* crisis is not discussed, its history will not be transmitted further to next generations and that emotions will be continually bottled. Similarly, it is either the absence or limited talk around the crisis which has kept psychological and emotional wounds within the affected parties fresh. The killing of panners by CIC was a result of suppressed emotions and feelings owing to lack of acknowledgement.

It is acknowledged that some initiatives were made at various levels towards healing and seeking forgiveness. The first effort was the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU and PF ZAPU that led to a "new" ZANU PF. This initiative deescalated direct killings of the Ndebele though structural violence has endured to date. President Mugabe has on various public platforms expressed apology to the affected people describing the crisis as 'a moment of madness'. Some individuals who perpetrated the violence serving in the *Gukurahundi* brigade and other state security organs have gone back to some of the victims' families seeking forgiveness as they are tormented by the spirits of the dead that they killed. Such spiritual appeasements have been experienced in such areas as Bhalagwe, Zamanyoni, and Minda in Kezi and Mawabeni and Nkankezi in Mzingwane and Filabusi respectively. At government level, there have been various institutions like the Organ of national healing and reconciliation and the National Peace and Reconciliation whose results are still at infancy stages. All these efforts have been supported by the numerous church, civil society and non-governmental organisations' initiatives.

6. Summary

The research which sought to explore how reflection in a person's life may serve to renew and drive emotions in a long aggrieved people did focus on various aspects like remembrance, reflection, misrepresentation, acknowledgement, conflict resolution and morality. All these aspects helped in responding to each of the issues raised in the study. After presenting the selected cases for analysis, the research questions were progressively answered. The study established that remembrance of past events is effected through a variety of means; names, songs, artifacts and activities. It was also noted that distortion of facts has been a major contributing factor to most conflicts as it defies morality. The study raised the aspect of acknowledgement as the first step towards the creation of peace and harmony.

However, it was noted that with regards to the *Gukurahundi* crisis, there has not been appropriately formal and noticeable acceptance by the responsible parties. It is the study's finding that in the absence of morality, acknowledgement, and factual reportage, victims are bound to remember and reflect through other potentially dangerous and explosive means like vengeance, uprisings and disloyalty amongst others.

7. References

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