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Values, Perceptions, Conceptions, and Peacebuilding: A Qualitative Case Study of a Mexican Business

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Abstract

The direct assault on criminal organizations by the Mexican government has not resulted in a more peaceful country, a circumstance that continues to impact people's sentiments about their safety. In previous studies, this research team qualitatively explored the social construction of perceptions regarding organized criminal violence and peace in Mexico. Personal experiences and observations were found to be the main social constructors of participant perceptions of criminal violence and peace. This paper represents the continuation of that research and involved 25 participants employed in a private corporation ranked as one of the top companies to work for in Mexico. We explored any variations between these participants and the initial 80 participants in the previous study. The results indicate that the patterns tend to repeat, suggesting that despite offering economic and labor incentives, training, and education programs, as well as taking other measures to establish a favorable working atmosphere, when the surrounding environment in which workers live is violent, those incentives may not be sufficient to generate overall positive peaceful sentiments among them. Only a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding may be

effective in producing a change in worker perceptions regarding organized criminal violence and the possibilities for peace in their country.

VALUES, PERCEPTIONS, CONCEPTIONS, AND PEACEBUILDING: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF A MEXICAN BUSINESS

Introduction

The Mexican government's direct assault on criminal organizations has not resulted in a more peaceful country. In its 2016 edition, the Global Peace Index ranked Mexico among the 25 least peaceful countries on Earth (IEP, 2016), dropping six spots since the previous edition. The environment of violence has had a profound impact on Mexicans' perceptions of their security, on the state of their fear, and on their views regarding the possibility of establishing peace in Mexico in the near future (Buendía & Laredo, 2010; Consulta Mitofsky, 2011).

The first stage of this project was conducted by one of the authors on this research team as his dissertation project (Meschoulam 2014). The second stage involved 80 participants, representing different genders, ages, and professions, living in various parts of the country, who were interviewed about their perceptions of violence and peace. In that study, the research team (Meschoulam et al., 2015) found that the manner by which research participants formed ideas and perceptions regarding organized criminal violence and peace was based primarily on their own experiences, their conversations, and the experiences of people closely related to them, and less on their connections to mass media. In fact, participants tended to distrust mass media, considering it part of a corrupt system. It was through those own experiences, observations, and conversations that participants concluded that peace in Mexico would be achievable in the future only by addressing the structural and systemic factors that are the root causes of organized crime. In the view of participants, this long-term approach would have to include actions such as combating corruption, fostering education, and reducing economic and social inequalities in the country. The authors concluded that structural factors should be not only addressed at the federal level but also emphasized as part of a local approach to positively impact people's experiences and observations.

This paper presents the continuation of the work of this research team (Meschoulam et al., 2015) by involving participants who work in a private corporation, ranked one of the top companies to work for in Mexico. This ranking is due to the company's favorable working conditions and socially responsible actions, and the incentives it provides for employees. The objective of this qualitative study was to explore whether 25 employees of one socially responsible company presented any variations in contrast to participants from the previous study (Meschoulam et al., 2015), in the way they socially construct their sentiments and ideas about the conditions of their country, its future, or the possibility of establishing peace in Mexico. We wanted to understand whether their personal experiences at work made a difference on those perceptions, and to what degree this was evident to those interviewees.

This paper presents the findings of the third stage of the project and will begin by addressing the background and conceptual framework of the case study, including a summary of results from the

previous two stages of the project and a brief literature review on the role of for-profit corporations in peacebuilding. The methodology will then be described to present the findings, discussion, and some notes on the implications of those findings for businesses and policymaking.

Background and Conceptual Framework: Business and Peacebuilding

Literature covering the relationship between business and peacebuilding and the role of businesses in peacebuilding is rather vast. Based on their studies of environments in which there is an active war or an armed conflict situation to research on countries such as Colombia or Mexico, where organized criminal activities interfere with economic security and the business environment, several authors seem to agree about the growing role of corporations as responsible elements of the systems of which they are part. Bennett (2002) explained that corporations usually avoid security operations associated with peacekeeping. However, as the author noted, globalization is causing the role of the private sector to become increasingly more relevant in efforts to establish stability and security, as those factors directly affect the performance of private sector businesses. Therefore, in the author's view, corporations now share a role in the social responsibility for keeping peace, maintaining stability, and avoiding conflict.

Nevertheless, peace is not only the absence of violence (Alger, 1987; Galtung, 1985). According to Ekanola (2012), there must be different conditions, some objective and some subjective, for a society to be considered peaceful. Objective conditions include physical security, material prosperity, and harmony among the members of that society. Subjective conditions include the emotional wellbeing of the members of that society, the subject of extensive consideration in the three phases of the present investigation. Czerw (2014) made the distinction that:

Social well-being refers to life in bigger groups and societies to which we are not attached as to family and friends. It is connected to the satisfaction obtained from belonging to a given society, the emotions experienced in that society or the sense of integration with the society, the acceptance and of own social environment, the sense of own contribution to the society, the sense of purpose of social environment development and the sense of coherence in the society [...] Employee well-being is defined as the assessment of one's own professional life in the context of evaluation of both job type and social professional environment. (p. 98)

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, 2015) presented pillars of positive peace that include a well-functioning government, low levels of corruption, equitable distribution of income, and a sound environment for business. Therefore, as Bennett (2002) stated, corporations must work in collaboration with their governments and social organizations, and use their commercial and financial capabilities to foster stability in the surroundings where they operate. It must be recognized that as businesses have become more influential in their environments and in the lives of their workers, they have also become more socially responsible, acknowledging that labor contributes not only to the personal well-being of workers but also to a better society (Uccello, 2009). Some companies may do so because they care for their societies and are responsible actors;

others, may behave responsibly because it is profitable or because they fear the moral or economic damage that can be inflicted upon them should it be known that they do not behave responsibly.

In their investigation of a specific case of a company in Colombia, Azuero, García, and Duque (2012) noted that a corporation may have primary responsibilities, such as those inherent to their activities, secondary responsibilities, such as improving the impact of their business to their workers and their communities, and tertiary responsibilities, which relate to improving their environment. Thus, the private sector is seen by different authors as a resource that can contribute to building the conditions required for a durable and stable peace in societies with armed conflicts or criminal organizations, such as Colombia or Mexico (Jiménez, 2014). In some cases, corporations may have larger budgets, more capacity, more managerial expertise, and more knowledge than governments—all of which can contribute to peacebuilding. Not only do corporations create job opportunities, they also often have an apolitical nature. Thus, businesses “in theory, may be capable of acting where others can’t” (Berdal, 2010, p. 44).

Different authors provide examples of such contributions by corporations, such as the case of Nestlé. In Colombia, Nestlé works in collaboration with the Foundation for Reconciliation to create spaces for forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, and to improve living conditions in areas in which the company operates (Jiménez, 2014). Additional authors have noted other roles corporations may play in peacebuilding: from roles in post-conflict situations (Berdal, 2010) to roles in active armed conflicts or other circumstances that occur in places where organized crime operates, such as in Colombia or Mexico (Arredondo, Rosas, & Villa, 2011).

Alger (2007) noted the potential role of business in conflict prevention and conflict management, while other scholars wrote about how business plays a role in fostering human rights and ethical behavior (Dubach & Machado, 2012) and in promoting education, health, and security (Wolf & Engert, 2005). Some companies fund projects to help marginalized or high-risk populations (Nelson, Jane, & Jenkins, 2005). Arredondo, Rosas, and Villa (2011) focused on studying programs for volunteers to improve the quality of life experienced within the company during labor hours.

On the topic of violence, Wennman (2012) advocated for involving corporations in violence reduction and prevention through proactive strategies to make businesses responsible for the zones in which they are located. Wennman mentioned the need to have enough information to analyze the causes and consequences of violence on multiple levels, including on people and communities. However, he also proposed multidimensional responses, as no single actor can do that job by itself. These additional actors include other corporations and other social sectors, such as the government. Taking a different perspective, Alger (2007) explained that peace is not a condition that can be created by governments alone. Just as non-governmental or social organizations must be involved, corporations too must assume their role in fostering the conditions required to build peace. All these actors are interdependent. In Alger’s view, researchers must work with businesses and inform them about their potential to contribute to peace. The question remains: "How can researchers

more adequately study these peace building roles and evaluate their effectiveness?" (Alger, 2007, p. 551).

There appears to be a lack of qualitative studies in Mexico that explore the impact positive labor experiences might have on the social construction process of violence and peace among workers. The present investigation intends to contribute to filling that gap.

Values, Perceptions, and Peacebuilding: Phases 1 and 2

The first two stages of this project were based on a social constructivist approach (Assmann, 2008; Fagan, 2010; Stenmark, 2009). According to that approach, realities, such as violence or peace, or for that matter, the ability to change them, are constructed by the process of human interactions. In the field of public policy, social constructivists argue that underlying "assumptions, values, norms, rationales, social understandings, and shared knowledge about realities within human groups" (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) inform policy issues and design. Thus, understanding how such values, norms, and ideas are socially constructed is important, not only for policy makers and public administrators but also for society as a whole.

With that in mind, this research team (Meschoulam, 2014; Meschoulam et al., 2015) conducted the first and second stages of a research project seeking to explore the process through which participants from different places in Mexico socially constructed their values, perceptions, and conceptions regarding organized crime-related violence and peace in their country. Eighty qualitative interviews were conducted in 29 different neighborhoods in Mexico City and in 13 other states within Mexico. Consistent responses and pattern repetition emerged, despite differences in gender, age, profession, and location. According to those results, participants tended to socially construct their values, perceptions, and conceptions regarding organized crime-related violence and peace primarily on the following elements:

- (a) Individual experiences and observations;
- (b) Conversations with family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and associates; and
- (c) The experiences of those in close proximity.

Participants showed distrust of traditional mass media, which was linked to expressions of distrust of the government. In the participant view, there is a deeply corrupted system in which a perverse circle is formed among the government, criminal organizations, and mass media. For this reason, even though most of them have some contact with newspapers, radio, or TV, most participants expressed that they do not feel influenced by those elements. Fear and terror stood out as some of the most frequently mentioned categories among participants who live outside Mexico City, which may be a result of the high rates of violence in those places.

The present case study is an expansion of the previous two phases of the project, and it was designed to explore a very specific type of environment: a corporation that not only contributes to the development of its society through socially responsible measures but is also regarded by its workers as a very favorable place to work. As Arredondo, Rosas, and Villa (2011) noted, in

Mexico, there are few companies that engage in integrating activities. Businesses are focused mainly on contributing through donations or by funding social projects. This is why the target company, which from this point will be called Company X for confidentiality reasons, was worthy of study.

The Company X

The following information is obtained from the company's website and personal communication with company personnel. For confidentiality reasons, the sources cannot be cited. Company X has been rated as one of the best 50 Mexican corporations for the past three consecutive years. This recognition is awarded to private Mexican corporations by the Deloitte firm, with the support of the Mexican National Bank and the Technological Institute of Monterrey. This distinction is granted to companies that exhibit high performance in business management and have good business practices in areas such as sustainability, investment in human capital, leadership, planning, and operation. Company X also received the Gilberto Rincón Gallardo Award for Inclusive Companies in 2013, 2014, and 2015, which recognizes private organizations using practices designed to integrate people in vulnerable situations, and promote diversity and inclusion. The company also received the Super Empresas Expansión award, which is granted following a survey of an organization's employees regarding working conditions and motivation. The company is then audited by a firm specializing in human resources to verify the practices and procedures the corporation uses. Finally, Company X has received the Social Responsibility Award from the Mexican Center of Philanthropy and the Alliance for Corporate Social Responsibility.

One of the priorities of Company X is to retain its personnel and aid in their personal development. Therefore, several corporate training programs and personal coaching at all levels are available. Executives are trained in business management practices such as personnel evaluation and monetary and non-monetary development incentives. Company X receives continuous feedback from its workers regarding its organizational culture and atmosphere. It promotes ethical behavior by providing direct contact with the Deloitte firm for workers who wish to report suspected unethical situations.

Company X develops training workshops on topics of inclusion, sustainability, and community aid. It has a track team, and it also has an internal school where workers can complete their basic studies after work. There is transportation service for workers and a dining room in which employees pay only a small sum to obtain high-quality nutritious meals. Company X provides a favorable environment for its workers, well above average among Mexican businesses.

Research Question

The research question that guides this study is as follows: What are the processes by which values, perceptions, and conceptions regarding the current state of organized criminal violence and peace possibilities for Mexico are socially constructed among 25 people who work in a very favorable environment? Assuming that personal experiences and observations were the main social constructs underlying perceptions and conceptions of criminal violence and peace among the

participants in the previous phases of the investigation, we wondered what variations might be encountered between those initial 80 participants and the 25 people who work in a very favorable environment, in terms of their social-construction process. This study also explored the role government and criminal organizations played in participant perceptions regarding organized criminal violence and peace possibilities for Mexico, the role of mass media, and the role of oral conversation in the process of social construction.

Methodology

This study was conducted through qualitative deep interviews with 25 participants who work in Company X.

Setting

The country of Mexico consists of 31 states and one federal district. The data collection took place in Company X, located in the State of Mexico (Estado de México), the state that surrounds Mexico City. Company X provided interviewers with time and designated quiet places where interviews could be conducted in comfortable privacy.

Participants and sampling strategy

A combination of purposive sampling and random sampling strategies were used to select the participants. The sample was designed to represent, as much as possible, the demographic patterns and income levels within the company. Of the 25 participants, 14 were women and 11 were men, which represents the gender composition of Company X. Seeking to represent the age composition of the corporation, we interviewed seven individuals under 24 years of age, 17 people between 25 and 59 years old, and one person above the age of 59. The company has 258 employees, of which 32% are considered low income, 59% are middle income, and 9% are high income or executives. Thus, the sample consisted of 8 low-income participants, 14 middle-income participants, and 3 high-income participants or executives. The sample is not intended to be representative of the Mexican population or of socio-demographic patterns in Mexico. The procedures for contacting, recruiting, and conducting the research adhered to the ethical standards used in previous studies conducted by this research team, already published in 2014 and 2015, which are in compliance with Mexican law regarding the privacy and security of information and data. All the participants signed informed consent forms.

Data collection

Data collection consisted of 25 face-to-face deep interviews conducted under safe and comfortable conditions. The interviews were all conducted in Spanish, the native language of the participants. The same semi-structured interview protocol that was used for the previous phases noted above was applied. This was of particular importance since the purpose of the study was to explore potential differences in responses and pattern repetitions between participants of this study and participants from previous phases of the project. Variations of the questions were used only to obtain further details. All the interviews were digitally recorded. Notes and signal elements from the interviews were also used.

Data analysis

As in the first two phases of the project, interviews in the present study were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo qualitative data management software. All the categories used for the first and second phases of the project, whether preexisting or emerging, were now treated as preexisting themes. Because of the nature of the present case study, three additional categories were precoded, paying close attention to whether those specific themes were mentioned by the participants: *Positive strategy/Government efficiency*, *Positive experience at work*, and *Situation improving*. Attention was also paid to the potential emergence of new themes. Words, sentences, or paragraphs were encoded according to these categories to detect patterns and repetitions. Table 1 shows the preexisting categories.

Table 1. Preexisting categories

Social Constructors: Experience/Observation/Conversation	Social Constructors Mass Media	Social Constructors: Other	Perceptions and conceptions: Causes of violence and solutions for peacebuilding
<i>Experience of someone close</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Family social construction</i>	<i>Structural peace conception</i>
<i>Experience at work</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>Education and learning social construction</i>	<i>Education as a peacebuilding factor/education investment</i>
<i>Positive experience at work</i>	<i>Radio</i>	<i>Religion social construction</i>	<i>Structural violence conception</i>
<i>One specific experience</i>	<i>Movies</i>	<i>Old age social construction</i>	<i>Grassroots peace conception</i>
<i>Oral conversation</i>	<i>Distrust of Mass Media</i>	<i>Books social construction</i>	<i>Government not succeeding/not efficient/negligent</i>
<i>Excessive violence (high-impact violence or terrorist tactics)</i>	<i>Little or very little contact with mass media,</i>	<i>Cultural social construction</i>	<i>Positive strategy/Government efficiency</i>
<i>Fear or terror</i>	<i>Music or Cultural programs in General</i>	<i>Public spaces interaction social construction</i>	<i>Distrust of government</i>
<i>Security forces out in the streets cause stress or impact my perceptions</i>	<i>They exhibit too many violent images or stories</i>	<i>Social or political meetings social construction</i>	<i>Corruption</i>
<i>Frustration/Impotence</i>	<i>Analysis programs are interesting</i>		<i>Lack of family care or lack of parents' care</i>
	<i>Not Interesting</i>		<i>Participation/engagement as citizens in public issues</i>
	<i>I used to watch (read/listen) to them but not anymore</i>		
	<i>Internet social construction</i>		
	<i>Social media</i>		

			<p><i>Ambition/Crime is easy money</i> <i>Situation deteriorating</i> <i>Situation improving</i> <i>Mexicans are naturally violent</i> <i>Mexico or Mexicans are passive (do not act or engage)</i> <i>Loss of values</i> <i>Lack of social interaction, lack of links</i> <i>Mexicans are naturally peaceful</i> <i>My hometown is less violent than other places</i></p>
<p>Perceptions and Conceptions related to Peace</p> <p><i>Peace understood as links and relations</i> <i>Peace understood as respect for or absence of violence/not “messing” with one another</i> <i>Peace understood as tranquility, calmness, Inner peace</i> <i>Peace not related to poverty or underdevelopment</i> <i>Peace is possible / Peace is not possible or too difficult</i> <i>Mexico is not peaceful</i> <i>Mexico is peaceful</i></p>	<p>Perceptions and Conceptions related to Organized Crime (OC)</p> <p><i>Tough approach to OC/we should not negotiate</i> <i>OC too powerful</i> <i>OC normalized (OC is part of Mexican life), Long-term problem (Participant believes violence is a long-term problem)</i> <i>OC an international problem</i> <i>OC not violent/lives in peace within communities</i></p>		

<i>Principles and values as components of peace,</i>			
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Consistent with the first and second studies, some of these themes appeared frequently in the participant discourse, whereas some appeared only a few times.

Trustworthiness

Several triangulation methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the results. Interviews were conducted by four different members of the team who had experience using the protocol. The identified patterns and repetitions were confirmed, even though the interviews were conducted by different interviewers. Second, a peer-review process was used in which data were shared with all team members, and group discussions were held to minimize personal biases. As evidence grew that this study was producing results that were very similar to those of the previous two studies, more meetings with the team were held to ensure that all researchers/interviewers were paying close attention to any variations or differences. Finally, following the data analysis, all the categories and their frequencies were contrasted to the first and second stages of the project to determine whether the patterns were consistent with or different from the results from the previous studies.

Transferability

The first two stages of this research provided results for 80 participants who lived in very different areas of Mexico City and in various regions of the country. In this third stage, we added 25 additional interviews with participants who work in a favorable business environment. However, neither the first two studies nor the present case study intend to produce results that could be generalized to the entirety of the Mexican population. The samples are small and limited. Moreover, findings from the present study cannot be immediately generalized to all workers in the target company. Nevertheless, the consistency of pattern repetition among the participants, who represent very different locations and professions, and the consistency of the results across different genders, ages, and working environments strengthen the hypothesis suggested by this research team (Meschoulam et al., 2015), which should be tested through further research in Mexico or elsewhere.

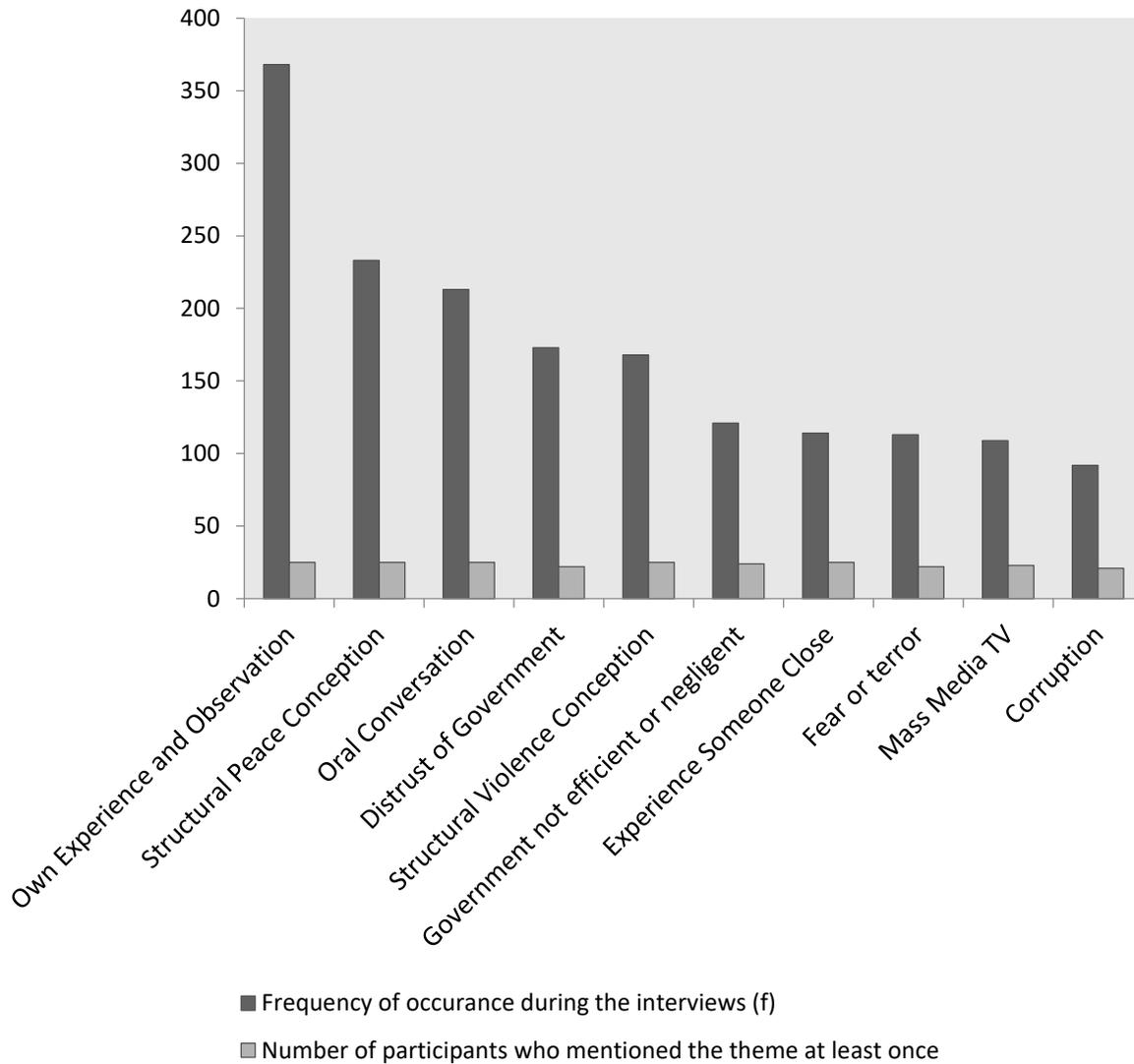
Results

The patterns from phases 1 and 2 of the project (Meschoulam 2014; Meschoulam et al., 2015) tend to repeat among the 25 interviewed workers of Company X. The most frequently occurring themes among the 25 interviews were *Experience and personal observation*, *Structural peace conception*, and *Oral conversation*; each of these themes was mentioned by all the participants. A general overview of the most frequent themes is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Ten most frequently occurring themes; Total participants: 25

Categories coded	Frequency of occurrence during the interviews (f)	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
Own Experience and Observation	368	25
Structural Peace Conception	233	25
Oral Conversation	213	25
Distrust of Government	173	22
Structural Violence Conception	168	25
Government Not Efficient or Negligent	121	24
Experience of Someone Close	114	25
Fear or Terror	113	22
Mass Media TV	109	23
Corruption	92	21

Figure 1: Overall frequencies. This graph shows the saturation of the first 10 categories.



General overview and contrasts

i) Experience, personal observation, and oral conversation

Experience and personal observation was the most frequently mentioned theme by the 25 participants (f=368 or 14% of all mentions). Oral conversation was the second (f=213 or 8% of all mentions). The seventh most frequently mentioned category was *Experience of someone close* (f=114 or 4.3% of all mentions). These patterns confirm the tendency found in previous phases of the project. Participants in this investigation tend to socially construct their values, perceptions, and conceptions of organized crime-related violence and peace mainly from their own experiences; from social conversations they have with family, friends, coworkers, or associates; and from the

experiences of people close to them. Following are some typical responses related to those categories:

I tell you, we live it; nobody has told us about it [...] One time, they even came in to search...I don't know whether it was the drug dealers, it seems to me they were because they carried heavy weapons [...]. They came into my house because they were searching for one of the drug distributors from my neighborhood, one who lived in the same building where I live [...]. They came in that night. It was 4 am, we were sleeping [...] and they came in kicking doors [...] and they opened my door with a kick. That is how we find about these things. Nobody tells us; we live it. (Interview participant 5)

Two years ago some people came in and assaulted me, and I didn't let them, I started fighting with them, and I got even with them [...] so then they grabbed a lady, one of them pulled out the gun, put it against my head and hit me with it, it was inside the subway, just imagine, and he got me sitting down and he shot me in the leg. Now you tell me whether there was a policeman around, no, there was no one. (Interview participant 10)

They were drinking and they mugged me, they hit me and sent me to the hospital for two months. They took my wallet, 80 pesos, my jacket, my tennis shoes, they broke some of my teeth, they damaged my ribs. (Interview participant 15)

Well, this is a little too frightening. One of my neighbors went out to work and she tells us her mother was on the phone with her boyfriend, she was going to work, she was in a taxi, and the boyfriend started to hear smashes and very ugly things (they were beating up a girl). The girl was screaming, and the girl disappeared for three days, and they found her dead inside a trashcan, so yes, it's too strong. (Interview participant 22)

In the basic school where my daughter goes, all the parents were called in because in the area of Azcapotzalco they were kidnapping children. We were told at school, I don't know whether these were urban stories, or whether they kidnapped a boy from the kindergarten, and they say they found his open body with no organs, and they left money for the parents in exchange for the organs. I don't know whether this happened or not, but the point is they told us. (Interview participant 4)

i) *Distrust of mass media and distrust of government*

Despite the fact that TV (f=109 or 4% of all mentions) appeared as a somewhat more frequently mentioned theme than in the previous phases of the study, other types of mass media such as radio (f=16) or printed media (f=28) were mentioned very few times during the interviews. Furthermore, *Distrust of mass media* (f=75) appeared repeatedly during the interviews. *Distrust of government* (f=173 or 6.5% of all mentions) was the fourth most frequently mentioned category, and *Government not efficient or negligent* (f=121 or 4.5% of all mentions) was also among the top 10 most frequently mentioned themes. When interpreting participant conversations, it appears, just as in the previous phases of this project, that even though they have contact with traditional mass

media, participants believe that these media sources are complicit with the government, which they generally do not trust. Thus, they tend to form their opinions and ideas from their own experiences, their conversations, and the experiences of closely related people, which represent sources that they do trust. As in the first two phases of the project, almost 50% of the total interview mentions relating to the social construction of values, perceptions, and ideas regarding organized criminal violence and peace consist of themes connected to experience (their own or someone close to them), whereas only 12% of the mentions are linked to traditional mass media (TV, radio, or papers). The following are some examples of such mentions:

Look, what I say of organized crime happens in the neighborhood where I live. Everybody knows who sells drugs, where they're distributed; the police patrols go by all the time, and they do nothing. We even know they sell drugs in the market; the kids walk by, and nobody can get in because we know someone is coming behind [...] and they walk by, and everybody knows, we all know what streets, we know who they are, and nobody does anything. (Interview participant 24)

No, I have never voted for the same reason; it would be like supporting the thieves, the ones who cheat you, the people who will rob you in the future and will make things worse. So, how can I trust people like that? (Interview participant 1)

I don't listen to the news because you know that what they tell you there, only half of it is true and half isn't. And you can't know which part is the truth and which is not. (Interview participant 10)

They (mass media) are sensationalist, you know they are not objective, and they do it to get better ratings; they make you see things as more violent they get your attention when they are actually not as critical as they say [...] so you trust half of what they say, and you distrust half. (Interview participant 11)

First of all, because media lives off its sales, it's a business, and they try to sell their stories to the highest bidder, and if the government pays them enough so they say what the government wants, well, they'll put it as the government wants it. (Interview participant 17)

ii) *Structural peace and structural violence*

Consistent with the first two phases of the project (Meschoulam 2014; Meschoulam et al., 2015), the second most frequently mentioned category was *Structural peace conception* (f=233 or 8.6% of all mentions). This means that participants tend to perceive organized criminal violence as being rooted in structural factors. These factors include a lack of equal opportunities, a lack of social justice, and the structural weakness of institutions, among others. *Structural violence* (f=168 or 6.3% of all mentions) was the 5th most frequently occurring category. As in the previous studies, participants placed special emphasis on factors such as education as peacebuilders, grassroots participation (Alger, 1987), and the need to combat corruption to build peace in the future. The following are some examples:

Well, there are many people in need because they never studied. Not because they didn't want to, but because they didn't have resources to do it. And no job. Or the job they have doesn't provide enough to sustain their families. (Interview participant 22)

Most kids today are leaving school for the same reason. If it's not for drugs, it's because of lack of money at home; they have not enough resources to keep studying. (Interview participant 12)

It's the government, because if the government doesn't provide jobs, well, people seek out the easiest paths, right? Such as consuming drugs and selling drugs, weapons, and such things. (Interview participant 15)

Well, it's what we live, what we see, isn't it? Let's talk about salaries. The more you earn, the more they take from you. If people start doing more things and they don't have enough money, then they start doing other things. There is a lack of opportunities for people [...] the government doesn't provide the choice of good teachers, good schools, nothing. (Interview participant 18)

I think if the government was well organized and there was not so much corruption, we would not be going through what we are [...] Some cops just mugged a friend, so who do you really have to watch out for? (Interview participant 10)

Most of the participants (64%) believe that Mexico is not peaceful. However, the majority of them (56%) believe that peace can be built as long as structural factors are appropriately addressed:

The government has to be very intelligent. We can't go without a strategy; we can't go simply arresting people in the streets. We must have long-term strategies, beyond political parties, beyond terms, in which the true objective is recovering social peace and the rule of law. (Interview participant 7)

I want to believe peace is possible. But it will come slowly, things will not change right away. Organized crime took many years to be in the shape it is, and in the same way, we will reach peace only in the long term. (Interview participant 22)

Contrasting results with previous phases

The results of the present case study were not found to be significantly different from the results of the previous phases of the project conducted by this research team (Meschoulam 2014; Meschoulam et al., 2015). With only one variation (explained below), the top eight most frequently occurring categories in this study are exactly the same as those that appeared in the previous phases. Several tests were conducted to detect pattern repetitions and variations between the different stages of the project. These tests included comparing (a) the overall results from stages 1 and 2 with the results of the present study; (b) the male and female participants in the present

study; (c) the male participants in this study with the male participants in the previous stages, as well as the female participants in the present study with the female participants in the previous stages; (d) participants of different ages in this study and participants of different ages in the previous phases of the project; and (e) participants with different income levels within Company X. In all cases, the three initial frequencies, as explained above, are exactly the same, and the first 10 categories remain very similar in all the phases of the project. Furthermore, although this qualitative study does not seek to identify any statistical significance, it is interesting to note the statistical similarities in the results from the present study of 25 workers from Company X and the results of the previous 80 interviews conducted in many different places in the country with people from very diverse professions and jobs. The category with the highest rate of occurrences in the previous study was *Experience and observation*, which represented 13.76% of all mentions, with 100% of the participants mentioning it at least once. In the present study, the most frequently mentioned theme is *Experience and observation* as well; it represented 13.72% of all mentions, and 100% of the participants mentioned it at least once. Something similar is true for the second and third most frequently occurring themes: *Structural peace conception* and *Oral conversation*. In the last stage of this project, those themes received 8.12% and 7.72% of all mentions, respectively, with 100% of the participants mentioning them at least once. Among the 25 Company X workers, those categories received 8.68% and 7.94% of all mentions, respectively, with 100% of the participants mentioning them at least once. Tables III, IV and V show the consistency of the pattern repetition among the participants in the different stages of the project.

Table III. Four most frequently occurring concepts among the 15 participants in the initial study published in 2014

Categories coded	Frequency of occurrence during the interviews (f)	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
Experience and personal observation	111	15
Structural peace conception (Peace possibility depends upon structural factors)	96	15
Oral conversation	79	15
Structural violence conception	64	14

Table IV. Four most frequently occurring concepts among the 65 participants from the second study published in 2015

Categories coded	Frequency of occurrence during the interviews (f)	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
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Experience and personal observation	854	65
Structural peace conception (Peace possibility depends upon structural factors)	476	65
Oral conversation	462	65
Structural violence conception	362	63

Table V. Five most frequently occurring concepts among the 25 workers from Company X

Categories coded	Frequency of occurrence during the interviews (f)	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
Own Experience and Observation	368	25
Structural Peace Conception	233	25
Oral Conversation	213	25
Distrust of Government	173	22
Structural Violence Conception	168	25

Searching for variations

As explained above, in this investigation, some precoded categories were added to detect any potential pattern repetitions in the interviews of the 25 people who work in a very favorable environment. These precoded categories were *Situation improving* (any potential mentions by participants indicating that the situation in the country was getting better), *Positive strategy/Government efficiency* (mentions regarding the government applying efficient strategies to build peace) and *Positive experience at work*. No significant results, however, were found regarding those categories. Although *Situation improving* received 38 mentions and was the 16th most mentioned category, another category from previous stages of the project, *Situation deteriorating* received almost as many mentions (f=37) and even a higher percentage of all mentions (1.37%) than in the previous stage of the project (0.94%). *Positive strategy/Government efficiency* (f=9) and *Positive experience at work* (f=6) did not receive a sufficient number of mentions to become a pattern. Given all the actions taken by Company X, the latter finding is worthy of notice. This means that when workers were discussing the topics of organized criminal violence and peace, they tended to speak about their experiences, primarily their high-impact experiences with violence, and the experiences of people close to them that occurred in their neighborhoods and on their way to work, whereas mentions of positive labor experiences were largely absent from their conversations. More variations between the different phases of the project and the findings from the present study were explored, but the deviations were minor. For example, mentions regarding *Mass media TV* seemed to occur somewhat more often among the 25 workers of Company X than among the participants in the previous phases of the investigation. In the

present study, it was the 9th most frequently mentioned category. However, when analyzing participant conversations, 84% of interviewees say they distrust mass media, which is consistent with the previous study published in 2015, in which 86% of the interviewees expressed the same distrust. Participants have some degree of contact with traditional mass media; however, they seem to distrust what they read, hear, or watch.

The fear factor

The conclusions regarding these comparisons are similar for the category *Fear or terror*. Participants in the present case study repeatedly spoke about the fear and terror they feel due to the violence they experience. This factor was mentioned more often among the interviewees from Company X than among the participants from Mexico City who were interviewed in the previous phases of the investigation. The findings of the present study, however, are rather consistent with the interviews of participants who live outside Mexico's capitol. In the second phase of this project, *Fear or terror* was the fourth most frequently occurring category among the participants from 15 other cities within the country, which was consistent with the high levels of violence that those cities are suffering. In the present case study, the same category was the 8th most frequently mentioned theme (f=113 or 4.2% of all mentions), with 88% of participants mentioning it at least once. This seems to be related to the experiences they have suffered with high-impact violence (f=84, 88% of the participants).

Consistent with the findings for other cities within the country, these feelings may be connected to the violence levels present in the State of Mexico, where most of the participants live. In 2014, the State of Mexico was ranked first nationally in intentional homicide reports, kidnappings, extortion, armed robberies, vehicle robberies, household robberies, and business robberies (Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública [SNSP], 2016). According to the National Survey of Victimization and Perceptions of Public Safety (ENVPSP, 2016), inhabitants of the State of Mexico feel more insecure than inhabitants of other areas. According to the results of the present study, this may be directly connected to their own experiences or to their conversations. The following are some examples of typical remarks by the participants:

My life has changed; we go out, and we must be prepared for anything; we don't know whether we are going to come back, we don't know whether we will be mugged or shot. So we learn to live in the midst of this; we can't hide, we'd like to build a cave and get inside, but unfortunately, we are in the middle of everything and we must live like this. (Interview participant 5)

You get into a taxi, and you tell them to take you to my neighborhood, and they say they don't go there for fear [...] it's very rare when a taxi driver takes you to my neighborhood. (Interview participant 9)

Sincerely, the only thing you do because of fear and for your safety is you turn away. I tell you, I mean, perhaps if I was alone, and I didn't care, maybe you try to report crimes or do something, but I am not alone, I have my daughters and my wife, and I wouldn't dare

because something could happen to me and they would be left alone, or something could happen to them. (Interview participant 10)

Yes, it's fear of going out because you are never safe anywhere. Where I live, you don't know anyone anymore. If the guy on the corner already has a big house, he built it overnight, well maybe he is a drug dealer now. And on the other side of the street, they arrested the gang that used to join there. Everything is very insecure now. (Interview participant 20)

Everything has become more fearful. If I, for example, live in Coacalco [State of Mexico] which is 20 minutes away from here, and on the streets, in the entrance of that municipality, you can now see the vans of the Navy, and the Army, always there, waiting. So people have to get used to that and adapt. (Interview participant 23)

Discussion of Findings: Implications for Public Policy and for Businesses

As in the previous stages of this project, the main finding of the present study is the consistency in pattern repetitions across gender, age, and income level within Company X. This consistency in pattern repetition is also observed between the present study and the previous two phases of the project. Participants seem to socially construct their values, perceptions, and conceptions of organized crime-related violence and peace from their own experiences and observations, from conversations, and from the experiences of closely related people. In their view, deep-rooted structural factors, such as corruption, income inequality, and lack of education are the main causes of organized criminal violence. They seem to distrust the government and regard it as an inefficient body that colludes with organized crime and sometimes with mass media, which they highly distrust. These patterns were substantially the same in all three phases of the project. More concretely, these patterns seem to be equally present among the interviewed workers of Company X, a corporation regarded as having a very favorable environment in which to work, despite the advantageous labor conditions in which the participants spend a large part of their days. This means that the experiences they have in their daily lives in their neighborhoods and while commuting between those neighborhoods and their workplace, as well as the conversations they have with family and friends about the experiences of closely related people, appear to have a much greater influence on their perceptions of and ideas about violence and peace than any positive experiences they may have at work. These findings lead us to the following implications:

1. Although the results of this study are limited in nature, the literature review above shows that when working in conflictive environments, corporations cannot act alone. Despite offering economic and labor incentives, training, and education programs, as well as taking many other measures to produce a very favorable working atmosphere, when the surrounding environment in which workers live is violent, those incentives may not be enough to produce overall positive peaceful sentiments among a company's workers. More concretely, when organized criminal violence is as high as it is in the State of Mexico (SNSP, 2016), it is likely that the perceptions and conceptions of violence and peace among

citizens will be influenced primarily by the high-impact violence, and not by any positive incentives that the company they work for may provide.

2. Consequently, in such environments, public policy designed to foster peacebuilding at the local level may have to be applied concurrently with corporate incentives and socially responsible measures to positively impact people's perceptions and conceptions of violence and peace.
3. Collaborative projects between the public, private, and social sectors must address both the improvement of working conditions and the level of peace at the local and experiential levels.
4. Corporations working in environments marked by organized criminal violence may have to assess the level of stress this causes among their employees to better help them address stress through the use of specialized tools and workshops, or even psychological first aid and intervention when needed (James, 2004). It is worth noting that in several of the 25 interviews, participants repeatedly thanked the interviewer for devoting time and attention to the workers' issues and concerns. The findings of this study seem to show that those employees may deeply value any measures specifically directed at addressing these areas of attention and concern, perhaps even more than they value other activities that the corporation is conducting.

Future research is suggested that replicates this study in other businesses and areas of Mexico (as well as in other parts in the world) to assess whether the patterns found in this case study tend to repeat. Moreover, the results from the present investigation, together with the results from the other stages of this project, could be used to design a quantitative research tool to determine the validity of the abovementioned implications. Until then, the findings presented here are limited.

Conclusion

As the third phase of a research project, the present case study sought to explore the same questions investigated in the previous stages through interviews with 25 people who work under favorable conditions; it also sought to determine whether the patterns from the two previous phases would be repeated. The present investigation found that the process of the social construction of values, perceptions, and conceptions regarding organized criminal violence and peace among the 25 participants from the Company X is composed primarily of the same elements that were present in participants from other locations and professions who were interviewed previously (2014; 2015). The lack of significant variations in those results suggest that only a comprehensive approach towards peace—which may involve collaborative efforts between the social sectors of society that address not only the experience of structural peace at work but also seek to foster peace at the local level in neighborhoods where workers live—may be effective in producing a change in workers' perceptions regarding organized criminal violence and the possibilities for peace in their country.

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Fragments of Peace in South Sudan: A Critical Look at the Intervention Strategies of the South Sudan Ethnopolitical Conflict

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Abstract

Conflict intervention strategies by the International Community to end the six-year-old ethnopolitical conflict in South Sudan have not yielded positive results, as fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition continues unabated. This paper examines peace intervention efforts, associated gaps, and the way forward for durable peace. The qualitative study is based on a theoretical approach that relied solely on secondary literature using text analysis. Four major intervention strategies were identified: South Sudan Ceasefire agreements, sanctions, peacekeeping operations, and the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. These strategies were largely influenced by realist and liberal paradigms to peace and security, with little attention to critical social-psychological issues. This paper recommends the adoption of an intervention strategy that prioritizes social-psychological issues of love, justice, trust, mercy, reconciliation, relationship building, and security.

FRAGMENTS OF PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN: A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES OF THE SOUTH SUDAN ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT

Introduction

Prior to attaining independence in 2011, South Sudan was engulfed in a war of self-liberation with the Northern-dominated central government of Sudan since 1983 (Human Rights Watch, 2006). The underlying cause of the conflict was a result of long-term political and economic marginalization and discrimination based on religion and ethnicity. This culminated in socio-economic grievances manifested in a civil war between the South, led by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, and the Islamic-based government in Khartoum (Baker, 2011). The 28-year conflict (1983-2011) left an estimated two million people dead and five million displaced, and saw the destabilization of both neighboring countries and the entire sub-region-Eastern Africa Bloc (Baker, 2011). Mediation efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and supported by the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and some western nations resulted in the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Included in the agreement was the provision that a referendum be held six years following for the people of the South to determine whether they prefer a unity government or a secession (Baker, 2011). This provision served as the basis for the 2011 referendum in which about 98 percent of the people of the South voted for a secession from the North (Astill-Brown, 2014). The outcome was the birth of a new nation: South Sudan. In turn, the people of South Sudan were faced with huge developmental challenges, as well as high hopes of prosperity and political stability.

However, the hope for peace and stability was short-lived. Since 2013, South Sudan has been engulfed in a civil war that has claimed the lives of approximately 17,000 people (Astill-Brown, 2014). Four million South Sudan citizens are facing severe food insecurity, 1.6 million are internally displaced, 202,700 are seeking refuge at the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and 1.2 million refugees and asylum seekers are fleeing to neighboring countries (Astill-Brown, 2014; Ralieg, Kishi & Moody, 2016; United States Institute for Peace, 2016; USAID, 2016). Although a political dispute within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) for control of the new nation, the current crisis has assumed an ethnic dimension (Koos & Gutschke, 2014). The two protagonists, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, relied on their respective ethnic groups—the Dinka and the Nuer—through the creation of negative ethnicity, “us” versus “them,” and negative narratives as a means of mobilizing support. The quest to find a solution to the conflict resulted the signing of a peace agreement on August 26, 2015, between the feuding groups: The Government/SPLM and the Sudan People Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO). The outcome was the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity on 29th April 2016 (Blanchard, 2016). The agreement was a sign of hope for the restoration of peace and stability in South Sudan. Less than four months into the reign of the Transitional Government of National Unity, on the eve of the country's fifth independence day celebration, violence broke out again between the Government/SPLM and SPLM-IO in Juba and spread to other parts of the city (Blanchard, 2016).

The return to violence has raised several questions regarding intervention and prevention strategies employed and implemented by the international community. This paper explores the strategies and measures adopted by the international community and other stakeholders to resolve the ethno-political conflict in South Sudan. Specifically, the paper uses secondary data to examine these strategies within the context of the social-psychological theory of ethno-political peace intervention processes. The paper considers the South Sudan Ceasefire Agreements, sanctions imposed by the United Nations and other Western Nations on some political leaders in South

Sudan, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS). The paper also identifies challenges associated with the implemented strategies, in order to offer solutions to the resolution of the conflict. The position of this paper is that strategies adopted to resolve the conflict have failed to critically address the fundamental problem of the conflict. As well, the strategies lack a coherent approach in addressing issues of identity, security, reconciliation and relationship building within the South Sudan body politic. This paper proposes a negotiation process that will lead to the exit of both political elites and their immediate associates within the short term. The paper further recommends establishing trust and reconciliation processes in the short term; building social, political, and economic institutions in the medium term; and democratic establishments in the long term.

Background

A theoretical framework for peace processes

Literature has been developed to understand the dynamics of peace processes, especially in ethno-political conflicts. The literature on what constitutes a peace process has been influenced largely by realists, liberal and social psychological perspectives. Peace processes are initiatives by a third party with the objective of ending a conflict and restoring peace (Akebo, 2016). The process is focused on shifting conflict dynamics from a violent to a non-violent state, with assistance provided to the parties in conflict so a formalized or mutual agreement can be reached (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2008). Although peace processes might differ from one conflict to another, Akebo (2016) argues that there are similarities to many peace processes. For Akebo, most peace processes are characterized by ceasefire agreements, direct negotiations, international mediation, and peace agreements on issues pertaining to political accommodation, disarmament, elections, and the building of democratic institutions. Likewise, Wallensteen (2011) observed that sanctions are also a major characteristic of peace processes.

Ceasefire agreements are central to contemporary peace processes and serve as one of the minimum requirements for party negotiations (Mac Ginty, 2006). They are generally aimed at bringing an end to the violence associated with the conflict. In addition to humanitarian reasons, there are security- and development-related issues, and political incompatibilities (Akebo, 2016). As a measure of contemporary peace processes, ceasefire agreements foster cooperation by changing the incentives, reducing uncertainty about actions and intentions, and controlling accidental violations of the ceasefire (Fortna, 2003). Although ceasefire agreements do not resolve conflict, they do serve as the pivot in creating the environment for peace processes to continue (Mac Ginty, 2006). They are considered central to the peace processes of every conflict situation (Fortna, 2003). Despite their role in facilitating peace processes, ceasefire agreements sometimes collapse and result in violence (Akebo, 2016). Some scholars have therefore described ceasefire agreements as mere “scraps of paper,” with no place in contemporary peace processes (Fortna, 2003). Ceasefire agreement compliance has always been problematic, often resulting in the failure of ceasefire agreements to achieve their intended purpose. This non-compliance phenomenon arises when the incentives to engage in violence exceeds the cost of breaking the ceasefire (Fortna, 2003). The ability of a ceasefire agreement to alter crucial attitudes, behaviors, and relationships of the parties is influenced by six factors: recognition, status and legitimacy, external incentives and resources, trust and confidence, contextual changes, intraparty dynamics, and whether or not claims are being met (Akebo, 2016).

Similar to ceasefire agreements, sanctions are a major part of every peace process (Wallensteen, 2011). Citing the case of Cote D'Ivoire, Wallensteen observed that sanctions and other peace processes prevented the escalation of conflict into genocide in 2000. Since the 1990s, the international community has used sanctions as an instrument to enforce norms and standards (Griffiths and Barnes, 2008). Sanctions encourage parties to cease unacceptable behaviors, whereas ceasefire agreements encourage negotiations (Griffiths and Barnes, 2008). Sanctions are targeted, focusing on particular decision makers. Likewise, sanctions have moved from dealing with all types of trade to dealing with particular commodities (Wallensteen, 2011). With the introduction of smart sanctions, the impact shifted from weakening an entire economy to targeting particular sectors; from creating hardships on the broader population to concern for humanitarian effects; from targeting any suspect to maintaining higher standards for human rights (Wallensteen, 2011). Although sanctions are not alone sufficient, they play a significant role in advancing the implementation of peace processes (Griffiths and Barnes, 2008). In any peace process, sanctions are aimed at weakening the military, diplomatic, and economic capabilities of the parties through the arms embargo; imposing travel bans; and freezing of assets respectively (Wallensteen, 2011).

The assumption underlying sanctions is that altering the behaviors and attitudes of parties in conflict plays a significant role in peace processes (Wallensteen, 2011). However, failure in behavioral change has led to the escalation of the conflict and "...can harden or entrench conflict attitudes and behaviours" (Griffiths & Barnes, 2008, p.11). Likewise, sanctions can result in difficulties in engagement, especially when parties consider the imposition of sanctions as bias. This can lead to more entrenched positions rather than impeding undesirable activities (Griffiths and Barnes, 2008). The main impact is stigmatization, as well as naming and shaming (Wallensteen, 2011). The effectiveness of sanctions on a peace process is mediated by the leadership of the conflicting groups regarding their concern about the consequences of the sanctions on the public or themselves, the credibility of the sanctions, the credibility of the third party imposing the sanctions, the kind of allies they have, the support they receive from their allies, and the wider conflict and how it shapes their expectation of the conflict (Jacobson, 2012).

Recent research suggests the introduction of positive sanctions alongside negative sanctions to initiate new connections and stimulate changes in the targeted actors (Wallensteen 2005 as cited in Wallensteen, 2011). According to Lund (as cited in Wallensteen, 2011) and others, positive sanctions are most useful in the early stages of conflict and in inter-state conflicts. However, in intra-states conflict, the application of positive sanctions could be problematic. Wallensteen notes, "If an outside actor offers military cooperation, security guarantees, or diplomatic support to the targeted actor it also means supporting a particular side in an internal dispute. At least, that could easily be the perception on the other side of a conflict divide" (2011, p. 178). Positive sanctions are also relevant in situations of regime change or leadership shift, where leaders (whether political or rebel) are paid to leave the country, as in the case of Haiti in the 1980s, Angola in the 1990s, and Liberia in 2003 (Wallensteen, 2011). However, this raises a fundamental dilemma regarding peace and justice: saving lives in the short term or focusing on long-term processes that can lead to deaths of many (Wallensteen, 2011).

Peacekeeping operations have become one of the most utilized strategies by the UN and other regional organizations in conflict zones peace processes (Ruggeri, Dorussen & Gizelis, 2017).

Peacekeeping operations focus on traditional monitoring of ceasefire agreements and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, protection of civilians from violence, and nation building, through which governing structures and the security sector are totally rebuilt (Johnson, 2004; Fortna, 2008). Others have argued that peacekeeping operations are also intended to halt armed conflict (Salvatore & Ruggeri, 2017). From 1948 to 2016, the number of peacekeeping operations carried out by the United Nations stood at 71, 53 of which occurred after 1990 (Sandler, 2017). The major debate in the literature has focused on whether peacekeeping operations are effective in achieving their mandate. Both qualitative and quantitative findings on the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations on peacebuilding and peace processes are mixed. Jacobson (2012) observed that in countries such as Liberia, Namibia, and Timor-Leste, where there has been little success of peacekeeping operations, it cannot be attributed solely to peacekeeping operations. For Jacobson, cooperative efforts of the conflicting parties, the host government, and peacekeeping missions produced the results. Citing Liberia, Jacobson argues that it was the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with peacekeepers from the United States of America that led to the exit of the then incumbent Liberian president Charles Taylor in 2003.

Jacobson (2012) argues that the failures of UN peacekeeping operations outweigh the successes, citing the Somalia tragedy of 1993, the Rwanda genocide of 1994, the Bosnia massacre of 1995, and the Israeli-Lebanon Border murders. In addition, increased prostitution attributed to peacekeeping forces, and allegations of sexual and child exploitations against UN peacekeepers make it difficult to conclude that peacekeeping operations are successful (Jacobson, 2012). Relying on quantitative research by Fortna (2004), Diehl and Druckman (2010, 2013), Gilligan and Sergenti (2008), and Doyle and Sambanu (2000, 2006), Sandler (2017) concludes, “peacekeeping operations foster peace in the short term and limit casualties” (p. 1893). The presence of peacekeeping forces is not a guarantee, but it tends to make peace more likely to last and last longer (Fortna, 2004). Based on this, Fortna concludes that “peacekeeping after civil wars does indeed make an important contribution to the stability of peace” (p. 269). In the study “Winning the peace locally: UN Peacekeeping and local conflict,” Ruggeri, Dorussen and Gizelis (2017), conclude that the presence of peacekeeping forces deters local conflict, reduces the possibility of a local conflict continuing for a year, allows for mediation of local grievances, and supports the relevance of local conflict dynamics.

Since the inception of peacekeeping operations as an instrument of peace building, certain principles have to be applied to their initiation and implementation. These principles include (i) consent of the parties (ii) impartiality (iii) the non-use of force except in self-defense (UNDPKO/DFS, 2008). Although these principles are to guide the smooth implementation of peacekeeping operations, in some instances, these principles have become bottlenecks to peacekeeping operations. In some conflict situations, host countries have relied on the principle of consent to either reject the deployment of peacekeeping forces or drive peacekeeping forces out of the country (Jacobson, 2012). This phenomenon is more prevalent when the political leadership of the country is a party to the conflict (Jacobson, 2012). Whatever the circumstances of peacekeeping operations, they do play a role in the implementation of peace processes especially when there is a peace accord or peace agreement.

Negotiated peace settlements with the signing of peace agreements have been increasing since 1945 (Bell, 2006; Stedman, 2001). This strategy has its underpinnings defined in Chapter VI, Article 3, Subsection 1 of the United Nations Charter (Fortna, 2005). Between 2000 and 2005, the number of conflicts ended by a negotiated peaceful settlement outnumbered those ended by military victory by a factor of four to one (Sisk, 2008 as cited in Mohammed, 2012). The trend towards this ratio began in the 1990s, when 41 conflicts were settled by negotiation, compared to 23 ending in outright military victory (Harbom, Hogbladh, & Wallensteen, 2006, p. 618). For the past 35 years, a total of 61 conflicts came to an end with about 77 percent of the conflicts ending through peace agreements, and 16.4 percent through the military victory of one of the parties (Fisas, 2016). The signing of a peace agreement sets the stage for the positive resolution to the incompatibility underlying the conflict (Wallensteen, 2011). Peace agreements have also become instruments for the reconstruction of societies emerging from conflict (Bell, 2006).

Three types of peace agreements can be identified based on the objectives. The full peace agreement focuses on settling the whole incompatibility, as happened in the Democratic Republic of Congo under the Inter-Congolese Political Negotiation of 2003. Under this accord, provisions were made for the conduct of elections, interim government, and a new constitution. The second type is partial agreement, where parties agree to settle some part of the incompatibility. Under this category, peace agreements are signed to deal with one issue at a time, until final agreement is signed signaling finality of the conflict. In Sudan, partial agreements such as security, wealth sharing, power sharing, and the administration of certain areas were signed between the SPLM/A and the Sudan government before the final agreement in 2005. The third category is the peace-process agreement in which parties agree to initiate a process to settle the existing incompatibility (Wallensteen, 2011).

The successful implementation of a peace agreement by conflicting and third parties has the potential to guarantee durable peace (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2008). Peace agreements are not rigid documents to which the parties must strictly adhere. Rather, the agreements are a demonstration of the commitment to peace. Peace agreements sometimes collapse which can plunge the state into anarchy (Stedman, 2001). The failure to successfully implement a peace agreement has been explained by many authors. Hampson (1996) argues that the poor design of a peace agreement itself may be a major source of its failure. The presence of spoilers is another cause of unsuccessful peace-agreement implementation in conflict situations (Mac Ginty, 2008). For a “spoiler,” the presence of peace is a threat to their power and very existence in some cases; whereas, the continuation of the conflict is an opportunity to project power and influence. Likewise, the ability of third parties to offer incentives and new power balances between the parties have a bearing on the successful implementation of the peace agreement (Hampson, 1996; Darby & Mac Ginty, 2008).

Peace agreements have been criticized for their interest only in sharing political power, democratization and elections without focusing on the core issues of the conflict (Mehler, 2008). Despite these challenges, the negotiated settlement of conflicts and the signing of peace agreements that address the fundamental problems of the conflict are appropriate vehicles to peaceful resolution of conflict (Mehler, 2008). How did these approaches play out in the South Sudan conflict and how were successful were they in bringing peace to South Sudan? It is this gap that this paper seeks to interrogate.

Context of the South Sudan Conflict

South Sudan gained independence in 2011 from Sudan after a prolonged and protracted conflict with the North. As part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, the people of South Sudan voted in a referendum for secession in 2011 (Astill-Brown, 2014). The buoyancy associated with the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement and referendum was not fruitful, as fighting broke out in the country in December 2013 (Deng et al., 2015). Political tension within the SPLM and country leadership erupted into violence, resulting in targeted ethnic killings in Juba, the political and administrative capital, and beyond (Sharland & Gorur, 2015). The dismissal of Vice President Riek Machar by President Salva Kiir on the grounds of plotting a coup, followed by Riek Machar's establishment of the SPLM-IO by, culminated in a twenty month long civil war (Small Arms Survey, 2014). Efforts by IGAD led to the signing of a ceasefire agreement in Addis Ababa in May 2014, later violated by both parties (Blanchard, 2016). Under the negotiation efforts of the IGAD, the two major partisans in the conflict, along with other stakeholders such as political parties, civil society, women, faith-based leaders, and eminent personalities signed a peace agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in August 2015 (Deng et al, 2015). The agreement called for the formation of a transitional government with Salva Kiir as the President and Riek Machar as Vice President, even though both parties did not agree on the composition and responsibilities of the transitional government. This move occasioned the return of Riek Machar to Juba to take his position as Vice President in April 2016, six months behind schedule (Kuol, 2016). A new cabinet was also formed as part of the peace agreement.

The implementation of the peace agreement was stalled, raising a number of questions about the commitment of the two leaders to the progress of South Sudan and the peaceful resolution of the conflict (Blanchard, 2016). The stalled peace process and intermittent outbreak of violence in some parts of the country predisposed the country to an outbreak of civil war (Blanchard, 2016). Three months into the return of Riek Machar and the formation of the transitional government, fighting between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar broke out on July 8, 2016, resulting in casualties on both sides. Full-scale conflict erupted on the 10th and 11th of July in the Juba capitol and other parts of the country, resulting in the killing of civilians and some UN Peacekeepers. The fighting also affected key humanitarian activities by staff of the United Nations, Peacekeeping Operations by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and the fleeing of Riek Machar to Sudan. The President subsequently appointed Taban Deng Gai to replace Vice President Riek Machar, a move some observers believe crippled the leadership of the SPLM/A-IO (Weber, 2016).

Although the current crisis is largely a result of a struggle for control over the "new" nation among leaders within the SPLM (Koos & Gutschke, 2014), the concept of negative ethnicity has played a prominent role. The two leaders have relied on the collective needs and fears of the two major ethnic groups to advance their personal interests. The introduction of negative ethnicity impacted the dynamics of the resolution processes and set the stage for the current ethno-political crisis. Salva Kier and Riek Machar, the two protagonists in the South Sudan conflict are both endeavoring to annex the power structure of the country and their respective ethnic groups—the Dinka and the Nuer. IGAD, the AU, and the UN are leading the mediation processes, while, China, USA, Sudan, and Uganda seek to maximize their interests in the conflict (SUDD Institute, 2014).

Results-Intervention strategies of the South Sudan Conflict

This section reviews the intervention strategies adopted by the international community, specifically the ceasefire agreements, sanctions, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan, and the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS) in resolving the ethno-political conflict in South Sudan since 2013. The author will attempt to understand how the theories reviewed have influenced the intervention strategies in South Sudan.

The signing of ceasefire agreements is the most utilized strategy to managing the ethno-political conflict in South Sudan. Since December 2013, no less than five ceasefire agreements were signed between the Government/SPLM and SPLM-IO (Astill-Brown, 2014). For instance, IGAD brokered two ceasefire agreements between the Government/SPLM and the SPLM-IO on January 23, 2014 (Marthe, 2014). The agreements called for the cessation of hostilities between both parties and the release of eleven political detainees jailed in December 2013 (Marthe, 2014). The agreement called on the parties to cease all military actions against each other and any other action that may undermine the peace process. These actions included cessation of the hostile media and propaganda campaign; necessity to refrain from all kinds of attacks (e.g., rapes, torture, and sexual abuse of civilians such as women, children and the elderly); provision of a corridor for humanitarian agencies to reach displaced person and persons in need of support; and, the establishment of a monitoring and verification mechanism under the supervision of IGAD to monitor implementation of the agreement in which all parties must declare the positioning of their forces (IGAD, 2015). The agreement also referred to the release detainees outlined in the commitment of IGAD and its partners to expedite action in that regard. It called on the parties to remain fully committed to the outcomes of the peace process and the establishment of an all-inclusive National Reconciliation Process (IGAD, 2015).

The purpose of signing the ceasefire agreements was, therefore, to curtail parties from resorting to violence to resolve conflict. This expectation was not achieved, as many of the provisions of the ceasefire agreements were violated and/or not implemented. This led to the collapse of the ceasefire agreement and the continuation of violence (Astill-Brown, 2014). According to Astill-Brown (2014), this outcome suggests that none of the parties yet recognize the futility of violence. This recognition is in line with Smith's (2003) conclusion that parties sometimes engage in ceasefire agreements for political and strategic reasons such as gaining public support and sympathy. Parties failed to observe the successive ceasefire agreements because both sides still perceived political advantage in renewed conflict (Astill-Brown, 2014). This phenomenon arises when incentives to engage in violence exceed the cost of breaking the ceasefire (Fortna, 2003). Similarly, the posture of IGAD member states created a lax atmosphere for parties to violate the ceasefire agreements. Relying on the principle of non-interference, IGAD member states failed to put punitive measures in place to respond to violations of the ceasefire agreements (Astill-Brown, 2014). The failure of the parties to observe the ceasefire agreements and the continuous use of violence forced the international community, especially the United Nations, to place sanctions and embargoes on some political leaders in the country.

Through Security Council Resolution 2206 in March 2015, the UN imposed sanctions on six individuals perceived to be responsible for or complicit in direct or indirect actions or policies threatening the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan. Sanctions included a travel ban and

assets freeze (UN, 2016). Sanctions targeting key individuals within the Government/SPLM and the SPLM-IO were imposed in March 2015 through June 2016 were extended through May 31, 2017. Sanctioned individuals from the SPLM-IO were Major General James Koang Chol, Major General Simon Gatwich, and General Peter Gadet Yaka. The sanctioned Government/SPLA representatives were Lieutenant General Gabriel Jok Riak, Major General Marial Chanoung Yol and Major General Santino Deng Wol (Leriche, 2015). Further efforts were made to include two other leaders in the list of sanctioned individuals, but this move was opposed by Russia and Angola (Blanchard, 2016).

Similarly, the United States Treasury imposed sanctions on two government officials of South Sudan and the former military chief of staff on September 6, 2017 (Sudan Tribune, 2017). These sanctions included freezing of assets under U.S. jurisdiction, a U.S. travel ban, and sanctions on three South Sudanese companies owned and controlled by Malek Reuben, the information Minister (VOA, 2017). Likewise, the United Kingdom, France, and New Zealand called for an arms embargo, which will not only increase the cost of importing arms into the South Sudan, but sends a strong signal about the international community's resolution to settle the crisis (Blanchard, 2015). Arms are major means of waging conflict and destroying human life and property. The arms embargo will reduce the number of arms in the hands of government forces and rebels, and reduce the killing of civilians. As the major tool for perpetuating the civil war, targeting the tools of destruction shape the dynamics of the conflict.

The imposition of sanctions on the six individuals will compel the political elite of South Sudan to work towards a sustainable peace in the country. The sanctions also serve as deterrents to other leaders, who will act accordingly for fear of facing similar sanctions (Leriche, 2016). While those who imposed the South Sudanese sanctions expected behavioral changes of the political troublemaking elites or their removal, the imposition of sanctions has not made any impact on the peace processes in South Sudan (Sudan Tribune, 2017). The goal of using targeted sanctions on individuals to compel behavioral change has not been achieved. Most of the people sanctioned are leading members of the two political blocs engaged in the conflict and hold key positions in government and the oppositions group. These individuals are not isolated, which makes it difficult for the sanctions to have the intended impact. This result is in line with Jacobson (2012) who argues that the effectiveness of sanctions is mediated by the impact on the sanctioned individuals and their communities. Targeted individuals are indifferent to sanctions that do not affect them in consequential ways. As well, sanctions have led to entrenched positions by the parties.

Recent sanctions by the U.S. on three members of the South Sudanese government resulted in claims that the sanctions are unfair, and the summoning the U.S. Ambassador to explain the actions. The government will view this reaction as support for the opposition group and will therefore take an entrenched position to the conflict. The move by the U.S. to impose an arms embargo has been rejected by the UN Security Council. The position of members of the Security Council on this resolution was largely fueled by self-interest in the conflict. China and Russia are considered major suppliers of arms to South Sudan and beneficiaries of their oil fields. These two countries consider such a move as a barrier to their interests. As an ally to China and Russia, South Sudan has been a major factor hampering the imposition of arms embargo on the government (Leriche, 2016). Neighboring countries have also served as major sources of arms to the government and rebel groups involved in the conflict. These factors have made the imposition of

arms embargo ineffective. Sanctions do not generate the desired peace, as they exclude leaders who are relevant in the peacebuilding process of South Sudan (Leriche, 2016).

Furthermore, the United Nations, in addition to the imposition of sanctions, has deployed a peacekeeping mission to South Sudan since the country became independent in 2011. The first peacekeeping mission, code named the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), was tasked to facilitate the stabilization process of the country. This task was created under a Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011) with a focus on state building. The 2013 eruption of violence pushed the United Nations to change the mandate of the UNMISS under UN Resolution 2155 (2014) to four key objectives: protecting civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights abuses, facilitating aid delivery, and supporting the cessation of hostilities (Sharland & Gorur, 2015). There was also an increase in the number of personnel from 7,000 troops and 900 police, to 12,500 troops and 1,323 police (Sharland & Gorur, 2015). In December 2015, the Security Council authorized an additional increase of 500 troops and 600 police (Blanchard, 2016). This decision afforded the UNMISS the opportunity to expand its operations to other areas of the country where a lot of civilians are protected (Blanchard, 2016).

To bolster the mandate of the UNMISS, the Security Council through Resolution 2304 (2016) authorized the deployment of a 4,000-person Regional Protection Force to provide a safe environment for the stabilization of Juba and the entire country. This result corroborates Butlers (2009) suggestion that peacekeeping provides an appropriate interim measure for stabilizing zones of conflict and assisting in the transition to a post-conflict settlement. At the initial stages of Resolution 2304 (2016), the South Sudan Government rejected the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, arguing that it was a violation of the nation's sovereignty and the consequence of a regime-change agenda (Blanchard, 2016). After discussions with the UN Security Council, the government agreed to the deployment, subject to approval of the composition, weapons, and equipment of the Regional Protection Force (Blanchard, 2016). Similarly, the government rejected forces from neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda, although such deployments are under Chapter VII of the UN. The Charter does not require the approval of the host government (Blanchard, 2016). The mandate of the peacekeeping mission has changed over time corresponding to the complex dynamics of the conflict. Since the signing of the Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan, the Peacekeeping mission has been tasked with overseeing implementation of the agreement.

The work of UNMISS has been criticized for failing to protect civilians and other aid workers (Blanchard, 2016). Recent attacks on humanitarian workers at the Terrain Hotel in Juba and the inability of the Peacekeeping Force to avert the attack suggest the weakness of UNMISS (Blanchard, 2016). Similarly, continuous attacks on UNMISS, especially by troops loyal to the government, including destruction of two UNMISS helicopters, raises questions of how equipped and prepared peacekeeping forces are to protect civilians, humanitarian personnel, and UN staff (Sharland & Gorur, 2015). Moreover, the South Sudanese Government has obstructed the operations of UNMISS on countless occasions. UNMISS was forced by the government to declare its logistical operations, despite a joint UN-Transitional Government communiqué on 4 September agreeing that national control over UN troop movements would be loosened (Nicki & Oystein, 2016). Within UNMISS, there are operational problems with respect to the chain of command. Considering that UNMISS consist of many nationalities, the chain of command becomes difficult

(*Sudan Tribune*, 2016). This situation resulted in the lukewarm attitude exhibited in recent attacks by government forces in Juba. These attacks resulted in the firing of the Kenya Commander of the UNMISS Forces which led Kenya to withdraw its Defense Forces serving under UNMISS (*Sudan Tribune*, 2016). Subsequently, Kenya vowed not to contribute to the Regional Protection Force and to disengage from the South Sudan peace processes. However, this position has changed following discussions between the current UN Secretary General and the President of Kenya (*Sudan Tribune*, 2017). These challenges have led many observers to conclude that UNMISS has not generated any peace, and therefore there is no peace to keep. This conclusion confirms Fortna's (2008) position that peacekeeping hardly contributes to peace, and that other non-military incentives push belligerents to observe peace.

Overall UNMISS has not been able to fulfill its mandate as outlined in the resolution to establish the peacekeeping operations. The Mission mandate of protecting civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights abuses, facilitating aid delivery, and supporting the cessation of hostilities has not been achieved, as there are reports of gross human rights violations by both the government and rebel forces. As well, aid workers and civilians have been targeted and killed. Also, there is the interethnic killing of civilians which is assuming the status of genocidal tendencies and continuous eruption of violence. Also, the breakdown in the implementation of the peace agreement points to the failure of the UN mission in contributing to state-building. This observation is in line with Jacobson (2012) who argues that peace operations have most often failed to achieve the objectives for which they have been established.

The Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan is considered one of the most comprehensive approaches towards peaceful resolution of the crisis since the conflict broke out in 2013. Mediation and negotiation efforts towards the signing of the agreement were initiated by IGAD with support from the UN and the AU (Vhumbunu, 2016). Relying on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which provides that regional bodies initiate and undertake mediation and conflict resolution activities, IGAD started a negotiation process between the Government/SPLM and the SPLM-IO. This strategy culminated in the signing of the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in August 2015 by the Government, the SPLM-IO, Senior Members of the SPLM, and other political leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, despite missed deadlines (Vhumbunu, 2016). The agreement was declared by the International Community as the appropriate framework for durable peace, reconciliation, and national cohesion (Blanchard, 2016). Peacefully negotiated settlements have often been considered the most appropriate options towards the resolution of conflicts around the world (Bell, 2006).

The agreement committed all parties to "ending the conflict, building an inclusive and democratic society founded on the rule of law, and undertaking political reforms" (Vhumbunu, 2016, p. 4). It also called on the parties to form a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) with the task of restoring stability, facilitating the resettlement of displaced persons, undertaking national reconciliation, and healing and concluding works on the national constitution adopted before independence (Blanchard, 2016; Pichon, 2016). The agreement further directed the TGoNU to devolve powers to state and local levels and to undertake public financial management, civil service, and security sector reforms. According to the ARCISS, the composition of the TGoNU was based on a power-sharing formula comprising 53 percent government, 33 percent SPLM-IO, 7 percent former ruling party political detainees, and 7 percent other parties (Blanchard, 2016).

Under the agreement, Salva Kiir remained as President and the opposition was given the opportunity to elect a vice president. Based on these arrangements, Riek Machar returned to Juba as First Vice President in April 2016 and the appointment of the TGoNU cabinet ministers marked the start of the Unity Government in South Sudan (Blanchard, 2016).

With the exception of the formation of the TGoNU and appointment of cabinet ministers, other provisions in the agreement have not been implemented. The stalled implementation process raised a number of concerns and fears within the international community. The agreement eventually collapsed when violence broke out in Juba in early July 2016 (Pichon, 2016). This development led to a number of scholars arguing that the agreement was signed under international pressure, and did not reflect the compromise and commitment of the parties (Vhumbunu, 2016). For instance, the threat of sanctions through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2206 (2015) on those whose actions obstruct the peace process was the apparent impetus for signing of the peace agreement by both parties (Vhumbunu, 2016). This was, therefore, a peace agreement under duress and not based on commitment from both parties.

Discussion

The current situation in this conflict calls into question the effectiveness of the four conflict intervention strategies implemented in South Sudan. Although all four intervention strategies are intended to facilitate peace processes, the objectives set for each of them have not been achieved. In the first place, there is no commitment to the peace processes by the conflicting parties. The manner in which the ceasefire agreements and the peace agreement were signed—coupled with the continuous violation of provisions in those agreements and blatant disregard for peacekeeping operation guidelines and sanctions—clearly shows that none of the parties is committed to peaceful resolution of conflict. For instance, the President described the ceasefire agreements as an attack on the sovereignty of the country (International Crisis Group, 2014). The signing of the peace agreement was based on threats from the international community and two regional bodies, IGAD and AU, which can be described as agreement under duress. The parties were therefore not committed to the agreement, did not agree on the composition and responsibility of the agreement, and did all they could to thwart the smooth implementation of the peace agreement (Blanchard, 2016). The signing of the ceasefire agreements and the peace agreement by the parties was simply to portray to the international community that they were committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, when in fact this was not the case. Both parties felt that violence was the only way out of the situation, as none of the provisions in the ceasefire agreements were implemented.

The four strategies were focused on satisfying the interest—the desire for power—of the parties in the conflict, which is secondary; and has not much bearing on issues of identity and security, which are fundamental to the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. The strategies have focused on elections, constitutionalism, the bill of rights power sharing, and less on the rights, needs, and interest of all stakeholders. The peace agreement is therefore elite-driven, intending only to satisfy the interests of the South Sudanese political elites and the international community, especially the West. The agreement is seeking a political solution to the conflict with no efforts toward addressing fundamental issues of identity, security, recognition, negative ethnicity, relationships, and reconciliation. This observation confirms the Mehler's (2008) position that some agreements are only interested in elites sharing political power, democratization, and elections, without focusing on the core issues of the conflict. Similarly, Vhumbunu (2016) argues that the international

community has regularly forced belligerents into signing peace agreements without considering whether or not these agreements adequately address the needs and interests of the parties in the conflict. The conflict is ethno-political, and its pattern has been largely defined by identity, recognition, and security. Therefore, any efforts at resolving the conflict should prioritize issues of identity and security before other components, such as elections, constitutions, and bills of rights.

Furthermore, the assumption that by signing the peace agreement, the conflicting parties were close to attaining peace was ill conceived. This is because the international community placed priority on signing the peace agreement to the neglect of concerns raised about the agreement itself, such as power-sharing and security arrangements. For instance, President Salva Kiir raised concerns about the scope of the permanent ceasefire and transitional arrangements. This arrangement provides for the “redeployment of military forces within Juba and outside a 25km radius from the capital city” (Vhumbunu, 2016, p. 6). In Kiir’s view, this would lead to the de facto demilitarization of Juba (Vhumbunu, 2016). Threatening to sanction any party that did not sign the agreement ensured that the peace agreement was signed under duress, and increased the likelihood that agreement terms would not be adhered to by the parties. Moreover, agreement framers did not consider relationship building as part of the process, as it was not included in the document. Trust among the parties was critical to ensuring that the peace agreement was successfully implemented, but this component was not explored. Thus, it was not surprising that the peace agreement, which constituted the most comprehensive approach to resolving the conflict, collapsed a few months after the formation of the TGoNU.

Similarly, the four intervention strategies did not take into consideration the cultural context of South Sudan. Once again, the international community with its liberal and realist ideas, assumed that strategies such as sanctions, ceasefires, and peacekeeping were universally applicable. Diehl (2008) notes that the success or failure of any conflict intervention strategy is influenced by a number of factors, apart from the composition of the strategy itself. For the author, the operational environment of the strategy such as the socio-cultural fabric of the context is a critical determinant of its success or failure. Fundamentally, the international community was much inclined to act in its own self-interest, and therefore no effort was made to contextualize the intervention strategies. For example, the sanctions placed on some leaders of the conflicting parties would have been more effective if the international community had framed these sanctions to reflect the collectivistic nature of South Sudan society, instead of singling out the sanctions at all. For this reason, that those sanctioned were not actually impacted by the sanctions.

In a collectivistic society like South Sudan, sanctions are ineffective. Sanctions are designed to work in individualistic societies because “no food leads to hunger and anger at the leaders.” The application of sanctions in communal and collectivist South Sudan is less likely to function in the desired way. In these environments, people stand with their leaders, as was the case in a high-context society such as Northern Ireland with the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Sean, 2009). Similarly, the historic buildup of South Sudan, where resistance has been part of the social life of the people due to long years of the liberation struggle from the colonial era has made sanctions even less relevant as a conflict management strategy in the country (Leriche, 2016). Overall, the failure of the international community to contextualize its strategies has ensured that most of the strategies are ineffective.

Continuing, the assumption that targeting individual leaders at the top of the political hierarchy in South Sudan will resolve the conflict was flawed. Although Kiir and Machar are seen at the forefront of the civil war, other key stakeholders in middle-range leadership and grassroots leadership, as well as leaders of unidentified rebels, are critical to the peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict. The focus of the four intervention strategies has largely been on the two protagonists who can be described as “men with guns” to the exclusion of other important stakeholders including local community leaders, women, and children. Community and local leaders are important stakeholders in the management of disputes in their respective communities, and therefore occupy a strategic position to contribute to resolving the political crises in South Sudan.

Communal chiefs and opinion leaders such as religious leaders and clan heads in South Sudan have served as a safety valve for people within their communities in terms of resolving disputes and protecting the identity of the people. Likewise, the role of women in the peace processes was largely ignored. Women and children bear the brunt of the conflict and therefore have an important stake in how the peace processes should proceed. Their needs and fears were largely ignored in all the four intervention strategies that have been implemented. Most importantly, other rebel groups in control of other settlements did not have input with respect to the four intervention strategies. Although the key actors are the government and the SPLM-IO, the existence of smaller rebel groups has been a challenge to security and stability of the nation. In order to have a holistic and practical peace process, the concerns of these groups have to be considered.

Implications

A critical analysis of the ethno-political conflict in South Sudan places it within the social-psychological school of thought. However, the understanding of the conflict by the international community has largely been influenced by realist and liberal perspectives. The failure to apply the assumptions and tenets of social-psychological theory has culminated in the neglect of critical issues fundamental to the conflict. Issues pertaining to identity, security, participation, recognition and, above all, respect for values did not receive much attention in the peace process. It is therefore recommended that the international community give credence to such issues through building relationships at all levels of society in South Sudan. Priority should be placed on reconciliation, problem-solving workshops using middle range actors (such as ethnic and religious leaders, civil society organizations, and scholars), and the development of systems that recognize the cultural values of the diverse ethnic groups in South Sudan. This discussion does not suggest, however, realist and liberal tenets should not be applied. Timing and priority are essential, whereas the emphasis has been on elections and power sharing, with little attention to relationship building across the socio-political divide of South Sudan.

Finding a lasting solution to South Sudan's ethno-political conflict is an arduous task not only for the international community, but for peace practitioners, researchers, and the people of South Sudan. There is a need for approaches and strategies that address the fundamental underpinnings of the conflict: political power, negative ethnicity, identity, and security. This paper, therefore, proposes a three-pronged approach: political settlement, relationship building, and reconciliation. The first approach is a proposal for concerted mediation efforts, which could take the form of

positive sanctions for the political exit of the two major players in the conflict—Kiir and Machar—from the political space of South Sudan. The major protagonists in the conflict should be allowed to select a country where they are comfortable and can trust that they will be safe.

The time has come for priority to be placed on securing peace for the people of South Sudan who have endured many years of suffering. Although this goal could be seen as traversing justice for crimes against humanity, the attainment of peace is paramount in South Sudan. This position does not suggest that justice is not critical; rather, that it is imperative to seek peace now to save more lives in the short-term. In that regard, the decision to give the two key actors asylum should be done with utmost trust backed by confidence building and transparency. This should be done under conditions that are favorable to the parties, the international community, and the larger interest of South Sudan. The successful exit of these two main players should be followed by the formation of a neutral transitional government with the responsibility of undertaking state building.

The second proposal is for the international community to embark on efforts to build relationships across the socio-political spectrum of South Sudan. The protracted and intractable nature of the conflict has created animosity between families, neighbors, ethnic groups, clans, and members of the same congregation. To a large extent, these soured relationships have influenced the peace process from local levels to the national level. It is therefore necessary for mediators to place critical attention on relationship building across the sociocultural and political settings of the country. Lederach (1997) describes these as the "uniquely human dimensions of protracted conflicts" (p. 23). This is necessary for establishing an enabling environment for the identification and implementation of political processes towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Finally, there should be implementation of reconciliation processes among the people of South Sudan. This process will establish "truth, peace, justice and mercy" (Lederach, 1997, p. 30) in a country that has been engulfed in ethno-political crisis since independence. As Lederach (1997) remarks, there is a need to move away from the mechanistic approach to peace-building, where emphasis is placed on elections, democracy, and power-sharing, to more engaging issues that deal with reconciliation and relationship-building. This goal could be achieved through interactive and problem-solving workshops targeting middle-level and grassroots actors and stakeholders, who are supported and encouraged to work collectively and collaboratively to develop positive images of each other. This has the effect of changing the underpinning perceptions the conflict from negativity to positivity. The reconciliation process should create the opportunity for collective engagement from the community level to the state level, where truth and forgiveness are sought by all South Sudanese. This process should be initiated by middle-range and local-range leadership, with support from the United Nations and African Union. Academic bodies, religious leaders, local civil society organizations, national and international civil society organizations, chiefs, and clan heads within South Sudan occupy an important space in the socio-cultural lives of the South Sudanese, and therefore have leverage in shaping the reconciliation processes.

Summary and Conclusion

The return of violence to South Sudan after the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unit under the Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan has called into question the kinds of strategies that have been adopted by the international community towards the peaceful resolution of this ethno-political conflict. This paper focused on four strategies

implemented by the International Community to resolving the conflict—ceasefire agreements, sanctions, United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan—in the context of three theories for prevention and management of ethno-political conflicts: realist, liberal and social-psychological.

Ultimately, all of these conflict resolution strategies failed. For instance, all five cease-fire agreements were violated by the parties who signed them. Sanctions imposed by the International Community on political leaders from both sides are ineffective, as those sanctioned still hold relevant positions both in the Government/SPLM and the SPLM-IO. Similarly, UNMISS is unable to provide protection for civilians, even in protection camps. Finally, the only comprehensive strategy towards the resolution of the conflict, ARCISS, was not implemented, resulting in the return of violence.

It is worth noting that the fundamental problem regarding the South Sudan conflict is the struggle for political power by both Salva Kiir and Riek Machar. Both parties, bent on tilting the balance of power in his favor, resorted to negative ethnicity and violence to achieve this purpose. Therefore, any strategy that seeks to introduce power sharing will not be feasible, as evidenced in the implementation of the ARCISS. None of the parties is willing to compromise, thereby making it difficult for mediators to bring finality to the three-year civil war. As a result, any strategy or intervention that seeks to resolve the conflict peacefully needs to focus on tackling the political power struggle between Kiir and Machar, relationship building, and reconciliation.

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Post Conflict Rehabilitation in Post Gukurahundi Zimbabwe: The Role of Civil Society Institutions

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Abstract

Three decades after the Gukurahundi massacres, Zimbabwe has been marked by a disintegrated social fabric and cyclical ethnic tensions within Zimbabwean structures. As such, one may question the efficiency and viability of the national structures and the existence of a robust civil society, since peacebuilding initiatives ought to be a mandate reserved for civil society organizations (CSOs). It is within this stream of thought that one may grapple with the question, “Does Zimbabwe have the robust civil society machinery to pull off post-conflict initiatives?” This paper scrutinizes CSO-led post-conflict rehabilitation initiatives in their many facets, exploring their modus operandi as well as their efficacy in the post-Gukurahundi Zimbabwean context. Post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) is a vital building block in the quest for effective peacebuilding. This paper aims identify and evaluate these post-conflict efforts, and affirm them as a preventative measure against relapse into conflicts with the same dynamics. As such, post-conflict mechanisms employed by CSOs are scrutinized to determine their effectiveness and efficiency towards the attainment of sustainable peace. Nevertheless, CSOs in their quest for post-conflict peacebuilding have been compromised by a myriad of factors ranging from CSO composition to State-CSO relations among others. In light of the argument presented in this work, recommendations are

proposed in a bid to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions and initiatives in question.

POST CONFLICT REHABILITATION IN POST GUKURAHUNDI ZIMBABWE: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

The Zimbabwean socio-political frame has been tainted by ethnic disparities birthed by the infamous Gukurahundi massacres of the 1980s. As a result, reconciliation and co-existence between the warring extremes remains unattainable in this region. This trend outlines the cyclical nature of deep-rooted conflicts, suggesting the need to establish institutions to break the destructive cycle. In a bid to rehabilitate affected societies, the government and civil society organizations (CSOs) have implemented various measures, strategies, and peacebuilding initiatives in an attempt to restore, heal, and reconcile affected societies and individuals. Furthermore, a plethora of civil society organizations such as IBhetshu Lika Zulu, Habakkuk Trust, Grace to Heal, Mthwakazi kaZulu (now Mthwakazi Republic Party), among other notable civil society institutions have also had their fair share of rehabilitation initiatives.

Nevertheless, the tribal brawl continues to intensify despite rehabilitation efforts by both state and non-state actors as the two ethnic groups—the Shona and the Ndebele—are still in a tug of war over past injustices. Given the current state of affairs, it is justified to state that Zimbabwe is sitting on a potential time bomb, as tribal and ethnic hostilities are bound to relapse into full-blown hostility; hence, post-conflict peacebuilding becomes a necessary remedy. This paper will unpack and evaluate the effectiveness of the post-conflict rehabilitation efforts pioneered by civil society organizations in the aftermath of the Gukurahundi genocidal massacres.

Historical Background

In the dawn of Zimbabwean Independence in 1983, civil strife broke out in Bulawayo, Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces respectively, such that 1983–1987 has been termed the African version of the Reign of Terror (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). In the aftermath of the War of Liberation, ZAPU militants failed to acknowledge and pledge allegiance to the elected regime (Murambadoro, 2015). Bloomfield (2003) concurs with Murambadoro that ethnic tensions between ZANU and ZIPRA forces resulted in suspicions of a coup by ZIPRA forces, which ultimately gave way to the civil strife. The alleged “dissidents” were of Ndebele descent, which is important to note. The government reacted by unleashing the Shona-concentrated Fifth Brigade which was to carry out “Gukurahundi.” Gukurahundi is a traditional Shona term meaning, “the early rains that wash away of the chaff before spring rains” (Moyo, 2012, cited in Murambadoro 2015, p. 37).

From a critical point of view, one might argue that the term Gukurahundi metaphorically suggested the wiping out of the Ndebele minority in order to establish a tribally biased one party state. Sokwanele (2007) affirms that the aim of Gukurahundi was to crush the people of Matabeleland

and force them to submit to the new regime. As such, the Gukurahundi operation indirectly culminated in tribal hostility. As a result of this tribal brawl, crimes against humanity were unleashed by the Fifth Brigade not only on the alleged dissidents but also on civilians in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions. Consequently, the terror led to the loss of over 20,000 lives, unexplained disappearances, abductions, rapes and other dehumanizing acts, disintegrated families, disabled persons, internal displacement, and desire for vengeance and psychological trauma (Murumbadoro, 2015).

In 1987, the government attempted to address these issues by signing the unity accord. In addition, presidential amnesty was granted to all of the so-called dissidents as a stepping-stone towards healing a fractured society. Nevertheless, these governmental attempts failed to yield intended results, which can be mainly attributed to the government and other civil society institutions using the wrong approach. Be that as it may, this angle of criticism ought to justify the Lederachian perspective considered in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Lederachian Theory of Peacebuilding

This study is premised on the Lederachian Peacebuilding Pyramid proposed by John Paul Lederach (1997) in his publication *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Lederach's theory builds on the assumption that peacebuilding is a process, not an event. The Lederachian framework identifies key actors within the peacebuilding process, aligning them to respective transformative initiatives. Moreover, Lederach (1997) proposes that the peacebuilding process can be deployed as a bottom-up approach or a top-down approach, according to the preferences of the actor. In either case, the framework describes a symbiotic relationship between levels to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable peacebuilding process.

In the light of this peacebuilding framework, one may argue that the triple stratification of Lederach's pyramid ultimately promotes inclusiveness and comprehensiveness in the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives in a given context. Gutura (2015) concurs and appreciates the stratification of the pyramid, suggesting that peacebuilding initiatives manifest themselves on three levels. As a result of its holistic nature, inclusive and sustainable strategy, and propensity to positively influence the peacebuilding process, this approach has been termed a "comprehensive peacebuilding framework" (Gutura 2015). Furthermore, the multi-level peacebuilding pyramid promotes multi-level stakeholder participation, grassroots empowerment, and renders the post-conflict peacebuilding a joint effort (Dube and Makwerere, 2012). Lederach (1997) separates the three levels into actors and approaches, thereby identifying responsible leaders and initiatives per suggested level, giving peacebuilding a stratified structure as described below.

This paper is theorized in terms of the Lederachian perspective as a means of investigating the extent to which the civil society organizations in question conform to the Lederachian perspective of peacebuilding in post-conflict initiatives. From a critical point of view, one may contend that

the quality of a CSO initiative can be measured by its conformity to the Lederachian school of thought.

Lederach (1997) describes level one as the elitist level, as it is largely comprised of top-level leadership including the top clergy, heads of state, and the military; as such, they are viewed as iconic figures that tread the diplomatic route towards peacebuilding through use of power and influence (Gutura, 2015). The first level approach to peacebuilding is dominated by diplomatic initiatives such as shuttle mediations, negotiations, round table meetings, and negotiated ceasefires which ultimately give birth to peace accords and agreements which have insignificant impact on the lower levels, thus questioning the credibility of this top-to-bottom or trickle-down approach (Lederach, 1997). An example of level one peacebuilding was the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 by the two iconic elites, which failed to positively impact the situation on the ground. One might argue that top-level peacebuilding initiatives are more symbolic than practical.

Level two is composed of CSOs, academics, and religious leaders such as bishops and pastors. This is an influential level, as actors in this segment have the capacity to positively influence both the first level and third level. Furthermore, Gutura (2015) posits that second-level actors tend to challenge the actions of top leadership; thus, they can be termed the “watchdogs,” as they perform checks and balances on both lower and higher levels. Middle-track approaches mainly focus on capacity building through problem solving initiatives and providing a platform for adversarial parties to converse. In the same light, Dube and Makwerere (2012) contend that the Lederachian school of thought is rooted in constructive social change that seeks to positively change the flow of human interaction. Level two actors serve as intermediaries between the grassroots and elites. For this reason, one may contend that they pioneer the bottom-up approach to peacebuilding by proving the necessary channels and infrastructure for peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997).

The base of the pyramid represents the third level of peacebuilding, known as the grassroots level. This level comprises both direct and indirect victims (Gutura 2015). Lederach (1997) opines that this level’s initiatives are victim centered, as they focus on trauma healing, psychosocial work, and prejudice reduction. Moreover, Lederach (1997) posits that grassroots initiatives are spearheaded by local community leaders as well as community-based organizations who are credible leadership to the grassroots, which comprises civilians affected by the conflict (Gutura, 2015). Within the same loop, community leader involvement ought to become a call for CSOs to collaborate and engage with community leaders if their initiatives are to be effective. Moreover, in a bid to rehabilitate the affected members of the community, level three spearheads initiatives around healing long-standing traumas and addresses a deep-rooted sense of past injustices, as asserted by Dube and Makwerere in Musorowegomo (2013).

Furthermore, Lederach posits the importance of collaboration in peacebuilding, with initiatives implemented simultaneously across all levels. Guzura and Dube (2016) concur with Lederach as they postulate that peace processes cannot be achieved in isolation if they are to be transformative and sustainable, suggesting that there should be synergy among the three levels.

From Lederach's viewpoint, effective peacebuilding is hierarchical, and all three levels are interdependent and work in tandem. In this regard, one should be cognizant of the fact that among the three actors identified by Lederach (1997), the middle track actors are the life lifeline of post-conflict peacebuilding, as they become an adhesive between the apex and the base of the pyramid. Hence, the role of middle track, particularly CSOs, cannot be understated as far as post conflict rehabilitation and reintegration are concerned.

Lederach's theory is the epicenter of this paper, as its approach is congruent with the requirements of the study as well as the multi-faceted approach post-conflict processes. It outlines necessary and contextual approaches to post conflict peacebuilding and becomes a blueprint for peace practitioners to identify and prescribe viable and effective actions. Notably, the bulk of CSOs fall into the middle and third level brackets. As such, CSO initiatives in tandem with the first and third level actions offer a comprehensive and sustainable approach to peacebuilding.

Conceptual Framework

Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding has been highly contested in the field of peace studies; however, Musorowegomo (2013) excavates its origins stating that Johan Galtung coined the term in his prominent works on peace. Galtung (1998) cited in Cardenas (2013) defines the notion of peacebuilding in his 3R model, which includes reconstruction, reconciliation and resolution. From Galtung's point of view, sustainable and holistic peacebuilding is achievable only if it seeks to reconstruct structures and mend altered relationships, as well as resolve pending disputes and irregularities. Embracing this comprehensive approach becomes a challenge for CSOs, and one may evaluate the extent to which they have used this approach in their operations in the post-Gukurahundi context.

Lederach (1997) conceptualizes peacebuilding in terms of human relations. He centers on reconciliation thus prioritizing human capital in peace processes. Ghali (1992) focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding and advocates for the strengthening of structures toward effective peacebuilding. One may contend that Ghali's concept of peacebuilding is rooted in the first and second levels of Lederach's pyramid. Moreover, it ultimately becomes the role of CSOs influence structures and policymaking.

Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

The term *post-conflict rehabilitation* is the jugular vein of this particular discussion, such that its conceptualization and understanding ultimately cements the study. Pugh (1998) posits that post-conflict rehabilitation encompasses a wide range of activities from social work, human rights monitoring, and reintegration as stepping stones in the transition from conflict to relative peace. Therefore, post-conflict rehabilitation and processes are mostly rooted in advocacy and social integration, which are arguably functions of a large number of CSOs. As such, CSOs should be the main actors, as most post-conflict requirements outlined by Pugh fall within the bracket of CSO functions.

Civil Society

In exploring the concept of civil society, Merkel and Lauth cited in Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) posit that civil society ought to be considered a voluntary platform, which is not influenced by the state. Instead, it is the CSO that influences the state through the provisions of checks and balances. Moreover, it should be considered that civil societies are built on values and shared interests. The CSOs under scrutiny here share mutual ground in post-conflict peacebuilding. Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) conceptualize civil society in terms of its functions, as suggested by the Merkel and Lauth Function Model, centering on the role of civil society in civilian protection, intermediary duties between state and civilians, socialization and social integration, community building, as well as facilitating communication processes between adversarial groups. Hence, in their peacebuilding quests, CSOs ought to fulfill the above-mentioned functions to ensure the success and effectiveness of their initiatives.

Civil Society in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

Over the years, there has been a blurred distinction in regard to which institution is mandated to implement and oversee post-conflict rehabilitation (PCR) and peacebuilding initiatives: governmental institutions or the civil society. Presented with such a conundrum, this paper advocates the notion that CSOs are the sole institutions mandated to dominate the post-conflict arena. Moreover, this argument is further cemented by the Merkel and Lauth model, which stipulates and prescribes CSO operations.

Still, the civil society's years of activity in post-Gukurahundi peacebuilding are subject to scrutiny as most CSOs commenced their activities from early 2000s to the present. During the 1990s, the number of CSOs actively involved was limited to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). Habakkuk Trust stated that for the past three decades, the government imposed an unofficial ban on the Gukurahundi issue, which had an adverse effect of post-Gukurahundi peacebuilding efforts and ultimately contributed to a limited number of actors in this field. Thus, CSO-pioneered, post-conflict initiatives gained momentum almost two decades after the atrocities. This contradicts Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) who postulate that effective post-conflict processes should be implemented 1–10 years after the conflict. As such, one may argue that the inability of CSOs to collectively implement post-conflict initiatives during the early stages of transition as suggested by Paffenholz (2006) ought to be held at ransom for the prevailing ethnic tensions. Further, this has immensely contributed to the recurrence of violent tendencies in Zimbabwe. CSOs such as the Ecumenical Church Leaders Forum (ECLF) are of the belief that post-conflict initiatives can be applied at any period of transition without any time limit attached to them there by justifying the time frame. Within the same stream of argument, Rev. Cele of ECLF stated in an interview,

As far as timeframe for PCR is concerned, I will refer to World War I atrocities perpetrated by Germany which are several decades old, but the implications still live on. As such post conflict rehabilitation has no time frame, but it just heals as far as the memory can reach.”

On another striking note, when one is working with the idea of civil society within this given context, it is of paramount importance to appreciate both sides of civil society namely the faith-based arm as well as the non-faith based arm of a CSO. The majority of CSOs engaged in post-Gukurahundi rehabilitation processes were faith-based organizations (FBOs), thus the role of these FBOs is usually understated (World Bank, 2006). FBOs such as Grace to Heal, Habakkuk Trust, and ECLF, as well as the CCJP were earmarked for post-conflict rehabilitation initiatives. Berchovith (2008) posits that the credibility and role of FBOs and religious institutions remains undisputable in spheres of conflict transformation, thereby making them perfect candidates for PCR. However, it is imperative to note that FBOs tend to be more concerned with issues of human security, social integration, and social cohesion as postulated by Katunga (2008). In a bid to complement Katunga's postulation, faith-based institutions tend to be socially acceptable on moral and ethical grounds as they are bound by a sense of social responsibility; hence, their initiatives are bound to be better appreciated and promote social/local ownership of these post-conflict initiatives. Hence, faith-based are considered the custodians of a peaceful society, thus they fulfill their societal obligations through post-conflict initiatives. Nevertheless, to ensure a comprehensive approach in this discourse, non-faith based institutions' initiatives are integrated in this paper and are scrutinized in a like manner.

CSO Post-Gukurahundi Initiatives and Strategies

Faith-Based Organization Initiatives

Within the 1990–2017 time frame, various CSOs have embarked on a number of post-conflict missions, some of which are still under way. These can be argued to have an inclination towards the transitional approach, as they are mostly restorative, rehabilitative, as well as therapeutic, and these include truth telling, dialoguing, advocacy and so on. This paper equally explores faith-based organization and non-faith based organization initiatives respectively, thereby embracing the multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach. In the same vein, one ought to appreciate the notion that non-FBOs tend to build their momentum from social sentiments as a mobilization tool to anchor their initiatives. On the other hand, FBOs tend to speak truth to power. Thus, FBOs are considered the more effective institutions in the peacebuilding process. Nonetheless, both FBOs and non-FBOs have proven to be effective and efficient, as they conform to the Merkel and Lauth model as well as the Lederachian perspective.

Truth Telling and Healing

Healing and truth telling seem to dominate the post-conflict rehabilitation strategies implemented by CSOs. Murambadoro (2015) and Lederach (1997) concur that truth telling lays a firm foundation for dialogue and platform for reconciliation. It anchors rehabilitation and ultimately justifies the popularity of the strategy among CSOs. From an economic point of view, healing and truth telling are common as they require less or no monetary funds, hence the domination of these twin strategies within CSOs is justified on the basis of economics and cost efficiency. However, from a transitional approach adopted by ECLF, the two strategies/concepts have a symbiotic relationship, as one cannot exist outside the sphere of another. One cannot be a standalone concept without the other: there can be no healing (psychological, emotional) without truth telling; and there can be little to no chance of truth telling if healing has not taken place.

ECLF further defines healing not only in psychological and emotional terms but points out infrastructural development as a form of relevant healing that is contextual to the Bulawayo and Matabeleland regions. Devolution of power is one of the means to achieve this “specific type of healing” such that educational facilities are constructed for the affected areas to cater to their felt needs. In an interview, Cele of ECLF stated, “Government policies must be deliberate in promoting and developing people of the affected areas who are still dealing with Gukurahundi effects as well as cater for their contextual needs.”

Thus, healing is a multi-faceted approach that should be tackled from all angles to prevent the recurrence of conflicts with the same dynamics. Hence, it becomes a challenge for CSOs to spearhead such initiatives and not to limit their scope.

Local Peace Committees

Local Peace Committees (LPCs) are a stepping-stone towards promoting post-conflict peacebuilding at the grassroots level as a duty initiated by relevant CSOs (Lederach, 1997). From this standpoint, one is compelled to argue that ECLF is the main actor behind the implementation and formation of LPCs, as they have managed to adopt the bottom-up approach in post-conflict peacebuilding as prescribed by Lederach (1997), through the empowerment of grassroots and victims of atrocities. Thus, it can be argued that in order to create a strong foundation for durable peace, a transitional approach ought to be adopted to conform to the Lederachian perspective of peacebuilding.

Habakkuk Trust embarks on capacity-building initiatives, which, in this paper, will be classified as LPCs, as they focus on grassroots empowerment, especially victims. Nevertheless, one should be cognizant of the fact that few CSOs embark on grassroots initiatives, as the majority of the CSOs have adopted the top-down approach, contributing to the ultimate failure of their initiatives. For CSO initiatives to be effective and efficient, they should embark on the bottom-up approach instead of the top-down approach.

Advocacy

Advocacy initiatives are mostly pioneered by Habakkuk Trust as per data generated for the purposes of this paper; however, it seems this strategy remains popular with other members of the CSO body. An advocacy approach ought to be applauded for its conformity to the Merkel and Lauth functional model, as it pioneers advocacy work within its operations. One may contend that the CSOs will ultimately become the voice of the victims, which seek to bring about social justice as postulated by World Bank (2006). Moreover, in the course of the study, it was excavated that through advocacy work, CSOs ultimately become the conscience of communities. As stated by one of the Bulawayo Metropolitan community leaders the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province Mayor in an interview, “Civil Society emerges to express a voice of the general populace pertaining to issues that affect them, and as such it becomes the conscience of the communities in question.”

Lederach (1997) delegates the middle track (i.e., the CSO) with the duty of conducting problem-

solving workshops, which one may equate to the advocacy work performed by Habakkuk Trust. The conformity of Habakkuk Trust to the Lederachian pyramid authenticates advocacy as a viable post-conflict mechanism.

Taking a paradigm shift, non-faith based organizations have shared the limelight with their faith-based counterparts in engaging in advocacy work under the banner of post-conflict rehabilitation in the context of Gukurahundi. Typical of such organizations which have been the voice of Gukurahundi victims include, Mthwakazi Group, a pressure group which has turned political. At the dawn of the ceremonial February 21 movement earlier this year, the group aired concerns over the inappropriateness of the location, stating, “We cannot allow ZANU PF to hold a party near Bhalagwe (Matobo) Gukurahundi mass graves, to us it seems as a celebration of the atrocities” (*Bulawayo 24 News*). Still on the note of advocacy work, *Newsday Zimbabwe* reports civil society groups and opposition political parties have opened fire in response to the remarks by the home affairs minister that Gukurahundi was a non-issue. CSOs such as Mthwakazi Republic Party, ZAPU as well as IBhetshu Lika Zulu took up the task to address the alleged offender ZANU PF stating that they were being “irresponsible” as well as suggesting that ZANU as the offender should stop dodging accountability since “brushing a genocidal crime aside by making it a non-issue will not make it go away” (“Chombo Rapped,” 2017). Therefore, it goes without saying that these CSOs have been instrumental in advocacy work, as the voice of the voiceless stipulated in the Merkel and Lauth model. One may contend that CSOs have ultimately become the voice of the victims seeking to bring about social justice (World Bank 2006).

Within the discussion of CSO advocacy roles, it is imperative to note that the majority of CSOs have been actively advocating for issuing of proper identification documentation to both the living and the dead, such as birth certificates and death certificates, as well as for the economic empowerment of both direct and indirect victims. It is therefore in this line of thought that the advocacy role of CSOs ought to be applauded. Taking a paradigm shift as far as advocacy is concerned, it is equally imperative to consider possible downsides of this approach due to massive political party involvement. From a critical point of view, one ought to be justified in stating that the Gukurahundi issue is currently exposed to the danger of being manipulated as a campaign strategy by politically ambitious individuals turning them “ethnic-entrepreneurs,” thereby compromising the entire post-conflict operation.

Dialoguing

CSOs such as Grace to Heal have managed to pioneer storytelling mechanisms which has therapeutic value to victims. Lederach (1997) submits that human interactions through dialoguing mend fractured relations, thereby setting the bar high for dialoguing as a viable bridge between the warring parties. In scrutinizing the delegated role of CSOs under the Lederachian perspective, Dube and Makwerere (2012) contend that CSOs ought to facilitate constructive social change through the flow of human interaction, which in this case can be justified as dialoguing. In the light of the above above-mentioned schools of thought, dialoguing is a viable instrument for social cohesion in divided societies such that its application in post conflict societies is justified.

Major drawbacks affecting the full-scale initiation of dialogue mechanisms include the lack of co-operation from the government as outlined by Habakkuk Trust. This fault line is evidence of the inability to conform to the Lederachian perspective, which advocates for co-operation amongst the three levels of the pyramid as advocated for by Guzura and Dube (2016). Nevertheless, the effectiveness and efficiency of dialoguing as post-conflict rehabilitative mechanism ought to be enhanced by the active cooperation and collaboration with the state (Moyo 1993).

Documentation

Documentation mechanisms have been largely monopolized by the CCJP as far as post Gukurahundi scenarios are post-conflict processes are concerned. According to Lederach (1997), documentation strategies are assigned to middle-track actors in peacebuilding, who constitute academics who are bound to be instrumental in documentation processes. In the same vein, Lederach (1997) justifies the inclusion of religious leaders in CSO initiatives. In this case, CCJP is justified on religious grounds for pioneering documentation processes; nevertheless, one may critique this mechanism for adopting a top-down approach, as there is no way local ownership can be initiated from grassroots level. From a Lederachian perspective, this mechanism has the propensity to prevent the recurrence of conflict through awareness creation as well as capacity building.

Conflict Prevention, Resolution, and Transformation Mechanisms

ECLF cited the utilization of conflict prevention, resolution, and transformation mechanisms as a post-conflict rehabilitation mechanism's most effective tools in rebuilding divided societies. In the light of this assertion, one should be cognizant of the fact that the three above mentioned aspects all contribute to peace building, thus in line with Ghali's (1992) postulation that post-conflict peacebuilding should aim to reduce hostile perceptions and avoid re-emergence of renewed hostilities. With reference to ECLF initiatives, one is justified to state that this mechanism is all encompassing, as it entails the first-level operating in tandem with the second level so as to effectively mend relationships, engineer preventative measures, and so forth as stipulated in the Lederachian view. Moreover, in post-conflict rehabilitation, Orjuela (2003) stresses that the incorporation of peace-education initiatives will ultimately equip individuals with necessary conflict resolution and transformation skills to ensure the sustainability of the peace process. Hence, to ensure effective conflict prevention, resolution, and transformation in a post-conflict society, peace education ought to be the epicenter of all operations. Therefore, organizations aimed at transforming minds and deconstructing violent tendencies, such as ECLF, are challenged to fully utilize peace-education strategies in their initiatives.

Having explored the faith-based post-conflict operations, one can easily align these to the Lederachian perspective (1997), as the faith-based initiatives explored above lay in the second strata of the peacebuilding pyramid. Therefore, this suggests that faith-based actors directly interact with the grassroots so as to solidify their initiatives. In the same vein, these faith-based institutions have managed to directly and indirectly influence the elite, as far as policy formulation and implementation are concerned. Hence, the institutions ought to speak truth to power. Such organizations include ECLF and Habakkuk trust, who have attempted collaborative efforts with

the government towards post-conflict processes. Despite their efforts being fruitless, these CSOs, especially faith-based institutions, ought to be applauded for their conformity to the Lederachian perspective, as they have dual influence on both the State and the broad base.

Pressure Groups/Non-Faith Based Institution Initiatives

Pressure groups or non-faith based institutions ought to be afforded recognition in the field of post-conflict rehabilitation, as they build their momentum from social sentiments thus utilizing social sentiments as a mobilization tool. Despite faith-based initiatives being preferred and arguably considered more effective, non-faith based institutions conform to the Merkel and Lauth model and the Lederachian perspective. As a result of their distinct role in war torn societies, pressure groups are classified as non-governmental organizations, as they pioneer all dimensions of human security, thus rehabilitating victims of war as well as strengthening broken societies (Weker & Ahmed, 2007).

Memorialization

As deduced from the research findings purposed for this paper, pressure groups such as IBhetshu Lika Zulu have been in the forefront of memorialization strategies. In a bid to justify the dominance of this strategy, Guzura and Dube (2016) posit that memorialization is the jugular vein of post-conflict peacebuilding, thus outlining the need to appreciate the employment of memorialization techniques within the post-Gukurahundi context. Nevertheless, these initiatives have been met with stern resistance from state authorities such that their efficiency has been gravely affected. To cement this assertion of state interference, Atobi (2010) lays the foundation for the understanding of strenuous state-CSO relations, which explains the disruption of these CSO-led memorial initiatives. Moreover, lack of local ownership of these memorialization initiatives has contributed to the ineffectiveness of this particular peacebuilding panacea. In the light of this assertion, Lederach (1997) opines that post-conflict initiatives in all their facets ought to adopt a bottom-up approach, such that the initiative will be wholly acceptable as well as sustainable. Grappling with this school of thought, one is compelled to state that as far as memorialization is concerned, IBhetshu Lika Zulu failed conform to the Lederachian perspective, which might have ultimately contributed to the ineffectiveness of the strategy. Some community members in the remote location of Bulawayo denounced this strategy and expressed their discontent with its implementation. Hence, it is on these bases that the strategy has been tried and tested in its quest for post-conflict rehabilitation within the context of Gukurahundi

Reburials

Marshall (1999) posits that in post-conflict rehabilitation, the ultimate goal should be to restore sanity, give closure to whomever it is due, and bring about victim-offender and community justice. Therefore, the employment of reburial mechanisms can be argued as a solution, which has the capacity to weave together a divided society plagued by amnesia of the past. This mechanism has been advocated for by various pressure groups as a viable means of healing fractured societies. The Mthwakazi Republic party has financed and actively advocated for reburial exercises in the remote area of Matobo. Nevertheless, the CSO's means-to-an-end approach has been condemned by other CSOs as unprocedural, as the haphazard reburials will destroy the hope of relatives

recovering their missing relatives. Despite this hurdle, this stance ought to be appreciated in the quest for post-conflict rehabilitation in the Gukurahundi context. Nevertheless, CSOs have met resistance in their reburial initiatives and advocacy. In this context, Vice President Mphoko was quoted in *Bulawayo 24 News*, stating: “We cannot go to mass graves and start digging; it is not in our African Culture” (“Mphoko on Gukurahundi Climbdown,” par. 5). Given this remark, one might question whether the genocidal killings were African in the first place. In an affirming stance, the Mthwakazi Republic Party is rooted in the notion that reburials are the sole antidote to the ever-present Gukurahundi tensions, as this move will afford relatives of the Gukurahundi victims a chance to properly pay respect to their relatives and this will positively constitute a step towards justice.

Community Response of CSO Societal Post Conflict Rehabilitation

For any grassroots initiative to be a success, local ownership ultimately becomes the cornerstone of the entire operation. Hence, it is of paramount importance to consider societal/community response and acceptance of these post-Gukurahundi initiatives. As such, the consideration of community or grassroots response ultimately becomes the lifeline of this paper, as it aligns itself with the Lederachian perspective of prioritizing the broad base in a bid to scrutinize whether CSO initiatives employed the bottom-up approach. Hence, one may attribute this aspect to the compromised mandate of the CSOs, such that there has been an ultimate mismatch between its operations and societal expectations. Chambers and Kopstein (2001) posit that one of the ultimate drawbacks in CSO effectiveness is the notion of the “bad civil society” or the “uncivil civil society,” which inflicts more harm than good on the grassroots; hence, this explains the reason CSO initiatives have ultimately lost favor in the eyes of the society.

Moreover, the majority of community members, whether CSO beneficiaries or not, still question the credibility of post-conflict processes due to the top-down approach adopted by some CSOs, especially those pursuing governmental agendas at the expense of post-conflict victims. This has hastened a lack of local ownership of these initiatives, as they do not address the felt needs of the affected communities. By the same token, this ultimately negatively impacts the effectiveness of CSO initiatives, as the individuals to whom the initiatives are targeted do not wholly accept them. One may attribute this to CSOs adopting a top-down approach, contradicting Lederach (1997), who advocates for synergies between and among tracks of the pyramid such that the idea of post-conflict rehabilitation is wholly appreciated. As such, one can attribute this hurdle to the inability of responsible CSOs to conduct a needs assessment of the target group prior to the implementation of these post conflict strategies. This line of thought is evidenced by the individual’s need of economic and financial assistance, as opposed to the usual services rendered by CSOs such as memorialization, dialoguing, and so forth.

Be that as it may, to ensure that CSO initiatives reach their full potential and yield desired results, CSOs must conduct needs assessments in affected communities to implement strategies that are acceptable and tangible to the community to better the lives of victims and survivor. One may then argue that the CSOs have been straying from the Lederachian perspective, as CSOs have been operating in isolation instead of actively collaborating with the grassroots to ensure that initiatives

are contextual and relevant to the societies to which they are applied.

State-Civil Society Relations in Post-Conflict Societal Rehabilitation

State-CSO relations is an area that is still being tinkered with by scholars and experts in the field. However, Barnes (2006) three Cs (cooperation, co-optation, and confrontation) have typified the state-CSO relations. However, State-CSO relations within this context have been more confrontational than complementary, as resistance from the state has been encountered from all angles. CSOs operating within the context of Gukurahundi have experienced political meddling, thus bringing this aspect is subject to scrutiny. From an academic point of view, one is compelled to posit that CSOs should be a separate entity of the State, thus suggesting the independence of CSOs from government influence (Moyo, 1993). Nevertheless, various CSOs have engaged in confrontational relationships with the State such that their activities are compromised, ultimately jeopardizing the post-conflict processes. IBhetshu Lika Zulu, for example, has been the object of ridicule by authorities, as their prayer marches and commemorations were ruthlessly and repeatedly dispersed by members of the uniformed forces. Hence, it is indisputable that the State has been in the forefront of disrupting CSO-led post-conflict initiatives. Atobi (2010) states that post-conflict initiatives are compromised by state interference, as the State will be infringing in the domain of the Civil Society. Hence, it is of essence to consider how a vast number of CSO spearheaded initiatives have been a causality of political prestige.

ECLF cited how the co-option of FBOs has compromised issues of human security. The credibility of these institutions is being questioned, as they no longer represent the interests or serve as the voice of the people; instead, they are vessels of repressive governments. CSOs have fallen into the trap of co-optation, as they are frequently enticed by government incentives, thus motivating FBOs to abandon their God-given mandate for material benefits at the expense of conflict torn societies. In cementing this notion, Chambers and Kopstein (2001) posit the notion of a bad or “uncivil civil society” which has jeopardized CSO operations within the post-conflict context as evidenced in the findings.

Habakkuk Trust outlined how its operations have been hindered by government interference. Members of the uniformed forces had the tendency of interfering with the Habakkuk Trust organized gatherings. In an attempted truth telling mechanism, government officials sabotaged the whole operation, such that it was a failure. Habakkuk Trust outlined how an unofficial ban was issued against them barring them from operating in some areas of Matabeleland. Hence, restrained State-CSO relations have ultimately engulfed CSO operations. Similarly, Grace to Heal stated that most of its operations have been hindered by the government, as most of the perpetrators are in the realms of power and government. Due to vested interests, these political officials will ultimately act as spoilers to post-conflict processes in the context of Gukurahundi. ECLF claimed that it is currently engaged in conflictual relations with the government due to its ability to speak truth power on Gukurahundi issues. Strenuous State-CSO relations are the main hurdle hindering the successful implementation of CSO initiatives, such that the majority of the organizations have fallen victim to political challenges.

In a bid to further cement the notion of strenuous state-CSO relations, it was recently noted by *Bulawayo 24 News*, as IBhetshu Lika Zulu stated that the Vice president (representing the arm of the government) is “the wrong person to bring closure about the Gukurahundi issue, as he is approaching the issue with dirty hands,” thereby concluding that in this context the “perpetrator cannot prescribe the solution.” Thus, this argument cements the incompatibility between the State and civil society, serving as evidence that the state and CSO will never be engaged in a collaborative relationship for a greater good.

Furthermore, despite civil society being an entity separate from the State, it should collaborate with the State or government in rehabilitating post-conflict societies. Despite the confrontational and conflictual relations between the state and civil society, their efforts ought to be complimentary in achieving a desired outcome, i.e. prevention of the recurrence of conflict as well as achievement of sustainable peace. Though they may be separate entities, one institution cannot be independent of the other, such that in order to influence adoption of new policy frameworks the CSO needs the state, and the state needs the civil society due to its proximity to the grassroots. Hence, it is commendable for CSOs to collaborate with the state for a greater good.

Way Forward

Aligning the views of the author to the Lederachian perspective, it is imperative to note that all post-Gukurahundi initiatives should adopt a bottom-up approach while prioritizing the victims and affected societies (Lederach, 1997). This approach would ensure that the felt needs of victims are well addressed, thereby laying a firm foundation for the sustainability of these initiatives. The future and sustenance of CSO pioneered peacebuilding initiatives lies with cultivating healthy CSO-State relations. As separate entities, the State and CSOs should recognize and respect the mandate and domain of the other institution (Moyo, 1993). Hence, instead of the State and CSOs being at loggerheads, there should be synergies and cooperation between the two institutions to ensure a proper flow and implementation of initiatives.

Conclusion

In summation, this paper explores CSO post-conflict rehabilitation initiatives within the context of Gukurahundi in their quest for social cohesion and durable peace. The post-conflict initiatives in question were grassroots centered; hence, one could argue that the CSOs were pioneering a bottom-up approach of post-conflict peacebuilding advocated by Lederach (1997) in his peacebuilding pyramid. Moreover, the majority of CSOs that effectively pioneered post-Gukurahundi initiatives were faith-based organizations, as compared to their non-faith based counterparts. However, most of these FBOs became quasi-CSOs, as they were co-opted by the repressive government, thereby compromising the entire rehabilitation effort and eroding their own integrity in the process. Related findings exposed that the State was ultimately a sworn enemy to any Gukurahundi-oriented initiative, hence providing a tangible reason for the underperformance of respective CSOs within the given context. Furthermore, the inefficiency of some CSOs is largely attributed to their inability to conform to the Lederachian framework. In conclusion, it is of essence for CSOs to appreciate and conform to the Lederachian perspective of peacebuilding in post-Gukurahundi Zimbabwe. As a blanket assessment of the CSO initiatives,

one can hazard that in order for these CSOs to achieve large-scale effectiveness, CSOs should not centralize their operations but should nationalize their efforts to increase the scope of their effectiveness.

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The *Halal* and *Haram* of Boko: Communicating Meaning in Contending with Statecraft or “Modern-Witchcraft” in Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite its gains, western education is perceived as a tool for subjugation. Some citizens of the Middle East and their allies in Sub-Saharan African States like Nigeria perceive western education as inimical to Islam. Although Islamic scholars have countered this position, the Boko Haram sect in North-Eastern Nigeria upholds it in communicating their ideologies. Through a qualitative method of study, this paper investigates the communication of meaning by insurgents and discovered that apart from illiteracy and unemployment, extreme religious beliefs are also responsible for the menace. It suggested that building strong statecraft through education, employment, and reintegration of victims could curb the menace.

THE *HALAL* AND *HARAM* OF BOKO: COMMUNICATING MEANING IN CONTENDING WITH STATECRAFT OR “MODERN-WITCHCRAFT” IN NIGERIA

Introduction

There is an ongoing debate as to whether or not western civilization and education are forces for good or evil in the world. To this debate, there are two schools of thought: pro-western education and anti-western education. Those who argue for western education appeal to its gains like democracy, promotion of human rights, safeguarding egalitarian society, and freedom of speech, religion, and the press as upheld in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 2017). Conversely, those who belong to the anti-western education school of thought weigh it on the interference of the governance of smaller democracies by super powers, the devastation effects of globalization, the promotion of gay rights and other concerns such as secularism and modernism.

They contend that these put a bad taste in the mouths of those who desire puritanical approaches to religion.

The rejection of what the West offers smaller nations stems from the proverbial Greek Gift: When a mechanism for empowerment becomes a tool for subjugation, people become circumspect of Western Education. The supposed battle between the West and the Middle-East or the Islamic world stems from a clash of civilizations. Islamic scholars have always defended the position that Western Education is not inimical to Islamic Education. It is yet to be seen whether this submission is theoretical or factual, given the rise of insurgents who use religious tenets as principle for jihad. How does the communicative implication of the ideology behind *Halal* and *Haram* plus the modus operandi of the Boko Haram sect, which has killed an estimated number of 100,000 people (Shettima cited in Tukur, 2017) in North-Eastern Nigeria, prove or disprove this point?

The 21st century presents many challenges. One of such is the clash of civilizations occasioned by the communication gaps between Western Education and religions like Christianity and Islam. For instance, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim scholars have all wrestled with the problem of religion and political authority (Fadel, 2013, p. 1258). It is common place to find people around the world aggrieved because their religious beliefs are supposedly polluted by the trappings of anything western. Western affiliations in addition to the twin ideologies of globalization and secularization have combined to make matters worse. These, in the thinking of radical Islamists and their sympathizers, are responsible for moral decadence and crass misconduct among the young in Nigeria. The idea of “Western values” standing in the way of the understanding of other cultures results in resistance by both developing and Islamic countries (Baderin, 2005). It should be noted that this reaction is because most of these countries have been under repressive colonial governments of the West (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2014).

Leader of the Boko Haram sect, Yusuf Mohammed “compared western education and modern statecraft [and maintained] that socialism, capitalism, military dictatorship, western education and modern statecraft have all failed because God was excluded from these systems” (Barkindo, 2013, p. 37). Perhaps this is why leaders of the sect used visual, auditory, and audiovisual media to circulate tracks, music, and amateur videos to condemn Western education in strong terms, while advocating for the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate with the full implementation of Sharia Law in Nigeria.

The abduction of over 200 Chibok schoolgirls on April 14, 2014, would draw the attention of the international community to what many describe as a humanitarian crisis. The Bring Back Our Girls campaign rose to prominence in its efforts to ensure the safe return of the girls. However, their propaganda and destruction lasted. In Borno State alone, almost 100,000 people were killed; 2,114,000 internally displaced; 52,311 orphaned; and 54,911 widowed as of December of 2016.

Based on the post-insurgency Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) report on the northeast which was jointly validated by the World Bank, the European Union, the Presidency and the six states of the northeast, Boko Haram inflicted damages to the tune of \$9 billion on the region (Shettima cited in Tukur, 2017). There are about 58 thousand Nigerian refugees from Borno State at the United Nations Camp, Minawao village in the state of Maroua de mokolo, Cameroon (Dyikuk, 2017). This is why the sect was described as Nigeria’s number one public enemy

(Gingim, 2011). Because of its genocidal tentacles, a commentator also noted that Boko Haram is a murderously dangerous phenomenon in Nigeria (Gbinjie, cited in 2011, p. 20).

The study aims to:

- a) Expose the various theories which either encourage or discourage Western Education especially in North-Eastern Nigeria,
- b) Clarify and examine the communicating of meaning in the concepts *Halal* and *Haram* vis-à-vis Western Education,
- c) Investigate what constitutes Western Education in Islam and the suspicion of western values by some people in the region,
- d) Probe the notion of a clash of civilization between Western Education and Islamic Education, and
- e) Propose further research on the topic under review because of the dearth of data on the issues of *Halal* and *Haram* of education in Northern Nigeria.

Method of the Study

This study involves a qualitative method of study about extant data on the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. After investigating the matter to find communicative meaning as employed by the insurgents through review of relevant literature, the researcher shall highlight the major findings while proposing ways of curbing the menace.

Conceptual Analysis of *Halal* and *Haram*

Halal and *Haram* are Arabic words. According to the Holy Quran, *Halal* “is any object or an action which is permissible to use or engage in according to Islamic law. The term covers and designates not only food and drink as permissible according to Islamic law, but also all matters of daily life” (Quran 7.157). Conversely, *Haram* means what is unpermitted or unlawful. It also connotes what is sinful, forbidden or unlawful (Dyikuk, 2013).

In Islamic theology and jurisprudence, these words constitute what is permissible and impermissible; what is allowed and disallowed; what is practicable and impracticable. They touch on spirituality, morality, politics and other ways of life which Islamic law legislates on. Implicitly, the *Halal* and *Haram* of things carry divine blessings and sanctions. In Islam, it is believed that whatever is laid down as permitted or unpermitted is no human construct but divinely given.

This means that religious doctrines must be followed to the latter because they carry either benefits or sanctions here and in the hereafter. When the law for instance says it is *Haram* for a man to stand close to a woman in public, it is a divine injunction. In the estimation of what this researcher regards as “hardline left-wing” Islamic theologians, western education is seen in the same light. This shall be explored in the course of the paper.

Communicating Meaning

The word communicating stems from communication. Communication has to do with the sending, receiving, and understanding of information and meaning. It deals with the creation or exchange of thoughts, ideas, emotions and understanding between sender(s) and receiver(s) (Dyikuk, 2017, p. 19). In every act of communication, “receiving” and “understanding” are most important operations, since the response of the receiver defines whether the communication is successful or

not (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 4). It is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or nonverbal means which includes speech or oral communication, writing or written communication, signs, signals, and behavior. Communication is often conceived as the creation and exchange of meaning (Nordquist, 2017).

McLuhan's popular "the medium is the message" stimulated a paradigm shift of communication in contemporary society from print to a visual culture which centers on (1) the mass communication industries, the people who run them, and the effects they have upon their audiences; (2) persuasive communication and the use of technology to influence dispositions; (3) processes of interpersonal communication as mediators of information; (4) dynamics of verbal and nonverbal (and perhaps extrasensory) communication between individuals; (5) perception of different kinds of communications; (6) uses of communication technology for social and artistic purposes, including education in and out of school; and (7) development of relevant criticism for artistic endeavors employing modern communications technology (Gordon, 2017).

Literature Review and Discussion

Boko Haram: Early Beginnings, Ideologies and Exploits

The interpretation of *Boko* as *Haram* and so unlawful is encapsulated in the idiosyncrasies of Boko Haram. The sect calls itself *Jama'atu ablis Sunnah lidda' watiwal-jihad* (Higazi, 2013, p. 1) which means, "People committed to the propagation of the prophet's teaching and jihad." Earlier, it was simply known as "Al Sunna WalJamma," meaning followers of the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (Ishaku, 2012, p. 21). They were also called Yusufiya, which means followers of Yusuf. Many media outfits describe the Boko Haram phenomenon as either Boko Haram republic or Boko Haram imbroglio (Dyikuk, 2012).

Literally, Boko Haram translates as "western education is forbidden." This is due to its abhorrence of Western educational system especially science and technology. For the records, there is ideological similarity between the Boko Haram sect with the philosophy of Maitatsine of the 70s and 80s. This is why it is believed that the members of the sect are successors of the Maitatsine movement. This group led by the Cameroonian born Muhammadu Marwa was blamed for the bloody clashes in Northern Nigeria between 1980 and 1984. The resilience of the Maitatsines is akin to that of Boko Haram. The first leader of Boko Haram, Mallam Abubakar Lawal from Kano, may have been radicalized by Maitatsine ideologies.

There are various historical perspectives to the origin of the Boko Haram sect. Some scholars hold that the trouble started shortly after members of the *Yusufiyya* movement popularly called Boko Haram marked the one-year remembrance of their leader, Mohammad Yusuf who was killed in 2009 (Idris and Ibrahim, 2011, p. 2; Ngare, 2012). Brock (2012, p. 16) too concurs that the Boko Haram insurgency started in 2009. Those who differ from this opinion hold that its remote stage started in 2001. Another school of thought insists that the insurgency started in 2003 at Zagi-Birri (Tarmuwa Local Council of Yobe State) about 70 kilometers north of Damaturu. It is believed that after the group clashed with the police, its members who were now called Talibans after the Islamic fighters (Mujahidins) of Afghanistan relocated to Kanamma, about 3,000 east of Zagi-Biriri, in Yunusari Local Council of the State on December 21, 2003.

Some of their members were arrested to which they sent threats warning of an impending danger if they were not released. Consequently, on December 24, 2003 they set the Kanamma police station ablaze killing an Inspector of Police and injuring others (Ishaku, 2012, pp. 21-32). Its initial attacks in Bauchi and Borno plus those of its splinter factions like Kala Kato and Ansaru took many by surprise.

According to Ishaku (2012), “Boko Haram soon added to its doctrine the notion that working for any arm of the corrupt secular government of Nigeria was against the tenets of Islam. Yusuf, himself, had to quit his civil service job with the Yobe State Government” (p. 25). Unequivocally, Yusuf held that *Boko* represents the whole of Western civilization, which he equated with atheism and unbelief, secular education and Judeo-Christian traditions. He argued that European countries had colonized the Muslim world by establishing artificial borders to weaken Muslim countries in Africa and impose democracy to brainwash Muslims into eliminating Islam by adopting *Boko*. He concluded that anything related to Western civilization or Western institutions must be rejected as *haram* – this includes agriculture, biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, medicine, geography and English language. In Yusuf’s list of things considered as *haram* were employment in the legislature, judiciary and law-enforcement areas of government because Nigeria’s government was non-Islamic (Zenn et al, 2013, pp. 48-49).

In like manner, Kukah (2010) maintains that:

they were obviously contemptuous of the state and its agents and agencies and they openly said so in their sermons. They abused other Muslims whom they considered to have abandoned the paths of Islam. They rejected the corrupting influence of the secular world, they railed against the corruption within the so called Islamic community. They abused the political class openly. Like all millenarian groups, they spoke and looked forward to a future of living in an Islamic state. They believed that a truly Islamic state was possible even though they were ignorant of the real world beyond them. (pp. 3-4)

In summary, the sect gave their creed as follows:

1. We do not believe in the Nigeria Judicial System and we will fight anybody who assists the government in perpetrating illegalities;
2. We would not respect the Nigerian Government because it is illegal. We would continue to fight its military and police because they are not protecting Islam;
3. All the people that we are killing including ward heads, politicians, the police and the armies have erred because they are associating themselves with the government in its effort to arrest the Muslim brothers and sabotage Islam;
4. We want to make it clear that we are fighting not just because our Mosques and canters of learning were destroyed or because our wealth has been seized or because we are chased out of our houses. No, that is not the reason. The reason why we are fighting is because our freedom was curtailed. For a long time, we have been advocating for freedom of worship and assembly and the need for everybody to believe in Allah;
5. It was while we [were] propagating Islam that the federal government and state government connived with Imams and ward heads and attacked us in many states (Idris and Ibrahim, cited in *Weekly Trust*, 2011, p. 2).

To confirm the submission above, an erstwhile Boko Haram Spokesman Abu Dardam noted: “We are strongly against the Nigerian Constitution. We are also against the democracy being practiced in Nigeria. This is the reason why we are fighting. It is irrational for us to accept the proposal of the new governor who was not elected under the provisions of the Islamic Sharia which is the only vibrant option that will guarantee peace, justice and equality. We would continue fighting until we archive a virile society” (Idris and Ibrahim, cited in Weekly Trust, 2011, p. 2).

Due to their unprecedented destruction of lives and property including military apparatus, on May 14, 2013, the then President Goodluck Jonathan declared a partial state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States without tampering with the democratic structures (Olumide & Akinola, 2013). After the declaration of the emergency rule, the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) swung into action. Despite the state of emergency, the insurgency did not abate as suicide attacks often take citizens by surprise. Many believed that the inability of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) led-government of Jonathan to bring the situation under control was why he lost power to a former General, now President Muhammadu Buhari who was voted on the All Progressives Congress’ (APC) mantra of change.

Despite the present administration’s effort to nip the situation in the bud, it should be noted that from the first Boko Haram suicide attack on the headquarters of the Nigerian Police Force in June 2011, through a later attack on the UN building in August, both in Abuja (Shettima, cited in Tukur, 2017) to the recent attack of August 20, 2017 in which two people were killed following an ambush by suspected Boko Haram terrorists along Damaturu-Biu road in Yobe (Toromade, 2017), the guerilla tactics of the sect rages on.

Out of the summary of vulnerable places and the main causes of violence in Nigeria released by the Sixth Report on Violence in Nigeria, Borno State was highlighted as still the most dangerous location in the country, with 56.2 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants. The group also noted that despite little progress, the Boko Haram conflict remains a deadly issue, with 3,147 fatalities in 2016. In ten years, from 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2016, it has led to a total of 32,842 fatalities. Roughly the same number of people that were killed directly by the insurgents are (16,666) and by security forces (16,182) (Nigeria Watch Project: Sixth Report on Violence, 2016). (For a detailed breakdown, see Appendix 1.)

The Islamic religion has received a negative public image leading to Islamophobia, radicalization of the religion and a reinforced, deliberate or inadvertent interest in the debate on the symbiosis between religion and politics as well as global insecurity because young Muslims are involved in the actual and attempted attacks (Igboin, 2012, p. 76) perpetrated on unsuspecting members of the society. That is not to say that there are no adherents of other religions in the sect.

Western Education in the Eyes of Islam: Between Statecraft or Witchcraft?

To put this discussion into perspective, it is crucial to distinguish between “right-wing” and “left-wing” schools of thought in Islam. The “right-wing” school of thought constitutes Islamic scholars who not only embrace Western Education but always seek the romance between Western education and Islamic civilization. These theologians cherish the basics of religious tolerance as well as living in a pluralistic society.

In the light of the “right-wing” school of thought, a ninth century rationalist Islamic/religious school of thought known as the Mu’talizes argued for a created Qu’ran inspired by the eternal word of Allah. For the scholar, the word of Allah is accessible to human reason. Though this view was marginalized by the “orthodox” mentality (traditionalists/literal interpreters), the Mu’talizes’ school of thought remain influential down to the present (Aina, 2012, p. 129). Perhaps this remote position set the stage for the interface between faith and reason in Islamic theology since it indicates that the knowledge of God in and through the Qur’an demands the use of human faculties (Aina, 2012, p. 129).

It is no doubt that the Egyptian-born Abu Zayd carved a niche for himself in finding a nexus between Islamic faith and Western Education. Born as a devout traditional Muslim, Zayd got radicalized in no time. As a youth, he joined pan-Islamism perhaps to curb the excesses of foreign hegemony. The Muslim brotherhood became a handy tool. But this seeming revolutionary center led to his incarceration for some time.

Zayd’s world view soon changed at the Cairo University where he was exposed to the rudiments of academic life with its attendant values of scientific research and rational persuasion. One would not be surprised that he may have come across the contribution of Islam to mathematics, geometry and medicine. This, sooner than later, shaped his religious views in the perspective of a lively faith engaged by reason. The result was obvious – the best way to bring Islam in productive confrontation with modernity (Aina, 2012, p. 129).

As such, between the early seventies and 1981, Abu Zayd specialized in Islamic studies (Abu Zayd, 2004, pp. 27 & 29). This blended his first-hand experience of traditional Islamic knowledge and piety with rigorous scholarship that embraced antiquated Arabic and European literary and methodological approaches (Aina, 2012, p. 129).

Consequently, according to Aina, (2012, p. 129) Abu Zayd made the following thesis worth appraising by Islamic scholars in Northern-Nigeria:

1. Islam is not inherently incompatible with modernity and some of its projects, based on some facts of Islamic history, especially Renaissance of the 11th and 12th centuries spearheaded by Ibn Rushd (aka. “Averros,” pp. 1126-1198).
2. Islamic literalism (exemplified by “dogmatic Islam” of the Middle Ages that codified the “Islamic right” i.e. the Shari’a) may not be compatible with modernity.
3. Islam, with symbolism and hermeneutical/contextual reading of the Qur’an, can be compatible with modernity.
4. The compatibility of Islam with modernity is possible if there is a rediscovery of the importance of hermeneutics through *ijtihad* i.e. the reapplication of faith via rigorous human reasoning. As such, there may not be fixed interpretations of the Qu’ran, the Sunna and Islam (Alalwani, 2007, pp. 120-121).

It is significant to note that this submission is not exclusive to Abu Zayd. Abdullahi Ahmed an-Naim is another moderate Islamic Scholar who has written volumes on the relationship between Islam and secular government. He interprets the Qur’an as instructing Muslims to observe Sharia as their life’s work, their responsibility, their struggle - not their government’s. The scholar notes:

“My motivation is in fact about being an honest, true-to-myself Muslim, rather than someone complying with state dictates.” He even goes ahead to question the concept of an Islamic state, seeing it as a post-colonial construct based on a mid-20th Century European-style state believing that the right answer for Muslims is a secular state which promotes human rights and provides access for Muslims and others to practice their faith freely (Johnston, 2012).

Their (Zayd and an-Naim) thoughts fall within “Basic Islam” as distinguished from “Cultural Islam.” On the one hand, “Basic Islam” argues for an Islam with values that are in congruence with the needs of universal humanity. To this end, Islamic doctrine married to legal prescriptions needs ongoing reorientation. This Islamic world-view opens up the frontier of “a jurisprudence of reasoned argument and practical wisdom that takes the sacred text only as its starting point” (Souaiaia, 123). In the light of this submission, it is also argued that Muslim nations do want to align with the international community and international human rights (Gilani, Wali, Rehman & Mujtaba, 2014, p. 99).

On the other hand, “cultural Islam” which many Muslims regard as “sacred Islam” refers to a specific format that evolved at a specific time and within a socio-cultural context. In time, it took the twist of historical, monolithic and essentialist form which makes Westerners label it as “Fundamentalist Islam” (Aina, 2012, p. 131). This may not be far from the “gospel” of those who declared *Boko as Haram*.

In contradistinction to “right-wing” theology, Islamic theologians who perceive Western education as an intruding foreign system which denigrates the teachings of Allah are “left-wing” theologians. “Left-wing” teaching often described as radical Islam push for a puritanical ideology which breeds violence.

Some scholars have defended the “left-wing” thesis thus:

it is argued that most Islamic theologians, including reformers, revivalists and Islamists (extremists) either from the Sufi or Sunni tradition, from the Wahhabis to Sayyid Qutb and to Osama Bin Laden have in one way or the other attacked the validity of secular political authority. They have also questioned the authority of Muslim but secular political leaders who have failed both in their personal and political lives to uphold correct Islamic ideals. (Barkindo, 2013, p. 30)

The ideological framework and modus operandi of faraway extremist sects like the Muslim brotherhood, Taliban, Al Qaeda, Iranian theocracy, Wahhabism and Nigeria’s erstwhile home-grown Maitatsine, plus recent sects like Kala Kato, Ansaru and now Boko Haram are indicative of “Left-wing” Islamic theology.

While a host of “Left-wing” ideologies abound within Islam, one that readily comes to mind is that of 14th century Ibn Taymiyya – The professor of Islamic law who comes from the Harran (an old city within the Arabian Peninsula between Sham and Iraq) is said to have picked up some religious elements in Islam and turned them into ideological precepts (Mehdi, 2007, pp. 17-33). In his attempt to defend radical Islamism, Taymiyya argued that:

1. The legitimacy of political authority must be based on God's revelation in the Quran as taught and handed over by his Prophet. As such, all creatures must submit to Allah the ultimate mystery of things and also surrender voluntarily and unconditionally to his word and prophet (Cheneb, 1961, p. 952).
2. The unity and sovereignty of Allah is the foundation of political, social and moral systems propounded by the prophets. All human beings, individually or collectively, must surrender all their rights of lordship, legislation to Allah in such a way that no one is allowed to pass orders or make commands in his own right – such commands must not be obeyed. The application of the law of Allah, therefore, is the only prerequisite for legitimate political authority and valid means of developing and reforming all societies. This strong view may have come from the influence of Islamic jihad on his belief system hence his legitimizing it as enshrined in the Quran which needs no further discussion (Barkindo, 2013, p. 33).

From the speeches of the leaders of Boko Haram, audio/video tapes and leaflets around North-Eastern States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, it is easy to conclude that the sect is contemptuous of anything western. Yusuf's personal charisma, oratory and resilience endeared him to the army of jobless youths and Almajiri in the northern parts of the country who were ready for any kind of job. The sect had, in the light of radical Islam, raised the following concerns against the state and western civilization:

1. Western education is a form of "modern-witchcraft" which enslaves the passions.
2. Education is the white man's way of cheapening religion, showing contempt for it and a tool for its elimination.
3. Western education brings about moral decadence and laxity and indecent dressing especially by women.
4. Education encourages consumption of alcohol, the operation of hospitality industry especially pubs and bars.
5. Education, being the way of the white man, makes people to question the teachings of Islam or seek informed clarification.
6. Education has empowered Islamic aristocrats within the region who have in turn sold out with powers that be (infidels) to manipulate their kith and kin.
7. Western education stands in the way of theocracy and the full implementation of Sharia law.
8. Democracy with its scorecards of freedom encourages contempt for religion and the Law of Allah.
9. Democratic representation oiled on the wheels of choice of leaders enslaves Muslims under the rule of infidels.

A Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency, (cited in Kukah, 2014) contends that the aims and objectives of the sect include:

- a) Limit the ability of the government and enhance their capability to provide public services. They often do this by sabotage of public utilities such as destruction of oil installations, sources of power and transportation, poisoning water supply, and so on.
- b) Obtaining the support of neutral but critical segments of the population (media, academia, security agencies, other leaders).
- c) Increase its own visibility and publicity at the expense of government.

- d) Destruction of the confidence of government in its legitimacy.
- e) Neutralize the coercive power of the government (attacking or sacking police or military formations).

It is safe to conclude that “left-wing” Islamism does not approve of political leadership of whatever sort, but the full implementation of Sharia law. It may be reason why an erstwhile spokesman of Boko Haram, one Abu Dardam said, “we are against the Nigerian Constitution. We are also against the democracy being practiced in Nigeria. This is the reason why we are fighting...we would continue fighting until we achieve a virile society” (Idris & Ibrahim, 2012, p. 2).

The irony is, what others conceive as statecraft, “they” perceive as “modern-witchcraft.” Boko, education, is seen as making people blind from the realities of true faith and worship of Allah. This supposition sees science and technology as artilleries for western superiority and subjugation. Its attendant goods of civilization, liberalization and freedom are viewed as mere tricks of wooing the Islamic world to their whims and caprices. In their judgment, immorality, nudity, drunkenness and contempt for God are bye products of a corrupt West bent on dominating the world. The conclusion is, this is unacceptable and should be fought at all cost. They see Islamaphobia as a western propaganda which is baseless and must be confronted through jihad.

Zenn makes a succinct description of what Boko is and the distinction between *ilimin boko* and *ilimin Islamiyya*. He stresses that the word crept into the lexicon of northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century with the coming of colonial rule and Western education. *Boko*, derived from the English word “book,” was often used in relation to a second noun, *ilimi*, meaning “education.” As such, the full expression, *ilimin boko*, was derogatorily used to refer to Western education. It was often used to distinguish it (*ilimin boko*) from what the Muslim community at the time understood to be the only form of education - that is, *Ilimin Islamiyya*, or “Islamic education.”

Accordingly, *Ilimin Islamiyya* focused on the teachings and recitation of the Qur’an in Arabic. This became the entry point for children into Islam. *Ilimin boko* on the other hand, taught Western education. Since it did not teach about the Qur’an, Islam or use Arabic, it was considered suspect. As such, the “white man,” with his incomprehensible ways, was also often associated with witchcraft – *Boka* in Hausa. This understanding is supported by Islamic theology because every act is either *halal*, meaning “permissible,” or *haram*, meaning “impermissible.” It is within this context that *ilimin Islamiyya* was considered *halal* while *ilimin boko* was *haram* - and anyone undertaking Western Education was considered to be a sinner, carrying out an impermissible act (Zenn et al, 2013, p. 48). This summation lives one in no doubt that one day, a sect would rise up to defend and propagate a theology and jurisprudence such as that of Boko Haram.

Taymiyya’s Overt Communicating of Meaning in the Light of the Insurgency

The phrase, communicating meaning, as frequently used throughout this study is defined as the denotative or literal meaning of the words *Halal* and *Haram* used in evaluating the ideology of Boko Haram. The paper intends to investigate the communicative implication of these words by examining their exact meaning in the light of the insurgency. It also seeks to analyze how individual actors framed their circumstances in communication with one another and how this affected their subsequent interpretations and actions as events unfolded (Cornelissen, Mantere & Basra, 2014).

Since this paper seeks to unravel communicating meaning in contending with statecraft or “modern-witchcraft” in Nigeria in the light of the Boko Haram insurgency, it shall underscore the denotative rather than the connotative meaning of *Halal* and *Haram*. This means that the study would evaluate the literal primary meaning of *Halal* and *Haram* as ideological basis used by members of the sect. This is drawn from Ibn Taymiyya’s school of thought.

The application of Ibn Taymiyya’s views on the existential insurrection in Nigeria is central to this study. Taymiyya’s thesis falls within “cultural Islam” which we saw earlier. Barkindo (2012) outlines the implication of his position as it relates to the context of this paper:

1. Taymiyya makes a case of theocracy with the full implementation of Sharia law which can only be possible in an Islamic State. Nigeria is a secular State.
2. The Islamic scholar’s position implies that government becomes a political agency meant to enforce the law of God. How can this be possible in a cosmopolitan and diverse society like ours?
3. He forbade the separation between State and religion but this forced-marriage constantly causes friction. In Islam, religion and politics are one and the same. What becomes of others who may not hold contrary views and creeds? What is the dividing line between religion and politics?
4. Deducing from his submission, both ruler and ruled are not only subjects of God but are transformed by it. As such, what is civil right in democracy becomes religious duty in theocracy. When democracy clashes with theocracy what becomes of this elephant-fight?

The above interpretation prepares the ground for an investigation into how far Abu Zayd’s theory can turn “modern-witchcraft” to statecraft. Perhaps members of the sect and their sympathizers who are cold in embracing Western Education because of their religious beliefs can borrow a leaf from Zayd’s teachings namely:

1. Islam is not incompatible with modernity and education: North-Eastern Muslims and scholars must realize the great contributions of Islam to fields of human endeavor such as medicine, mathematics, geometry to mention just a few.
2. Cohesion between faith and reason: Zayd saw the invaluable place of human reasoning in reading, understanding and interpretation of the Holy Quran. This is enough sermon pertaining the romance of faith and reason concerning those who use religion as a tool for justifying violence.
3. Learning from the past: The pedigree of Islamic faith which propelled Zayd to seek greater knowledge behooves all to learn from the past to fortify the present for a robust future.
4. Education liberates: Education which the Islamic scholar enjoyed liberates from the shackles of extremism (little wonder he distanced himself from the Muslim brotherhood upon going to the University of Cairo).
5. Education provides checks and balances: As far as the world is concerned, one cannot dispense with the bye products of *Boko*, education which the Islamic scholar praises, since through jurisprudence and enforcement of human rights, it provides for check and balances.

Failures in Countering the Literal Approach of the Insurgents

- a) **Government failure:** The lack of a potent counter insurgency military architecture provided the insurgents with ample time to retreat and re-group. Government may have initially treated the fight against terror with kid-gloves. The lack of professionalism displayed by some members of the armed forces especially the police in the public torturing and execution of some suspected members of the sect would in the long run trigger the insurgency into a full guerilla warfare in which members of the sect target military installations as well as government and financial institutions. Furthermore, poor policy articulation and response made people in the region, victims of the resultant inaction or paralysis of statecraft to which residents paid with their lives and property (Shettima, cited in Tukur, 2017).
- b) **Role of Religious and traditional leaders:** The recruitment and radicalization of the youth in the region into militia groups is fingered on religious elements who pose as clerics to perpetuate their crude religious ideologies. The *Almajiri* system in the North which makes children from various parts of the country to engage in *Karatun Allo*, Islamic Studies and street begging, under the supposed supervision of an Imam (usually untrained) or scholar has provided a breeding ground for radicalization of kids who are often used as female-suicide bombers. The complicity of traditional leaders in the region in the Boko Haram imbroglio is not in question as some were purportedly financed to let the group access their communities.
- c) **Media-Involvement:** The initial bad publicity the media gave the insurrection through broadcasting and televising of the brutish manner in which some leaders of the sect were publicly executed further emboldened the group to avenge the death of their commanders. The gory account of these tragic events by Mike Hanna of Al Jazeera is really blood chilling and may have set the tone for the viciousness of post Yusuf Boko Haram (Kukah, 2014). For fear and lack of professionalism, many local media firms in Nigeria have had to engage in the unethical practice of relying on foreign media sources as basis for reporting the insurgency.
- d) **Complicity of Citizens:** For every conspiracy theory, there is a group that stands to gain politically (Shettima, cited in Tukur, 2017). The Boko Haram narrative is not different. This is indicative of the concept of Problem Reaction Solution (PRS) – a situation where the elite in a society would ignite crisis and stand aloof. When the people are almost tired of looking for a solution, they pose indicating they could help – the masses would then beg them to come to their rescue and when the elite provide the solution, the people celebrate them as heroes.

Until recently, citizens were cooperating with members of the sect by providing safe havens for them in their homes. This further frustrated government's efforts at curbing the menace. In some cases, the insurgents used civilians as shields while attacking soldiers. The failure of parents to fend for their children who are often pushed into street begging has made innocent children vulnerable to various abuses one of which is radicalization into groups like Boko Haram. Apparently, its genocidal tentacles cannot be checkmated because of leadership inertia, cowardice of Christians, fear of Muslims and sacred cow syndrome in Nigeria (Gbinjie, cited in 2011, p. 20).

Findings

1. **Socio-political Indices:** This study has uncovered several social indices which may have prompted the insurgents into taking arms against the government: poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, insensitivity and media-failure.

- a) **Poverty:** With the high rate of people who are living below the poverty line in the region, crime becomes an easy alternative. They believe that some people were created rich and others poor so that those who are well-off can offer little stipends to the needy has contributed in putting the region in its present condition.

Uwais (2013) agrees with the above submission: “today the North of Nigeria continues to throw up Nigeria’s poorest indices on matters relating to healthcare, nutrition, education, empowerment and productivity. Consequently - insecurity, violence and poverty remain rife in that region. Statistics have it that 2/3 of the 102 million poor people in Nigeria live in the North. Extreme poverty in the North translates into extreme vulnerability to the effects of climate change, food security and so much more.”

Recently, the Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II while delivering a key note address during the opening ceremony of Kaduna States Investment and Economic Summit (KADINVEST), titled “Promoting Investment Amidst Economic Challenges” said, the northern part of the country especially the North East and West are the poorest in the country and even in the world (Sanusi, 2017). In fact, poverty and ignorance are considered as fertilizers for insurgency anywhere and in any age (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).

- b) **Illiteracy:** As the most backward region compared to other parts of Nigeria, this paper has discovered that low literacy level makes the youth population in the North-East easy target for politicians to use them as thugs or criminals to target perceived enemies. The scenario in the north-east (north-west) zone(s) of Nigeria nosedived such that Daily Trust of 17 May 2011 reported that this region had the highest percentage of children who have never attended school; the lowest literacy rates and the highest percentage of children not able to read. This was the finding of the Nigeria Education Data Survey 2010 presented by the National Population Commission (NPC) in Abuja.
- c) **Unemployment:** Because of the high rate of unemployment (Uwais, 2013) in the area under consideration, those who are not gainfully employed resort to violence as a way of meeting personal and family needs. This social index indicates a high rate of vulnerability for idlers and people who are less engaged in either menial or white-collar jobs, falling prey to criminal elements who use others for their selfish aims. The governments of the region have failed in harnessing the rich potentials of arable land, rich livestock, variety of wild-life and numerous mineral resources for optimum employment opportunities for their citizens. Youth employment, social inequality, social and economic exclusion are fingered as factors responsible for the insurgency (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
- d) **Insensitivity:** The insensitivity and negligence of the federal government towards the plight of people in the region as well as its failure to nip the crisis in the bud at its earliest stage emboldened the operations of the insurgents. Except for the Almajiri Boarding School System (which has since been neglected) that was initiated by the

Goodluck Jonathan Administration, there has been no clear vision for the region as regards its jobless teeming youths and the education of the girl-child in the region.

- e) **Media-Compromise:** It has been ascertained that the media is a major culprit in the rise and proliferation of the Boko Haram operations. As soon as the public execution of leaders of the sect was broadcast by the media, the insurgency became deadlier. Sometimes, the media under or over-reports causality figures; at other times, their reportage belittles the armed forces in the eye of the insurgents which further boosts the morale of the group. The study has discovered that there are occasions where local media houses rely on foreign sources for what is happening in Nigeria.
2. **Religious and Cultural Indices:** This paper has revealed that religious and cultural matrices are possible causes for youth radicalization in the region. Hate-preaching, youth radicalization and extremism as well as the *Almajiri* system have also been factored in as responsible for the insurrection.
- a) **Hate-preaching:** In Northern Nigeria, hate preaching is common place. Since the Boko Haram sect began their campaign against the Federal Government and Western Education through itinerant preaching and distribution of flyers, it suggests that the impact of such brand of evangelization is destructive. The paper revealed that the practice of preachers on Juma'at prayer sessions, in motor backs or evangelism-vehicles, preaching hate-sermons with the aid of hi-tech microphones has also contributed to the rise of Boko Haram.
- b) **Islam/the Almajiri system:** There is a thin line between culture and religion in the north. Perhaps that is why Sanusi (2017) queried why love books cannot be written in northern Nigerian stressing that it is wrong to burn books of science based on religion because the books have not committed any crime. The practice of itinerant Islamic catechism known in Arabic as the Almajiri system (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014) is another factor responsible for the insurgency.
- c) The paper notes that the Almajiri system which erroneously suggests that Islam is incompatible with education is a breeding ground for miscreants. The Almajiri children who are usually under a Mallam who is himself unlettered fall prey to a lot of abuses. These children who grow without parental love and under inhuman conditions are easily transformed into instruments in the hands of political bigwigs who use them as thugs during elections. Other Muslim countries have pushed on, but Northerners are fighting for the entrenchment of their culture and Islamic civilization (Sanusi, 2017).
- d) **Youth radicalization and extremism:** This paper has discovered that youth radicalization and extremism flow from hate-preaching and illiteracy occasioned by the Almajiri system, poor-parental upbringing and brainwashing of kids. A situation where the youth are brainwashed to hate foreigners, are made to believe that their religion is the only acceptable religion in the world and that Western

Education is evil, rising up against the government or anyone becomes an effortless venture.

By way of analysis, the following tables provide evidence for the above claims. Table 1 indicates the possible causes and remedies of Boko Haram insurgency; Table 2 is a comparative analysis of “Boko” (Western Education) as *Halal* (Lawful) or *Haram* (Unlawful); Table 3 compares previous and current positions of counter insurgency strategies; and Table 4 presents the socio-political, religious and cultural indices of the insurgency as findings of the study.

Table 1. Possible Causes and Remedies of Boko Haram Insurgency

Possible Causes of Boko Haram		Possible Remedies of Boko Haram
1.	Failure of government (Shettima, cited in Tukur, 2017).	Counter-insurgency initiatives
2.	Failure of religious and traditional leaders	Balancing faith and reason, separation between state and religion and training and licensing preachers
3.	Media-involvement (Kukah, 2014)	Investing in investigative reporting
4.	Complicity of citizens (Shettima, cited in Tukur, 2017).	Reconstruction of the North-East and reconciliation as well as rehabilitation of victims

Table 2. “Boko” (Western Education) as *Halal* (Lawful) or *Haram* (Unlawful): A Comparative Analysis

<i>Halal</i> (Lawful)		<i>Haram</i> (Unlawful)
1.	Islam is not inherently incompatible with modernity and some of its projects.	The legitimacy of political authority must be based on God’s revelation in the Quran as taught and handed over by his Prophet - The ideals of western education are in contradistinction to this call.
2.	Islamic literalism (exemplified by “dogmatic Islam” of the Middle Ages that codified the “Islamic right” i.e. the Shari’a) may not be compatible with modernity.	The application of the law of Allah is the only requisite for legitimate political authority and valid means of developing and reforming all societies – This makes it incompatible with the demands of western education.
3.	Islam, with symbolism and hermeneutical/contextual reading of the Qur’an, can be compatible with modernity.	Muslim and secular political leaders must not fail in upholding the correct ideals of Islam in their personal and political lives (Barkindo, 2013, p. 30) – Western Education constitutes a hindrance to this.
4.	Islam allows for the rediscovery of the importance of hermeneutics through the reapplication of faith via rigorous human reasoning.	Western education stands in the way of the unity and sovereignty of Allah which is the foundation of political, social and moral systems propounded by the prophets.

Table 3. Counter Insurgency Strategies

Previous Studies		Current Studies
1.	Effective network for intelligence gathering and analysis (Nchi, 2013).	Effective counter-insurgency must be predicated on strategic intelligence and reconnaissance (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
2.	Strategic surveillance aimed at dictating membership, motivation, and operational modalities of the sect (Nchi, 2013).	Preventive and mitigative measures through strategic intelligence, pragmatic policies and proactive strategies to counter the terrorists' designs in an attempt to forestall and/or mitigate terror (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
3.	Clinical investigation and prognostication of the socio-psychological and socio-economic currents that underlie the emergence, growth and sustenance of the sect and its activities (Nchi, 2013).	Systematic surveillance and reconnoitering in an attempt to stop them [the insurgents] before they strike (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
4.	Proactive engagement of civil society stakeholders in the fight against the sect (Nchi, 2013).	Adoption of counter-terrorism strategy by the Nigerian government through its relevant agencies to contain the insurgency in the interest of national security (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
5.	Identifying and foreclosing sources of inspiration, funding and recruitment to the sect (Nchi, 2013).	A necessary paradigm shift from anti-terrorism to strategic counterterrorism as a way forward (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).
6.	Tactical exploration of the diplomatic option in an attempt to come to terms with legitimate grievances of the sect (Nchi, 2013).	Deferring from the traditional anti-terrorism campaign in which terror is confronted by way of reactive and hyper-defensive combatancy (Chukwuma & Iortyer, 2014).

Table 4. Findings: Socio-political, religious and cultural indices of the insurgency

Socio-Political Indices		Religious and Cultural Indices
1.	Poverty (Uwais, 2013 & Sanusi, 2017)	Islam
2.	Illiteracy (Daily Trust, 17 May, 2011)	Almajiri system
3.	Unemployment (Uwais, 2013)	Youth radicalization
4.	Insensitivity	Hate-preaching
5.	Media-compromise	Extremism

As such, by way of properly communicating the meaning of *haram* and *halal*, this study makes the following submissions:

- a) Islam is not incompatible with modernity and education;
- b) There is cohesion between faith and reason;
- c) It is crucial to learn from the past - especially from renowned moderate Islamic scholars;
- d) Education liberates from the shackles of ignorance and extremism;
- e) Education provides the architecture of modern statecraft as well as checks and balances.

Far from idolizing western education, it must be acknowledged that education has its excesses like modernism and secularism which often leads to exaggeration of freedom and irresponsibility.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

Apart from the social indices of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, religious ideologies are responsible for the menace. To counter the literal communication of the meaning of *Halal* and *Haram*, the paper suggested that building strong statecraft through developing a robust Marshall plan which includes education, employment and reintegration of victims could help in curbing the menace. This can be accessed through:

- a. Counter-insurgency initiatives:** Counter-insurgency narratives include setting a panel of inquiry by the Federal Government into the remote and immediate causes of the insurgency and involving traditional and religious leaders at combating further attacks. This also involves developing feedback mechanisms which makes both the people and repentant Boko Haram members to bear their mind about the sad events that have taken place. These initiatives must factor in the reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabilitation factors earlier mentioned.
- b. Balancing faith and reason:** In order to balance faith and religion, government must ensure (through legislation) that religious institutions have curricular for Western Education. This law must be supervised to ensure compliance. Only then can faith and reason be balanced in the secular space. It is important for Muslims to adopt Western Education and stop using religion and culture to set the region backward (Sanusi, 2017). Religious organizations also need to promote inter-faith dialogue and advance moderate ideas towards facilitating understanding and cooperation on a broader scale (Johnston, 2012). This is key to making sure that western education is not seen as witchcraft.
- c. Separation between state and religion:** The proposition that Islam is synonymous with politics can be resolved if there is clear separation between state and religion. In that way, religion will enjoy its freedom while government functions without undue interference. However, since religion is practiced within the state, the state has the right to check the excesses of religious leaders. Nevertheless, religion should not be limited in its capacity to address issues, but neither should it be privileged with specific immunities from the law that do not apply to nonreligious institutions or citizens (Fadel, 2013, p. 1260). It is observed that “[w]e must confront this menace head-on, by wiping away all their traces and that of their sponsors. Nigeria cannot take her place in the comity of nations when we allow parochial religious extremism to becloud our young democracy and our march to nationhood. Enough is enough for religious tyrants and demagogues” (Gbinjie, 2011, p. 20).

The state has the responsibility of reminding its citizens of their allegiance to the Federal Republic of Nigeria which is a secular state governed under the constitution. To achieve this, Rane suggests a system of governance based on the universal principles of social justice, as envisaged by the masses, rather than “crude appeals to the punitive aspects of Sharia Law or creating an Islamic state in the conventional modern sense” (2010, p. 1). Rane favors a representative government otherwise called democracy which is still a product of westernization. This means that all must work at making Nigeria’s democracy work.

- d. Training and licensing preachers:** One of the lessons the state can learn from the havoc Boko Haram has caused is to license preachers. Since anyone can pose as a preacher, the government should put a law in place which will license not only Islamic preachers but all clerics in the country. This will go a long way in checkmating their excesses. Also criminal elements who pose to tarnish the image of genuine clerics should be prosecuted. This will help genuine clerics to communicate the real meaning of *halal* and *haram* to their adherents. This will go a long way in reducing radicalization and literal interpretation of the Quran.
- e. Investigative reporting:** The absence of real investigative reporting in Nigeria due to its risk factor, poor training, lack of good remuneration and insurance cover for journalists can be reversed if these are provided. Investigative journalists have a role in countering the narrative through interpreting either the connotative or denotative meaning of the videos and messages of members of the sect. Only investigative journalists who dare time and circumstance would be able to survive the fire-line to provide the general public with exclusive scoop and coverage on the activities of Boko Haram, the role of citizens, the complicity of security agencies and government’s action or action in the insurgency.

Conclusion

The metaphor of the Platonic allegory of the cave is essential to this study - Only one who has come out of the cave and sees light is able to tell the story. Those who remain in the cave are not only bereft of that experience but may not believe even if someone who has seen the light tries to convince them. The puzzle which remains is the communication gap between “left-wing” Islamic Theologians like Ibn Taymiyya and “right-wing” Abu Zayd. Apparently, only the true communication of meaning can bridge this communication gap in both academic and religious circles. Rather than widespread Islamophobia, Igboin suggests a more positive construction of the image of Islam as a good beginning (2012, p. 83) for distinction between radical Islam as employed by Boko Haram and moderate Islam which is a pious way of life.

This paper leaves us with the challenge of academic discipline namely, the voracious desire for further research in finding objective intellectualism while living in a pluralistic society. It has, however, succeeded in bringing to the fore the cognitive rendering of communication as an important tool for rendering meaning. The task of elite and Islamic scholars of North-Eastern Nigerian origin is to guarantee that Western education is not seen as “Modern-witchcraft” but factored in as a major player for the overall development of the human person – Since *Boko* (education) was not *Haram* (forbidden) from time immemorial, it is yet to be seen how it will be in contemporary times where it is indispensable in building statecraft.

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Appendix 1: Timeline of the Boko Haram attacks from January–August, 2017

	Date	Attack
1.	January 7	At least five soldiers were killed during an attack by Boko Haram fighters on an army base in Buni Yadi, Yobe state.
2.	January 8	Two people in Borno were killed in a residential area in the Kaleri area of Gwange after an attack by two female suicide bombers. Hours prior, three all male suicide bombers attacked a military checkpoint in the area, killing themselves and a civilian self-defense fighter after one of the vests detonated.
3.	January 13	Militants attacked the 119 Battalion and 133 Special Forces Battalion of 7 Brigade deployed to Kangarwa, Kukawa Local Government Area, Borno state. Three soldiers were killed in the encounter that also resulted in 10 Boko Haram casualties. On the same day, four suicide bombers staged an attack in Madagali that killed at least five civilians.
4.	January 16	In what was the first attack of many on the premises of the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) in 2017, a twin suicide bombing by two teenagers on the school campus resulted in the death of three people, including Professor Aliyu Mani, the director of the university's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.
5.	January 23	After invading the Dzaku village of Askira-Uba Local Government Area of Borno state, Boko Haram fighters killed

		eight people and kidnapped an undetermined number of women and children.
6.	January 25	A civilian member of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Kaleri district of Maiduguri, Borno, died after two suicide bombers detonated their vests in a confrontation while trying to enter a mosque.
7.	January 28	A recently secured Maiduguri-Biu highway was attacked by Boko Haram terrorists, leading to the death of seven people. Reports claimed that the number of casualties was actually more than 20 civilians in a convoy that had been travelling under military escort. The Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Major General Lucky Irabor, refuted the figure, claiming only one person had died.
8.	January 31	One person died after a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Dalori quarters, close to UNIMAID, during morning prayers. Another attack was reported in the Cameroon border town of Kontcha, killing five United Nations contractors: a Kenyan, a Cameroonian, and three Nigerians.
9.	February 5	Boko Haram terrorists launched an attack on a military base and burned down Sasawa, a town near Damaturu, Yobe state. No official death toll was released.
10.	February 10	Seven soldiers lost their lives after troops of Operation Lafiya Dole walked into a Boko Haram ambush in Ajiri village of Dikwa Local Government Area, Borno state.
11.	February 11	Terrorists invaded Mussa Village of Askira-Uba LGA, Borno state, burning dozens of residential houses with a man suspected to have been trapped in the attack.
12.	February 13	About 30 armed Boko Haram terrorists gained access to Mifa community in Chibok LGA, Borno, killing an Islamic scholar and breaking a boy's hand.

13.	February 16	An attack by three suicide bombers near Muna Garage, a bus station in Maiduguri, left two civilians dead.
14.	March 14	Boko Haram released a video that showed the execution of three people accused of being spies for the Nigerian army.
15.	March 15	Boko Haram terrorists attacked Magumeri in Borno state, killing seven people.
16.	March 16	Four soldiers died in another attack on Magumeri after an estimated 300 Boko Haram fighters targeted the military and a local police station.
17.	March 25	Militants kidnapped 18 girls and four women from Pulka village in Gwoza.
18.	March 30	In two separate attacks, Boko Haram abducted 22 girls and women from the village of Pulka and outside the village of Dumba. The abducted victims in Dumba were four women from the family of a herdsman who had refused to pay protection money to the terrorist group.
19.	March 31	At least three people were killed by Boko Haram in an attack on Kaye near Gumisiri village in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno, where terrorists burned down the village and kidnapped dozens of people, including three women.
20.	April 5	Boko Haram fighters killed seven men in a farming community outside Maiduguri and stole an estimated 360 head of livestock.
21.	April 12	A soldier was killed during a suicide and gun attack on a military checkpoint on the outskirts of Maiduguri.
22.	May 4	An attack by two female suicide bombers on Mandarari ward in Konduga LGA in Borno resulted in the death of five people.
23.	May 13	In another attack on UNIMAID, two suicide bombers detonated their vests when they were confronted, killing themselves and one security guard. Nine Boko Haram terrorists also killed 11 farmers in Amarwa, a village in Konduga LGA, 16 kilometers away from Maiduguri.

24.	May 15	A suicide bomb attack by three female bombers resulted in the death of two people in Shuwari Buri village, close to Maiduguri. Burned livestock and litter was left behind after an attack by Boko Haram on the mainly Shuwa Arab village of Mairi in northeast Borno state, the epicenter of its bloody eight-year insurgency (AFP)
25.	May 18	In two separate attacks, three suicide bombers were killed when they attacked UNIMAID again, reportedly killing one soldier.
26.	May 20	Seven people died when Boko Haram fighters stormed remote villages in Mussa and shot at villagers in Askira-Uba LGA, Borno state. An unspecified number of people were also reportedly kidnapped.
27.	June 7	In multiple attacks that rocked the eastern axis of Maiduguri, at least 10 people were killed.
28.	June 8	After the arrest of a Boko Haram commander in a failed attack in the village of Hambagba, near Gwoza, on the Cameroon border, almost a dozen terrorists invaded the community, killing four people and kidnapping six.
29.	June 9	Two teenage boys were killed in Fadama Rake village in Hong Council, Adamawa state, after unknown people handed them explosives contained in a polythene bag.
30.	June 11	After simultaneous raids by Boko Haram terrorists on Komdi and Tuyan villages in Borno, at least five people were reportedly killed.
31.	June 18	12 people were killed by three suicide bombers who detonated explosives in separate attacks on Kofa, a village that's only 8 kilometers from Maiduguri.
32.	June 20	After an ambush attack by militants on a police convoy on the Maiduguri-Biu highway, three people were killed while 16 women were reportedly kidnapped. Boko Haram later released a video, claiming some of the kidnapped women were police officers.

33.	June 25	A UNIMAID security guard was killed by a suicide bomber, while eight others died in another attack by four suicide bombers in Zannari community in Maiduguri.
34.	July 11	12 JTF members and seven civilians were killed in separate attacks on Moloji, Judumeri and Polo-Sabongari areas of Maiduguri.
35.	July 15	A 12-year-old boy was killed at Muna Delti area of Jere Local Government Council, Borno state after he was strapped with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) by suspected Boko Haram terrorists.
36.	July 17	Eight people were killed when a female suicide bomber detonated explosives at a mosque in Maiduguri.
37.	July 23	Seven people died when suicide bombers attacked two Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Maiduguri.
38.	July 25	In what was Boko Haram's bloodiest attack in 2017, at least 69 people, including soldiers and civilians, died after an ambush of an oil exploration team in the Magumeri area of Borno.
39.	July 28	At least eight people were killed and 14 others injured in a suicide bomb attack on an IDP camp in Dikwa LGA, Borno.
40.	August 1	After an attack on Mildu village in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa state, Boko Haram terrorists killed 7 people and injured 10 others.
41.	August 4	A suicide bomb attack at the Molai General Hospital, Maiduguri led to the death of three people including a hospital assistant.
42.	August 5	At least 31 fishermen were killed by Boko Haram jihadists in two separate attacks on the islands of Duguri and Dabar Wanzam in Lake Chad.
43.	August 9	At least one person was confirmed dead from an attack by Boko Haram Islamists in Ghumbili community in the Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa.

44.	August 11	Two tractor operators were killed by Boko Haram terrorists in Jere LGA of Borno while they were working on a farm.
45.	August 12	At least four people were killed in an attack at Wanori-Amarwa community of Konduga LGA of Borno.
46.	August 15	A suicide bomb attack on a market in Konduga resulted in the death of 16 people, with more than 80 others sustaining injuries.
47.	August 20	Two people were killed following an ambush by suspected Boko Haram terrorists along Damaturu-Biu road in Yobe.

(Toromade, 2017)