RETHINGKING PERSONAL HEALING IN THE CONTEXT OF

COMMUNAL RECOVERY

AN ESSAY ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE ASPECTS

OF RECONCILIATION

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RETHINGKING PERSONAL HEALING IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL RECOVERY
AN ESSAY ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION

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ABSTRACT

The point of departure for this thesis is the acknowledgment of the importance of meeting the challenges of trauma simultaneously at personal and communal levels. It is argued that the relationship between individual healing and communal recovery reflects interdependency: one can only be achieved when the other is correctly identified and addressed. The thesis is organized in three main parts (dealing with the nature of trauma, communal reconciliation, and the case study of Northern Uganda) and involves a critical examination of the importance of personal trauma healing in the context of communal recovery. In the concluding discussion, it is proposed that reconciliation at communal and personal levels must take place simultaneously in order for a society to fully overcome trauma.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

What is trauma? Trauma is a physical and psychological power that prevents an individual's coping resources from helping him or her perform in society. It is usually a personal response to extraordinary events, including natural disasters and violent human catastrophes.[1] A person traumatized by an extraordinary event is more or less left with intense feelings, emotions, and sensations that produce a negative influence on his or her mental and psychological well-being.

However, Janoff-Bulman demonstrates that the experience of trauma can also shatter four basic healthy assumptions: 1) belief in personal invulnerability ("it won't happen to me"); 2) the view of the self as positive (trauma is seen as a symptom of a weak, powerless, guilty, or ashamed individual); 3) the world is a meaningful and orderly place and that events happen for a reason; and 4) other human beings are fundamentally benign.[2] These four assumptions can give people power and space to function effectively in society.

Since the emergence of the concept of trauma more than a century ago, trauma studies have gone through stages from the initial ideas of Freud to the experiences of war-affected soldiers in the twentieth century. As Herman concludes, there are three phases of development of trauma studies that constitute to the generation of "a particular form of

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[1] Judith Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic Books. 1997.
[2] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman. *Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma*. New York: Free Press. 1992.

psychological trauma" in public consciousness.[3] The first phase was the notion of hysteria – the archetypal psychological disorder of women, which resulted from the republican, anticlerical political movement of the late nineteenth century in France; the second was combat neurosis or shell shock, which grew out of WWI in England and the United States and reached a peak after the Vietnam War due to the collapse of a cult of war and the growth of an antiwar sentiment; the third and most recent is sexual and domestic violence in the context of the feminist movement in Western Europe and North America.[4] The contemporary study of psychological trauma "is built upon a synthesis of these three separate lines of investigation"[5].

What Is Trauma: A Brief History of Trauma Studies

In the late nineteenth century, the disorder known as hysteria triggered serious inquiry. Jean-Martin Charcot, a French neurologist, was regarded as the patriarch of the study of hysteria[6]. Charcot studied hysteria by examining young women patients who had found refuge in his hospital complex from lives of unremitting violence, exploitation, and rape. Charcot transformed this ancient facility not only to an asylum but also to a place of modern science that attracted gifted and ambitious individuals in the fields of neurology

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[3] Herman. *Trauma and Recovery.*
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

and psychiatry. Sigmund Freud was one of them.

Upon Charcot's death, Freud tried to surpass his master's work by demonstrating the cause of hysteria. He originally hypothesized that traumatic experiences were at the root of hysteria. Such a hypothesis made him one of the first individuals to identify the concept of trauma. Calling it "double consciousness", Freud noted that unbearable emotional reactions to traumatic events produced an altered state of consciousness, which in turn induced hysterical symptoms.[7] According to Freud, a traumatic event is "any impression which the nervous system has difficulty in dealing with by means of associated thinking or [that] by motor reaction becomes a psychological trauma".[8] He not only recognized the relationship between traumatic events and hysteria, but also discovered that hysterical symptoms could be alleviated when "the traumatic memories, as well as the intense feelings that accompanied them, were recovered and put into words" (called by Freud as "abreaction" or "catharsis", and later as "psycho-analysis")[9]. However, the initial hypothesis of the causes of hysteria was soon changed. As Kleber and Brom explain, "Freud gradually began to doubt his trauma theory. He began to suspect that the patient's story about seduction and abuse… was the product of sexual desires and fantasies…"[10] Then, instead of something caused by external acts of society, Freud started to consider trauma and hysteria to be a

[7] Sigmund Freud. *Collected Papers*, ed. by James Stracky. New York: Basic Books. 1959. Vol. 5, Pg. 20-32.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Rolf J. Kleber, Charles R. Figley, and Berthold P. R. Gersons. *Coping with Trauma: Theory, Prevention and Treatment*. Amsterdam, Swets and Zeitlinger. 1992. Pg. 12-13.

product of individual sub-conscious and internal desires.

The catastrophe of WWI again forced the reality of psychological trauma upon public consciousness. In just four short years, the war destroyed millions of human lives and four European empires. Many soldiers suffered from similar symptoms experienced by hysterical women decades ago in the illusion of manly honor and glory in battle. "Under conditions of unremitting exposure to the horrors of trench warfare, men began to break down in shocking numbers. Confined and rendered helpless, subjected to constant threat of annihilation, and forced to witness the mutilation and death of their comrades without any hope of reprieve… They screamed and wept uncontrollably. They froze and could not move. They became mute and unresponsive. They lost their memory and their capacity to feel…"[11] Psychologists observed the phenomena and referred to it as war neurosis or "shell shock"[12]. It was believed that "the emotional stress of prolonged exposure to violent death was sufficient to produce a neurotic syndrome resembling hysteria in men"[13]. However, the main form of treatment at that time was to shame soldiers into accepting responsibility for their duties so as to return them back to battlefields.[14] At the conclusion of the war, discussions over soldier traumatization gradually faded. Decades later, the outbreak of the Second World War brought back psychologists' interests in the study of trauma. They

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[11] Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*. Pg. 20.

[12] The British psychologist Charles Myers is among the first few psychologists that examined some of the first cases and attributed their symptoms to the concussive effects of exploding shells. See Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.

[13] Ibid.

[14] See example in Lewis Yealland, *Hysterical Disorders of Warfare (1918)*, in which he introduced a treatment strategy of shaming, threatening and punishing.

recognized, for the first time, that anyone could break down under conditions of extreme stress, which did not necessarily signal personal weakness or genetic preconditioning.[15] However, the aim of psychological treatment or therapy was barely changed – treatments, such as hypnosis or talk therapy, provided traumatized soldiers with temporary relief so that they could return to fighting as quickly as possible.

Not until the Vietnam War in the 1970s was greater and widespread significance attached to the long-term influences of trauma on soldiers. Veterans and select mental health professionals began subsequently organizing peer-support discussion groups throughout the country for soldiers to share their experiences with one another as a way of coping with the effects of the war.[16] A new term, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), was coined and widely recognized. Sinclair, by examining individual cases of PTSD, notes that after returning to the United States after war, many soldiers exhibited myriad symptoms of traumatic stress, such as flashbacks, emotional numbness, and difficulty in reintegrating into society without a reliable means of support.[17] In addition to psychological effects, he also points out that consequences of trauma include "spiritual losses", which include "but certainly are not limited to, loss of trust, loss of faith, loss of innocence, loss of hope, loss of purpose, loss of meaning, and loss of joy"[18]. The designation of PTSD was the

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[15] Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*.
[16] Kleber and Brom. *Coping with Trauma.*
[17] N. Duncan Sinclair, William Clements, and Norma Sinclair. *Horrific Traumata: A Pastoral Response to the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*. New York: the Haworth Pastoral Press. 1993.
[18] Ibid. Pg. 43.

first framework for and recognition of problems that could result from exposure to traumatic incidents.[19]

Conflict Societies: Bringing Together Individual and Communal Traumas

"We are meant to be a part of the process of the healing of our nation, of our people, all of us, since every South African has to some extent or other been traumatized. We are a wounded people… We all stand in need of healing…" said Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his opening address to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission on December, 1995.[20] Archbishop Tutu insightfully noticed that unresolved trauma could cause dire consequences both at the personal and at the communal level, especially in those societies where mass human rights violations took and are taking place. Reychler argues, "War engenders a mental environment of desperation in which fear, resentment, jealousy, and rage predominate."[21] Consequently, building peace requires not only attention to the hard layers of the conflict but also to the soft layers of the deep conflict – psychological and emotional reconciliation.

Dealing with trauma requires efforts in terms of personal healing and communal recovery. However, countries going through democratic transition often encounter an

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[19] R. Yehuda. "Conflict between current knowledge about posttraumatic stress disorder and its conceptual basis", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 152 (1995), 1705-17.
[20] Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "Getting Away with Murder." *Special Correspondent Program*, BBC2.
[21] Reychler, "Coping Trauma".

inevitable dilemma: on one hand, under certain circumstances, individual rights and personal healings are required to give way to national reconstruction and state peace-building; on the other hand, "nations do not have collective psyches which can be healed," nor does any nation suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a whole and "to assert otherwise is to psychologize an abstract entity which exists primarily in the minds of nation-building politicians".[22] Such a dilemma reflects problematic functions of community trauma-coping mechanisms, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC). In response to the notion of communal psyches, Ignatieff writes, "We tend to vest our nations with conscience, identities, and memories as if they were individuals. It is problematic enough to vest an individual with a single identity: our inner lives are like battlegrounds over which uneasy truces reign…"[23] After violent conflicts, governments were eager to rebuild the national psyche, the mythology of which can probably generate damaging consequences for individual survivors who have been forced "out of step"[24]. According to Ignatieff, communal recovery mechanisms create merely a public space in which debate and discussion on what happened occurs.[25] What we see during this process is the appearance of cracks between communal and individual representation of trauma, since the trauma itself is personalized.

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[22] Brandon Hamber & Richard Wilson. "Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies", *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2002.
[23] Michael Ignatieff. *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*. London: Chatto & Windus. 1998.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

The starting point of this thesis is the acknowledgement of the importance of dealing with trauma at personal and communal levels at the same time. It argues that the relationship between individual healing and communal recovery reflects interdependency, which means that one can only be achieved when the other is correctly identified and addressed.

Structure and Methodology

This thesis will consist of three parts with the aim to reconsider, in a comprehensive manner, the importance of personal trauma healing in the context of communal recovery. Serving this goal, the first part will be devoted to identifying the personalized nature of trauma. A person suffering from trauma may find it difficult to relate to friends and family and not be able to contribute meaningfully to post-conflict reconstruction. Certain individuals, especially victims of past violence, have the tendency of becoming perpetrators of retributive violence (such cases are more often seen in children exposed to violence). Moreover, victims are not the only group of people who experience traumatic syndromes. Perpetrators, for instance, especially those under amnesty or those who have been forced to be involved in war (child soldiers might be the typical example here), will endure difficulties in societal reintegration.

The second part will focus on the examination of reconciliation processes to explore

how much emphasis they have placed on personal trauma healing, what they can and cannot do to help individuals recover their wounds and move on. To obtain a better understanding, a brief review of the current debate over the same topic will be provided.

The third and final part will introduce the case study of Northern Uganda to further demonstrate the points addressed in the previous parts. The choice of this conflict zone lies basically in three considerations: 1) the war in Northern Uganda took a terrible toll on civilians during the 21 years of the conflict. More than 80 percent of the people in the northern districts of Kitgum and Pader (an estimated 1.5 million people) live in IDP camps. According to the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies 2005 study, in which they interviewed 2,300 households in 67 IDP camps, 85 percent of all households in the camps were dependent on food aid, one-third of all children over 10 years old had lost a parent, and 9 percent of children were orphans.[26] 2) Uganda could not be purely defined as a post-conflict society – but, more accurately, a community that struggles between the brinks of in-war and out-of-war situations. Under such circumstances, the Ugandan government has mainly pursued a bifurcated approach of a military solution to the conflict on the one hand while also occasionally pursuing peace talks, which often leaves the civilians unprotected and ignored. 3) Conflict resolution processes in Northern Uganda have long been addressed from an international perspective, particularly over the ICC intervention – the discussion of

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[26] Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo. *The Northern Uganda IDP Profiling Study*, Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees of the Office of the Prime Minister and United Nations Development Programme, Vol I, September 2005.

psychological trauma healing has not been heated as those in South Africa and Rwanda, where recovery mechanisms were adopted more systematically.

The main source of analysis in the case study comes from findings of a population-based survey on attitudes about peace, justice, and social reconstruction in Northern Uganda, conducted in 2007 by the Human Right Center, University of California, Berkeley, the Payson Center for International Development, Tulane University, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. A similar survey was conducted by these three organizations back in 2005, in which they found that high levels of exposure to traumatic events including killings, abductions, mutilations, and sexual violations took place during the two decades of conflict, that more than half of respondents wanted to see judicial punishment of perpetrators, and that a majority indicated the need for an opportunity to speak publicly about the abuses and their sufferings.[27] Two years has witnessed a different situation – a preliminary agreement was reached between the parties and the overall living environment is improving with regards to security and IDP camps. Thus, the 2007 survey results could better show attitudes of local civilians in conflict-affected regions.

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[27] See Phuong Pham, Patrick Vinck, Marieke Wierda, Eric Stover, and Adrian di Giovanni. *Forgotten Voices: A Population-Based Survey of Attitudes about Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda*, International Center for Transitional Justice and Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, July 2005.

PART I: IDENTIFYING PERSONALIZED NATURE OF TRAUMA

The Experience of Collective Trauma

Kai Erikson, in the book *A New Species of Trouble*, examines the impact of collective trauma and defines it as "a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community."[28] A well-functioning community can, more or less, help its members buffer from some of the disruptive consequences of collective trauma.

However, an interactive communal system can be double-edged. Since it serves as supportive, individuals can rely on it for meaning and directions of lives. Collective trauma, "by its very definition, poses a direct assault on the continuity and integrity of the system."[29] At times, an entire community "is compromised by collective trauma, leaving individuals vulnerable to the psychological sequelae in traumatic stress."[30]

The Experience of Personal Trauma

The influences of a traumatic event on individuals vary on a person-to-person basis. What they have been through, how they respond afterward, and whether they can recover

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[28] Kai Erickson. *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*. NY: Norton. 1994. Pg. 233.
[29] Mary de Young, "Collective Trauma: Insights from a Research Errand," The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. 1998.
[30] Ibid.

may differentiate from one another.

When the topic of personal trauma is ever brought up, the very first objective that comes to mind tends to be the victim, who are viewed as "innocent and pitiful" after terrible conflicts. However, there are others, who might not necessarily be regarded as direct victims of mass human rights violations, but still need ways to heal their wounds and move on. I do not try to discuss whose needs for recovery are more urgent than others'. What I believe is that the identification and categorization of traumatized individuals and their psychological and mental needs can help us examine the constructive and destructive consequences of certain community-level trauma healing mechanisms more comprehensively.

Victims: Trauma Resilience

In an armed conflict, victims are an identifiable group of people who have gone through, individually and directly, traumatizing events, such as mass killing, abduction, and torture. Levels of traumatization may vary individual by individual. Correspondingly, trauma-coping abilities of the victim may differentiate on a personal basis. Recent years have witnessed an emerging field of study – resilience, which is widely recognized as one of the most significant factors in assessing trauma adjustment. [31] Although it is well established that exposure to violence can have severe negative consequences for personal

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[31] Kathryn M. Conner, M.D. "Assessment of Resilience in the Aftermath of Trauma," J Clin Psychiatry 2006;67.

development, not all individuals that are exposed to trauma events suffer from prolonged

harmful psychological discomfort. Such an ability to withstand trauma is resiliency.

Ever since the 1970s, researchers and clinicians in the field of developmental

psychopathology have started exploring the phenomena of resilience. In 1982, Kobasa et al.

pointed out that resilience is a crucial factor influencing how people respond to and cope

with stressful life events.[32] The theory was then expanded by Beardslee by suggesting that,

when faced with "adverse experiences, resilient people tend to manifest adaptive behaviors

in the areas of morale, social functioning, and somatic health".[33]

The characteristics of resiliency were studied in the same period. Kobasa

demonstrated that "people with greater hardiness also exhibit an internal locus of control, a

stronger sense of commitment to self, a sense of meaningfulness, and an ability to view

change or stress as a challenge."[34] Moreover, people with high resiliency tend to be more

capable of engaging others, forming attachments with personal and social networks, and

developing toward life goals.[35]

Thus, among aims of treatment are to alleviate symptoms of disorder, strengthen

resilience, improve quality of life, and ultimately bring them back to normal life. "As

resilience reflects the ability of an individual to cope with stress and adapt in the aftermath

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[32] Kobasa Sc, Maddi Sr, Kahn S. "Hardiness and Health: A Prospective Study," J Pers Social Psychology, 1982; 42:168-177.
[33] Beardslee WR. "The Role of Self-Understanding in Resilient Individuals: the Development of A Perspective," Am J Orthopsychiatry 1989; 59: 266-278.
[34] Ibid 28.
[35] Ibid.

of a traumatic event, improved resiliency would be a desirable outcome during treatment."[36]

Perpetrators: Searching for Belongings

Similar as the victim in need of being reassured that the state will not serve as a tool of their oppression, perpetrators are also afraid that new political attempts will backlash into their subjugations. Those, who have conducted terrible deeds against their fellows, are asking for the acceptance of the others, for the true forgiveness from people hurt by what they have done, and also for a place to continue their live, though none of these is easy to achieve. But in order to move on, society at all levels should be encouraged to moderate their vindictive desires and engage enemies in a meaningful manner to facilitate an appropriate atmosphere for the society. "Process (in reconciliation) is dependent on growing trust between opponents as the first hesitant steps towards rapprochement and, beyond that, to long term peace-building."[37]

Janoff-Bulman argues, "severe forms of trauma shatter the cognitive assumptions of personal invulnerability, viewing oneself positively and that the world is a meaningful and comprehensible place"[38]. For those perpetrators, the difficulty for them to reintegrate in the society is partly dependent on the fact that "trauma often results in confusion, and an

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Villa-Vicencio, "From Encounter to Settlement", Pg. 3.
[38] Janoff-Bulman. "The Aftermath of Victimization: Rebuilding Shattered Assumptions." In C. R. Figley (eds.), *Trauma and Its Wake*. New York: Brunner Mazel Publishers. 1985.

inability to fully understand the causes of one's suffering"[39].

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[39] Hamber & Wilson.

PART II: DEBATING OVER COMMUNUAL RECONCILIATION

"Reconciliation — restoring broken relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences — can be seen as the ultimate goal of conflict resolution."[40] In the process of conflict transformation and peace building, reconciliation might be one of the most ideal status, which providing possibilities to wave goodbye to the past and to say hello to the future. Unfortunately, reconciliation is not an action. It requires numerous participants and actions. It includes a long and tortuous road. Archbishop Desmond Tutu once addressed that "I told those dedicated workers for peace and reconciliation that they should not be tempted to give up their crucial work because of the frustrations of seemingly not making any significant progress, that in our experience nothing was wasted, for when the time was right it would all come together and, looking back, people would realize what a critical contribution they had made. They were part of the cosmic movement towards unity, towards reconciliation, that has existed from the beginning of time."[41]

Reconciliation is one of the most desired aims of communal recovery. It signals not only the cessation of hostilities but also a deeper desire by former belligerents to re-engage, interact, and unite in a common struggle for the renormalization of politics and social life. Reconciliation has the power to heal the wounds of past conflict and rebuild barriers to its

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[40] Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. 2005. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity. Pg. 231
[41] Archbishop Desmond Tutu, addressing an audience in Northern Ireland in 1998.

future recurrence. Ironically, despite its appeal and desirability, reconciliation is also one of the most disputed concepts in the field of conflict management. Some view reconciliation as the end point of conflict while others argue that it is a process continually redefined. Some argue that reconciliation occurs on a societal level while others argue it is part of an internalized personal struggle. Some believe that prosecutions are more effective in promoting reconciliation while others propose that localized practices and truth commissions are more successful in fostering genuine reconciliation.

Literature Review: Different Definitions

As alternative ways to "move on", approaches of forgive and revenge seem to serve as opposite poles. To forgive is to forget or ignore past atrocities and traumas, while to revenge is to be repaid or let out personal vindictive feelings. Andrew Rigby argues in *Justice and Reconciliation after the Violence* that forgive-and-forget as one way of "moving on for societies emerging out of division, bloodshed, and collective nightmare with the alternative of trials, purges and the pursuit of justice". It is often the case that forgiveness tends to be related to "peace", while revenge to "justice". But are peace and justice exclusive alternatives?

Jeffrie Murphy's ideas over the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation may act as a start. He suggests two situations: "forgiveness without reconciliation", in

which letting go the past does not necessarily lead to co-existence under the same roof; and

"reconciliation without forgiveness", in which reconciliation transcends personal feelings,

showing that sometimes victims are not required to overcome their vindictive emotions but

are hoped to be willing to accept for the sake of the future of their society.[42] Apparently,

both situations create paths to peace. However, without the participation of justice, neither

is immune to future reoccurrence of crimes or conflicts. The truth is that both concepts of

peace and of justice are not as monolithic as they appear to be. Reconciliation stands for the

positive peace as often made out, which includes "democracy, good governance, and the

beginning of civil trust"[43]. Such a positive peace, as a matter of fact, develops from a

negative one in conflicts, which is embodied by the absence of violence. In other words, the

passage from negative to positive runs through justice, either the rule of law or trials, either

the truth commissions or distributive justice.

José Zalaquett, a participant in the Chilean Commission for Truth and

Reconciliation, takes an opposing view. Borrowing from Max Weber's lecture, *Politics as a*

Vocation, Zalaquett stresses the importance of balancing ethical imperatives and political

constraints. Although conceding "the ghosts of the past, if not exorcised to the fullest extent

possible, will continue to haunt the nation tomorrow,"[44] Zalaquett argues that the ethics of

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[42] Jeffrie Murphy. *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits*. Pg. 15.
[43] Villa-Vicencio. Chapter 7.
[44] José Zalaquett, "Balancing Ethical Imperatives and Political Constraints: The Dilemma of New
Democracies Confronting Past Human Rights Violations," *Hasting Law Journal* 43 (August 1992). Pg. 1430-
1432.

responsibility for political leaders outweigh their ethics of conviction. "Political leaders

cannot afford to be moved only by their convictions, oblivious to real-life constraints, lest

in the end the very ethical principles they wish to uphold suffer because of a political or

military backlash."[45] On the question of how to deal with past abuses, Zalaquett claims that

leaders are better off promoting reconciliation through truth telling than prosecutions or

formalized trials. "Although the truth cannot in itself dispense justice, it does put an end to

many a continued injustice."[46] It can serve as a "healthy social catharsis [that] helps to

prevent the past from reoccurring."[47] Thus, for Zalaquett, reconciliation is secured through

"the whole truth and as much justice as is possible,"[48] and political reconciliation is

favorable to personal reconciliation.

In the article, "Dealing with the Legacy of Past Abuses," Neil Kritz argues "there is

a positive relationship between a society grappling with the legacy of past abuses and the

potential for that society attaining a stable peace."[49] However, unlike Zalaquett, Kritz is not

as critical of prosecutions or formalized justice methods. "For the advancement of a cultural

justice and accountability as well as for the effective promotion of peace and reconciliation,

the best option will always be a local one through the deployment of mechanisms that are

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Diane F. Orentlicher, "'Settling Accounts' Revisited: Reconciling Global Norms with Local Agency," *International Journal for Transitional Justice* 1, no. 1 (2007). Pg. 5.
[49] Neil J. Kritz, "Dealing with the Past: Critical Issues, Lessons Learned, and Challenges for Future Swiss Policy," in *Koff/Swiss Peace Working Paper 2* (Berne: 2004). Pg.16.

located *in situ* and administered by local actors."[50] Besides, Kritz notes that reconciliation

and transition also require "the establishment of accountability, democratization of

government, and reform of the security forces and the criminal justice system."[51] Therefore,

for Kritz, reconciliation relies on a number of situational factors – post-conflict societies

must not only confront their pasts through the use of localized institutions and methods of

justice but should also work to develop various measures of effective governance.

Charles Villa-Vicencio, the former National Research Director of the South African

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, proposes a useful middle ground between the

theories espoused previously. Standing along with Kritz's emphasis on local ownership of

justice, Villa-Vicencio is also a strong proponent of Zalaquett's truth telling as a useful

means of reconciliation. Based upon African traditional justice and reconciliation

mechanisms, Villa-Vicencio argues that these mechanisms "provide a sense of cultural

resonance that can result in a level of truth-seeking, perpetrator accountability and peace-

building that external agencies cannot easily deliver."[52] However, like Murphy, Villa-

Vicencio stresses the personal dimensions of reconciliation as well. "Reconciliation, in the

modest sense of being willing to engage an opponent in dialogue, joint decision-making,

civic respect and self-criticism, although time consuming, is ultimately the most effective

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[50] Ibid. Pg. 17.
[51] Ibid. Pg. 24.
[52] Villa-Vicencio, "Transitional Justice in Africa," in *Walk With Us and Listen: Building Sustainable Reconciliation in Africa*. Pg. 9.

way of promoting sustainable peace."[53]

Debating over Communal and Personal Reconciliation

As evidenced in the literature, a key distinction in the nature of reconciliation is the level at which reconciliation is pursued. Should a statewide effort of communal reconciliation and the renormalization of social life be promoted, or should a deeper, more personal level of reconciliation be pursued?

Despite its critique of being more superficial than personal reconciliation, communal reconciliation is no easy task. The post-conflict political atmosphere is characterized by hesitancy, anxiety, and mutual distrust, features hardly conducive to negotiation and compromise. "A house divided cannot stand"[54] and state institutions, as well as individual political leaders, need to work diligently to reassure their broader populace. Victim groups must be reassured that the state will not serve as an instrument of their oppression and that their personal and cultural survival is secure.[55] Likewise, perpetrators must be reassured that new attempts at political interaction will not backlash into their own subjugation and oppression. Even neighboring countries, as well as the international community at large, must be assured that appropriate measures of stability and reconciliation are adopted and that conflict will not cross international borders. Thus, while

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[53] Ibid. Pg. 3.
[54] Abraham Lincoln, June 16, 1858.
[55] David Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996).

some may argue that it is less "genuine" than personal reconciliation, communal reconciliation remains vital to transitional justice and its consequences should not be ignored.

Communal reconciliation can take place at two levels: one at the official level of the state and the other at the broader level of the society. At the official level, efforts to promote political reconciliation include those to eliminate state discrimination, promote increased transparency and accountability, and the proper punishment of the violations of previous regimes.

The need for communal reconciliation can also go beyond the immediate realm of state actions. Kritz reminds us that "crimes against humanity, genocide, or systematic repression are not carried out by a handful of people; where such atrocities occur, hundreds if not thousands of perpetrators and their accomplices are often implicated."[56] Consequently, societal reconciliation is essential for the functioning of a post-conflict community. Post-conflict states need to be convinced that it is in their own best interests, as an integral society, to leave grievances behind and work toward a common future. Communities from all sides of the conflict should be encouraged to moderate their vindictive desires and engage their former enemies in a meaningful way that helps facilitate the better functioning of the state.

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[56] Kritz, "Dealing with the Past: Critical Issues, Lessons Learned, and Challenges for Future Swiss Policy." Pg. 21.

Reconciliation can also occur outside the confines of states. It can result from an internalized process of encounter, engagement, and exploration with former adversaries. Villa-Vicencio highlights the importance of these concepts in the process of personal reconciliation. "Serious encounter call for honest and robust engagement."[57] "It endeavours to see beyond the mask we project and that others impose on us."[58] To encounter an individual means to see them for whom they are, to try and understand their motivations, and to discover the reasoning for their actions. By engaging in serious encounter, adversaries lay the foundation for mutual understanding and "provide a narrative space" in which to explore through dialogue the possibilities "to move jointly towards resolving their differences."[59]

However, personal reconciliation is intensive and exhausting. It requires both time and patience. It also requires a genuine commitment from participants to truly set aside their prejudices and attempt to see the humanity in their adversaries. Such a commitment is not always possible or even desirable. It is up to the individual to decide if they are ready to move on, confront their enemy, and ultimately forgive them for what they have done. This is not a process that can be forced nor should it be. Victims do not speak with a single voice. Some may demand justice, some may demand revenge, and some may even wish to be left alone. Personal reconciliation is an organic process, one unique to each individual, and is

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[57] Ibid. Pg. 8.
[58] Ibid. Pg. 5.
[59] Ibid. Pg. 12.

simply not appropriate or desirable in all cases.

Examining Communal Reconciliation Institutions

One of the factors that make reconciliation processes complex and difficult is that violent conflicts always happen earlier. Under such circumstances, reconciliation is rarely just a case of sitting down and speaking out. "Too much has happened, too many relations have been severed, too many norms violated, too many identities distorted, too many traumas endured."[60] Too many things are waiting to be done before people are willing to reconcile. Dealing with the past should and ought to come first.

Thomas Ohlson introduces in *Understanding Causes of War and Peace* the Triple-R triangle and regards it as an explanation not only to the cause of conflicts but also to the beginning of peace. Thus, to use Ohlson's Triple-R model as a guide, in order to reconcile, truth has to be unveiled: why do we want to have this conflict (reasons); why could we have this conflict (resources); why must we have this conflict (resolve)? Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, also "stressed the importance of understanding the 'causes, motives and perspectives' of those responsible for past evil. He warned that unless the essential concerns of perpetrators and victims are addressed, they are likely, in one form or another, to give rise to future conflict."[61] It seems that for most people involved in violent

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[60] Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall. Pg. 233.
[61] Villa-Vicencio. Chapter 7.

conflicts, what they want is as simple as knowing "what has happened and why it could happen." For example, in Chile, the relatives of the victims, after experiencing uncountable pains and sufferings, "stressed in the end, what really mattered to them was that the truth be revealed, that the memory of their loved ones not be denigrated or forgotten, and that such things never happen again."[62] The requests appear to be simple. However, digging out the past is far more difficult.

Unfortunately, digging out the past is not enough for reconciliation, which requires both the past and the future, both digging out and moving on. How much of the past is needed for the traumatized to reconcile? The answer is unknown. What should be the most appropriate attitude toward the past? And how could we move on? These are not as simple as "yes or no" questions. To those perpetrators, they are facing the innocent who have suffered from their atrocities. To those victims, they are expected to communicate with whom they consider to be evils. "People know if they are from a war-torn country how difficult it is to sit down across the table in the same room with an adversary…. It is likely that adversaries will say: 'we cannot negotiate because we despise the other side too much. They have killed our children, they have raped our women, they have devastated our villages.'"[63] The invisible scars of the past are often harder to treat, and for some people, recovery from psychological injuries and losses might take forever.

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[62] Zalaquett.

[63] Carter, J. 1992. The real cost of war. *Security Dialogue*. 23 (4), 21-4.

When looking back into the history, we would find plenty of case studies in different societies concerning the ways undertaken to reconcile from brutal wars and conflicts. Here, I will only take the South Africa Truth Commissions and the International Criminal Court (ICC) as examples.

Desmond Tutu, Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, refers to the TRC as the "third way" between "Nuremburg and national amnesia". Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) can "facilitate a measure of accountability and truth-telling from perpetrators and provide some form of reparations for victims of the conflict. It can further lay the foundation for the rule of law in an emerging democracy, within which a culture of human rights is cultivated and given legislative priority."[64] In the South African case, the TRC sets a great example, not necessarily a perfect one, of avoiding vindictiveness through honoring the past with the hope that there be a full public disclosure of the truth — human rights violations. However, some people oppose that the South African government is taking risks by digging out the past, which may very likely cause new injuries. Some people also argue that the TRC's way of dealing with the perpetrators and crimes (usually amnesty) fails to include the role of law, which is of importance in reconstituting new social structures and relationship. There are still others who doubt the TRC as an effective means of reconciliation. But we cannot neglect the facts that "the defeat of apartheid had been decisive", "Christian and indigenous African ubuntu traditions

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[64] Charles Villa-Vicencio. "Truth Commissions". Published in *Pieces of the Puzzle* (2004). Pg. 80-88

could be drawn upon", and "outstanding leadership was providentially displayed".[65] What the TRC aims to dig out is more than an official version from the government, but instead, the deepest emotions and painful stories from the perspectives of the victims. Above all, the TRC helps to make reconciliation possible.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) seems to concentrate more on justice or retributive justice as suggested by Murphy, which brings the past before the judgment of the present. Compared to the TRC, the ICC is only responsible for limited human rights crime violations. Because of the political restraints behind, it can hardly be widely acknowledged as a symbol of real justice after conflicts and before reconciliation. Moreover, the ICC has received criticism of questioning how international prosecutions could contribute to local peace-buildings, let alone the ICC prosecutions are in nature long and tortuous processes. This may bring us back to rethink Murphy's idea of retributive justice: how retributive justice could contribute to the reparation of victims and help them move on?

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[65] Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity. 2005. Pg. 240

PART III CASE STUDY: NORTHERN UGANDA

Depicting the Picture: What Is Happening?

The conflict between armed rebellions and the Ugandan government, which is also known as one of the Africa's longest-running conflicts, has been under fierce debate since the mid-1980s. The notorious Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony who claimed to establish a theocratic state on the basis of the Ten Commandments and Acholi tradition, carried out numerous anti-human rights activities, including murder, abduction, sexual enslavement, training children soldiers, and mutilation in northern Uganda and parts of Sudan. It is estimated that there could be thousands of soldiers in the LRA, among which the number of children is, however, unpredictable. Until now, northern Uganda continues to be in a terrible situation.

The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ALPI) prompted the amnesty process in Uganda through the Amnesty Act of 2000, the aim of which was relevant to "the expressed desire of the people of Uganda to end armed hostilities, reconcile with those who have caused suffering and rebuild their communities". This Act granted Amnesty, as "a pardon, forgiveness, exemption or discharge from criminal prosecution or any other form of punishment by the State", to any Ugandan who "engaged in or is engaged in war or armed rebellion against the government of the Republic of Uganda by (a) actual participation in combat; (b) collaborating with the perpetrators of the war or armed rebellion; (c)

committing any other crime in the furtherance of the war or armed rebellion; or (d) assisting

or aiding the conduct or prosecution of the war or armed rebellion"[66]. ALPI expected, by

carrying out such an Act, combatants could be encouraged to leave insurgencies without

worrying prosecution and then the rebellion could be brought to an end. However, the

application of the Act failed to either realize the attempted goal or break the cycle of

violence.

In December 2003, the government of Uganda pushed forward the case to the

International Criminal Court (ICC). The case also became the first ICC prosecution since its

establishment one year ahead. After two years of investigations, the ICC issued its first

arrest warrants for the LRA leader Joseph Kony, his deputy Vincent Otti, and LRA

commanders Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odiambo, and Dominic Ongwen[67] in 2005. Facing the

involvement of the ICC and the international community, the LRA leaders have repeatedly

required immunity from the ICC prosecution in order to end insurgencies. Regardless of the

ceasefire and the well-known Juba Peace Process starting in July 2006, people in Uganda

were still suffering from terror and anguish after the unforgettable experience in the past.

In late June 2007, the LRA and the Uganda government signed an agreement,

setting out general principles to deal with accountability and reconciliation in Northern

Uganda and providing that 1) the Ugandan government will exercise jurisdiction over

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[66] Amnesty Act 2000 s. 3 (1).
[67] International Criminal Court, 14 October 2005. *Warrant of Arrest Unsealed against Five LRA Commanders*.
(Accessed 1 December 2009) http://www.icc-cpi.int/pressrelease_details&id=114&l=en.html

individuals who allegedly "bear particular responsibility" for the most serious crimes committed during the conflict and 2) "alternative penalties" are available for serious crimes committed by the LRA (though without further specification). At the time of writing, further consultations on the accountability and reconciliation mechanisms are held by both parties before a final agreement can be reached.

The topic of the transitional justice and reconciliation process arouses great concerns not only in the Ugandan government but also around the world. However, besides debating over how Uganda, as a conflict-stricken state, could recover from the past and move on to the future, the voices of Ugandan civilians are often forgotten. Researches from the Human Rights Center at University of California, Berkeley in partnership with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) conducted two population-based surveys of attitudes about peace and justice in Northern Uganda respectively in 2005 and 2007. The surveys concentrate on the needs and desires of ordinary Ugandan civilians after serious human rights violations and conflicts. How do they perceive the justice system underway for peace and national recovery? To what extent have the feelings and thoughts of Ugandan people been taken into consideration? How reconciliation mechanisms help those people who witness and experience violence move on from the past to the future?

Reflecting the Facts: What Can We Learn from the Survey?

The 2007 survey consists of preliminary analysis of quantitative data collected from interviews with 2,875 residents of four northern districts, including Acholi and non-Acholi regions.[68] One of the specific objectives of the survey is to capture opinions and attitudes about specific national conflict resolution mechanisms, including trials, traditional justice, truth commissions, and reparations. Interviewees were posed several questions covering a wide range of topics from accountability to the function of the ICC. Relevant conclusions, based on my personal readings and understandings, are drawn as follows:

High percentage of self-identification as victims

95 percent of the respondents identified themselves as victims. In response to identifying the principal victims of the war in Northern Uganda, we have answers with broad definitions, such as "everybody in the north" (60%), "the Acholi in general" (52%), or "Children" (32%). These figures, on the one hand, show the widespread nature of violence in the Northern Uganda, and, on the other hand, the depth of the conflict on ordinary Ugandan residents. As for the general exposure to traumatic events, as many as 76% of all respondents had at least one family member killed over the course of the conflict; more than 85% reported suffering from economic consequences, like income lost, house destroyed, productive assets taken away.

Hierarchical needs for trauma healing

When asked to prioritize their needs in contribution to the development of potential

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[68] Pham et al., "When the War Ends"

policy responses at the communal level, only 3% of the respondents regarded justice as the top one. Instead, they put more emphasis on resolving immediate needs for health (45.2%), peace (44.1%), and food (43.2%). Similar conclusion can also been drawn from their responses to the question "what should be done for the victims?" Over half of the respondents voted for "financial compensation" (51.8%), compared to "justice" (1.7%), "apologies" (4.4%), and "reconciliation" (3.2%). It is obvious that personal trauma healing requires as its foundation material compensation to ensure the restoration and recovery of mental and psychological needs.

Integrated justice response

A majority of respondents (84%) believed that peace could be achieved in Northern Uganda; the figure is even higher when they considered "dialogue with the LRA" (90%) and "pardoning the LRA for their crimes" (86%) as ways to achieve peace in the country. It is important to note that as few as 29% of respondents associated the term justice with "trials" and only 26% defined it as "holding the wrongdoer accountable." It is even more important to recognize that fewer than half of the respondents thought trials would contribute to peace (46%), security (49%), and justice (49%). In similar case, only 15% of the respondents favored "peace with trials" over peace with other mechanisms, such as amnesties (51%), truth-telling (25%), and traditional ceremonies (8%). A majority (76%) believed that pursuing trials at this point would endanger the peace process.

Another important point shown in the survey is the respondents' attitude toward the ICC. When asked "what is the most appropriate mechanisms to deal with abuses in Northern Uganda", more respondents voted for the ICC than those for domestic trial courts (Ugandan National Court or Amnesty Commission). This result also resonated with the previous conclusion that it is in Ugandan residents' interest that their government should attach more significance to its people's livelihood and development rather than trials that might hurt the peace process.

Changes have taken place in the respondents' attitude toward trials. In the 2005 survey, more respondents thought that LRA leaders should be punished, brought to court, and then imprisoned or killed. Similarly, only 47% of the respondents favored "peace with amnesty" in 2005 compared to 2007 (80%). We can assume that this acts in accordance with the civilian confidence in the ongoing Juba peace talks and active outreach programs around the country.

Willingness to reconcile and reintegrate the perpetrators

Respondents in all of the surveyed districts supported the need for the people of the country as a whole to live together. The survey result in attitudes toward reconciliation of former perpetrators is particularly encouraging – more than half of the respondents felt comfortable living in the same community with former LRA leaders (65%) and lower ranking LRA combatants (70%). However, due to certain local cultural factors, non-Acholi

respondents reported greater discomfort than Acholi respondents.

It is more important to learn that over half of the respondents (54.2%) agreed that former LRA leaders would have the same rights as anyone else; around 46% said that former perpetrators could participate in politics; and about 70% stated that LRA leaders and lower ranking combatants could become part of the national army.

In conclusion, the survey results demonstrate large scale willingness to reconcile and reintegrate the whole society at both the communal level and the personal one.

From the Victim Perspective

The levels of exposure to violence in Northern Uganda are extremely high. "Of the 2,585 respondents, 40 percent had been abducted by the LRA, 45 percent had witnessed the killing of a family member, and 23 percent had been physically mutilated at some point during the conflict."[69] Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his opening address to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission on December 16, 1995, addressed that "We are meant to be a part of the process of the healing of our nation, of our people, all of us, since every South African has to some extent or other been traumatized. We are a wounded people… We all stand in need of healing"[70]. Archbishop Tutu's statement could also be applied in the Northern Uganda case, where every individual who either loses his/her loved

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[69] "Forgotten Voices", Pg. 38.
[70] Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "Getting Away with Murder." *Special Correspondent Program*, BBC2.

ones or witnesses the atrocities needs to heal. It is an undeniable truth that under certain circumstances, individual rights are forced to be sacrificed to national reconstruction and personal healings are required to give way to state peace-building.

"Nations do not have collective psyches which can be healed, nor do whole nations suffer post-traumatic stress disorder and to assert otherwise is to psychologize an abstract entity which exists primarily in the minds of nation-building politicians."[71] Michael Ignatieff wrote in his book, "We tend to vest our nations with conscience, identities and memories as if they were individuals. It is problematic enough to vest an individual with a single identity: our inner lives are like battlegrounds over which uneasy truces reign; the identity of a nation is additionally fissured by region, ethnicity, class and education."[72] After violent conflicts, especially in places like Northern Uganda, the governments eager to build up a national psyche, the mythology of which can probably generate damaging consequences for individual survivors who have been forced "out of step"[73].

One of the aims of both the amnesty process and the ICC prosecutions in Uganda is to create public discourse and public memory, with which people – victims, perpetrators, and bystanders – are encouraged to move on for the sake of the reconstruction of a peaceful Uganda. Even if a new national psyche and identity can be created, it is not necessarily true that such an identity means adequacy for every Ugandan resident to forget what have

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[71] Brandon Hamber & Richard Wilson. "Symbolic Closure Through Memory, Reparation and Revenge in Post-Conflict Societies." *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2002.
[72] Ignatieff. Pg. 169.
[73] Hamber & Wilson.

happened in the past, to accept the new identity, and to be willing to move on. I cannot be convinced that the decisions made by the ICC, which is known only to 27 percent of the Ugandans, are able to make them recover. Their voices need to be heard, and their desires need to be expressed. After all, as members of the nation, it is the individual who is traumatized in this huge war of human rights abuses and violations. "Yet if we look hard, we start to see cracks appearing between the national and individual representation of trauma, if only because there is a truth that can be known only by those on the inside."[74] Those who are in desperate need for cure are those who have been severely traumatized. Just as doctors have to ask question about the patients' symptoms before writing prescriptions, the Ugandan government and the international community cannot forget the public voices before taking further actions.

Michael Lapsley, priest and facilitator of the *Healing the Memory Workshops*, in South Africa, argues that "memory can be healed only by individuals"[75]. To this end, "individuals need to talk about their distinctive pasts, put their memories on the table, open them up, clean them out and in so doing facilitate healing"[76]. In Uganda, some survived from abduction, some never heard from their husbands or children, some were present when their relatives, friends, or classmates were brutally killed, and some never experienced the violence but learned the story from their parents or grandparents. Every

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[74] Ignatieff. Pg. 175.
[75] Michael Lapsley. "Healing the Memory: Cutting the Cord Between Victim and Perpetrator — Interview with Father Michael Lapsley by Hannes Siebert." *Track Two*, 1997. Pg. 46.
[76] Hamber & Wilson.

piece of truth is in itself highly personalized. Every piece of memory is unique to be kept. Neither prosecutions nor amnesties targeting those who are responsible for the bloody history is enough to meet the psychological needs of the victim — "they may be necessary first steps toward individual psychological healing but they are generally not sufficient in themselves"[77].

Survivors of the human rights violations need a space to memorize their lost and to protect the truth they and their future generations need to know. The memories and truth cannot be removed from the society. The country of Uganda needs a national story, which ought to be consisted of every episodes owned by its people.

The war between the Ugandan government and the LRA is now in its twenty-first year. This war "has taken a horrible toll, both socially and psychologically, on the people"[78]. According to the survey, many people regard sustained peace as their top priority. Such a priority does not mean no desire for justice, but the need for a stable environment to live in is far more pressing. On this point, the Ugandan government is standing on the same line with the public. However, the national peace-building process should never be merely the job of the Ugandan elites, nor should it only be the concern of the international community. Instead, this process requires involvement of all Ugandan citizens.

However, it is argued that a simplified reality may be more beneficial for the

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[77] Hamber & Wilson.
[78] "Forgotten Voices", Pg. 39.

process than listening to every individual about his or her stories. On the contrary, it is proposed that after having the sense of being involved and paid attention to, one might be more willing to contribute to the national peace-building, which will undergo in a more stable way. To arrange personal healing and national peace-building in a sequence seems to me as impossible, and I cannot imagine how the Uganda government is able to build peace if its people fail to repair and are unwilling to move on. As argued by the researchers, who conducted the survey, "societies emerging from periods of war or political violence or political repression can deal with the past in a number of ways"; but no matter what mechanisms they choose to use, they must meet several criteria: "first, it is imperative that the wider population views the implementing authorities as both legitimate and impartial; second, much measures should be selected through a genuine process of consultation with those most affected by the violence; third, victims must receive formal acknowledgement and recognition of the grave injustices and losses they have suffered"[79]. All the criteria mentioned in the report share one commonality — individual reparation should take place along with the national peace-building process.

Amnestied Perpetrators and Returned Children Soldiers: Moving on How?

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a clinical and psychologist and former member of the

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[79] "Forgotten Voices", Pg. 9.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, once pointed out that "A central dilemma facing many countries that are making a transition from an oppressive authoritarian state to democracy is what to do about the human right abuses of the past regime. The issue becomes particularly wrenching when there has been a record of torture, murders, and other crimes against humanity."[80] For victims in Uganda, "too much has happened, too many relations have been severed, too many norms violated, too many identities distorted, too many traumas endured"[81]. It may seem to be tricky that it is also true of the amnestied perpetrators and returned children soldiers that they have been through too much as well. In the post-conflict society, what they are looking for is reconciliation at the personal level — the decision of the public to be ready to move on, the willingness of the victims to confront them face to face, and the ultimate forgiveness that allows them to return to a normal life. Intensive and exhausting, such a process requires both time and patience, and this is not an action that can be forced nor should it be.

Nobody, other than those complex political victims who conducted crimes in the brutal war, can totally understand the psychological changes taken place to them in a traumatized Uganda. However, what everybody may understand is that, by performing dehumanized behaviors, those former perpetrators' mind and soul have more or less been traumatized, though in an evil way compared to that of the victim. In her work, Gobodo-

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[80] Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. "Remorse, Forgiveness, and Rehumanization: Stories from South Africa." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2002; 42; 7.
[81] Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall. Pg. 233.

Madikizela argues that "trauma is passed on intergenerationally in ways subtle and not so subtle, through silences, fear, and through the psychological scars and pain that are often left unacknowledged"[82]. In order to help those special victims to heal their wounds and prevent them from passing "evil genes" to the next generation, the priority should be given to the rehumanization of the group.

"Reconciliation, in the modest sense of being willing to engage an opponent in dialogue, joint decision-making, civic respect and self-criticism, although time consuming, is ultimately the most effective way of promoting sustainable peace."[83] Nelson Mandela, also "stressed the importance of understanding the 'causes, motives and perspectives' of those responsible for past evil. He warned that unless the essential concerns of perpetrators and victims are addressed, they are likely, in one form or another, to give rise to future conflict."[84] As a matter of fact, truth-telling is not refined to the victim; instead, people who engaged in past atrocities should also be given the chance to tell the truth. By doing this, there may be a better understanding of what have happened, why they happen, and how can we deal with them based on their causes. Ohlson's Triple-R triangle aims at presenting an explanation not only to the cause of conflicts but also to the beginning of peace. Thus, to use Ohlson's Triple-R model as a guide, in order to reconcile, truth has to be unveiled: why do we want to have this conflict (reasons); why could we have this conflict (resources);

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[82] Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, "Language Rules." *River Teeth*. Spring 2007. Vol. 8, No. 2.
[83] Villa-Vicencio, "From Encounter to Settlement," in *Walk With Us and Listen: Building Sustainable Reconciliation in Africa* (Forthcoming, used w/ permission). Pg. 3.
[84] Villa-Vicencio. Chapter 7.

why must we have this conflict (resolve)? Similarly, the application of the model also requires the involvement of the enemies.

However, through the process of making victims and perpetrators sit together and talk about the past, there exists a danger to dig out the buried pain, which many people who choose to forget are forced to remember. Ruth Glynn warns the challenge of such "ceaseless repetitions of traumatic experience"[85], leading probably to the retraumatization within people's mind. The same topic has been brought up in opposing the limitations of Truth Committees in South Africa and other countries in transitional period, where victims and perpetrators come together and share their personalized story and memory.

One of the concerns of perpetrators to give up their arms, step out of the bush, and return to their homes is that they fear to face the prosecutions and to be able to find their belongings in the society. In order words, they wish to receive the forgiveness from the public to eliminate the guilty and scare deep in the heart, as Andrew Rigby argues in *Justice and Reconciliation After the Violence* that forgive-and-forget as one way of "moving on for societies emerging out of division, bloodshed, and collective nightmare with the alternative of trials, purges and the pursuit of justice". In this sense, forgiveness is necessary for those amnestied perpetrators and children soldiers to heal and move on.

However, the real situation appears to be more complicated. Let us recall Murphy's

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thorough distinctions between forgiveness and reconciliation. He proposes that there could

be "forgiveness without reconciliation" as well as "reconciliation without forgiveness"[86].

Specifically speaking, "forgiveness without reconciliation" means that letting go the past

does not necessarily lead to co-existence under the same roof, while "reconciliation without

forgiveness" refers to a status in which reconciliation transcends personal feelings, showing

that sometimes victims are not required to overcome their vindictive emotions but are

hoped to be willing to accept for the sake of the future of their society[87]. Murphy also states

that "no change of heart was required or even sought from the victims…All that was hoped

of them was a willingness to accept this process as a necessary means to the future good of

their society"[88]. Under such circumstances, the need for forgiveness goes beyond the

personal level to a higher stage of national peace-building. But in both situations, the

problem remains that both are not immune to future reoccurrence of crimes or conflicts.

How quickly can perpetrators regain trust from the people they hurt to some extent

determines whether they can be reintegrated into the society. The key point, as argued by

Gobodo-Madikizela, is to make them "recognize something they failed to see when they

violated the victim, which is that victims feel and bleed just as others with whom they, the

perpetrators, identify"[89].

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[86] Murphy, Pg. 13.
[87] Murphy. Pg. 15.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. "Remorse, Forgiveness, and Rehumanization." Pg. 23.

CONCLUSION

Dealing with trauma requires efforts in terms of personal healing and communal recovery. The starting point of this thesis is the acknowledgement of the importance of dealing with trauma at personal and communal levels at the same time. It argues that the relationship between individual healing and communal recovery reflects interdependency, which means that one can only be achieved when the other is correctly addressed and approached.

In the first part, I identified traumatized individuals that need to be involved in trauma healing processes, both personal and communal. First, after an armed conflict, victims are an identifiable group of people who have gone through, individually and directly, traumatizing events, such as mass killing, abduction, and torture. Levels of traumatization may vary individual by individual. The aims of treatment include those to alleviate symptoms of disorder, strengthen resilience, improve quality of life, and ultimately bring them back to normal life.

Similar as the victim group in need of being reassured that the state will not serve as a tool of their oppression, perpetrators are also afraid that new political attempts will backlash into their subjugations. What those, who have conducted terrible deeds against their fellows, are asking for the acceptance of the others, for the true forgiveness from

people hurt by what they have done, and also for the place to continue their lives in the community, though none of these is easy to achieve.

The second part presented the debate surrounding the nature of reconciliation – a key communal recovery process. The literature was reviewed to highlight the differences between communal and personal reconciliation. While each level of reconciliation entails its own unique benefits and challenges, it is unclear which is more desirable or if genuine reconciliation is even possible at all. As a matter of fact, there are three basic challenges to reconciliation and attempt to evaluate if genuine reconciliation is in fact attainable:

The first challenge to consider is the motivation for reconciliation. Is there a genuine desire to forgive and move on, or is reconciliation simply sought out of political and economic expediency? Understanding the motivation for reconciliation is crucial for determining its future viability. Should it be the case that reconciliation is sought because of expediency, it is unlike to endure. While reconciling parties may agree to set aside their differences, the process will likely unravel at the first hint of conflict. It is one thing to taut the merits of reconciliation but it is quite another to sacrifice for it. Unless based on a genuine desire to forgive former adversaries, reconciliation is unlikely to endure.

The second challenge to reconciliation is the degree to which the original grievances that led to conflict have been addressed. Have the underlying structural causes of conflict been resolved? Have they even been discovered and analyzed? While

reconciliation on peripheral issues can serve as important catalysts for further consensus, reconciliation is meaningless unless the original causes of conflict have been mollified.

The third and final challenge to consider is the extent to which reconciliation has occurred. Is there a "critical mass" that needs to be involved before reconciliation can be said to have occurred? Do all parties to the conflict have to reconcile their differences or will a simple majority suffice? Empirical evidence suggests that it is unrealistic to assume that all parties to a conflict will be willing reconcile, let alone all the individual members of a post-conflict society. The question then becomes, how many is enough?

The third part introduced the case study of Northern Uganda to further demonstrate the points addressed in the previous parts. I carefully examined the findings of a population-based survey on attitudes about peace, justice, and social reconstruction in Northern Uganda, conducted in 2007 by the Human Right Center, University of California, Berkeley, the Payson Center for International Development, Tulane University, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. The survey exposed high percentage of self-identification as victims, hierarchical needs for trauma healing, integrated justice response, and high willingness of victims to reconcile and reintegrate the perpetrators.

It is no easy to conceptualize the process of personal healing, since victims, perpetrators, and even onlookers need to be treated respectively and differently, since the past has to be exposed when people are expected to move on, since we have to overcome

contradictions and polarizations, since we should build up new relationships and social structures for a new life.

A truly recovered society needs reconciliation at communal and personal levels at the same time. Reconciliation is one of the toughest challenges faced by post-conflict societies. Communities, torn apart by violence, fear, and distrust, are asked to look past their grievances, face their enemies, and collaborate toward a common future. Sometimes conditions may be even more perverse. Not only will some have to interact with perpetrators of unspeakable acts, they may still suffer from ongoing political oppression, economic inequality, or social inferiority.

Fortunately, although difficult and less frequent than often supposed, as we discussed earlier, genuine reconciliation is indeed possible. It is derived from a process of encounter, dialogue, and vision; a process that is both backward and forward-looking; a process that is multi-layered, involving both personal and political reconciliation. It is a process that requires thorough commitment, forgiveness, and understanding. It is a process that demands a grueling sequence of introspection, encounter, engagement, and collaboration with former enemies. It is a process that necessitates both communal and personal reconciliation: communal reconciliation to spread the dividends of peace and diminish the overt issues of conflict, and personal reconciliation to confront and ameliorate underlying tensions and conflict. It is a process that is continually tested, challenged, and

reaffirmed. Though it may be arduous, difficult, and unlikely to occur, reconciliation is a process at the heart of trauma healing and the cornerstone of a lasting and durable peace.

Truth and memory are personalized to every single person in the war of human rights violation. Not only should the voices of the victim be heard and tended, but also those committed seemingly unforgivable crimes need to be involved. If we look back into the survey once again, we will notice that accountability does matter in a post-conflict state to heal the wounds, but what the public looks forward to also includes returning to the normal life as before in a peaceful and stable way. None of these would ever happen unless the importance of personal healing is acknowledged and addressed, which should and ought to include the healing of people who are willing to remorse their wrongdoings and move along the line with the nation to recover.

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