



Towards peacebuilding? Mapping Efforts of the Government of National Unity to prevent electoral violence in Zimbabwe

A Research Paper presented by:

Knowledge Mwonzora

(Zimbabwe)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Human Rights, Gender, Conflict: Social Justice Perspectives

(SJP)

Specialization: **Peace and Conflict Studies**

Members of the Examining Committee:

Freek Schiphorst

Helen Hintjens

The Hague, The Netherlands
December 2014

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address:

Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my late dad and all the respondents who agreed to take part and share their views.

Acknowledgements

First of all I give praise to the Almighty God for granting me the gift of life. My profound gratitude also goes to my academic supervisor Dr Freek Schiphorst, I salute you!. I am deeply indebted for the academic guidance you offered since the initial stages of this research paper up to its completion .To my second reader Dr Helen Hintjens you have done a wonderful job. It is all because of your academic criticism and guidance that made this research see the light of day. To my parents Mrs. E. Mwonzora and my late dad thank you so much for raising us and for the support rendered through thick and thin. A special thanks also goes to the following, my twin brother Gift, (family friend and brother- Maxwell Sakutukwa and wife), Mr. Nyemba and wife, Henry Kutombo, Muswere, T.Joni, Tapuwanashe and my cousin brother Mr. D Mwonzora you were indeed my pillars of strength during my entire academic journey.

To my discussants Grace Nassaka and Yonas Bayru thanks so much for reading my paper and for the insightful criticism which helped in shaping the paper. To NUFFIC and the Netherlands Government at large, awarding me a scholarship was like a dream come true. Thank you for the great job of imparting knowledge that transforms the world. Fellow SJP students we had great times together. To my fellow Zimbabwean students Rotina, Samuel, Roy and Siya hats off to you guys, for your brotherly and sisterly love throughout our entire study period at ISS.

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List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-led by Tsvangirai
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
COPAC	Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community.
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace in Zimbabwe
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
AIPPA	Access to Information and Privacy Act
SSR	Security Sector Reform
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
GAPWUZ	General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

Politically motivated violence in pre and post-elections became a challenge in Zimbabwe after the founding elections in 1980. The period leading to the June 2008 run-off elections saw massive human rights abuses and state orchestrated political violence in the country. It is against such a contextual backdrop that the main opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the elections in which President Mugabe ran uncontested. Consequently, the run - off elections were condemned by the international community as 'null and void' and as to having failed the litmus test of (free and fair) criterion. From this background, the study seek to analyse how the Government of National Unity, created in 2008, managed to curb the cycle of electoral violence of June 2008 and to facilitate a transition towards elections considered to be relatively peaceful and also 'free' (in the eyes of regional and continental election monitoring bodies). Notwithstanding the fact that the concept of 'fairness' has remained deeply contested. The paper further argues that various institutions played a critical, yet significant role in peacebuilding and reconciliation during the entire period of Government of National Unity. The paper rounds of by mapping and analyzing how institutions such as ONHRI, JOMIC and COPAC helped in peacebuilding and in the holding of peaceful elections. Using Lijphart's model of consociational democracy, the study submits that the praxis of peacebuilding, reconciliation has remained a subject of controversy in the Zimbabwean polity. Largely, this is as a result of a rich history of recurrent state sanctioned violence which has remained a menace to the Zimbabwean citizenry especially during election periods. The paper concludes that, peaceful elections and peacebuilding was achieved due to a combination of factors.

Relevance to Development Studies

The contemporary world is plagued by a plethora of insecurity issues, chief among them is electoral violence which is gradually becoming a norm in most African countries. Democratic elections remains the lifeblood of peace and security that ultimately shape political and policy developments in any polity. Flawed elections have proved to be detrimental to democracy and development. This is so since 'flawed elections' normally engender a culture of violence, civic apathy, conflict, loss of life and human insecurity. In order for economic development to take place, there are certain pre -requisites which include peace, tranquility, stability that should exist. This study therefore locates the role of elections in engendering a culture of peace using the case study of the GNU in Zimbabwe. The paper also argues that peace building and reconciliation remain critical areas which facilitates both economic, social and political development. The issue of elections, peace building and reconciliation are very critical in development since development policy interventions are also dependent on the level of stability in the country.

Keywords

Coalition government, Government of National Unity, Powersharing, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation, Electoral Violence, Zimbabwe.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. The Importance of this Study

‘The GNU was meant to be an antidote to violence. It was meant to be a coalition for a limited time’ (Ibbo Mandaza, 2014)¹

Highly contested elections and political violence seem to be gaining momentum in recent years as exemplified by the cases of Zimbabwe and Kenya, among others. Appearing to go against this general trend for rising electoral violence, this research paper seeks to analyse the role that was played by Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe, in reducing electoral violence through peacebuilding and reconciliation processes between the elections of 2008 and 2013. The study aims to assess how transitional arrangement negotiated between the three main political adversaries, and with the aid of facilitation and mediation of former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, managed to restore some kind of peace in the country.

This achievement seems more remarkable since Zimbabwe until 2012, had been on ‘genocide alert’, with very high levels of political polarization and intolerance (Genocide Watch 2012: 66). Given this, the study will analyse whether the fairly peaceful elections of July 2013 were the result of various peace building initiatives rolled out during the years 2008-2013 by the GNU. The role played by the GNU in curbing electoral violence through peacebuilding processes in a once politically polarized country, is assessed in part by gathering people’s perception through field research. The study considers how the GNU, within an overall framework of peacebuilding and reconciliation, found ways to end electoral violence, and reports on the views of researchers, politicians and party activists. This study thus digs deeper into the strategies and roles of the GNU that may be hidden to outsiders, in order to understand how it was possible to end extreme political polarization, reduce electoral conflicts and start to engage in peace and reconciliation processes in the country.

The research is very relevant as power sharing governments are emerging in the contemporary world, yet little attention is devoted in trying to unpack the relevance of such to peacebuilding initiatives in curbing future electoral conflicts. This study therefore seeks to fill in such a lacuna by offering alternative and well-grounded theoretical and methodological approaches. One of the theories adapted for this purpose is the ‘consociational democratic’ approach associated with Lijphart and others, in seeking to investigate the anatomy of the GNU vis-à-vis its nexus to electoral conflict management, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe as from 2008 - 2013.

I myself have a passionate interest in human rights, peace and conflict issues in Africa. The exposure acquired from my previous studies and work experience gives me the impetus to research on peace and conflict domain. I participated in the Constitution making process as a Team Rapporteur and this experience has widened my understanding of human rights, peace, conflict and constitutionalism. On the academic side, I hold a diploma in International Communication,

¹ Extracted from interview carried out with Dr Ibbo Mandaza on 30th of July 2014.

Diplomacy and NGO studies which introduced me to international peace and security issues. The Advocacy and Human Security Boot camp, which I attended at the Institute of Security Studies in Ethiopia, also added value in my quest to pursue human rights and peace issues. Given such background, I developed keen interest in the proposed research area. This research is very relevant because it elucidates how the coalition government reacted in trying to end the aftermath of violent political conflicts in Zimbabwe.

Most existing studies have paid scant attention to the issue of reconciliation in Zimbabwe apart from the popularization of the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's famous speech on the eve of Independence in 1980, quoted also by Morgan Tsvangirai on the signing of the GPA, "Let us turn our swords into ploughshares..." (LivingZimbabwe.com 18 September 2008). This study therefore seeks to fill a gap in the scholarly and empirical literature, by placing the decline of electoral violence in its full contextual setting, and analyzing precisely how national reconciliation and peacebuilding processes were managed by the GNU, in order to end direct electoral violence in Zimbabwe. A second question, not fully explored, is whether GNU measures to end electoral violence have been properly institutionalized so as to prevent possible future electoral conflicts.

This study emerges against a backdrop of the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, which preceded the creation of a unity government. Undoubtedly, the issue of the GNU has courted global interest amongst different actors and scholars alike. This has stimulated the emergence of varied scholarly perspectives from local Zimbabwean and foreign academics – most of which has been favourable either to the ZANU PF regime or to the MDC-T political party. As such, there has been a lot of debate and academic polarization, reflecting the mixed feelings and distortions that arise over the extent of the contribution of GNU to the peace building processes, to reconciliation, to national economic development and especially – for this study – to the holding of relatively peaceful and democratic elections in Zimbabwe (for detailed analysis on GNU; see for example Raftopoulos, 2013).

1.2 Understanding Electoral Violence in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe had experience of politically motivated conflicts since at least 2000, when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) emerged into the Zimbabwean polity. The emergence of the opposition political party triggered contestation for power with the revolutionary party- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). In light of these developments, Zimbabwe has witnessed recurring political violence in all its elections which according to many studies, sparked political polarization, displacements fear and hatred across the country during the run up to 2008 disputed elections (Bratton and Masunungure 2008; Kebonang 2012; Dodo, Nyoni and Makwerere 2012).

Nhede (2012: 180) rightly argues that Tsvangirai pulled out of the June 2008 elections because of widespread violence, especially in the countryside. This left President Mugabe uncontested in the Presidential election. Given the political turmoil that had characterized Zimbabwe's June 2008 elections South Africa's regional intervention was the best possible option to mitigate the contested elections by bringing political rivals to the negotiating table.

Peacebuilding and reconciliation processes remain very pertinent in any post conflict situation, and this paper intends to illuminate some of the key strategies used in Zimbabwe to ease the political tensions in a ‘transition period’ (Eppel and Raftopoulos 2008). Peacebuilding generally involves a myriad of strategies that seeks to reconstruct the economy, building institutions that recognize and respect human rights issues (McCarthy 2011). On the other hand reconciliation dovetails and reinforces peacebuilding by bringing people with different linguistic, ethnic and political affiliations together. The unity of political parties in Zimbabwe during the coalition government will be discussed and analyzed in this paper, more importantly whether it was authentic or just ‘paper unity’; and indeed whether this unity managed to curb electoral conflicts.

The formation of government of national unity was triggered by the climaxing of social injustices that range from human rights abuses, outbreak of cholera emanating from socio, political and economic meltdown. The first attempts and declaration of the coalition government was to create an authentic unity that would work towards ending political conflicts, reconcile societies and start to curb the widespread socio-economic distress. To break the political impasse and restoration of human rights, the political leaders saw the importance of burying their past and engage in a serious state building process that included constitutional reforms to pave way for a free and fair election.

1.3 Understanding how GNU Managed the Transition

The background to this study are the power sharing deals that have been seen in recent years in several countries affected by electoral violence. In a very similar situation to Zimbabwe, Kenya also had a power sharing deal in 2008 after post-election violence. In Zimbabwe the opposition (MDC) and (ZANU-PF) had been contesting for power since 2000. People were murdered, raped and displaced during this period of struggle for power. As an interim project a deal was negotiated and sealed to ease the political tensions. Power sharing became very contentious as political parties subsequently debated on the allocation of ministerial positions and ministries.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) that was signed on 15 September 2008 saw the birth of the coalition government. The unity government was comprised of the main opposition political party Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai, alongside the former ruling party Zanu PF led by Robert Mugabe and the smaller faction of MDC led by Professor Mutambara.

It is against this background that the paper seeks to analyse how the coalition government managed to curb violence and intolerance, and thus to overcome mutual mistrust and the perceived lack of legitimacy of electoral institutions. The study further seeks to analyse how reconciliation of political parties in Zimbabwe became possible because of a more level playing field that ushered in the relatively peaceful 2013 elections. The study will also trace whether the “marriage of convenience” represented by Global Political Agreement (GPA) that established the Government of National Unity (GNU) can be given the credit for implementing the elections roadmap, managing constitutional reforms and opening up possibilities for other peacebuilding initiatives.

Reconciliation and peacebuilding is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. What were widely viewed as ‘rhetorical’ efforts towards reconciliation were first

initiated after the Gukurahundi massacre of 1983-1987 (See CCJP Report 1997) that left thousands of Ndebele people dead. This violent episode was formally ended by the Unity Accord in 1987. The Unity Accord that was signed by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) managed to bring together the two ethnic groups that had been in civil conflicts since independence. The unity agreement was signed by President Robert Mugabe and the late Joshua Nkomo in 1987.

In the same vein, Chigora and Guzura observe that the idea of a coalition government is not new – it has been proposed in the past in Zimbabwe as part of a vision of attaining unity of the nation. These include the coalitions of Smith and Muzorewa (Rhodesia-Zimbabwe) in 1978 and also the coalition government of ZANU-PF and ZAPU of 1987 (Chigora and Guzura 2011: 22). It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to make an analysis of how power-sharing deals may be viewed as a means to confront political conflicts and bring peace in post electoral conflicts situations as in the case of Zimbabwe and Kenya. However, such political deals cannot be a panacea, this study also suggests. At best, such power-sharing is a political tool, which may or may not enhance reconciliation.

Experiences of electoral violence are not unique to Zimbabwe. They have been witnessed also in Kenya in 2007, which there too led to the formation of coalition government between Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki. Zimbabwe and Kenya shares the same experiences of disputed electoral outcome that consequently led to post-election violence. Mapuva contends that, while election outcomes in Zimbabwe in 2008 and in Kenya in 2007 showed that main rival parties may be denied the opportunity to take over power through the use of force or violence. However the Zimbabwean regime in 2008 condemned the western countries agenda and based its claim to legitimate authority on having fought for liberation against white colonial rule. Resultantly, what brought violent conflict into these two countries was that the incumbents refused to surrender power to an opposition party that was widely believed to have won the vote. In both cases, the result was post-electoral violence, which soon led to external intervention and a solution in the form of coalition government (Mapuva 2010: 248). “In both countries, the aim of these arrangements have been to ensure sound constitutional reforms that will provide for institutional mechanisms aimed at avoiding the repeat of electoral violence ” (ibid: 256).

The thrust of this research in light of these developments is to add on to the literature of how coalition's governments can bring conflicting parties together and ensure the entrenchment of peace, reconciliation and democracy. I have the fervent hope that this research will add on to the corpus and inform how coalition governments can be an alternative way of ensuring durable peace in the event that elections fail to produce an outright winner. The proposed study is therefore in sync with emerging yet crucial political developments on the Zimbabwean political structure and dynamics. Overall, the existence of violence in Zimbabwe has had a long history both prior to settler colonialism, during war of independence and in the post-colonial Zimbabwe (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni; 2003, Raftopoulos; 2013, Phimister and Raftopoulos; 2007, Addison and Laakso; 2003). However, there has been no recent sustained scholarly analysis on the nexus between in Zimbabwe electoral violence, peacebuilding and reconciliation especially in the wake of new political arrangements such as the GNU.

1.4 The Research Problem: How to End Electoral Violence *or* How to Build ‘Peace’?

Machakanja (2010: 2) highlights the problems that the coalition government faced by pointing out that, with the political settlement, Zimbabwe faced new obstacles of coming up with democracy and good leaders supported by peace-building processes as requirements for a peaceful nation. When then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and his facilitation team mediated in the Zimbabwean political crisis among the opposition and the former ruling party, the power-sharing arrangement that resulted was meant to end antagonism and bring greater cooperation between the political rivals and help rebuild the state both politically and economically. The focus was on peacebuilding and reconciliation to reduce the relapsing of electoral violence, and this is the main problem the study is interested in. The power sharing deal came as a result of sharp political contestations and the escalation of politically motivated violence prior to rerun election, the so called “run off”, which was held in June 2008. The (GPA) was eventually signed by the three main political rivals namely MDC-T, MDC-N and ZANU-PF) that had contested and won seats in the parliamentary, senatorial, local government and presidential elections of 2008.

In Zimbabwe antagonism has become prevalent during campaigning periods - thus producing violent and ruthless activities such as murder, rape, burning of houses and displacements throughout the country. In this line Dodo et al. (2012: 4) pointed out that,

following the 2008 conflict that, according to government left over 200 innocent civilians brutally murdered and 16000 other human rights related cases recorded, the new government established a Ministry called National Healing and Reconciliation.

Zamchiya (2013: 3) concurs with Dodo et al. when he argues that, “about 200 opposition supporters were killed in the run-up to the election, 200,000 were displaced and many went missing”. In view of this trend of escalation of political conflicts, negotiations were inevitable so as to end such unnecessary loss of life. Peace in the Zimbabwean context remains a pie in the sky towards elections. In the same vein, it is important to note that, despite the existence of the GNU and in the subsequent post GNU era – violence has continued to rear its ugly head in the Zimbabwean political landscape (though on a micro level). Electoral violence, undeniably remains the major threat to Zimbabwe’s peace and security as evidenced by political violence fuelled by illegitimate elections and struggle for power over the past decade. It has then become a conundrum on whether the GNU has managed to reconcile, end political violence and build sustainable peace in the Zimbabwean polity or not.

Cheeseman and Tendi (2010: 210) chronicling the preceding events that led to the formation of the GNU succinctly posits that, Tsvangirai won the elections but instead the security forces unleashed violence which led to the withdrawal of the opposition in contesting the June 2008 re-run elections. President Mugabe won uncontested but both the domestic, regional and international community condemned the lack of legitimacy of the electoral outcome basing on the chaotic nature, conduct and process which then led to the SADC (Southern African Development Community) intervention. The intention of this research, therefore, is to examine, map out and analyze how Zimbabwe managed to hold fairly

peaceful polls in 2013. Fisher et al. (2005: 22) argues that, “mapping is a technique used to represent a conflict graphically, placing the parties in relation both to the problem and to each other.” Such an analysis is examined within the context of the enactment of the Global Political Agreement which clearly and categorically state in the preamble that, “*dedicating ourselves to putting an end to the political polarisation, divisions, conflict and intolerance that has characterised Zimbabwean politics and society in recent times*” (GPA 2008: 1).

1.5 The Research Questions

The core research question which seek to be addressed by this research relates to the transitional period of 2008-2013, and asks:

How did the Government of National Unity (GNU) manage the transition from violent to relatively peaceful elections and towards peacebuilding in Zimbabwe?

The sub questions of the research are:

- To what extent did the government of national unity managed to reduce political violence since its inception? This question was used to guide fieldwork and interviews, which are analysed mainly in Chapter 4.
- Which intervention strategies did the coalition government implement in seeking to reconcile fragile communities and build peace in the post-election period? How successful were these strategies? This question will mainly be addressed in Chapter 5.

A wider issue that underpins the study is to know how peaceful elections can contribute to more legitimate and democratic political arrangements in a country, such as Zimbabwe, so that peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts can be undertaken amongst parties and factions that had been in conflict. This issue is reflected on throughout the study, but especially addressed in Chapters 3 and 6.

1.6 Fieldwork: practical and ethical considerations.

In the study the researcher used qualitative methods of data collection. This research used primary and secondary data collecting methods. In-depth interviews were carried out with members of parliament, civil society, research organisations, academia and activists from across the political divide. Key informant interviews were conducted with members from political parties (MDC-T, ZANU-PF and MDC) so as to get the nitty-gritties of how political parties perceive on the transition from violence to peace. “Working with key informants means attempting to gather some insider or expert knowledge that goes beyond the private experiences, beliefs, and knowledge base of the individual you are talking to” (O’ Leary 2010: 169). The researcher conducted a total of 21 interviews of which 10 of them were key informant interviews with men and women with different opinions, so as to gather views and perceptions on the efforts of government of national unity and how it managed to raise hopes of peace in election periods. Identifying respondents was a bit easier for me since, I have worked with some of the activists from all political parties in the constitution making process.

Snowball sampling and purposive sampling was used in this research so as to get various insights about the study topic. O’Leary (2010: 170) asserts that, snowballing sampling “Involves building a sample through referrals”. In the same line, I got several referrals from the political parties which made it somehow easier since politicians are sometimes difficult to approach. Referrals from colleagues enabled me to build rapport with the other respondents. Referrals were very significant in my research because, I managed to get information from people who are well informed and have vast experience with the sought study. However the disadvantage of referrals in my research is that respondents from political parties have the same line of thinking which obviously produced biased viewpoints.

I purposively selected activists, politicians and researchers basing on the fact that they have vast knowledge of the electoral processes and GNU in Zimbabwe. I prioritised selecting these groups of people so as to hear about their perception on the transition from violence to peace, elections in national reconstruction, on future elections and peace building in Zimbabwe.

In order to get to the bottom of the study, I engaged in extensive content and interpretative analysis of the existing text (literature) that include online newspapers, reports and policy documents. As to date both civil society NGOs, such as Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Research and Advocacy Unit et al. has produced voluminous grey literature broadly dealing with the Zimbabwean political economy and specifically addressing the cross cutting issues of peace building, political conflict, electoral violence, reconciliation and the role of the GNU.

On the other hand, there has been a burgeoning corpus of literature from Zimbabwean and external scholars such as Bratton and Masunungure (2011), Machakanja (2010) and Mapuva (2010) on the subject of the Government of National Unity. However, it is common feature to note that coalition literature has been written with mixed views. In some cases there have been pockets of scholar-cum-activist who are either pro – ZANU PF or pro – MDC –T. To this end, there has been no substantial clarity with regards to electoral conflicts, the performance and efficacy of the GNU or lack thereof.

Henceforth, in the study, I embarked on a scholarly review of articles from various scholars who have written extensively on power sharing arrangements and violence in the recent past. Prominent among the existing scholarship are the likes of political scientists such as Eldred Masunungure and Michael Bratton. This study also engaged critically at length and in breadth with grey literature and mapping institutions such as the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration with regards to its efforts towards building sustainable peace and reconciliation be it election time or peaceful time.

The research topic in general is entrenched in politics of Zimbabwe. Issues of peacebuilding and reconciliation always raise many eyebrows as some people recall the *Gukurahundi* ethnic clashes between the Ndebele and the Shona. Given such a historical background, I ensured no harm to the respondents by using pseudonyms and collecting data through other proxy means i.e. review of grey literature, in-depth interviews with political actors and NGO activists who are already immersed in the political system as much of them always shown their

lack of fear to open up to research. Discussions that evolve around political parties and elections arouse suspicion and most people may fail to reveal their opinion which obviously affects the credibility of the information they will say.

In order for this study to see the light of the day, I conformed to some of the fundamental research ethics. I had to ask for the respondent's consent to tape record the responses or not. One interviewee requested anonymity and, I tried by all means not to put the respondents in danger thus upholding the 'No Harm Principle' which is in conformity with ethical social science research. Of all the total 21 interviews two respondents denied to be recorded in suspicion that I might use the information for other reasons other than academic use. Just like any other research, I guaranteed respondents of safety and confidentiality of the gathered information. My genuineness and confidence building was necessitated by my pre-existing relationship with some of the respondents during my previous work engagement as a rapporteur at COPAC and also as a trade union officer with GAPWUZ. However, this did not by any means affect the validity and reliability of the data.

I made great efforts to interview members from all political parties to get insights and opinions from both angles to avoid generalisation of biased data from one side or the other. The political fluidity in Zimbabwe makes any research work risky. Generally, I was extra careful and the institutional letter from ISS was useful in authenticating that I was researching for academic purposes.

This research was carried out in Harare, Zimbabwe. The political parties and research organisations are predominately located in Harare, as such the research was done there. In order to get a reflection of people's perception in-depth interviews were carried out with members from different political parties that actively participated and had positions in the coalition government. The data gleaned from activists, researchers, lecturers and the ordinary citizens added much volume in ascertaining whether the GNU managed to reduce electoral conflicts in the whole country and setting a stepping stone for peaceful elections in the near future.

1.7 Challenges and Limitations of the study

Due to time and resource constraints this research was conducted only in Harare. Basing on the sample size the study cannot claim to be representative of people's perception in the whole country. Non responses was the major challenge that I faced and rather unwillingness and general mistrust over researcher(s). I made great efforts in emailing potential key informants but in some cases efforts were in vain. Such organisations included Zimbabwe Election Support Network, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, Law Society of Zimbabwe, Human Rights NGO forum and Zimbabwe Peace Project, as such I failed to get statistical data on people who were killed by political violence but rather I relied on internet source.

I faced challenges in getting access to MPs since the parliament had adjourned by the time my fieldwork commenced. Also faced challenges in getting in touch with MPs because of their busy schedule. Some government and parliament staff refused to be interviewed as they regarded the topic as sensitive. Some asked about the purpose, aim and relevance and impact of my research. The fluid political environment (legacy of fear) made some potential respondents to turn

down my request to be part of the research. It was very common that some respondents diverted from the asked questions but rather took the platform to criticize the opposing political parties and its leadership and fail to answer the question at the end of the day.

1.8 Conclusion and Chapter Overview

After this general introduction, which has explicitly highlighted the main thrust of the research, Chapter 2 will cover some key concepts, such as peacebuilding, legitimacy and consociational democracy and the transition to democracy. In short, the chapter forms the basis of the conceptual and theoretical framework used to guide the rest of the study. Chapter 3 gives the background of electoral violence, tracing this through civil violence and party politics from 2000 till 2008. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes data collected from respondents in Zimbabwe in the winter of 2014. The chapter compares the 2008 and 2013 elections, and analyses the perceptions of how GNU managed to undertake a transition from violent to relatively peaceful elections. Chapter 5 maps out the institutions of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and discuss processes and practices involved. The argument in Chapter 5 returns to Lijphart's Model which is drawn on for better understanding the transition from violent to peaceful elections. The chapter briefly discusses the various institutions that promoted reconciliation and peacebuilding in Zimbabwe during the inter-election period (2008-2013). Chapter 6 is a conclusion of the study which returns to and reflects on the central research questions, as detailed in this chapter. Some modest recommendations and signpost for uncontested elections in the Zimbabwean polity in future are included in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Democracy, Violence and Peacebuilding

2.1 Introduction

Our approach in this study is guided by an epistemological perspective rooted in the study of politics and power relations, and in conflict and peace studies, in relation to development processes. An actor-oriented approach that emphasises the role of human beings is central, as the study considers how specific people – especially party activists – construct various forms of knowledge about political realities. O’Leary (2014: 5) defines epistemology as, “how we come to have legitimate knowledge of the world...” In this vein, the study shares the view of O’Leary (2014: 5) that “truth is actually ambiguous, fluid and relative”. This will be seen most clearly in Chapter 4, where views of those interviewed are presented. Indeed various competing, sometimes vague and fluid, comparative data emerged throughout the fieldwork, concerning the role of the GNU in preventing political and electoral skirmishes and violence. This invoked deeper ontological questions about what constitutes Zimbabwean political ‘reality’ (O’Leary: *ibid.*). This is why it is important to first define some key terms and concepts to be used in the study, especially since the study seeks to map out how the elections of 2008 and of 2013 can be perceived as either ‘violent’, ‘not violent’, or even as ‘peaceful’. Definitions in this chapter will underpin the rest of the study. In short, this chapter provides the theoretical backbone of the study.

2.2 Zimbabwe’s Roadmap to Peace: GNU and Constitution-making

“Peace-building is a dynamic process of resolving conflict and rebuilding societies, and it refers to mechanisms and structures that can prevent, terminate, transform, or resolve a conflict” (Bercovitch and Kadayifci 2002: 22). The concept of peacebuilding is very much applicable to the Zimbabwean context as various institutions were setup in the era of GNU seeking to usher in local and national peace processes. What is fascinating is the fact that the negotiations held by the political rivals resulted in institution building. Despite comprising of representatives from both political formations, the institutions faced so many hiccups along the transition. The formation of institutions was the first attempt to ensure democracy and peace prevails in the highly polarized country. In the Zimbabwean case, after 2008, when elections were marked by high levels of violence, political parties for the first time since 2000, finally agreed to work together despite differences in ideologies and principles.

The Government of National Unity that was created as a result in 2008, then played a formidable role in reconciling different adversaries as a way of building peace in a polarized society. The Global Political Agreement Article (VI) that provided for the setting up of a Select committee to spearhead the drafting of a new constitution, marked the start of this process. The mandate of the committee was to hold public consultation meetings throughout the country to gather people’s views of what they wanted to be enshrined in the supreme law so as to

replace the Lancaster House Constitution which was criticized as not representing the will of the Zimbabwean people. In 2009, political parties unanimously agreed to formulate a democratic constitution as clearly stated in GPA (2008: 6) article VI (i), and:

...to set up such subcommittees chaired by a member of Parliament and composed of members of Parliament and representatives of Civil Society as may be necessary to assist the Select Committee in performing its mandate herein;

In practice, drawing on insight gained from being involved in this process, this article was generally well-respected as the parliamentary select committee was seen as broadly representative. In this way, a culture of unity started to ‘cascade’ into local communities at the time of the Constitution-making process. By mapping the role of GNU in creating peacebuilding institutions and strategies, this study will help to understand how the foundations were laid for peacebuilding to achieve a more lasting peace in the longer-term. The key concepts now considered are legitimacy, violence especially in elections, and peacebuilding.

2.2.1 Definitions of Violence in Elections

Electoral violence means unsystematic or planned action that seeks to control, postpone results, or else sway an electoral procedure by means such as intimidation, coercion, hate language, propaganda, physical attack, damage of belongings, or killings (Fisher 2002: 8). Defining electoral violence is crucial in this study in order to bring to light conflicts that culminated into a coalition government. Undeniably, the emergence of numerous opposition political parties in Zimbabwe namely the MDC has led to an intense inter-party competition over votes and political power. This form of electoral competition has witnessed some pockets of high incidents of electoral violence specifically in the year 2000 and in the 2008 June Run - Off elections. To such an extent that since the birth of the MDC in the late 1999 to contemporary, elections in Zimbabwe have been characterised with episodic events of electoral violence. Civil Society Organisations such as Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Sokwanele, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Peace Project and Solidarity Peace Trust amongst others have documented huge figures of political violence in electoral processes in Zimbabwe over the period from 2000 – to the contemporary.

2.2.3 Reconciliation after violent elections

Bloomfield (2003: 12) proclaims that,

reconciliation is an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing [...] 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 concept of reconciliation suits well in this study. I will map out later in this study institutions such as (JOMIC) and (ONHRI) that undeniably helped in fostering new relationships to societies that had been torn apart by electoral violence of June 2008. Defining and understanding the concept of reconciliation is

imperative in this study because before GNU there was no formalization of reconciliation as such it was a mere talk and rhetoric. Zimbabwe witnessed the institutionalization and socialization of the reconciliation process for the first time in the Zimbabwean history. The provisions of article 7 in the GPA about reconciliation, inclusion in the constitution and the formation of an Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) attests to this statement.

2.2.4 Democratic Elections

Democratic reforms that upholds free and fair elections has emerged to be a catchphrase, in Africa following the disputed election results in countries such as Kenya in 2007. In the case of Zimbabwe, SADC and the two MDC formations pressurized the ZANU-PF government to cede into reform of electoral laws in order to eliminate electoral violence and arrest expected electoral conflicts and disputation. Democratic elections generally entails conducting elections in a transparent manner. Such democratic elections can only be achieved if political players desist from violent behaviour, in an environment which accords equal access to media and free campaigns. Commenting on the Zimbabwean situation, Makumbe (2006: 51) observes that the principle important for holding free and democratic polls is the need for such elections to be well planned so that eligible electorates are given the chance to exercise their right without intimidation.

2.3 Elections under Consociational Democracy

This research is inspired and guided by consociational democracy theory Lijphart (1985). This paper draws up from consociationalism principles. The ideas were used as a conflict resolving tool by the three main conflicting parties in Zimbabwe when they buried the hatchet and engaged in executive power sharing which obviously was the cornerstone of the long journey of peacebuilding and democratic elections. To reinforce this Lijphart (1985: 7) asserts that, "Power-sharing may take various institutional forms, such as that of a grand coalition of a president and other top officeholders in presidential systems, and broadly inclusive councils or committees with important advisory and coordinating functions". Lijphart (1977: 25) further highlighted that, the main feature of consociational democracy is that politicians who lead major divisions of a plural society form a unity government so as to rule the country together. The scholarly work of Lijphart undeniably illuminate on this research as the characteristics highlighted have been experienced in Zimbabwe's coalition government. The model of consociational democracy has a legacy in Zimbabwe as its principles has also been adopted in 1987 between the Ndebele and the Shona that is the unity between Zapu and ZANU PF.

Defined as a political approach in which political leaders wish to create a political attitude based on inclusivity, consociational theory reasons that coexistence can be reached in divided societies through setting up institutions of a power-sharing idea which aims at refining and reformation of in-built problems (Muhlbacher 2008: 10). In this line, Zimbabwe witnessed yet another form of consociational democracy in 2008 as political elites decided to bury their political differences which evidently resulted in setting up of various institutions

and ideally each political party represented. The whole idea was to come up with an electoral framework, move out of the social, political and economic crisis that the country had been plunged in.

2.4 Legitimacy: What's in a Phrase?

Despite the fact that the concept of political legitimacy is central in understanding the Zimbabwean story on elections, electoral integrity (Norris, 2014) and electoral conflicts, it has received scant scholarly attention. Zimbabwean scholars have researched extensively about the contestation of elections, electoral malpractices, electoral administration, militarization of elections (see for example Masunungure, 2009; Makumbe, 2008; Mapuva, 2010; Bond and Moore, 2005 ; Mashiri, 2011) but little attention has been focused on how the concept of legitimacy can be used as a peace building tool through conflict resolution and through institution building just like what happened with the creation of the Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe. In itself the GNU was a form of restoring peace after the disputation and 'legitimacy crisis' that had arisen in the aftermath of the June run-off elections.

Various Zimbabwean studies, with the exception of (Norris, 2014) also fail to analyse how legitimacy crisis as exemplified in the Zimbabwean case can result in electoral and political conflict as a result of the erosion of 'electoral integrity' and 'confidence' (ibid.). In this study I, therefore use the concept of legitimacy as a supporting concept to the overarching model of consociationalism. In analyzing the 2008 and 2013 elections the concept of legitimacy is also handy as argued elsewhere by Norris (2014: 3) who observes that restrictive regimes in power can continue their rule by various other tactics, including through authoritarian means, for example if they remain in control of security sector, the judiciary and overall control of the administration of the state. Such an analysis is very similar to the analysis of the Zimbabwean electoral situation more broadly.

In this study, I therefore deploy the concept of legitimacy in specifically analyzing how it can be used as an effective tool in preventing and in solving electoral conflicts. In Zimbabwe, the praxis of political legitimacy was used in building peace through establishment and institutionalization of credible and 'legitimate' democratic institutions during the GNU era. See for example the establishment of JOMIC which was a tripartite political party establishment to look into issues of political violence, healing and peace processes in order to usher in peaceful and non-violent elections. Norris (2014: 2) offers a working definition of 'legitimacy' as the "acceptance of the underlying rules of the game, so that all actors willingly consent to authority of the regime, without the sanction of force". In the same vein Lipset (1983) as cited in Norris (2014: 2) notes that legitimacy is all about, "...the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society".

In the same wavelength, Norris cautions that the undermining of political legitimacy especially through various electoral malpractices normally erodes the rise and approval of "basic electoral rules of the game by opposition parties. If these feelings are shared by their supporters, or by minorities excluded from the

vote, these conditions may exacerbate ethnic tensions and inter-communal conflict” (Norris 2014: 3). The case of Kenya serves as a clear example as lack of legitimate elections triggered violence amongst the ethnic groups.

Electoral legitimacy has become a buzzword in the contemporary African elections period as evidenced by different electoral manipulation and conflicts in Zimbabwe and Kenya amongst other African countries. Zimbabwe has been characterized by electoral fraud which ranges from vote buying, intimidation during voting day and vote rigging. This in itself forms the backdrop of the formation of the GNU as elections of June 2008 failed to pass the test of legitimate elections. Part of my analysis also shares the same scholarly strand with Norris’s conceptual framing of legitimacy.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter specifically looked at the key concepts that forms the analytical framework of the study. Legitimacy, peacebuilding and reconciliation concepts will be used again in chapter 5. The chapter also looked at how such theory of consociational democracy, and concepts namely peacebuilding and legitimacy are applicable and relevant in the investigation of how GNU facilitated for the shift from violence to a relatively peaceful environment in the elections of July 2013. In the next chapter, I present the historical/contextual background of electoral violence in Zimbabwe and party politics since the year 2000. I also map the historicity and genesis of the cycle of violence in Zimbabwe stemming from the independence decade up until to the contemporary epoch.

Chapter 3: The Genealogy of Electoral Violence in Zimbabwe

*"We watch with sadness the continuing tragedy in Darfur. Nearer to home we had seen the outbreak of violence against fellow Africans in our own country and the tragic failure of leadership in our neighbouring Zimbabwe,"*² The late Nelson Mandela 2008.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter specifically traces the genealogy of violence in the post - independence epoch in Zimbabwe specifically highlighting genes of violence, the evolution of violence and the institutionalization of violence -through a historical framework. This chapter further progresses by reviewing elections, violence and party politics in Zimbabwe since the year 2000 to 2008.

3.2 Party System, Elections and Violence in Zimbabwe: Snapshot

Partly the existence of electoral violence emanates from the party system structure in Zimbabwe. During the first independence decade, ZANU PF government was heralding towards the establishment of a *de facto* one party state (Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991; Sithole and Makumbe, 1997). However, such a one party state desire and establishment was vehemently criticised and crushed by the influential opposition political figures such as Edgar Tekere who led the vibrant Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM)³. This then meant that the one party state agenda was defeated in the *de jure* sense, but not in the *de facto* sense, as Zimbabwe's political landscape continued to resemble the dominance of a one party state (see Mandaza and Sachikonye 1991). However, amongst the political leadership of ZANU PF, prior to the formation of MDC there has always been intense intra - party conflict, this was caused by ethnic cleavages, jostling for positions, rent seeking and because of the politics of patronage.

During the days of the war of liberation and in post -colonial Zimbabwe, ZANU PF party remained ensnared in the so called '*Zezuru-Manyika*' zero sum game (Sithole1980). According to Sithole (ibid.) '*zezuru -manyika zero sum game*' was all about the intense struggle for domination of one ethnic group in

² See Borger, J. (2008) 'A tragic failure of leadership: Mandela's verdict on Mugabe',

<<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/26/zimbabwe.southafrica>> accessed on 9 October 2014

³ The late Edgar Tekere was the Leader of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) an opposition political party that contested in the presidential election of 1990.

the party leadership positions. Such a trend was viewed by some as the ethnicisation of Zimbabwean political parties. The late Zimbabwean celebrated political scientist Masipula Sithole in (1999) then wrote about what he termed “struggles within a struggle” in Zimbabwean politics, struggles which emanated even during the days of the liberation struggle. Struggle within a struggle (ibid.) was a catch phrase that referred to the internal party squabbles, factionalism, intra – party organizational conflict and infighting that had become endemic within the political leadership in ZANU which later manifested in a united ZANU PF. The trend of factionalism is also existing between political parties inclusive of ZANU PF, MAVAMBO, MDC -N and the MDC - T formations have been plagued with the intense fighting which has culminated in intra – party conflict.

Over the past decades, ZANU PF has managed to portray the Zimbabwean political establishment as a multi-party state. Zimbabwe has entered into a ‘multi-party’ political system due to the mushrooming of opposition political parties. However, this does not necessarily entail that she is a multi – party democracy. To this end, there are ‘grayzones’ on whether Zimbabwe qualifies into being “neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic” (Norris 2008: 57). It has also remained unclear whether Zimbabwe is a dominant party state, multi-party state or two party state. I also concur with (Norris 2008: 57) using the Zimbabwean case study that there is a blurred dichotomy on whether Zimbabwe neatly fits under Zakaria’s (1997) ‘illiberal democracy’ model, ‘competitive authoritarian regimes’ (Levitsky and Way 2002), or under ‘electoral autocracies’ (Diamond 2002).

The above snapshot helps in situating the Zimbabwean electoral processes and in understanding the background to the historicity of elections. Strikingly though, Zimbabwe has witnessed the conduct of periodic elections after every (5) years. However, it has been the political climate under which such elections have been held that has and continue to raise reservations on whether Zimbabwe has transformed into an electoral democratic system. Interestingly though, ZANU PF has successfully used “multiparty competitive elections for the legislative and executive office as a facade to legitimate autocratic regimes” (Norris 2008: 57). Though highly competitive, such elections has engendered deep societal cleavages, polarisation, fear and in some instances they have resulted in direct violence, murder, torture, displacements and arson especially in the Zimbabwean rural communities.

3.3 Brief history of Violence as Political Culture

There are different and varied interpretations on the genesis of violence in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, there has also been contestation on the trends and dynamics of political violence amongst Zimbabwean scholars, with others completely writing in exoneration of ZANU PF whilst others from the other competing camp has fingered ZANU PF as both complicit and ‘guilty’ of having unleashed, perpetrated, supported, celebrated and condoned state violence (see for example Kriger 2005; Bratton and Masunungure 2008). Condoning rather than condemnation of such acts has been done by acts of design by the ruling ZANU PF political elite. However, Zimbabwe remains amongst one of the

countries in Sub – Saharan Africa that has witnessed a checkered history of violence.

Stemming from the processes of state formation up to the contemporary electoral politics, violence has and continue to shape Zimbabwean politics. However, scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) who has written extensively on nationalism and Zimbabwean history strongly believe that the genes of violence in Zimbabwe are hereditary from the past historical episodes. In other words, the history of violence (though not necessarily electoral violence) stem from way back in history. Notable, is the way how Zimbabwe won her independence through the use of ‘guerilla violence’ (see Kriger 1991). In the same vein, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 22) categorically, argues that Zimbabwe has undergone or at least experienced three violence paradigms. These range from the nationalist (wars of liberation, *Chimurenga*), workerist (labour/worker violence against white capitalism) and the cultural paradigm (ibid.) which Ranger (2006) terms ‘ancient hatreds’ as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 22) especially among different tribal communities for example the 1896 *Shona – Ndebele* clashes and also maybe during the post-colonial era as marked by the *Gukurahundi* episode.

3.4 Historicity of Elections: Party Politics in Zimbabwe 2000-2008

The year 2000 ushered in a new political dispensation that soon led to political polarization. Although this section dwells mainly on the post-2000 period, it is imperative to trace the history of violence in Zimbabwe from earlier on, in order to appreciate how party politics have fuelled electoral violence since at least independence in 1980. Dube and Makwerere (2012: 297) rightly argue the nation has encountered numerous episodes of violence since then. Examples of violent conflicts include the *Gukurahundi* massacre (see also CCJP Report 1997), violence during elections and Operation Murambatsvina, which some critics view as punishment of those who voted for MDC in urban areas. These violent situations have engendered deep political cleavages inasmuch as they have also led to massive internal displacements, social unrest and societal ‘discohesion’ within the country.

Since gaining independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had been largely a one party state, because ZANU PF gripped on to power tenaciously and maintained what Sithole and Makumbe (1997: 123) termed “electoral hegemony” which led to the cropping up of independent candidates to challenge the system. The land reform process that was initiated by the ZANU PF regime in 2000 sparked a new wave of politicking, violence and electioneering in Zimbabwe. The quest for democracy intensified, which then fuelled political violence especially in the Mashonaland West, Central and Mashonaland East provinces. Zimbabwean’s experience of violence in general is a clear testimony of how history can repeat itself. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 9) aptly summed up the Zimbabwean story by observing that,

Violence has contributed tremendously to polarisation of the nation and accumulation of anger, grievance and resentment across society. The culture of violence is partly responsible for making transitional politics extremely fragile and the realisation of transitional justice very difficult.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) is of the view that ZANU PF has managed to skillfully and tactfully use the strategy of perpetuating sharp societal divisions through the politicization and monopolization of the *Chimurenga* monologue. It is to this effect that through election campaigns ZANU PF has managed to invoke the selective memory of the liberation struggle. The ZANU PF politicians have managed to invoke the violent memories and images of a nation that was born out of violence (liberation struggle) and they have used election time as an opportune time for voters to defend their country that is always at odds fighting against re-colonization and the agents of Western imperialism as fronted by the Morgan Tsvangirai led (MDC) party. This has been a strategy that has been used to win the hearts and minds of the electorate. Such strategies and ‘mind games’ are not unique to Zimbabwe, various strategies have also been successfully used elsewhere in post –conflict elections as argued by Lyons (2002).

In order to understand the change and continuity in the Zimbabwean electoral processes we also need to understand her political economy. The year 2000 marked a radical shift in the Zimbabwean political economy. This shift and transformation was also subsequently met with a crumbling economy which was characterized by erosion of safety nets, impoverisation of the working poor, massive retrenchments, job losses and heightened costs in fuel and food prices. The civil society intensified activities to lobby and advocate for citizen’s rights in health, better service delivery and demand for good governance , a struggle that had started during the 1990s. The Movement for Democratic Change led by the former trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai emerged into the political circles in 1999 as very vibrant and challenged President Mugabe in the 2000 referendum. It is also believed that the birth of the MDC influenced the electoral situation in Zimbabwe. Moyse (2009: 43) succinctly observes that, “ever since the birth of meaningful political opposition to the ruling ZANU (PF) party in Zimbabwe, elections have become a battleground”. This clearly explains how electoral contestations remains to be the source of political conflict in Zimbabwe.

In the year 2000, the ZANU PF government sponsored ‘YES’ vote campaign in the constitutional referendum was defeated by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the MDC in favour of the ‘NO’ vote Campaign. The triumph of the ‘NO’ vote campaign is assumed to have angered President Mugabe who later gave his blessings to the war veterans led by Chenjerai Hunzvi and Joseph Chinotimba to violently occupy and seize white owned commercial farms. Land reform was authorized by the government and war veterans championed the redistribution procedure, substituting local development groups, and subsequently violence against political antagonists and inner ‘sell-outs’ intensified, most prominently in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008 (Onslow 2011: 9). Gavin (2007: 6) argues in the same line when he highlighted that, “when the electorate defeated the referendum in what was widely interpreted as a rebuke to the ZANU-PF dominated government, President Mugabe embarked on a costly campaign to shore up his power and crush opposition forces.”

Land invasions preceded and most political scientists views it as a punishment to the whites who dominantly possessed land and supported financially the democratic forces in Zimbabwe especially in the NO vote campaign. The violent skirmish of 2000 land invasions was indeed a tip of the iceberg as exemplified by the violence that superseded. Indeed the absence of political plurality, high

level of political intolerance, social disharmony and human insecurity have been common features during the electoral periods as from 2000 to date.

Before the 2002 presidential elections, the ruling party imposed the Public Order and Security Act to restrict and curtail the civic space. In support of this assertion Chiroro (2005: 15) holds that, there are numerous laws that were authorized to suppress the capacity of the opposing parties to gather and freely express their opinions. The famous acts are Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002 and also Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002 which endangered the progression of opposition parties (ibid.). In addition to that, the violence that erupted in the 2000 House of Assembly elections spilled over into the presidential polls. The ZANU PF regime declared that they won't accept Tsvangirai as a leader in the event that he wins. President Mugabe obtained over 56 percent victory in the 2002 polls (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012: 10). Referring to the 2005 elections Kagwanja (2005: 6) suggests that, "the presence of an oppressive government posed serious challenges to the free campaigning events of opposing political party (MDC) towards run up to the March 2005 legislative elections". The argumentation put forward by these various authors explicitly shows how repressive the legislation perpetuated the uneven playing field, and this comparatively worked to the advantage of ZANU PF at the expense of MDC.

Kagwanja (2005: 17) observes that Zimbabwe's 2005 poll was predicted to be a conflict prevention mechanism that would end political conflicts. Conversely, in the run up to the elections, violence escalated which made it evident that the elections were not going to be the solution in ending the political stalemate. The emergence of the strong opposition political party intensified political violence and some civilians were killed in the act. ZANU PF hegemony also intensified terror to intimidate and suppress the electorate. The whole idea was to silence and reduce electoral competition from the MDC, hence it turned out to be militaristic to protect its hegemonic dominance on the political scene.

Lack of free and fair elections arguably remains to be one of the major sources of contestation and violence in the contemporary world. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011: 16) bemoaned the lack or absence of what he terms a "unifying national narrative" that would solidify and glue together the once deeply polarized society. A society which remains deeply polarized through political cleavages both real, created and imaginary. Such divisions is an albatross to national peace and conduct of free and fair elections as in the Zimbabwean case in June 2008. As Omotola (2010: 11) argues,

...post-election peace-building, especially in an environment characterized by massive discontent with the electoral processes and outcomes, is a serious business. Resorting to such palliatives as power-sharing can only produce short-term cosmetic effects.

During the first decade after 2000, electoral violence seemed to be on the increase in a number of African countries, such as Kenya, Ivory Coast and Zimbabwe. This posed a formidable challenge to any government aiming to build more democratic institutions. What this study will explore in the case of Zimbabwe, is how politicians and government actors can influence institutional and political processes so that elections become more peaceful, and more legitimate forms of decision-making and negotiations are possible. First, however, the

problem of a 'culture of impunity', as a factor in electoral violence, needs to be appreciated.

3.5 Electoral Violence and a Culture of Impunity: Spirals of Violence

Having analyzed violence in general, this section adopts an in-depth analysis on specific political/electoral violence in Zimbabwe. By illuminating on such, I seek to contextualize how political state sponsored violence has shaped the electoral processes in Zimbabwe as from 2000 to 2008. The most pertinent issue at this juncture is to bring to light different forms of violence that was perpetrated mainly by the supporters of the ruling party. Games (2005: 4) argues that, the period towards the 31 March 2005 elections showed an upsurge in repression, less freedom of political activity, and more intense persecution of opposition loyalists despite anticipation from regional actors that elections will be free. Put bluntly, violence has become endemic to Zimbabwean politics - to an extent that it has become synonymous with elections in Zimbabwe as noted by Bratton and Masunungure (2008:50) when they argued that, "code-named *Operation Mavhotera Papi* ("How Did You Vote?") was rolled out during the post March 2008 polls. This operation was aimed at rooting out, victimizing and targeting all people suspected of supporting or voting for the opposition MDC in the March 2008 elections (ibid:50). The major culprits of perpetrating violence and such operations were youth militia groups namely *Mandimbandimba* and *Chipangano* in Harare, *Jochomondo* which operated in Hurungwe, Border Gezi para-military pre, during and in the post-election periods (see Dziva et al. 2013). In most cases these militia groups worked in cahoots with former liberation war veterans to unleash politically motivated violence. Surprisingly many of the perpetrators of violence were immune from arrest and walk freely in their respective communities till today.

3.6 Attempting to Legitimate Political Violence: Speeches, Songs and Slogans

The Zimbabwean politics and society, from the 1985 elections to the 2008 elections, witnessed the use of hate speech and inflammatory language. The celebration of hate language and speech seemed to be intended to breed a culture where symbolic and physical violence could be legitimated as a 'normal' part of Zimbabwean political life (Saidi and Munemo 2012). This has then ultimately led to the entrenchment of polarization and hatred amongst citizens. The state as epitomized by ZANU PF has also been active in fanning hate speech and language especially in the print and electronic media and in political rallies. However, in the early years of independence prior to the 1987 Unity Accord, hate speech was mainly used against the Ndebele by the Shona. It is to such an extent that hate language seemed to have adopted a purely ethnic dimension. However, since the birth of the MDC in late 1999, both politicians from the opposition political movement (MDCs) and ZANU PF has been responsible for inciting conflict

through the reckless use of hate and violent language in communities through their political messaging.

From an elite and top down approach the political leadership has always used hate language in denigrating and in de-campaigning their political opponents. Judging from the precedent and trend of such, it can be argued that the vocabulary of violence has and will continue to dominate and percolate through Zimbabwean communities, especially in the rural areas. According to BBC news in the year 2000 Morgan Tsvangirai the leader of the opposition party is reportedly to have said, "*What we would like to tell Mugabe is please go peacefully. If you don't want to go peacefully, we will remove you violently*".⁴ Evidently these utterances entice violence and is an anti –thesis to the principles of his party that is the principles of social democratic non-violence and peaceful change.

The advent of the opposition saw a drift change in media reporting and discourse in the Zimbabwe political spectrum with the state media like Herald and ZBC being used for propaganda by the ZANU PF regime. Whilst on the other hand, the independent media such as the Daily News before it was bombed and closed also sympathized with the MDC party. Consequently, both ZANU PF and MDC has been using hate speech during campaigning periods since 2000 in order to influence, frame and manipulate the mindset of the electorate so as to gain political support. Eight years down the line President Mugabe is reportedly to have echoed the same message that could intimidate the electorate. Meldrum reporting for the Christian Science Monitor in 2008 quoted President Mugabe's speech, "*We are not going to give up our country for a mere X on a ballot. How can a ballpoint pen fight with a gun?*"⁵. Such a statement clearly shows how the political leadership in Zimbabwe has been negating the principles of electoral democracy and the respect of the popular will by calling for violence. Unfortunately, this call to violence has been couched and phrased in nationalistic and liberation war narratives.

Former MDC – T minister of Constitutional Affairs Advocate Eric Matinenga succinctly critiqued the socialisation of hate and violent language through message and symbols in the MDC especially the sloganeering. Mr Matinenga's message of non-violence was quoted in the Newsday and reportedly to have said, "*We say hit someone against the ground. Of what help to us is that slogan?*"[...] "*We want constructive slogans.*"⁶ Loosely translated into the Shona language the MDC-T slogan read as follows – '*musimudzvei mudenga, murowerei pasi bwaa*' (trans: 'Lift him/her up in the air, smash down to the ground'). Such a slogan has been widely used

⁴ *BBC News* (2000) 'Police consider Tsvangirai arrest', 2 October <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/952796.stm>> Accessed on 21 August 2014.

⁵ Meldrum , A. (2008) 'Zimbabwe's election: a battle for democracy and a test for Africa', 19 June *The Christian Science Monitor* <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2008/0619/p09s01-coop.html> Accessed on 25 July 2014.

⁶ See Chidavaenzi, P.(2013) 'Slogans fomenting violence' 7 May <<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/05/07/slogans-fomenting-violence/>> Accessed on 25 July 2014.

by the MDC at political rallies for denouncing their opponents in campaigning periods. In the same vein, ZANU PF is to a larger extent guilty of having resorted to hate language and speech both during and out of campaign periods.

In its slogans, ZANU PF uses the symbol/image of a clenched fist, which resembles militancy – it also uses phrases like ‘*ZANU ndeyeropa*’ (meaning the party is associated with blood). State media like the Herald, the single monopolistic national TV and radio stations has been widely condemned for peddling falsehoods, propaganda and reporting in a partisan manner. The issue of media reform also took centre stage during the GNU era, with opposition parties calling for the reform and de – polarization of the state media. The period leading to the June 2008 elections saw the emergence of a new crop of singers who came up with songs and jingles that captivates and were pregnant with revolutionary messages.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explicitly highlighted the genesis of political and electoral violence in Zimbabwe. It also further gave a historical background of electoral violence, and of efforts to legitimate violence and spelling out party politics since 2000 in Zimbabwe. What is intriguing is the fact that media played an instrumental role in fanning hate speech which further created animosity amongst the political opponents. In the next chapter, I will make a comparison of 2008 and 2013 elections, analyzing the data collected from the fieldwork.

Chapter 4 Comparing Two Elections: Unpacking the Paradoxes

4.1 Introduction

This chapter makes a comparative analysis of 2008 and 2013 elections in general. The chapter further develops by analysing people's perception about power sharing government and its role in reducing electoral and political violence since its formation up to its demise in July 2013. Data gleaned from the respondents will be presented and analysed in this section.

4.2 2008 March Elections: Preludes to Electoral Violence

Whilst the March 2008 were largely free of violence, the legacy of violence might have been still ingrained in the psyche of the Zimbabwean populace. At least there were no incidences of naked violence as opposed to the 27 June 2008 Run-off elections. The March 2008 elections by all standards were viewed by the local observers and regional observers to have passed the legitimacy test of free and fair elections as enshrined by the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (1992)⁷ which was adopted in Mauritius in (2004). Generally speaking, all political parties were 'free' to campaign in rural communities although the electoral playing field was still skewed in favour of the incumbent (ruling) ZANU PF. Nonetheless, there was some degree of a façade of 'freeness' especially comparing how the opposition MDC was able to enjoy some airplay on the national television selling its electoral message.

However, it should be noted that the electoral playing field has always been uneven and in favour of the incumbents especially in post - conflict elections (Lyons 2002) in most African countries with Zimbabwe being no exception. This is largely as a result of the fact that it is the incumbents that design and craft the 'rules of the game' what Tendi (2013) terms "preponderance of the incumbency". After Morgan Tsvangirai had won the elections with 47,9% whilst President Mugabe had 43,2 %, ZANU PF argued that according to the constitutional provisions a winner should have garnered a 50+% vote (Badza 2008); (Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010). Such electoral outcome was inconclusive hence Zimbabwe had to go for a rerun of the presidential elections. Prior to the re-run, ZANU PF regime manipulated the electoral system thereby delaying announcement of the results.

⁷ See SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections adopted in Mauritius in 2004
<<http://www.idea.int/africa/southern/upload/The-SADC-Principles-and-Guidelines-Governing-Democratic-Elections.pdf>> accessed on 21 August 2014.

4.3 2008 June Run – Off Elections: ‘Beat them to Love You’

On the 16th of May the ZANU PF party announced the date for the run-off elections. What followed was what some civil society organisations have termed a ‘reign of terror’ being unleashed on innocent civilians. Violence was deployed as a political tool to instil fear and to influence the voting behaviour of the electorate in favour of ZANU PF. In an interview with the MDC-T National Spokesperson Mr D. Mwonzora chronicled how violence erupted in 2008,

The electoral process was taken over by the Military Junta, results took more than four weeks to be announced after that the use of brute force and violence was state sponsored. Soldiers were deployed to establish camps throughout the country and central intelligence as well. Violence was de facto condoned by the state as long as it was directed to the MDC it was by and large legalised (interview 17.07.2014).

In the same view, in a report entitled “Change and New Politics in Zimbabwe” conducted by Freedom House Institute, Mass Public Opinion Institute in Zimbabwe and led by Professor Susan Booysen (2012) from South Africa, it emerged that there was eruption of violence perpetrated by military personnel in the country side. In the same report it emerged that, many respondents were optimistic that the next elections were going to be peaceful and historic since it was going to end the coalition government. To buttress the 2008 atrocities, Mr Muswere, the Project Officer for General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe highlighted that, “*After the opposition won in March 2008, the period leading to the presidential re-run was characterised by violence, civilians being beaten, murdered and massive evictions*” (interview 22.08.2014).

Masunungure (2009: 81) argues that, “the April to June 2008 election interregnum was a militarized moment.” Militarization of elections was indeed an act of intimidating and instilling fear amongst the rural populace. Due to the prevalence of cases of violence with mainly the opposition supporters as victims, Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from participating in the elections. Narrating the elections of June 2008 Mr Chakanyuka (note real name) a farmer and ZANU PF supporter surprisingly revealed that, “*Military involvement in 2008 and torture bases inculcated fear in many rural parts, due to the fear some people voted and spoiled the papers*” (interview 31.07.2014).

One striking issue is the fact that it is very rare to hear in the public discourse a ZANU PF loyalist openly admitting to the militarisation of the elections and accusations of perpetrating violence. It is also of public record that the 2008 June elections left communities fractured and polarised. In the horrific acts both parties were exposed to violence either as victims or perpetrators. An award winning scholar, Phumla Madikizela Gobodo (2014) in review of her book “A Human Being Died That Night” based on a story on apartheid South Africa, she argues that the world today is confronted with a challenge of avoiding to turn yesterday’s victims into today’s perpetrators. The same analysis can also be true to the revolutionaries in ZANU PF who were victimised, tortured and incarcerated during the war of liberation but they surprisingly deployed the same violence on the opposition supporters in June 2008. Indoctrination of the revolutionary principles was mainly the order of the day at the night bases in many

rural parts of the country by the ‘green bombers’ (youth militia). Failure to comply and allegiance to the opposition was highly punishable, normally with public beatings to the innocent civilians (Bratton and Masunungure 2008).

4.4 July 2013 Elections: from Violence to Peace

On the 31st of July 2013, Zimbabweans went to cast their votes for the elections that were meant to end the power sharing government. It is interesting to note that in the 2013 plebiscite, Zimbabwe managed to hold elections that passed the ‘free and fair’ criterion bar as pronounced by the African diplomats, African heads of states, SADC and AU observers. Though, locally the elections were dismissed by some pockets in the civil society and opposition ranks as being ‘unfree and unfair’ due to the electoral misconduct and mismanagement what Norris (2012: 4) termed “violations of electoral integrity” and alleged subtle rigging of the elections by ZEC in favour of the incumbent. In explaining the transition, the Legal Resources Foundation Advocacy Officer Mrs Mudombi argued that,

2013 elections were peaceful because of lessons learnt that violence does not pay. Youths were refusing to be used in 2013, some were incarcerated and if you commit crimes in the guise of elections you suffer the consequences on a personal level (interview 29.07.2014).

In line with this argument, Dr Mapuva, of Development Studies, points out that, “*The elections were peaceful because of lessons learnt from 2008 that if you execute violence the outcome lacks legitimacy. In order to maintain acceptance of results violence was condoned*” (interview 24.07.2014). The two claims suggest fact that there was an individual-centred perspective and an organisational or party centred perspective which also helped in reducing political violence in the 2013 elections. Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva (2014: 21) commenting on the shift from violence to peaceful elections argued that,

while in 2008 the post-election period was characterized by violence which the opposition has blamed on ZANU (PF), in 2013 different political parties avoided violence which would taint the results of the elections, hence the SADC and AU election observers described the 2013 elections as peaceful.

The peaceful elections of 2013 are viewed differently by the respondents interviewed. In an interview carried out with Kimberly, a coordinator in the MDC-T vice president’s office, she noted that, “*Zimbabwe’s peaceful election could have been a calculated strategy by ZANU-PF so that results will be legitimised*” (interview 18.07.2014). Mr Reeler, a senior researcher from Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) shares the same sentiments with Kimberly when he observes that, “*The period of the GNU can be seen as a period when peace was built or you can construe it as reflectory period by ZANU-PF as planning an election that they will win on a non-violent basis.....it was a conscious decision by ZANU not to use violence*” (interview 16.07.2014). Kimberly’s assertion has also been shared by scholars such as Ibbo Mandaza from the Sapes Trust a Harare based think tank. According to Mandaza, the compliance by ZANU PF to hold ‘relatively peaceful’ elections in 2013 emerged out of,

Condemnation of the Zimbabwean elections world over. Due to a contrived June 2008 Run-off which in all intent and purposes could not have been recognised by

anybody, if it wasn't for Mbeki who cleverly engineered the GNU which helped in saving Mugabe and his party who had lost the March 2008 elections (interview 30.07.2014).

One can argue that, due to such condemnation and quest for legitimacy ZANU PF went on to employ other tactics and strategies in winning the 2013 elections as opposed to naked political violence as in the previous episodes. It is of public knowledge that 2013 elections were relatively peaceful as evidenced by the lack of overt violence (see for example Zamchiya, 2014) but rather many people are of the opinion that Zanu-PF engineered a rigging strategy like printing of forged registrations slips, ghost voters and ballot stuffing that produced a clean win (see Maseko 2013). Appraising the GNU Bratton and Masunungure (2011: 32) rightly argues that, "...the elite accord restored a welcome modicum of peace and economic stability." Prior to the GNU, Zimbabwe was characterised by a precarious political landscape and hyperinflation.

Zimbabweans held a peaceful election due to a number of reasons as argued by the respondents. Makururu a member of the ZANU PF youth league had this to say: *"Peaceful environment was as a result of non-interference by external forces as Zimbabweans sat down and had dialogue as Zimbabweans"* (interview 15.07.2014). Makururu's assertion is disputed by some of the findings of this study, however, since external blocs like SADC and South Africa were seen by other interviewees to be very influential in forcing a transition towards greater dialogue amongst political opponents. Mr Muziri the Programmes Advisor of Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust orated that,

The play of the international community which was watching the implementation of the GPA made it a costly adventure to utilise violence as one of the tools for electoral processes so because of involvement of not only regional bloc SADC but by AU and other international players managed to assist the parties to a process that was more inclusive, therefore creating avenues for multiple stakeholder (interview 23.07.2014).

The role played by the international community will be elaborated on in chapter five.

The Information, Research and Communications Officer of Centre for Applied Legal Research, Moreblessing Mbire, argues that, *the involvement of the two MDC formations in the coalition and the need to return to normalcy in society contributed much in bringing peace*" (interview 22.08.2014). Whether it was the MDC that managed to counter violent possibilities or not, it is correct to argue that it was ZANU PF's craving for legitimacy (Norris 2014) that resulted in the latter paving way for 'relatively peaceful' though dismissed as not credible elections in some quarters. In support of this claim, Mr Maregere the Director of The Ecumenical Peace Observation Initiative in Zimbabwe succinctly noted that, *"Political parties realised violence was no longer a viable political capital"* (interview 04.08.2014). This explains why political parties especially ZANU PF abandoned political violence in the 2013 elections. However, various Zimbabweanist narratives have always portrayed the MDC as a victim of violence, yet in some instances it was complicit as it also retaliated.

4.5 Seeding Hope: Giving Peace a Chance

Whether Zimbabwe managed to hold peaceful elections because of Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) efforts remains contested as it has been argued elsewhere that the incumbent (ZANU-PF) needed to re-strategise. Thus, Maregere argues:

JOMIC played a fundamental role in quelling challenges that were being faced in various communities. JOMIC managed to engage perpetrators and victims of violence. JOMIC implored political parties to desist from inciting violence through hate speech and inflammatory language (interview 04.08.2014).

His view is also that the church played a huge role in imploring political parties to preach peace. Interestingly and contrastingly, it was the same church that seemed inactive and mute when violence raged on unabated in the run up to the 2008 June elections. Objectively analysed, it can be noted that the church did not always speak truth to power at the opportune time when calls for peace were made. Calls for a transition to a more peaceful form of politics, can also be associated with peace rallies that were carried out by the political leaders in all the major cities of which, I was fortunate enough to participate in one in the third largest city, Mutare. Data findings which will be discussed in the following chapter reveal that many respondents attribute the peaceful environment to the formation of institutions and the crafting of the supreme law.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research findings basing on the empirical data that was gleaned from the field work. I have briefly analysed different perspectives from the fieldwork on why the elections of 2013 were relatively peaceful. In the next chapter, I map out and present the institutions that were created during the GNU era and how such institutions may have helped to bring violence-free elections and open up possibilities for peace-building in the country among opposing political groups.

Chapter 5 GNU as an Institution: How to Build Sustainable Peace

'Peace Begins With Me, Peace Begins with You, Peace Begins with all of Us' (late vice president John Landa Nkomo⁸ (co-chairperson of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration representing ZANU-PF).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter maps out the various institutions and interventions that were established during the GNU era seeking to promote, bring and entrench peace. In situating these institutions the chapter appraises Lijphart's model of consociationalism in analysing the efficacy, effectiveness or lack of such institutions in embedding sustainable peace. The chapter also juxtaposes the other abstract supporting concepts such as legitimacy, peace building and reconciliation so as to map out how the institutions and mediation managed to break the cycle of political violence. The chapter will further analyse how such efforts created an enabling environment that led Zimbabwe to embark on a *praxis* of conducting peaceful environment and elections.

5.2 Role and Nature of Government of National Unity (GNU)

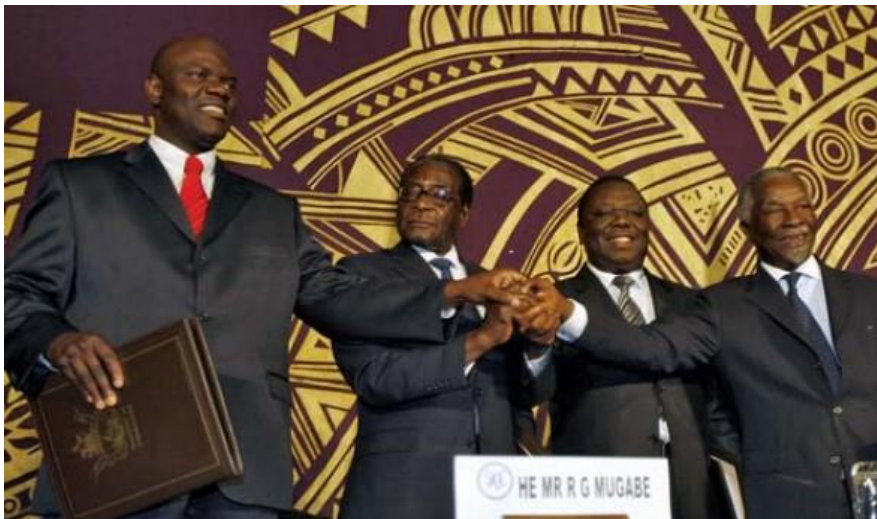
GNU came into existence after rigorous negotiations by Thabo Mbeki and the three main political protagonists. The coalition government assumed office in February 2009. The GNU provided for a consociational democracy framework (See Lijphart 1985) as it had executive powersharing from the top to bottom. It was as follows, the president was Mugabe, Prime Minister Tsvangirai, Deputy Prime Ministers namely Thokozani Khupe (MDC-T) and Professor Arthur Mutambara (MDC). In brief the GNU comprised of the three principles, cabinet, co ministers and legislators (Chigora and Guzura 2011).

Morgan Tsvangirai was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe by President Mugabe on the 11th of February which was followed by swearing in of the two deputy prime ministers. Swearing in of the Cabinet ministers was done on the 13th of February 2009 (Masunungure 2009). GNU was set out specifically to be a transitional government for five years. It set itself a task to restore peace, create a new constitution, and provide for a national healing and reconciliation process with the ultimate aim of paving way for a free, peaceful and fair election. To substantiate the existence of the transition Masunungure (2009: 4) posits that, "It arose out of and because the electoral route to democratic transition had been blocked. [...] designed as a framework for unblocking the blocked democratization". To achieve these fundamental tasks it created various institutions that I will elaborate on later in this chapter.

⁸ Words of the late Vice President John Nkomo which he used to say in public gatherings in 2009 to promote peace.

The GNU kick started by disagreements on allocation of ministerial posts but however it is worth noting that, it was a necessary ingredient in ending political conflicts. GNU principles showed commitment in ending political violence by having weekly meetings to review on the progress of various institutions. Periodic meetings of the cabinet and parliamentary debates can be acknowledged for cultivating peace as it was conducted in a sisterly and brotherly manner. Despite the positive fruits of GNU Matlosa and Shale (2013: 17) argues that, “The Zimbabwean power-sharing agreement was nothing more, nothing less than a mechanism for the political elite to access power...” Regardless of such shortcomings GNU to a larger extent went on a milestone in bringing sanity by reopening of schools and hospitals that were closed before its existence, and also more importantly instilling a culture of tolerance amongst opponents. In a nutshell, GNU’s efforts culminated into a national healing that made it possible to transition from overt violence of June 2008 to a relatively peaceful election in 2013.

Figure 1: Signing of (GPA): First Step Towards Peace



The above picture from left: Prof Mutambara MDC, President Mugabe ZANU-PF, M.Tsvangirai MDC-T and Thabo Mbeki-then President of South Africa during the Global power sharing Agreement signing ceremony in Harare 2008.⁹

5.3 Power Sharing and mediation as a Peacebuilding Mechanism

From the research findings it emerged that, GNU substantially helped in providing a platform for inter party engagement between the political parties. Although there are competing explanations from the respondents, the most plausible interpretation is that GNU complemented efforts with all the other strategies. At least all the respondents alluded to the fact that power sharing created a space for dialogue which resulted in constitutional reforms and tolerance across the country. Fundamentally, negotiations facilitated by then President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa was vital in bringing a new chapter that ended the Zimbabwean

⁹ Source of photo in Figure 1: <<http://nehandaradio.com/2013/01/19/gpa-reform-relegated-to-back-burner/>>

political turmoil. But some of the sticky and fundamental issues on the negotiating table included issues of sharing ministerial positions, constitutional reform, electoral reforms, media reforms and the de-militarisation of the Zimbabwean politics (Mokhawa 2013).

Mbeki's so called 'quiet' diplomacy played a crucial role in stabilising the political crisis which had bedevilled Zimbabwe, a crisis largely believed to have germinated by the turn of the new millennium in the year 2000. Generally South Africa as a neighbour was concerned in dealing with the Zimbabwean crisis so as to bring an end to the seemingly deepening refugee and political crisis which was destabilising Southern Africa. Zimbabwe had become a problem child on the SADC agenda for far too long a period, hence the commitment and desire on the part of SADC which gave South Africa the mandate to mediate in the Zimbabwean political crisis.

A series of SADC Heads of States meetings such as the Maputo summit¹⁰ and SADC troika meeting¹¹ discussing Zimbabwe shows that SADC played a facilitative and critical role in bringing political leaders to the negotiating table in the post-June Run - off elections. SADC was the guarantor which superintended the agreement. Mbeki and his facilitation team called for an election roadmap in Zimbabwe and checked on the progress of such against set timelines (See Raftopoulos 2010). Essentially Thabo Mbeki and his successor Jacob Zuma played a crucial role in pushing for national dialogue that ultimately led to the conduct of relatively peaceful elections in Zimbabwe.

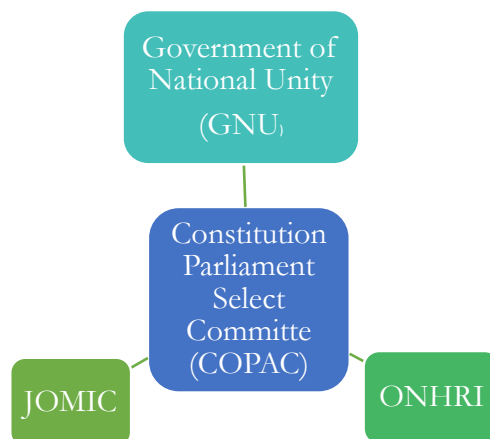
In my view international activism by SADC, AU and various UN agencies played an integral role in bringing electoral democracy in one way or another. The UNDP channelled financial resources to the constitution making process which was a milestone achievement to the Zimbabwean citizenry. However scholars such as Lyons (2002) taking from the case study of Liberia succinctly observes that it is difficult to hold democratic, credible and legitimate elections in a post –conflict setting. This argument is further collaborated by various factual realities such as the legacy of fear and the legacy of institutions (ibid.) and how such impact on building new democratic systems. Evidently there was a gap in as far as national healing and reconciliation is concerned as there was no institutionalization of such prior to the GNU. Coalition government thus was a welcome move as various institutions like ONHRI and JOMIC were setup. Lijphart's consociational democracy is very applicable in the Zimbabwean case as the grand coalition provided for a tripartite nature in all the established institutions that I will map out below.

¹⁰ See Communique of 32nd SADC Summit, Maputo held on 17 and 18 August 2012 <<http://www.changezimbabwe.com/index.php/news-mainmenu-2/1-latest/4180-full-text-of-32nd-sadc-summit-maputo->> accessed on 8 October 2014.

¹¹ See Mambo, E. (2013) 'Mugabe elections rush in disarray' 19 July <<http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/07/19/mugabe-elections-rush-in-disarray/>> accessed on 08 October 2014.

Figure 2: Mapping of Institutions – Diagram

This figure shows the institutions that were established by the GNU to promote peace



Source: Author's Own Diagram

5.4 Role of Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC)

The Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) was set up to spearhead the constitution making process in Zimbabwe. The provisions of the GPA (2008:6) in Article VI clearly stipulate that, “...it is the fundamental right and duty of the Zimbabwean people to make a constitution by themselves and for themselves”. The mandate of COPAC was to make a new constitution in which future elections could be held. The constitution making process led by COPAC was people driven, democratic and all inclusive as it comprised of outreach teams well represented by MDC-T, MDC and ZANU-PF. Despite facing logistical challenges and disagreements here and there, Mr Chimusipu, Chitungwiza Provincial Secretary for MDC noted that, “The process brought peace somehow as former opponents could sit side by side at outreach meetings and outreach teams travelling in same vehicles” (interview 15.08.2014).

I personally took part in the constitution making process and allude to other respondents who observe that outreach meetings were done in a peaceful manner. Although the process created a culture of peace some respondents bemoaned the fact that some people were being wiped into action by use of various ways like bussing and couching people before the meetings. One might therefore argue that the process was not peaceful. Zimbabwe's momentous process of crafting a constitution took four years which was characterised by ‘deadlocks’¹² and bickering. The so called ‘people driven’ process was questionable as the

¹² See Kawadza ,S. (2012) 'Copac hits deadlock'
<<http://www.herald.co.zw/copac-hits-deadlock/>> 17 May , accessed on 15 September 2014

drafting process was dominated by the political parties and they produced a compromised negotiated document (Raftopoulos 2013).

COPAC secretariat consisted of 25 parliamentarians from (MDC-T), (ZANU-PF) and (MDC). Within that, a tripartite nature of co-chairpersons comprised of Paul Mangwana (ZANU-PF), Douglas Mwonzora (MDC-T)¹³ and Edward Mkosi (MDC). In a synopsis the constitution making process was inclusive throughout and this powersharing framework was crucial in changing the attitude of the society. According to Manyeruke and Hamauswa (2013: 209), “About 70 outreach teams with eight members each were deployed to the districts to conduct the consultations”. Some critics however noted that in some cases the process was acrimonious as in some provinces people were forced to remain silent during the meetings under “Operation *Chimumumu*” (Zinyama 2012: 150). COPAC can be applauded for coming up with a constitution for Zimbabweans although the document came as a result of intensive negotiations by politicians. On a more positive note accepting the new constitution, Zimbabweans overwhelmingly voted yes and peacefully in the March 16 referendum of 2013 thus paving way for fresh elections which was anticipated to be peaceful (Hartwell 2013). The referendum was peaceful because the GPA principles had endorsed the outcome of the document hence they encouraged supporters to vote peacefully.

5.5 Role of Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration

ONHRI was set up under the provisions of Article 7.1 (c) of the GPA (2008:7) which states that,

The parties hereby agree that the new Government: ...shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre and post-independence political conflicts...

ONHRI was a very important institution towards wider peacebuilding and reconciliation. It emerged from the research that ONHRI provided for a peace architecture through partnerships with churches and peacebuilding trainings in communities. Overall all these pertinent institutions were born from the GNU as supported by Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013: 96) when he proclaimed that, “A product of the Global Political Agreement, ONHRI has attempted to come up with a code of conduct that will hold political parties accountable for political violence perpetrated by their supporters.”

Unlike the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 1995 in South Africa¹⁴, Zimbabwe failed to institutionalise such an important establishment for national healing purposes. Muchemwa et.al. (2013: 153) argues that, “It appears that for

¹³ Is a relative.

¹⁴ See South African History Online, <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc-1995>> accessed on 5 November 2014.

too long the government has been avoiding the truth, fearing it will open a Pandora's box that will be very difficult to deal with afterwards, hence adopting the 'letting sleeping dogs lie' attitude". Despite lacking financial resources ONHRI contributed significantly in reducing political violence through holding consultative meetings with victims and perpetrators of violence which was indeed a prerequisite of peaceful elections. The healing process was driven by John Nkomo from ZANU-PF, Mrs Holland (MDC-T) and Mzila Ndlovu from the MDC (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013).

5.6 Role of Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC)

Article 22 of the GPA provided for the formation of JOMIC. The organisation was established mainly to monitor the implementation of what was agreed in the GPA by all the three political parties. JOMIC and ONHRI received criticism from Mr Chimusipu who argued that, *"To a lesser extent, these committees were a toothless dog, firstly cases could be reported and no further investigation could be done by police but instead victims could be victimised after reporting"* (interview 15.08.2014). However JOMIC was seen rather favourably as having contributed much in encouraging peace by some respondents. Mr Kadenge in an interview highlighted that the organisation was very instrumental in encouraging people to coexist. He chronicled the tripartite setup, meetings held by JOMIC, attending trade fairs and supporters of different parties playing soccer whilst wearing their political parties' regalia and more importantly decentralisation into various provinces. This in itself provided a platform of tolerance and cascading peace in fragile communities. By and large the influence and efforts of JOMIC were significant in resolving political differences in societies.

5.7 Restoration of Trust in Institutions: Building Legitimacy

The lack of legitimacy is a cause of concern in contemporary African electoral processes. However, there are variations and similarities among these African countries. Some countries such as South Africa and Ghana being different from such a trend. It emerged from the study that Zimbabwe needs to draw lessons from such electoral best practices. Mandaza forecasts that for Zimbabwe to have an *"uncontested, free, fair, legitimate and credible future elections, there should be transparency in the electoral processes such as that which has been absent hitherto"* (interview 30.07.2014).

However, in the case of Zimbabwe, as from 2000 i.e. also under GNU state sponsored political violence has remained a symbol and manifestation of state repression and dictatorship. Such a trend has also influenced the electoral politics and voting behaviour in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans in most rural communities have therefore remained deeply polarised along political lines. It is mainly due to the repetition of the cycle of violence and the ingrained legacy of fear (Lyons; 2002) that many citizens still have sentiments of fear, vengeance, hatred and mistrust towards fellow community members. This has then emerged as a

challenge to peacebuilding in grassroots communities. From the research findings it was established that the Zimbabwean police had largely been inactive when it comes to apprehending perpetrators of political violence as they normally give lame excuses and ordering victims to bring the perpetrators when reporting their cases. The question then is how the powerless and the victimised can apprehend the perpetrator?

Despite the major financial and logistical challenges Mr Kadenge who worked as a Liaison officer for JOMIC under the MDC-T ticket appraised the GNU's efforts notably constitution making process by COPAC, efforts of JOMIC and ONHRI when he highlighted that, "*setting up of these institutions was fundamental as evidenced by the decrease in the incidence of violence due to political tolerance*" (interview 22.07.2014). Mr Muziri gave credit to the efforts of the government of national unity when he orated that,

Involvement of MDC formations in national institutions such as Cabinet also made a contribution in reorganisation of institutions. Changes in our laws which enabled Parliament to contribute towards a more inclusive approach to recruitment for national institutions like Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and Media Commission etc., also contributed towards a general acceptance and respect of these institutions because they took more of a national colour than the previous dispensation (interview 23.07.2014).

Therefore, it is significant to establish and build trust in a reformed police force which cannot afford to adopt a hands off approach to political violence. There is also a need to replicate institutions such as ONHRI and set up National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and give the latter broader jurisdiction, logistical and financial support in order for it not to become a white elephant.

5.8 Building on Interim Institutions

The research also established that in order to promote peaceful non-violent and democratic elections, Zimbabweans needed to build on the interim institutions that were established during the GNU era. However, this study makes a caution that such a process needs to be holistic and broad based. Scholars like Lyons (2002) have cautioned over placing too much expectations in 'new' institutions especially in post-conflict countries. As was the case in Angola, Liberia and Bosnia – Herzegovina (ibid.). It is generally believed such institutions will be weak, incapacitated to fully usher in democratic system.

It is worth noting that Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) refused to produce a voters roll to the general public for purposes of voter inspection in line with principles of transparency and legitimacy (Norris; 2014) in the 2013 elections. In order to have sustainable peace and acceptable elections in future it emerged that there is need to de-politicise and cleanse the electoral management body from partisan politics. GNU can also be criticized for establishing what Schedler (2006: 1) terms "institutional facades of democracy", COPAC as one of the striking example. COPAC co-chairs could play 'cat and mouse' games and each defending party position hence compromising the wills of the people. The result was a negotiated document which obviously threw away some of the views of the people. Basing on such political deadlocks one can therefore safely conclude that power sharing framework is not the best way to solve conflicts as politicians at times circumvent the wills of the citizens in order to retain power.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter mapped out institutions that were pertinent in bringing the transition from violence to national reconstruction. The main focus was on the role of GNU, COPAC, ONHRI and JOMIC's efforts in promoting peace in Zimbabwe and this was analysed and supported by empirical data from the research findings. The next chapter is the conclusion of the whole study.

Chapter 6: Synthesis and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I conclusively marry the theory and concepts with research questions, objectives and data analysis to sum up the key findings of this study. In short, this chapter synthesises the overall analysis of data collected and summarise how the research questions were addressed. This chapter is both backward looking and future-oriented, since it rounds off by making a few recommendations, in the form of ‘signposts’ towards more sustainable peaceful elections in Zimbabwe in future.

6.2 Conclusion

Overall, the study has established that the theory of consocialism, concepts like legitimacy and peace building are important analytical concepts in answering and explaining the main research question of this study ***“How did the Government of National Unity (GNU) manage the transition from violent to relatively peaceful elections and towards peacebuilding in Zimbabwe?”***

The main intention of the thesis was to find out the role that GNU played which made it possible to transition from violent elections of June 2008 to a relatively peaceful election of July 2013 and a more peaceful country. The respondents I interviewed had various perceptions about such a transition. The main question was explicitly answered in chapter 4 and 5 and key findings are summarised in the next paragraph.

The main conclusion of the study is that GNU managed to move from violence to relatively peaceful elections due to a number of factors namely establishment of peacebuilding institutions, such as ONHRI, JOMIC and COPAC that reformed the political landscape. The other reason that came out clearly was that; the experiences of 2008 that violence does not yield any results but rather causes mayhem which disintegrate communities. The study concludes that, although efforts of institutions has helped, but largely the conduct of peaceful elections were as a result of a combination of factors that includes political will from ZANU PF and all the state apparatuses and general consensus amongst political parties to shun violence. So basing from the empirical findings it emerged that the condemnation of violence by the political leadership and other non –state actors also helped in managing the transition from violence to peace. ZANU PF’s need for legitimacy also played an instrumental role in holding of a peaceful election in 2013 after the ‘illegitimate and sham’ June 2008 polls. Most significantly, the other reason that helped Zimbabwe transition from violent to ‘peaceful’ elections in 2013 is attributed to the international pressure, through Mbeki facilitation and mediation that ushered in the GNU which heralded a new political dispensation in Zimbabwe. Such intervention is worth praising as it contributed significantly in cementing relationships of the former rivals.

Building on Lijphart, the consociational democracy framework neatly articulates how power sharing by the GNU helped in building peace and reducing electoral violence through its tripartite arrangement. In revisiting the central thrust of the study, the study has managed to answer the question on the extent

in which Zimbabwe managed to reduce violence to peace through the GNU framework. Chapter 5 clearly mapped out institutions that contributed to peaceful co-existence from the GPA principles cascading to fragile communities. To sum up the research established that there was a drop in cases of violence and more importantly murder cases in the run up to July 2013 elections. On this note, it is therefore safe to conclude that the coalition government facilitated for a peaceful election devoid of murder as in the previous elections largely by a change in behaviour across the political spectrum.

Judging by the enduring electoral violence in Zimbabwe, it is becoming seemingly apparent that there is no vaccine for violence. Nevertheless, I posit with political will, strong effective apolitical institutions, collective individual will, rule of law - Zimbabwe can cultivate and reap a culture of peace that will necessitate conducting of peaceful and democratic elections in future. In this regard, the study cautions that the quality of 'peace' still remains worrying as some isolated episodes of violence were recorded in the GNU era and post GNU due to shortcomings of the institutions. Zimbabwe is now at the crossroads as evidently seen by the demise of the power sharing deal that indeed was instituted to broker peace and ensure democratic elections. Besides its positive efforts in restoring peace ONHRI, COPAC and JOMIC failed to eliminate violence completely. Maybe it will remain a question of 'half a loaf is better than nothing'.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Engendering Culture of Dialogue and Tolerance

Admittedly, it seems from the GNU era - Zimbabwe seemed to have witnessed a relatively peaceful election and some resemblance of peace within communities. However, others still argue that the GNU brought what can be termed as 'sworn peace' which was elitist and somehow 'fake' as it did not completely eradicate violence at grassroots level. Mokhawa (2013: 30) noted that, "... the agreement between the two MDCs and ZANU-PF, the GPA, became an odyssey that did little to resolve the deeply entrenched issues that were at the core of the crisis in Zimbabwe." Given the shortcomings of the GNU some respondents argued that there is need for institutions to build peace from below and also to promote a culture of dialogue in communities. This can also be done through setting up and operationalizing the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission which is provided for in the new Constitution of Zimbabwe¹⁵ so as to embark on serious reconciliation. In the same view it also came out clearly that there is a need for establishment of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in communities which can deal with micro level conflicts that arise during election campaign periods.

6.3.2 Security Sector Reform (SSR)

The debate on Security sector reform has raised an animated debate before and in the GNU era. But as alluded by Chitiyo (2009) there is need demilitarise that

¹⁵ See Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) Amendment (No. 20), Chapter 12 Part 6.

is separating men and women in uniform from partisan politics. Arbitrary arrests to human rights activists and opposition supporters by the partisan police force has been witnessed in the GNU period thus violating Article 13 of the GPA (2008: 9) which clearly states in Article 13.1 that:

“State organs and institutions do not belong to any political party and should be impartial in the discharge of their duties.”

Surprisingly such provisions were blatantly violated in some cases as the security forces could selectively incarcerate the opposition members and human rights defenders. It came out very clearly in research findings that militarisation of civilian processes such as elections has been the norm in Zimbabwe especially in June 2008. As discussed in chapter four the military was largely blamed for fanning political violence which culminated into an illegitimate election. To get rid of this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 220) is of the view that there should be “de-Zanufication of national institutions”. De-politicisation of such will then engender a culture of political pluralism and respect for people’s fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly and other political rights as enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution and in the Global Political Agreement.

6.3.3 Geo–Political Perspectives

Continental institutions such as AU and SADC have also at times lacked capacity to solve the Zimbabwean electoral ‘crisis’ (Tjønneland 2013). Others even suggest that these institutions have become weary of the Zimbabwean situation as Zimbabwe has been on the agenda in many SADC meetings. As such, Mr Mwonzora cautioned that in preventing future electoral violence, “*the International community should not sleep on Zimbabwe*” (interview 17.07.2014). However, it should also be noted that over the years, the ‘international community’ was reluctant to intervene in the Zimbabwean crisis as President Mugabe has always invoked the arguments of territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence through what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) terms “Mugabeism” thus condemning and brushing off external interference in the domestic Zimbabwean politics. Given this backdrop, it might therefore be expecting much from the so called ‘international community.’ However it is worth emphasizing that in 2008 SADC contributed tremendously in laying a democratic trajectory to Zimbabwe although the mediation was a long and tiresome process.

6.3.4 Level Playing Field and Peace Alternatives

There is also a strong need to create a level and even electoral playing field to avoid legitimacy crisis (see for example Norris 2012; 2014) that may arise as a result of electoral disputation and contestation as evidenced by the June 2008 elections in Zimbabwe. Using Norris’s concept of legitimacy it emerged that electoral conflicts may or may not arise due to contested legitimacy as evidenced in the Zimbabwean case. Mrs Mudombi noted that, “*peaceful elections contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation by enabling people to work together because it gives legitimacy to the government*” (interview 29.07.2014). Breaking the culture of violence requires concerted efforts between the political parties to sing the same song of preaching peace from the same hymn book, be it before or after, the voting processes. Zimbabweans also need to dialogue whether they should prioritise amnesia, justice, remorse, healing, truth telling, forgiveness or reconciliation in light of the

state's troubled history of political violence. This then helps in deepening and broadening a culture of peace in communities.

6.3.5 Alignment and Implementation of the New Constitution

In improving future elections in Zimbabwe, I also argue that there is a need for a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach especially from civil society organisations in pushing for reform and for implementation, alignment and respect of the new laws in light of the new constitution. Electoral laws and 'rules of the game' should be properly put in place by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. This will help in bringing legitimacy and in reducing perceptions of illegitimacy that nurtures electoral violence.

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Appendix 1: List of interviewees

Interview with Mr Tony Reeler, Senior Researcher with Research and Advocacy Unit, carried out on 16 July 2014.

Interview with Mr Makururu, A Zanu PF youth League Member, conducted on 15 July 2014

Interview with Mr Mandikwaza, Director of Policy and Research in the MDC-T held on the 17th of July 2014.

Interview with Ms Chihota, Deputy Mobilising Secretary in the smaller faction of MDC led by Professor Ncube conducted on the 19th of August 2014.

Interview with Kimberley, A Coordinator in the MDC-T vice president's office, conducted on the 18th of July 2014.

Interview with Mr Matibiri , Acting Deputy Secretary General in the MDC-T, conducted on the 18th of August 2014.

Interview with Dr Mapuva, lecturer in the Department of Development studies at Bindura University of science Education carried out on the 24th of July 2014.

Interview with Mr Misheck Chimusipu, MDC Chitungwiza Provincial Secretary, held on the 15th of August 2014.

Interview with Mr Philip Muziri, Programmes Advisor Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust conducted on 23 July 2014.

Interview with Mr Douglas Mwonzora, MDC-T National spokesperson and former co-chairperson of the Constitution Parliamentary Select committee (COPAC) carried out on the 17th of July 2014.

Interview with Honourable Mawere, Zanu PF Member of Parliament for Mutoko East constituency carried out on the 26th of August 2014.

Interview with Mr Austin Muswere, Projects officer General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe conducted on the 22nd of August 2014.

Interview with Moreblessing Mbire Information, Research and Communications Officer of Centre for Applied Legal Research carried out on 22 August 2014.

Interview with Ms T Chademana, Administrator, Election Resource Centre carried on the 4th of August 2014.

Interview with Mr Kadenge, Director Domestic Affairs MDC-T Secretariat, and Former JOMIC National Political Liaison Officer conducted on the 22 of July 2014.

Interview with Mr Maregere the Director of The Ecumenical Peace Observation Initiative in Zimbabwe conducted on 4 August 2014.

Interview with Honourable Dorcas Sibanda, Deputy Chief Whip and Member of Parliament for Bulawayo Central MDC-T conducted on the 25th of August 2014.

Interview with Mrs Mudombi, Legal Resources Foundation Advocacy Officer carried out on the 29th July 2014.

Interview with Ms T Rutsito, Zanu PF activist and Women's University student in the Sociology Department conducted on 5th of August 2014.

Interview with Dr Mandaza, Director of Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES TRUST) conducted on 30 July 2014.

Interview with Mr Chakanyuka (pseudo name), A farmer and ZANU PF supporter carried out on the 31st of July 2014.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

How did Zimbabwe manage to move from violent to relatively peaceful elections under the Government of National Unity?

To what extent did the government of national unity managed to reduce political violence since its inception?

In your own view, how can peaceful elections contribute to wider peacebuilding and reconciliation amongst Zimbabweans?

Which intervention strategies did the coalition government came up with in reconciling and rebuilding peace in fragile communities?

Did you participate in the constitution making process and if so was it a peaceful process and did it contribute to peace building?

What's your perception about the future elections in Zimbabwe? Do you foresee a situation were we are going to revert back to the violence of 2008?