

To Coup or Not to Coup: How the Zimbabwean Coup Exhibited a New Postcolonial Militarised Masculinity and Complicated the Understanding of Conflict

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The recent military takeover in Zimbabwe, which led to the resignation of Robert Mugabe, left the world confused as to whether or not international intervention was necessary, or whether to even define the moment as one of conflict and contestation. I argue that the case of Zimbabwe has shown a need to complicate the understanding of conflict, temporally and structurally, embedded in the United Nations Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Temporally, the WPS Agenda looks at conflict and violence in a narrow way and has a strict binary of what peace and conflict times are. Structurally, the WPS Agenda sees conflict through the lens of violence against women. The takeover challenged these temporal notions of the dichotomy of peace and war. Structurally, the takeover was the result of an unprecedented

postcolonial militarised masculinity. Its manifestation as non-violent made it difficult to highlight as conflict. Using discourse analysis of textual, visual, and media texts through the lens of postcolonial theory, the research will highlight how the takeover disrupts timelines of peace and war and displays a different kind of militarised masculinity. It will draw more attention to structural issues of gender relations as signals of conflict and understandings of militarised masculinities particularly in the postcolonial context. Was Zimbabwe peaceful before the takeover? Was the takeover itself a conflict? What unprecedented postcolonial militarised masculinities were exhibited by the coup in Zimbabwe? This research adds to the body of work that calls for complex analyses of the continuum of violence and militarised masculinities.