

The search for peace, reconciliation and unity in Zimbabwe: from the 1978 internal settlement to the 2008 global political agreement

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Abstract

This study is a critical examination of the complex search for peace, reconciliation and unity in Zimbabwe between the years 1978 and 2008, with a view to identify factors that have been blocking sustainable peace, national unity, reconciliation and development. It is a qualitative study which draws data from document analysis and oral interviews. The specific focus of the study is an analysis of the four peace agreements signed in this period namely; the 1978 Internal Settlement, the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement, the 1987 Unity Accord and the 2008 Global Political Agreement. Its central thesis is that coloniality in its multifaceted invisible forms is largely responsible for conflicts that have engulfed Zimbabwe and for compromising the chances of success of the four peace agreements. Coloniality has produced a 'postcolonial' leadership that has continued to practice politics in a violent, repressive, corrupt and unaccountable manner because of interpellation by the very immanent logic of colonialism that reproduces such inimical practices as racism, tribalism, regionalism and patriarchy. Theoretically, the study deploys de-colonial epistemic perspective in its endeavour to unmask and explain challenges to peace, unity, reconciliation and development in Zimbabwe. Finally, the thesis makes a strong case for pursuit of decoloniality as the panacea to conflicts and as an approach to conflict resolution and peace building that privileges decolonization and deimperialization so that Zimbabwe's development goals could be achieved.