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Jacob Zuma and Minority Groups in post-apartheid South Africa: An examination of his reconciliation policy toward the Afrikaners

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National reconciliation is an element which has characterized South Africa's post-apartheid political discourse. The term "rainbow nation" coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, became emblematic of Mandela's call for peace, harmony and the co-existence of all citizens. Mbeki, on the other hand, placed African unification above national reconciliation, but Jacob Zuma adds a new aspect to national reconciliation. This paper attempts to evaluate the national reconciliation policy under the presidency of Jacob Zuma, looking at factors which promote or discourage unity. Special emphasis is given to the government's relationship with minority groups, especially the Afrikaner, which is at the frontline of the reconciliation debate. The findings are that reconciliation is strongly influenced by ethnopolitics and president Zuma's attitude towards the rights of minority groups, whether exercised as a generous gesture or as a show of political strength.

Key words: Post-apartheid South Africa, National reconciliation, ethnicity, minority rights, Afrikaner.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to examine the reconciliation policy of President Jacob Zuma toward the Afrikaner in post-apartheid South Africa. Of particular interest is the president's promotion of ethnicity to acknowledge the existence of the different groups in the country. It is in this respect that the Afrikaner comes to the fore, as it is precisely their rights, traditions, political participation and culture that has been, and continues to be, neglected under the African National Congresses' (ANC) government which seen under the current polarized society, needs more recognition. It is true that the Afrikaner is not the only minority group in the country, and a valid question is: why should specific emphasis be placed on their role, citizen's rights and socio-political influence? There are also members of black groups, English-speaking white South Africans, Indians and coloreds, who all enjoy equal rights and privileges in their country of birth. Unlike members of the English-speaking community and descendants of other European immigrants, the Afrikaner is the only white ethnic and cultural group to be born and raised on African soil, and to have no refuge outside their country of birth. Reference is made to the constitution adopted in 1996, which set out the principles on which national

reconciliation was launched, but this serves only as a point of departure and not as an invariable theme of discussion. Although the reconciliation policies of presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were important in uniting the nation, they are only briefly dealt with, since their administrations legitimately followed the 1996 constitution. For this reason, no additional amendments are made to further clarify the concept. Instead, the presidency of Jacob Zuma is chosen for discussion because of his focus on ethnicity as a measure to bring about reconciliation. The signs are that Mr Zuma is promoting a new conservatism in South Africa, digging deep into the nation's cultural and religious roots and threatening Western-styled liberal values enshrined in the constitution. (Chotia, 2009). Zuma's outlook is somewhat in contrast to that of Mandela and Mbeki, because of his own unique style, moving away, in large part, from party politics, and taking the reconciliation debate in a new direction. The argument is that Zuma's personal involvement in reaching out to minority groups, visiting informal settlements of the poor and encouraging dialogue with academics and the business elite, two groups which could be considered political adversaries, elevates the

president to a level different to that of his predecessors. For example, Zuma handles political and economic matters with a more dignified and humane attitude. Nelson Mandela as the first democratic elected president of South Africa espoused the sound intention of protecting minority rights and allowing the different ethnic groups to maintain their cultural heritage. The visit to the widow of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd and discussion with prominent Afrikaner leaders highlighted his commitment to unite the nation, irrespective of color or cultural background. Mbeki carried this project forward, but was generally criticized for his emphasis on African unification or renaissance, the promotion of the New Partnership for Africa Development (Nepad), and not building a strong relationship with minority groups. The protection of minority rights in the country is still far from satisfactory, but progress is being made under the administration of President Zuma. And although there are still socio-economical and cultural factors that are significant to the reconciliation debate, such as development programs, social imbalances, urbanization, unemployment, and specific nation-building goals, these are not discussed in the paper in order to focus more extensively on the president's ethno-political outlook.

METHODOLOGY

The case study is based on an investigation of President Zuma's attitude towards reconciliation. Emphasis is paid to interaction with members of minority groups, whether in the form of personal visits to informal settlements for the poor, meetings with the business and academic elite, political speeches, outreaches and public opinion. Although there are no definite statistics available on the president's approval rate among Afrikaners, his visit to the Bethlehem informal settlement outside Pretoria, on two occasions, marked an increase on poor whites acceptability of the president. One remark that draws the Afrikaner closer to the president is when he said: 'the government should not create an expression that they are excluding other people, but in working together the government can help a great deal to remove that perception. The strength of the nation lies in unity'. This might seem as political persuasion to boost his credibility or standings before an election, but many Afrikaners view this statement as a true reflection of his attitude toward them. This is especially true under the group of Afrikaners who have lost jobs due to affirmative action and company retrenchments resulting from the economic recession. (The Good News Report, 31 March, 2010). Is there a political role to play for the members of the latter in the post-apartheid society? There is a twofold answer to this question. One group feels that the Afrikaner is still being ridiculed for the sins of apartheid and should move away from the government of national reconciliation. They feel that their culture and heritage can only be

preserved by self-determination in a territory of their own. The other group desires to share a common destiny with their fellow-South Africans, regardless of ethnic background. But it has to be said that this group do not possess the financial means to emigrate, are of the lower income groups, have lost their jobs in recent years and have no choice but to develop a bond of social cohesion with the other racial groups. For them South Africa is their homeland and it is a matter of adapt or die.

Three conceptual areas are specific to this case study, they are, political reconciliation, minority groups and the protection of minority rights and ethnicity. Due to the fact that this paper addresses President Zuma's relationship with the Afrikaner, it is important to look at the mutual interaction the president and members of the Afrikaner community has with each other. There are ample literature that reviews the rights and challenges faced by minority groups in post-apartheid South Africa. Inter alia, the threat of losing their ethnic characteristics in a multicultural environment and becoming marginalized because of factors such as reversed discrimination, racial profiling and emigration. This is looked at as the paper unfolds, where specific threats faced by the Afrikaner community after 1994 is addressed. The crux of the paper looks at President Zuma's ethnic approach towards reconciliation, specifically focusing on his interaction with minority groups. The conclusion comments on the overall reconciliation process in post-apartheid South Africa, the way forward with the reconciliation debate and if minority groups can live in peace and harmony with their fellow citizens. Recognition and tolerance of minority groups are two concepts which stand central in post-apartheid national reconciliation.

Reconciliation as a political concept

The meaning of reconciliation under the governments of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki in essence were based on the definition of the concept and the expression of ANC policy. But by looking at the approach of President Jacob Zuma, the feeling is that different aspects of reconciliations goals are accentuated, for example an improvement in the relationship between the president and minority groups and the will to address issues of mutual concern. Putnam (1988), in his seminar study on two-level games reports on the linkage that should exist between the domestic constituency and the government in international negotiations. And although this study, primarily does not meddle with negotiations between the president and minority groups in an international setting, because there is no third party involved, issue-linkage as a theoretical concept is useful in explaining this relationship. In reality, there are far more linkages between President Zuma and minority groups, as was the case with his predecessors. One aspect of such pragmatism is the president's acknowledgement of minority rights abuse and giving

recognition to the cultural rights of the Afrikaner. A memorable event was when he attended a barbeque (braai in the Afrikaans language), hosted by some prominent Afrikaner figures and academics in 2007. Zuma added: 'A lot of things have changed and it is now a real pleasure to sit around a table with Afrikaners,' (News24.com, 2007).

The neglect of Afrikaner rights, their growing political insignificance and cultural indifference, highlights the president's willingness to accommodate members of all groups and backgrounds. On the other hand, the president needs the approval of the party elite and has to consider the opinions of the electorate. It is however, not a prerequisite to count on individual propensities to formulate reconciliation goals and engage members of other ethnic groups. The right of the supreme authority to make decisions and enter into talks with minority groups still prevails over the consent of the electorate which mandated the ruling party to act as agents of public opinion. What literature exists on the concept of political reconciliation and what commonalities exist between the definitions provided here and the specific case study? There are many broad definitions of reconciliation as a political concept, but in the composition of a definition there are certain systematic processes or steps which have to be in continuum or completed, before political reconciliation is achieved (Greenfeld, 1992). For the sake of the argument in the paper, the process of political reconciliation in the administration of President Jacob Zuma is ongoing; far from obtaining its end result. To be precise, it is doubtful if the concept will find its ultimate meaning today, tomorrow or in the near future, as pointed out in the conclusion. Scholars in the field of political reconciliation provide some meaningful explanations or ideas about political reconciliation. As Hayner (2002: 161) observes, reconciliation implies building or rebuilding relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatred of yesterday. In the reconciled polity, she argues, the wrongs of the past could be discussed openly and without bitterness in public. Relationships between former antagonists would be based on responding to present challenges rather than identifying each other in relation to past events. Moreover, there would be some common agreement on fundamental historical facts concerning what wrongs were perpetrated. However, as Hayner acknowledges, it remains unclear, beyond this minimal definition, what political reconciliation should amount to and how it should be achieved. Consequently, the meaning of reconciliation tends to be vigorously contested among citizens divided by past wrongs. According to Gallie (1964: 123), an 'essentially contested concept' is one whose proper use 'inevitably involves endless disputes about its proper use on the part of its users'. Reconciliation is clearly such a concept. Actors may disagree over what form reconciliation should take or how it should be realised. However, even the most conservative supporter and the most radical

opponent of the old regime are likely to agree that reconciliation is a desirable social good in the changed political circumstances they find themselves. Reconciliation is an internally complex concept because it refers to a cluster of practices that include forgiving, redeeming, forgetting, remembering, promising, repenting, restoring, punishing, apologizing and understanding. Moreover, it is a concept broadly opens to interpretation so that actors are likely to differ significantly in their understanding of what 'true' reconciliation would entail. In South Africa after 1994, for instance, reconciliation is interpreted differently by various actors in terms of: a non-racial ideology that promotes unity in the form of the 'rainbow nation'; an intercommunal understanding that would preserve the distinct identities of separate cultures; a religious ideology that demands repentance from wrongdoers; a human rights approach that calls for restoring the rule of law in order to prevent future abuses; and community building that would restore social trust in divided townships (Hamber and van der Merwe, 1998). This contestability shows reconciliation to be a fundamentally political concept. As Hamber and van der Merwe (1998) discuss, although the various interpretations of reconciliation they identify sometimes co-existed 'quite comfortably' within political institutions and discourses in South Africa, they are, in various ways, incompatible. Consequently, the different meanings assigned to reconciliation often emerged at the 'core of the conflict between different groups'.

Recognition as an alternative principle of political reconciliation is an important factor in describing the relationship between President Zuma and minority groups (Taylor, 1991) argues that political society is not properly understood as a voluntary association of contracting individuals. Rather, community emerges out of relations of mutual recognition through which identity is constituted. Rather than predicating social harmony on a benign indifference to the other's form of life, Taylor advocates the realization of community by transforming antagonism into a struggle for recognition by which we might come to understand the other in her own terms. Recognition opens the way to a shared horizon of understanding as it proceeds from a hermeneutic engagement between thus the potential that self and other. The promise of action lies in its power to generate new relationships with others and a 'we' will emerge from public interaction. According to Bush and Folger (1994), recognition is a process of acknowledging one's adversary as a human being with his or her own legitimate situation and concerns. It is something one gives, not something one gets. Bush and Folger writes, "The hallmark of recognition is letting go---however briefly or partially---of one's focus on self and becoming interested in the perspective of the other party as such, concerned about the situation of the other as a human being, not as an instrument for fulfilling one's own needs."(1994: 97). Recognition is also used in a political sense to mean the

acknowledgement of a particular group's right to sovereignty. Through the political theory of recognition, Gibson and Gouws (2003), argue, political scientists gain a better understanding of identity and difference. Practically, the concept of recognition can serve as a basis for determining which individual rights should be protected, whether cultures ought to be valued, and whether a case can be made for group representation. Tolerance, in the words of Gibson and Gouws (2003) is a crucial element of democratic political cultures in general, but that in the South African case, tolerance is perhaps more important than any other democratic value. Since South Africa is one of the most polyglot countries in the world, the only viable strategy for survival is tolerance toward the political views of others. Beckles (2007) is of the opinion that inherent in the notion of tolerance is an inequality of power that assumes the right of one group to allow or permit the behaviors of another. Tolerance as a paradigm for social justice or equality is doomed from the start. The minority rights protection of the Afrikaner as an ethnic group constitutes the fundamental research investigation of the paper. Next is a general overview of what the concept means. Especially of significance are the five characteristics mentioned by Barzilai (2003), which are reminiscent of the Afrikaner diaspora in post-apartheid South Africa. These features are integrated in the section on Jacob Zuma and ethnopolitics: changing the course of national reconciliation. Cordell and Wolff (2001), describe the primary focus of ethnopolitics as "the analysis, management, settlement, and prevention of ethnic conflicts, on minority rights, group identity, the intersection of identity group formations and politics, on minority and majority nationalisms in the context of transitions to democracy, and on the security and stability of states and regions as they are affected by any of the above issues".

Minority groups and the protection of minority rights

Šmihula (2009) accepts that a minority is a sociological group that does not make up a politically dominant voting majority of the total population of a given society. A sociological minority is not necessarily a numerical minority — it may include any group that is subnormal with respect to a dominant group in terms of social status, education, employment, wealth and political power. To avoid confusion, some writers prefer the terms "subordinate group" and "dominant group" rather than "minority" and "majority", respectively. In socioeconomics, the term "minority" typically refers to a socially subordinate ethnic group (understood in terms of language, nationality, religion and/or culture). The term "minority group" often occurs alongside a discourse of civil rights and collective rights which gained prominence in the 20th century, as stated by Fegin (1984). Members of minority groups are prone to different treatment in the countries

and societies in which they live. This discrimination may be directly based on an individual's perceived membership of a minority group, without consideration of that individual's personal achievement. It may also occur indirectly, due to social structures that are not equally accessible to all. In South Africa under apartheid, Caucasian-South Africans were a majority even though there were many more black South Africans (Fegin, 1984: 10). Sociologist Louis Wirth, in (Linton, 1945: 347) defined a minority group as "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.

A full-blown system of minority protection is described as a conglomerate of rules and mechanisms enabling an effective integration of the relevant population groups and allowing them at the same time to retain their separate characteristics. Such a system would be based on two pillars or basic principles: the prohibition of discrimination on the one hand and measures designed to protect and promote the separate identity of the minority groups on the other (Henrard 2002). The term "minority group" often occurs alongside a discourse of civil rights and collective rights which gained prominence in the 20th century (Fegin, 1984: 11). Members of minority groups are prone to different treatment in the countries and societies in which they live. This discrimination may be directly based on an individual's perceived membership of a minority group, without consideration of that individual's personal achievement. It may also occur indirectly, due to social structures that are not equally accessible to all. Activists campaigning on a range of issues may use the language of minority rights, including student rights, consumer rights and animal rights. In recent years, some members of social groups traditionally perceived as dominant have attempted to present themselves as an oppressed minority, such as white, middle-class heterosexual males. Gad Barzilai (2003) states that a minority group has five characteristics: (1) suffering discrimination and subordination, (2) physical and/or cultural traits that set them apart, and which are disapproved by the dominant group, (3) a shared sense of collective identity and common burdens, (4) socially shared rules about who belongs and who does not determine minority status, and (5) tendency to marry within the group. According to Sunga (2004: 255), national minorities can be theoretically (not legally) defined as a group of people within a given national state: 1) which is numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the state or a part of the state; which is not in a dominant position; which has culture, language, religion, race etc. distinct from that of the rest of the population; whose members have a will to preserve their specificity; whose members are citizens of the state where they have the status of a minority and finally which have a long-term presence on the territory where it has

lived. International criminal law can protect the rights of racial or ethnic minorities in a number of ways. The right to self-determination is a key issue. Next is a discussion of the Afrikaner as an ethnic group in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Afrikaner diaspora in post-apartheid South Africa

Here we present a short definition of who and what the Afrikaner is, for those readers not acquainted to the Afrikaner as ethnic group. Reference is made to the Afrikaner's securing of minority rights through the establishment of a homeland, employment equity and affirmative action, racism against whites, the murder of farmers which is described by Genocide Watch as ethnic cleansing and lastly, a very controversial matter, the song by Julius Malema, 'kill the boer – kill the farmer'. This song is defined as hate speech by the South African Human Rights Commission (Newstime.co.za, 2010). Since the abolishment of apartheid some of these threats have grown in stature and become exponentially dangerous for the survival of this minority group on the African continent. These factors are integrated into the discussion section where they are analyzed in the context of reconciliation.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2010) defines an Afrikaner as person born, raised, or living in South Africa whose first language is Afrikaans and whose ancestors were Dutch, German or French. Efforts are being made by a few Afrikaners to secure minority rights even though protection of minority rights is fundamental to the new 1996 post-apartheid constitution of South Africa. These efforts include the Volkstaat movement. In contrast, a handful of Afrikaners have joined the ruling African National Congress party, which is overwhelmingly supported by South Africa's black majority. However, the vast majority of Afrikaners/Boer has joined White English-speakers in supporting South Africa's official opposition, the Democratic Alliance, indicating their acceptance of non-racism within a free enterprise economy (Schonteich and Boshoff, 2003). Employment Equity legislation favors employment of black (African, Indian and Coloured) South Africans and women over white men. Black Economic Empowerment legislation further favours blacks as the government considers ownership, employment, training and social responsibility initiatives which empower black South Africans as important criteria when awarding tenders. However, private enterprise adheres to this legislation voluntarily (Government Gazette, 1998). Some reports indicate a growing number of whites suffering poverty compared to the pre-apartheid years and attribute this to such laws as the employment equity act. Over 350,000 Afrikaners may be classified as poor, with some research claiming that up to 150,000 are struggling for survival. This combined with a wave of violent crime has led to vast numbers of English and Boer South Africans leaving the country (Woods, 2006: 6).

There have been increasing incidents of racism against white South Africans since 1994. In particular the actions of racist police personnel towards white victims have attracted media attention. White men arrested and held in overcrowded cells on minor or spurious charges have taken legal action against the government, as many have been raped and assaulted by violent criminals (often rape and murder suspects) held in the same cells (Edwards, 2008). Since 1994 there has been significant emigration of skilled white persons from South Africa. There are thus currently large Afrikaner and English South African communities in the United Kingdom and other developed nations.

The estimate is that more than one million South Africans have emigrated since 1994, citing violent and racially motivated crime as the main reason (Van Aardt, 2006: 3). Genocide Watch has theorized that farm attacks constitute early warning signs of genocide against Afrikaners and has criticized the South African government for its inaction on the issue, pointing out that the murder rate for them ("ethno-European farmers" in their report, which also included non-Afrikaner farmers of European race) is four times that of the general South African population. There are 40,000 white farmers in South Africa. Since 1994, close to two thousand farmers have been murdered in thousands of farm attacks, with many being brutally tortured and/or raped and the murders are continuing until this day (Genocide Watch, 2002).

What does the controversial song, 'kill the boer-kill the farmer', sung by Julius Malema, the president of the ANC youth league mean, and why does Afrikaners feel offended by the lyrics of the song? The song originates from the anti-apartheid song Ayasab amagwala which in Zulu means, (the cowards/Boers¹ are scared). The Afrikaners view the lyrics of the song as incitement to the murder of innocent farmers and further marginalizing the already divided society. The song can not be justified as a political slogan because people are really being murdered (Mokati, 2010).

In view of the emotional and symbolic intensity with which racially-based apartheid has now been rejected, the accommodation of racial minorities is extremely sensitive and controversial. The growing recognition of the difference between race (as a biological concept) and ethnicity (as a cultural phenomenon), and of the validity of the latter, however, opened up new possibilities. Ethnicity has been a major source of conflict in South Africa for centuries. With the arrival of white settlers, racial divisions in many ways intensified ethnic divisions. In its efforts to consolidate its power, the white apartheid

¹ In contemporary South Africa and due to Broederbond propaganda, Boer and Afrikaner have been used interchangeably despite the fact that the Boers are the smaller segment within the Afrikaner designation as the Afrikaners of Cape Dutch origins are larger. Afrikaner directly translated means "African" and subsequently refers to all Afrikaans speaking people in Africa irrespective of color or nationality. Boer is the specific ethnic group within the larger Afrikaans speaking population (Du Toit 1998: 1).

government promoted divisions among black ethnic groups, not only among colored people, Indians, and Africans, but also among the African tribes and so-called "homelands." Ethnicity, as a divisive tool of the oppressors, was hated by the victims of apartheid. Any discussion of the role of ethnicity in South Africa must be seen in the context of the way that the National Party (NP) government exploited ethnicity for over forty years to divide and oppress the African, colored and Indian populations.

Because of the international stigma attached to the apartheid ideology, progressive academics and politicians distanced themselves from any thinking which accorded significance to ethnicity. For decades, left-wing analysts of the South African conflict preferred a Marxist model of class struggle to one emphasizing cleavages along ethnic lines. This outlook has been indelibly stamped on anti-apartheid thinking; with the result that ethnicity was consistently swept under the carpet in South African academic circles. The "ethnic taboo" effectively silenced South African academics (Bekker, 1993).

This bias was, of course, not a uniquely South African phenomenon (Connor, 1994). The emphasis among liberal politicians and blacks was on assimilation. The entire cultural politics of the ANC seems to have rested on the assumption that ethnic identities would soon disappear in a homogeneous nation. The Charter of the United Nations asserted that "in a world where individual rights are fully protected, minority groups will disappear with time" (Giliomee, 1996: 29). Schlemmer (1991: 16) argues, however, that "provided that mechanisms are created for a creative resolution of conflict between majority and minority interests, and provided that race distinctions are eliminated from the constitution, minority safeguards can benefit the majority as well."

Political reconciliation and minority rights in post-apartheid South Africa are inextricably linked. If the two concepts are integrated by way of a mutual feeling of trust, respect and cooperation, the feeling is that president Zuma and the Afrikaner will draw closer. The ethnic reconciliation ideals of the president and the Afrikaner's sense of belonging in his country of birth will then lead to greater interaction between both parties. Political reconciliation under the Zuma presidency, taking the definitions of reconciliation into account, will firstly have to pay greater emphasis to recognizing the Afrikaner's role in modern day South Africa, secondly, build a trustworthy relationship based on mutual respect and the group's distinctive qualities, thirdly, acquire and exchange knowledge and lastly, provide a safe and sound living and working environment. The protection of the Afrikaner's group and individual rights is an outflow of fair and just reconciliatory measures. Next is a discussion of the interrelationship between Zuma and the Afrikaner focusing on the linkage between reconciliation and minority rights.

An examination of Jacob Zuma's reconciliation policy toward the Afrikaner

National reconciliation was one of the primary objectives of the government of President Mandela. The creation of a rainbow nation, or multi-cultural South African society, was envisioned by many political leaders and the general public to be an important factor in uniting the nation behind a common identity. Nearly two decades into post-apartheid South Africa, however, the question remains whether the country is really making progress towards this admirable goal. There have been instances in which reconciliation touched the imagination of the general population, such as the 1995 rugby world cup. This event stands out as one of the biggest unifying factors in the post-apartheid history of the country, but more than a decade after the victory there is little evidence that black and white fans, who proudly celebrated the victory in the streets of Johannesburg, are living in peace and harmony. Rather, the victory was a single joyous occasion where citizens were driven by emotion rather than feeling a common sense of identity. Mandela's dream of a non-racial South Africa with citizens joining hands and striving for a better future is indeed a noble one, but the government's neglect of the needs of minority groups and failure to establish mutual respect and recognition have hampered the goals of national reconciliation. Accusations against the government of reverse discrimination, the escalating crime problem, black elitism and nepotism, unemployment, incompetency, lack of service delivery, corruption and inefficiency are all issues which need to be addressed before the government can claim to be on the road to national reconciliation. The past has shown that the assertion of a single national identity precludes the assertion of others. Desmond Tutu and Miroslav Volf focus on the importance of worldly mediation between erstwhile enemies (Tutu, 1999: 10; Volf, 2001: 7). Archbishop Tutu writes: "It is something of a pity that, by and large, the white community failed to take advantage of the Truth and Reconciliation process . . . Many of them carry a burden of a guilt which would have been assuaged had they actively embraced the opportunities offered by the Commission . . . Apart from the hurt that it causes to those who suffered, the denial by so many white South Africans even that they benefited from apartheid is a crippling, self-inflicted blow to their capacity to enjoy and appropriate the fruits of change" (Restorative Justice Online, 2009). Tutu, who coined the phrase "rainbow nation", suggested that multiracial harmony remained elusive. "We have to ask ourselves whether we are completely healed" (Smith, 2010).

Baines (1998) reports that the Afrikaner's role in the new political dispensation is not shown to its best advantage. A poll published in 2006 by the South African Institute of Race Relations said 87% of Afrikaners felt racism against them was a serious problem (Nessman, 2006). For many Afrikaners, the euphoria of post-

apartheid reconciliation peaked when Nelson Mandela, then president, appeared at the final match of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, Afrikanerdom's favorite sport, wearing the national team jersey. The question is: can minority groups contribute and share in nation-building if their role in a multi-cultural society is not clearly defined or accepted. Afrikaner leaders and interest groups accuse the ANC government of deliberately attempting to destroy their heritage and assimilate different cultures without paying heed to group affiliations and traditions. This is a sensitive issue for the Afrikaners. On the one side of the spectrum is the group which calls for self-determination and rule in their own homeland. Hutchinson and Smith (1994: 4) observe that one of the goals of nationalism is the movement to establish or protect a homeland (usually an autonomous state) for an ethnic group. Critics of the Afrikaner nationalist movement claim that this desire is a symptom of their wish to revert back to the divide and rule tactics reminiscent of the colonial area. In effect, this means that Afrikaners still hold a negative view of other races and cultures and are reactionary in nature. Reactionary nationalism calls for a return to the past, and is generally intolerant of inclusion in a multi-cultural homogeneity, as mentioned by Hutchinson and Smith (1994: 5). Nationalism, however, can also be revolutionary when the establishment of an independent homeland is achieved by violent means, for example by armed conflict (Hutchinson and Smith, 1994: 5). It is, however, unlikely that the Afrikaner will resort to violent means in their fight for self-determination. The accommodation of population diversity is a vital issue for any multinational society. The legacy of apartheid in South Africa complicates this effort considerably. Schlemmer (1991: 16) argues that

“Self-determination of the "volk," nationalism and group identity have been key concepts in traditional Afrikaner thought. In the transition process towards a new democratic South Africa, such concepts have been repudiated in many Afrikaner circles. However, in others the isolationist mentality of old has been reinforced by the real threat of being swamped and reduced to an insignificant minority. A search for secure foundations has led a number of Afrikaners to believe that only an Afrikaner homeland (volkstaat) will ensure their survival as a distinct group, preserving their language, culture and religion”.

Philips (2010: 4) comments on the denial of the Afrikaner's language.

“The African National Congress strongly encourages the people to forget about their ethnic roots and become part of one rainbow nation in which English is the common language. Schools established by Afrikaans speaking people during the previous government are encouraged to become double

medium schools, a process in which they gradually lose their status as Afrikaans schools”.

On the other side is the younger generation, which is slowly but surely overcoming the racial divide. The young generation, as the future leaders of the country, is the foundation for the building of a new South Africa. Since 1994 children have been integrated in schools, universities and the job market, but an important question is: do they really pursue interracial harmony and peaceful co-existence? Due to the deep racial divisions that still exist in a post-apartheid South Africa, the assumption must be that young people from majority and minority groups are not necessarily better off than during the apartheid era. They may be free because of more opportunities, but racism in the workplace, on the sport field and in societal structures still exists. “A call for calm by President Jacob Zuma would not diffuse the current situation if the taunting of white people continues,” Freedom Front Plus leader Dr. Pieter Mulder said. “The dream of national reconciliation and nation-building is at present running the risk of being destroyed” (News24.com, 2010). Various political parties and cultural organizations, such as the Democratic Party (DA), the Freedom Front + and the Afrikanerbond (The association for the protection of Afrikaner culture and tradition), as concerned constituencies, have laid complaints with the South African Human Rights Commission about the singing of the struggle song “dubulu iBhunu” (or “shoot the boer”) by Julius Malema, the president of the ANC Youth League (News24.com, 2010). This is clearly viewed as a very strong form of hate speech which leads to the polarization of the different race groups in South Africa. Malema, on the other hand, alleges that segments of the society, and especially the Afrikaner, are not advancing the cause of nation building. The general opinion is that the Afrikaners still want to adhere to apartheid ideology.

The ANC made repeated calls in the four elections after 1994 for unity and encouraged all citizens to join hands. Are these calls proclaimed for the sake of advancing the political goals of the elite or are they sincere in laying down building blocks toward reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa? Reconciliation cannot be achieved if the society is polarized and one or more groups feel that they are excluded from the political process. It is true that the ANC is reaching out to the Afrikaner to promote mutual cooperation and involvement in government projects, but opposition groups feel that reconciliatory gestures are empty political rhetoric to score points ahead of an election or to bring a vote of confidence in the ruling party. As sociologist Dr Syed Farid Alatas points out, in a study on racial integration in Malaysia: “We do not live according to the three principles for harmonious relations – recognising the multi-cultural origins of civilization, inter-religious encounters and showing respect and understanding the

point of the other. We have little appreciation for each other's religion and culture. Our education system does not inculcate these attitudes in us but instead tends to polarize us" (Koshy, 2009: 5).

The resurfacing of tribalism only occurred with the election of Jacob Zuma in 2009. Zuma, as a tribal chief in his own right, urges all ethnic groups to join in nation-building. At a meeting with representatives of Afrikaner groups in Sandton, Johannesburg, Zuma said the following: "Of all the white groups that are in South Africa, it is only the Afrikaners that are truly South Africans in the true sense of the word". But his comments were immediately slammed by various other people and organisations across the country. Desiree van der Walt of the Democratic Alliance, the official opposition party, said, "In singling out white Afrikaners as the only true white South Africans, Jacob Zuma has revealed an ethnically and racially blinkered world view in conflict with our constitution. The preamble to our constitution says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. It does not say that some people have more of a right to call themselves South African than others" (Willcock, 2009: 3). The Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR) laid a complaint with the Human Rights Commission against Zuma's statement. CCR spokesman Dave Steward said that Zuma's comments "constitute unfair discrimination against non-Afrikaans-speaking, white South Africans on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, color, culture and language." He said it was shocking that the leader of South Africa's largest political formation should question the right of non-Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans to be regarded as equal in all respects to any other South Africans. Some people maintain that the ANC, a former terrorist organisation which waged a long campaign against white South Africans in general and the white National Party government in particular, despises whites and wishes they were all out of the way (Willcock, 2009). Dr Dan Roodt, the leader of the Pro-Afrikaans Action Group (PRAAG), is of the opinion that foreign, especially British, influence on the ANC is diminishing. It is almost as if Zuma has some pangs of nostalgia for the old, Afrikaner-run South Africa, with its discipline, sense of patriotism, successful agriculture, frugal public salaries and respect for law and order (Willcock 2009). Dr Pieter Mulder welcomed Zuma's statements, saying they showed clear leadership, but it is not good leadership to play one segment of South African society off against another. It is dangerous. However, Dr Mulder also said, "the Afrikaners, just like all the other groups, have a rightful claim here . . . they have as much of a claim as anybody else," and, "a place has to be created for everyone, because if the South African ship sinks, we all sink together" (The Freedom Front, 2010: 2). A stalwart of the African National Congress, Mr. Zola Skweyiya expressed his concern on tribalism when he made the following statement in the run-up to the election of Jacob Zuma in 2007: "The demon of tribalism is rising from every corner

and we ignore it at our peril. We thought we would not go through what the rest of Africa has gone through, but we are just another African country. There is nothing special about us." More recently, Mr Skweyiya said: "I feel strongly that we have not solved the national question - not just between whites and blacks but among ourselves as Africans. I know this is not a popular view but it's a fact" (Chotia, 2009: 3). However, Johannesburg-based political analyst Siphoo Seepe dismissed any fears that Zuma will place tribalism ahead of national reconciliation, saying: "Zuma is not obsessed with power. He is surrounded by people from different ethnic groups, and they are leaders in their own right," (Chotia, 2009: 3). Zuma promotes a new conservatism in South Africa, digging deep into the nation's cultural and religious roots and threatening Western-styled liberal values enshrined in the constitution. Zuma is keen to build a national identity – not just between whites and blacks but among Africans themselves, as reported by Chotia (2009). The tribal attitude Zuma espouses is also positive, since it leads to a new sense of nationalism arising within the different ethnic groups in society. In another very commendable move, President Zuma repeated that the government had to improve on and speed up service delivery and could no longer blame its failures on apartheid. The all-too-easy option of blaming failures on apartheid and playing the race card whenever things do not go the ANC's way has become a highly divisive and alienating factor for many South Africans (National Reconciliation 2009).

In conclusion, there are a couple of reasons why President Zuma is revered by members of minority groups. First, the president is sensitive to the quest of minorities and their quest for self-determination, unlike most African leaders. Zuma has the emotional intelligence that cements all the different factions of the ANC together. In Kwa-Zulu/Natal,² Zuma is generally regarded as the person most instrumental in achieving lasting peace. In October 1998, President Zuma was honored with the Nelson Mandela Award for Outstanding Leadership in Washington DC, USA. In an interview with Wingard (2008) Zuma said: "The president of this country is not the person who would be steering the economy of the country. He has hundreds of PhD's to do that. His job is to maintain peace and stability between people of all

² KwaZulu-Natal, also referred to as KZN or Natal) is a province of South Africa. Prior to 1994 the territory now known as KwaZulu-Natal was made up of the province of Natal and all pieces of territory that made up the homeland of KwaZulu. In the 1830s the northern part was the Zulu Kingdom and southern part was briefly a Boer republic called Natalia (1839-1843). In 1843 the latter became the British Colony of Natal; Zululand (KwaZulu in Zulu) remained independent until 1879. It is called the garden province and is the home of the Zulu nation. Two natural areas: the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, have been declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Located in the southeast of the country, the province has a long shoreline on the Indian Ocean. It borders three other provinces and the countries of Mozambique, Swaziland, and Lesotho. Its capital is Pietermaritzburg and its largest city is Durban. (<http://www.kwazulunatal.gov.za/>)

racess and cultural communities. I believe that I have demonstrated that I can do that." Understanding the man and knowing a little more about the Afrikaners, it is easy to grasp why Jacob Zuma would want to hear what the white trade unions like Solidarity³ and organizations like Afriforum have to say. Leaders before him did not even bother to see them, let alone hear them. The scene is set for a reversal of the cultural tensions set by Mbeki's infamous "Two Nations" speech, when he said that South Africa has two nations, a rich white one and a poor black one. The degree of polarization that followed is hard to imagine for an outsider. Zuma wishes to change all of that.

But there can be no doubt that, like Obama — although not as successful or convincing, part of Zuma's strategy is to portray himself as a leader who would return "the rainbow nation" to its non-racial path to nation-building. Lampbrecht (2009) quoted Deputy Secretary Dirk Hermann of Solidarity as saying: "Zuma gives the Afrikaners and especially the poor and working class, a hearing and is more accessible than President Thabo Mbeki. He gives us the sense that all have a place here". Zuma at a meeting with Afrikaner delegates stated: "Afrikaners have played a very specific role in shaping the history of this country. Whether ... people like it or not, that is part of the history of this country. From the days of the Great Trek to the South African War — the Anglo Boer War; to the formation of Euro South Africa; to the days of apartheid; the days of negotiations and now. "They are an important group to interact with; politically speaking, to help bring harmony, peace and stability in this country" (Lampbrecht, 2009). However, there is one aspect of Zuma's reconciliation gesture, Afrikaners feel he is not addressing properly and that is his failure to reprimand Julius Malema. The ANC youth leader at public rallies is still chanting the song 'kill the boer-kill the farmer', and this action is definitely not advancing reconciliation between the Afrikaners and the ANC government. Afrikaner leaders are also of the impression that Malema's idea of nationalizing the mines confines to the absurd. This effort of the youth leader will lead to further unemployment, since thousands of mine workers will lose their jobs.

Such talks also show that president Zuma is unable to control the young party elite which brings division between him and minority groups. The Afrikaners, almost two decades after apartheid has ended, still has a considerable workforce in the mines. People who depend

on mining as their livelihood.

Conclusion

Even though the system of racial segregation (apartheid) is still to an extent responsible for inequalities that exist in modern day South Africa, the country's citizens are trying to forget the past and move on towards building a new society. It is the author's view that the average citizen is positive about building a better country and endeavors for harmony and co-existence. The reasons for living in the country and making it work, in a strong nationalistic sense, outweigh the reasons for not living in the country and continuously criticising the policies of the ruling party. Mandela's 'country of our dreams' should give all citizens hope and encourage them to join hands and let bygones be bygones. Another hopeful sign is that the generation after 1994 already possesses more of a feeling of unity and belonging to a common identity than the preceding generation.

Too often in the politics of South Africa the blame-game is played, because citizens, and especially people of previous disadvantaged groups, feel that it is not their duty to contribute to reconciliation and change. Why? The ruling party, in election after election, makes a lot of empty promises which they cannot deliver and the masses, most of whom are illiterate and politically misinformed, accept their fate because of intimidation. Secondly, the government is trapped in a spiral of ill-natured activities which they cannot undo, because these actions have already become the norm. For example, corruption, racial slurring, hate speech and group polarization is not considered immoral or wrong, because the alternative which presents the right way is not taken. This situation impedes the progress already made on reconciliation and restricts future endeavors. In actual fact, the rift between Zuma and followers of the ANC youth league is widening, due to ill discipline and too much freedom of expression. This disharmony has a twofold effect on the reconciliation debate. Firstly, the expression of disloyalty to party policy and structure opens the door to diverse agendas which differ from general ANC policy, which is precisely what the young and upcoming party members' want (Hurst, 2009). Secondly, the ANC youth is unhappy with the progress of transformation in all spheres of socio-economic activity and development. Of special concern is the slow transformation of the agricultural sector. In this respect, one can look at the land restitution act, which, according to party extremists, is not moving fast enough. Other concerns are the abuse of non-white workers by land owners, and the unwillingness of white farmers to assist non-white farmers in acquiring the necessary skills to become self-sufficient. In many instances, claims regarding the unfair treatment of non-white farmers are substantiated by officials of the Department of Agriculture.

The injustices which exist in the business place, where

³ Solidarity (Afrikaans: Solidariteit) is a South African trade union that negotiates on behalf of its members and attempts to protect workers' rights. Although the union is often involved in issues of political import, it does not align or formally affiliate itself with any political party. Solidarity is a trade union within the Christian tradition of unionism. This differentiates it from the majority of other South African trade unions that have socialist ideologies. Solidarity has a broader focus than workers' rights and includes defending civil rights for its members. The union has positioned itself as a vehicle for minorities in South Africa to have their voices heard. Its membership is mainly, but not exclusively white people. (<http://www.solidaritysa.co.za/Home/home.php>)

racial discrimination is still rife and white men still occupy the majority of top positions in privately owned industries, are also a major point of concern for advocates of black emancipation. The complaint here is that black economic empowerment (BEE) is moving at an unsatisfactory pace, jeopardizing the opportunities of the black business elite to advance in the business environment. However, taking the above factors into account, poor public service delivery is one area where the government has fallen short in implementing a workable reconciliation agenda which can address the multitude of socio-political problems currently facing citizens of the country. The delivery of basic services is a right which citizens under a sovereign government should not need to ask for, but which should come naturally. How can minority rights be protected and reconciliation advanced? First, the greatest number of people, black and white, should act together as part of a people's contract that is based on the understanding that everybody in the country shares a common destiny. To achieve the goals of national unity and reconciliation requires that citizens act in unity to advance the shared national goal of a better life for all. The biggest obstacles to reconciliation are still intolerance, racial profiling, affirmative action, inadequate public service delivery, domestic strikes and union demands.

Does the reconciliation agenda of president Zuma succeed in drawing closer minority groups and protecting minority rights? By looking at the events of the last two years, it is unmistakably true to say that the president is attempting to breach the ethnic divide. Reaching out to the Afrikaner has taken a new direction, different from that of his predecessors and paved the way for a better cross-cultural and reconciliatory understanding. Members of all groups are also invited to join the new reconciliation debate and make a difference in uniting the country. Again, this move by president Zuma is in contrast to the policies of the two previous post-apartheid administrations. People on the ground feel that the president follows a more open-minded public diplomacy and is not a stringent mouthpiece of government policy. The president identifies with all the citizens, regardless if they belong to the Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Pedi or Afrikaner ethnic groups. Political reconciliation in this way is a more attainable goal, than where groups are judged on racial and ethnic backgrounds. The conclusive factors in linking reconciliation and minority rights in post-apartheid South Africa are tolerance, respect for cultural heritage and a sense of common belonging. If the gap between these factors can be bridged, the reconciliation goals of president Zuma and every future president, will be easier attained.

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