

The Role of Culture and Arts in Peace Building and Reconciliation

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Abstract

This paper argues that conflict resolution, peace building and reconciliation in the 21st century requires a cultural slant in addition to conventional political and military approaches. This development should not be surprising especially given the nature of recent wars which have turned out to be more intra-state than inter-state. Since the end of the Cold war, wars have been focused on issues of culture, ethnicity, politics and religion than on nationalisms. Thus, cultural beliefs, norms, traditions, ethnicity and religion have contributed towards many major disruptions that have cost innocent lives and loss of valuable property. In addition, conflicts and divisions within societies reflect lack of appreciation and intolerance of others' cultural beliefs, views and are motivated by cultural differences. In the wars of recent decades, rape has been used as a weapon of war and children have been abducted to be killers and sex-slaves. Millions of families have been uprooted from their homes. Taken as a whole, these current developments allow us to witness how everyday people are experiencing the historical, cultural, economic and social forces that shape our world. As such, this present effort unpacks the role that culture can play in peace building and reconciliation. The research is qualitative in nature and applied discourse analysis to draw information from journal articles, published books as well as

reports in the area of reconciliation and peace-building. Examples will be drawn mainly from Zimbabwe and other different countries in world to substantiate some of the arguments put forward in the paper.

Keywords: Culture, Traditions, Arts, Conflict Resolution, Peace building and Reconciliation