Untenable Marriages: Situating Governments of National Unity in Africa’s Political Landscape Since 2000

Tasara Muguti
Department of History and Development Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Baxter Tavuyanago
Great Zimbabwe University P.O. Box 1235 Masvingo Zimbabwe

James Hlongwana
Department of History and Development Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11634/216817831504209

Keywords: GNU, contest, democracy, marriages, stability, transitional, untenable, DOI, 10.11634/216817831201209

Abstract

This study examines Africa’s newest political phenomenon of forced political marriages called Governments of National Unity (GNUs) or Inclusive Governments. It endeavours to situate these governments in the continent’s political landscape with the view of assessing the phenomenon’s contribution to the democratic discourse in Africa. It analyses the foundations of such governments with the view of examining the extent to which they have been conflict resolvers in countries where they have been established. While this study acknowledges the positive contribution of GNUs in conflict management and resolution, the study posits that by and large GNUs have had the effect of subverting the voices of the electorate in Africa. The study argues that where they have been established, such governments have made the administrative systems of the countries fail to deliver desired services to the people as the political parties in the ‘marriage’ haggle for political supremacy. The study further argues that the foundation of these governments is lack of democratic traditions of accepting electoral defeat and failure by African electoral supervisory machineries to operate impartially. Consequently, the implication of the findings is that GNUs do not eliminate conflict but simply transform it thus only partially solving the problem.

Author Biographies

Tasara Muguti, Department of History and Development Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Baxter Tavuyanago, Great Zimbabwe University P.O. Box 1235 Masvingo Zimbabwe

Department of History & Development Studies

James Hlongwana, Department of History and Development Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Published
2012-12-31
A 'government of national unity' (GNU) has emerged as the referred way out of the Afghan electoral deadlock. A look at experience in other countries, specifically Kenya and Zimbabwe. The negotiations to end the violence and find a political solution were led by then South African President Thabo Mbeki, who shared a common past with Mugabe as liberation fighters against Apartheid-style regimes, and was initiated under SADC auspices. South Africa also managed a halfway peaceful transition from a racist into a pluralistic and democratic system (9) (there was still a lot of ethnic violence between ANC and Inkatha supporters).