

Infrastructures for Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Editors

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Mediel Hove
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Introduction

Surprisingly, not a great deal has been written on nonviolence in sub-Saharan Africa. Two of the three books of which we are aware (Sutherland/Meyer 2000; Bethlehem/Ginio 2007) focus on its application by independence movements, mostly during the 1960s. In the preface to his short book, George-Williams (2006) claims that it 'is the first serious analysis and documentation of ... nonviolent conflict transformation in Africa spanning the colonial and postcolonial periods'. It includes three examples – non-cooperation under the junta rule in Sierra Leone in 1997, the Ogoni struggles in Nigeria since the early 1990s and the soft revolution in Madagascar in 2001. There are also chapters in edited books such as Meyer/Ndura-Ouedraogo (2009) and Ndura-Ouedraogo et al. (2011), which document case studies of nonviolent action.

More recently, while much has been written on South Africa's celebrated Truth and Reconciliation Commission, there has been relatively little on the role of nonviolence in bringing down apartheid (but see Zunes 1999). Our interaction with young South Africans reveals that many believe that armed struggle was instrumental in apartheid's downfall and a similar belief is held in Zimbabwe. Clearly, there is much re-education to be done! There have been studies of important nonviolent actions in South Africa since 1994, notably the Treatment Action Campaign's successful efforts to force the government to provide medication for South Africans suffering from HIV/AIDS (Heywood 2009).

On a global scale, much has been written on people power movements, which are now termed civil resistance. There has been important research on recent resistance movements, including those of the Arab Spring in a number of north African countries (e.g. Schock 2015a, b; Courpasson/Vallas 2016). However, these have largely been mass protests against existing structures and have not proved strong on offering alternatives or maintaining pressure in the longer term. On these criteria, climate change activism has been much more effective.

The present book's focus is on sub-Saharan Africa, with case studies drawn from eastern and southern Africa, and it attempts to answer two questions – *What kinds of initiatives offer the greatest potential to move a society towards the peace which its people want and how can such initiatives be established, strengthened and sustained?*

The aim of Part I is to understand the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence. One of the signs of hope which emerges from Chapter 1 is the variation between and within countries when it comes to violence; some places are very violent, while others experience much lower levels. Violence, it is apparent, is not inevitable.

But understanding a phenomenon like violence will not of itself bring about change. Change requires effective and sustained intervention, which is why much of our own work involves action research (Kaye/Harris 2017). Interventions to deal with conflict and violence can be violent or nonviolent – although almost no intervention is wholly one or the other – and Part II examines the track record of these two broad approaches. The assessment in Chapter 3 includes a range of interventions, from the interpersonal through to the international level. While we come to this from a personal commitment to principled nonviolence i.e., for spiritual and ethical reasons, we are also convinced that nonviolence works and that the strategic planning processes which underpin pragmatic nonviolence (e.g. Sharp 2003, 2005) can be learned and practiced. Those who are convinced of the effectiveness of violence to bring about peace should reflect on the recent experiences of Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan.

We need to be careful not to promise too much. As Chapter 4 illustrates from the experience of Zimbabwe, those in power have a great capacity to hang onto it by foul and fair means (Hove/Harris 2015), while those who believe in nonviolence are not always able to remain organised, united and committed over the long term. Chapters 5 and 6 provide case studies of nonviolent conflict resolution in different contexts in Zimbabwe.

We had thought of Part III as simply containing a series of case studies of nonviolent action in sub-Saharan Africa, but the book, it seemed, had its own plans. What emerged very clearly is the importance of building infrastructures for peace, which has been defined as ‘a dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society’ (JPD Editors 2012). These can vary hugely in sophistication and level, ranging from interventions to establish local peace committees (Chapters 7 and 8), introducing peace education and peace club programmes in schools (Chapters 9 and 10), providing mediation mechanisms to help deal with election violence (Chapter 11) and establishing Ministries of Peace to coordinate government and non-government efforts in peacemaking and peacebuilding (Chapter 12).

Finally, the two chapters in Part IV examine two global challenges – a huge increase in the number and proportion of youth and climate change – which will have massive impacts on SSA and reflects on how these may be tackled nonviolently.

The final chapter examines the implications of all that has gone before. In brief, we find that the development of infrastructures for peace offers a great potential to build peace and that strategic planning is a valuable tool in establishing these infrastructures and helping them to be effective.

The fourth aspiration of the African Union’s *Agenda 2063* (African Union 2015) for a peaceful and secure Africa reads as follows:

Mechanisms for peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts will be functional at all levels. As a first step, dialogue-centred conflict prevention and resolution will be actively promoted in such a way that by 2020 all guns will be silent. A culture of peace and tolerance shall be nurtured in Africa's children and youth through peace education.

These are wonderful sentiments, but such a vision do not have a great record of success. Strengthening existing peace infrastructures and establishing new ones are, we believe, essential for such a vision to become a reality.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data 481 project for Africa
APFO	African Peace Forum Organisation
API	African Peacebuilding Institute
AU	African Union
AUPEAP	African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities
AVP	Alternative for Violence Project
AWM	Agricultural Water Management
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CF	Community Facilitators
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Démocratie et le Développement-Front pour la Défense de la Démocratie
DANIDA	International Development Agency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECLF	Ecumenical Church Leaders' Forum
EFA	Education for All
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ENSO	El Nino-Southern Oscillation
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FNL	Front National de Liberation
FRODABU	Front for Democracy in Burundi
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLPI	Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IEBC	Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JPD	Journal of Peacebuilding and Development

KNH	Kindernothilfe
LPCs	Local Peace Committees
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIPAREC	Mission for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross
NASS	National and Strategic Studies
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NCAVP	National Coalition of Anti-violence Programs
NCD	Ntengwe for Community Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NPI	Nairobi Peace Initiative
NPRC	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PEV	Post-Electoral Violence
PNI	National Unity
PNU	Party of National Unity
PO	Project Officer
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
SAPS	South African Police Service
SHGs	Self Help Groups
SLDF	Sabaot Land Defence Forces
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TJRC	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZIMCET	Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistical Agency
ZPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZPSP	Zimbabwe Peace and Security Programme
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZUNA	Zimbabwe United Nations Association

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