

National reconciliation in Bahrain

Was BICI report an opportunity to aid in promoting it?



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Abstract

Objective - This study aims to depict the influence of BICI's work and recommendations in promoting national reconciliation in Bahrain. It reveals the importance of making reconciliation and its essential role in building peace. Furthermore, by analyzing a lot of studies, it became clear that dialogue is the only way to address the global crises, including the crisis of Bahrain.

Methods- The design of this study is a randomized controlled trial. A questionnaire was sent to ten Bahraini politicians, who were randomly selected from the loyal and the opposition groups, to assess the influence of the BICI report on national reconciliation in Bahrain. The questionnaire was designed to be brief and straightforward by asking simple questions and soliciting approximations of caseloads. As for the units of measurement, they are as follows: views on the establishment of the Committee, in addition to the degree of its acceptance, the percentage of agreement with its report, and the degree of implementation of its recommendations, especially those related to national reconciliation and linked to the resolution of the crisis in Bahrain.

Results-: For the participants, there was consensus on the crucial role of national reconciliation in building peace, as well as a rush towards its establishment to address the current political problem. However, the opinions on the mechanism of implementing the recommendations of the BICI report were significantly different. Although the recommendations could be considered fair, the failure of the government to implement them has been considered to be unfair which led to the dissatisfaction of the people. Also, while some considered the recommendations to be fully accomplished, others have totally rejected this claim. As for the participants in this study, the majority (70%) acknowledged that national reconciliation is the only solution to the political crisis in Bahrain.

Conclusion-: Therefore, the statistical results are evidence of the desire of all parties to establish national reconciliation, considering it the only way out of the crisis in Bahrain.

Introduction

In February 2011, almost half of Bahrain's population protested peacefully against inequality, corruption, oppression, and their absence from any governmental role. The protests reached across different demographics, involving both youth and elderly, Sunnis and Shiites, and nearly every other major segment in the country. In response, the government dispatched security forces to violently suppress the protests, leading to thousands of arrests, hundreds of injuries, and dozens of deaths (ADHRB, 2015).

Following this repression of the pro-democracy movement, the Government of Bahrain established the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in July 2011 to investigate and report on these events. The purpose of the establishment of the commission was to defend human rights, end abuses, and find solutions to the political crisis in Bahrain.

The BICI commission consisted of a panel of international human rights experts who began to analyze Bahraini authorities' violations. Then, the commission started to give recommendations to the government on how to prevent such events from happening in the future. The Committee made recommendations regarding a better understanding and appreciation of human rights, including respect for religious and sectarian diversity.

In November 2011, the BICI commission handed over their finalized report to King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The report outlined 26 recommendations for the Government of Bahrain. The recommendations aimed to bring about meaningful reforms to end the kingdom's ongoing systematic abuses.

Among the recommendations, the Commission urged the Government of Bahrain to develop a national reconciliation program that addresses the grievances of groups which are, or perceive themselves, to be deprived of equal political, social and economic rights and benefits across all segments of Bahrain's population (Bassiouni; et al., 2011).

The current heated debate in Bahrain is mainly concerned about two main issues: what has been accomplished with regards to Bassiouni's recommendations and national reconciliation, and political dialogue between the Government and the Opposition. Human rights activists, politicians, and those interested in Bahraini affairs believe that implementing the recommendations is the first step towards tackling the current political crisis, which is the root of most social and security problems. Thus, since dialogue is the only way to solve any problem, this study has investigated the influence of the

opportunity provided by the BICI report to achieve effective national reconciliation and successful and constructive dialogue.

Therefore, in order to have a productive dialogue, there needs to be a serious review, establishment and consensus on key elements. The main elements of this dialogue should be as follows: the objectives of the dialogue, parties of the dialogue, and the mechanisms and regulations of the dialogue (Radhi, 2012).

Based on the above, this study was done in order to examine the importance of establishing reconciliation, which has already been the solution to many crises in more than one country. So, has the Government of Bahrain implemented these recommendations? What is the view of politicians in Bahrain about it? which local or foreign parties can help Bahrain establish the rules of dialogue?

Chapter 1: Literature Review

0.1. The Establishment of BICI

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (the Commission) was established by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa (HM King Hamad) in Royal Order No. 28 of 2011, which was issued on July 1, 2011, with an immediate force of law. Article 1 states: “An independent Commission of Inquiry is hereby established to investigate and report on the events occurring in Bahrain in February/ March 2011 and any subsequent consequences arising out of the aforementioned events, and to make such recommendations as it may deem appropriate” (Royal Order No.28, 2011).

The commission released a 500-page report on November 23, 2011, which took 9,000 testimonies, offered an extensive chronology of events, and documented 46 deaths, 559 allegations of torture, and more than 4,000 cases of employees being dismissed for participating in protests. The report criticized the security forces for many instances when “force and firearms were used in an excessive manner that was, on many occasions, unnecessary, disproportionate, and indiscriminate;” and found that certain abuses, such as destruction of property, “could not have happened without the knowledge of higher echelons of the command structure” (Dickinson, 2011). The report also stated that the violence in Bahrain “was the result of an escalating process in which both the Government and the opposition have their share of responsibility in allowing events to unfold as they did” (Bassiouni, et al., 2011). The report received an unprecedented welcome; moreover, the reaction of all Bahrain’s supporters, including human rights organizations, reflects their desire for a free and prosperous Bahrain (BHRM, 2011).

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the submission of the BICI report, Professor Cherif Bassiouni issued a statement in which he said: “the Commission consisted of five world-renowned distinguished jurists. It had total freedom of action in investigating what had occurred and received full cooperation of all government agencies. This, too, was unexampled in the Arab World. The commitment and dedication of the commissioners and the staff won nationwide recognition from all factions, as well as international recognition. Its members need to be recognized: Philippe Kirsch, former President of the ICC and former Canadian Ambassador; Sir Nigel Rodley, world-renowned longtime activist and scholar in the field of Human Rights and Professor at University of Essex, UK; Mahnoush Arsanjani, former director of the UN’s Codification Division; Badria Al-Awadhi, former Dean of Kuwait University Law School; and myself as Chair.” (Bassiouni, 2016)

0.2. BICI Recommends National Reconciliation

The BICI report gave a thorough view on abuses of power made by the Bahraini security forces and elements of the regime.

The report outlined 26 recommendations for the Government of Bahrain. The recommendations aimed to bring about meaningful reforms to end the kingdom's ongoing systematic abuses (Ulrichsen, 2013). The Committee made recommendations regarding a better understanding and appreciation of human rights, including respect for religious and sectarian diversities.

In general, the Commission recommends to the Government of Bahrain the development of a national reconciliation program that addresses the grievances of groups which are, or perceive themselves, to be deprived of equal political, social and economic rights and benefits across all segments of Bahrain's population (Bassiouni, et al., 2011).

The scope of the BICI's final recommendation is tremendously broad, as it calls for the development of a national reconciliation program to provide equal political, social, and economic rights and benefits to all segments of society. The principle initiative undertaken by the Bahraini government is the National Social and Economic Reconciliation Plan (NSERP). The social component of the plan encompasses six broad efforts, the first of which is the four-phase "Wihda Wahda" (One Unity) campaign that aims "at communicating the idea that, despite their differences, the people of Bahrain come together to call for unity." 26 additional efforts comprise educational workshops for children, rehabilitation programs, health-related proposals, and culturally-focused plans. The economic element consists of five campaigns, some of which emanated from earlier recommendations on compensation. The increase in salaries was instituted across the board, which impacted an estimated 35,000 people. Additionally, welfare reforms were advised by the World Bank, and \$500,000 was set aside for NGO projects to "provide real and tangible value to the development of the society." The oversight of the NSERP programs is held by a body known as the National Social and Economic Reconciliation Commission (POMED, 2012).

0.3. What is Reconciliation?

Neither is there an easy way for reconciliation, nor there is an easy solution for the problem of division in a society in the aftermath of sustained violence. Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a very difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a sense of lasting peace. Examining, acknowledging and understanding the painful past, and above all overcoming it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again.

Reconciliation is a complex term, and its definition is not unanimous. It is a theme with deep psychological, sociological, theological, philosophical, and profoundly human roots – and nobody really knows how to successfully achieve it (Galtung, 2001, pp. 3-23). We observed that one clear cause of the confusion around the term is due to the conflicting definitions of reconciliation as a process and as a goal. Lederach (2001), for example, understands reconciliation to be “dynamic and adaptive processes aimed at building and healing” (pp. 841-854) and “a process of change and redefinition of relationships,” For Chapman (2002), “national reconciliation can best be understood as a multi-dimensional and long-term process”, and McCandless (2001) notes that “the idea that reconciliation is a process of building or changing relationships is growing,” (pp. 209-222). The IDEA Handbook was presented, and well-received, as a pragmatic, policy-oriented tool. This entailed a conscious and exclusive focus on reconciliation as a process with no real attention to it as an end-state for harmony. Nonetheless, in common usage, the end-state definition is a significant factor in the definitional debate. Even though pragmatists might characterize it thus as idealistic (which society lives in perfect harmony?) and unattainable in an imperfect world, yet it is a motivating ideal for some of the key actors, and therefore of some significance.

When applying it, one is often confronted with the issues of the reason (why?), timing (when?), actors involved (who?), and ingredients (how?) of such a project.

When started, reconciliation should be exercised both top-down and bottom-up. These approaches are complementary, interrelated and self-supporting (Bloomfield, 1997). Bloomfield (2006) further accentuates the importance of a top-down approach in political reconciliation on the grand scale, whereas the bottom-up approach seems more important on the interpersonal level. The role of public authorities is thereby crucial, and all victims, perpetrators, profiteers, and witnesses, should be involved in it.

A national reconciliation initiative is the formulation or demonstration of either an attitude or behavior by national political leaders (be they government or opposition) that is consistent with reconciliation (Brounéus, 2008).

0.4. Role of Reconciliation in Solving Crisis

There is a consensus, at least in theory, within the Rulers, the Opposition and neutral observers that dialogue, and only dialogue, is the solution for this crisis. The nature of this dialogue is contested, however, and this is what needs to be addressed.

In order to have a serious, productive and meaningful dialogue, there needs to be a serious review

and establishment of the key elements; key elements that are somewhat unanimous among the players. The main elements of this dialogue should be as follows: the goal of the dialogue and its objectives, parties in the dialogue and the mechanisms and regulations of the dialogue (Radhi, 2012).

The reality and essence of the conflict between rulers and the people over different epochs are related to the popular demands that are based on two fundamental aspects:

1. The participation in formulating political decisions.
2. The participation in managing the national wealth, guaranteeing supervision over it and directing it to the public benefit.

The Parties to the Dialogue

For the dialogue to be productive and the solutions to be solved and implemented safely, effective parties should all be included.

0.5. Implementation of Reconciliation in Bahrain

0.4.1. The National Dialogue and State-Sponsored Reconciliation

The first “National Dialogue” started on July 2, 2011, and the government reported that 94 percent of the societal groups that were invited participated, slightly below 300 delegates.

Each group was accorded five seats, regardless of how influential it is in society. The entire process was presented as a dialogue between conflicting elements within society rather than a negotiation between society and the state. After only 15 days of talks, al-Wefaq quit the dialogue, claiming the process was ineffective and deliberately marginalized opposition groups (BNA, 2011).

Following 18 months of continued unrest, the second state-led “National Consensus Dialogue” started on February 10, 2013, and was attended by eight representatives from opposition groups. Nevertheless, the government officially suspended the talks on January 8, 2014 because of the withdrawal of opposition representatives (FT, 2013).

In September of the same year, Salman announced a five-point framework to structure further dialogue, but this process was also stalled (GDN, 2015).

In addition, the former U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain Thomas Krajeski hinted in January 2015 that a behind-the-scenes reinvigoration of the dialogue process was underway (Amanat, 2011). However, nothing has changed in the political situation.

0.4.2. Societal and Informal Reconciliation Initiatives

In the absence of state-led national dialogue, societal efforts to build reconciliation have become increasingly important, especially as these now form the sole pathway for participants who participated in previous dialogues to meet and discuss reform (Moritz, 2015).

Huda Al-Mahmood, the Sunni president of Bahrain's Sociologist Society led the "Bahrain Unites Us" initiative in an attempt to reduce sectarian tensions (Bahrain Women Association, 2012).

In addition, Ali Fakhro, former minister of health and education headed Al-Liqa al-Watani (the National Encounter); a cross-sectarian group held through the Al-Oruba club (Al-Wasat, 2013).

However, societal initiatives to promote reconciliation are hampered by divisive rhetoric from loyalists and radical street movements that oppose engagement and the concessions necessary to any reconciliation agreement (Moritz, 2015).

0.6. Assessing the Implementation of National Reconciliation

1. 1.6.1. By POMED

A report published in November 2012 by the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), entitled 'One Year Later: Assessing Bahrain's Implementation of the BICI Report,' concluded that recommendation "1725b" has been partially implemented, as the government has developed initiatives to pursue social and economic reconciliation. However, the lack of any meaningful effort to address political inequalities remains at the core of Bahrain's crisis. It is of the utmost importance that the government undertakes a sincere effort to hold dialogue with opposition groups – including releasing opposition leaders from jail – to address the myriad of issues facing the country (POMED, 2012).

2. 1.6.2. By US Department of State

The Government of Bahrain needs to take action regarding all other BICI recommendations that we believe will help lay the foundation for longer-term reform and reconciliation. These include dropping charges against all persons accused of offenses involving peaceful political expression, including freedom of assembly, prosecuting those officials responsible for the violations identified in the BICI report, and ensuring fair and expeditious trials in appeal cases. It also means continuing their effort to professionalize and diversify Bahrain's security forces to reflect the communities which they serve (Posner, 2012).

3. 1.6.3. By Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

The report issued by Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

in 2016 on the evaluation of the situation of Human Rights in Bahrain mentioned that: “since 2011, there have been hopeful moments – the King’s embrace of the 26 recommendations of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), which provided at least a partial roadmap for reform, and the start of the national dialogue that led to constitutional amendments in May 2012”.

Nonetheless, during the last couple of years, reforms have clearly been stalled, and the national dialogue has been suspended since 2014. The State Department’s most recent report on the status of the BICI recommendations made it clear that they have not been fully implemented, and that “national reconciliation as envisioned by the BICI report has not yet been achieved (Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing, 2016).

Chapter 2: Methodology

1. Design

The design chosen for this study was a randomized controlled trial. The randomized controlled trial design is a study design that randomly or arbitrarily allocates the participants into either an experimental group or a control group. The objective of this study is to analyze national attempts for reconciliation in post-crisis in Bahrain. For this reason, we made a survey which contains ten questions about the relation between the BICI report and the national reconciliation.

2. Population and Selection Criteria

A total of ten Bahraini politicians were approached for this study: five were Pro-government and five were from the opposition, and all of them agreed to participate.

Then, participants were randomly allocated to both loyal group and opposition group. The inclusion criteria included politicians from all majors who are follower of the Bahraini affair.

3. Sampling

The process used was the convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a nonparametric sampling technique where the sample population is chosen due to it

being readily available, easily accessible and proximate to the researcher. This sampling method was used due to a time restriction; thus, it was the most suitable method.

4. Material and Methods

To assess the influence of the BICI report on the National Reconciliation of Bahrain, a questionnaire was sent to ten Bahraini politicians. The questionnaire was designed to be brief and straightforward, asking simple questions and soliciting approximations of caseloads.

Both groups answered the same questions. We used Monkey survey and we sent it via WhatsApp. Questions were in Arabic language to be clear for all participants.

Answers included sections for commentary. All respondents were included in the results. The questions were intended to reflect the specific opinion of each one based on his experience in the analysis of Bahrain's situation.

Responses were recorded on computer data-base to summarize statistical results and correlations. Statistical comparisons were self-analyzed because of the open question type.

5. Ethical Consideration

Consent of the participants was obtained by signing a consent form. The participants had the freedom to retreat from the study at any time. All the information gathered from the participants is confidential.

Results

The percentage of respondents to the survey was 100%. Most of the respondents appeared to have well understood the format of the questions, as judged by their responses.

First, the establishment of BICI was a positive initiative for 90% of the respondents, who considered it as a proactive and hopeful initiative. Some of these judged it positively, but claimed that it was neither exploited well nor applied correctly. Results are mentioned in the pie-chart below (figure 1).

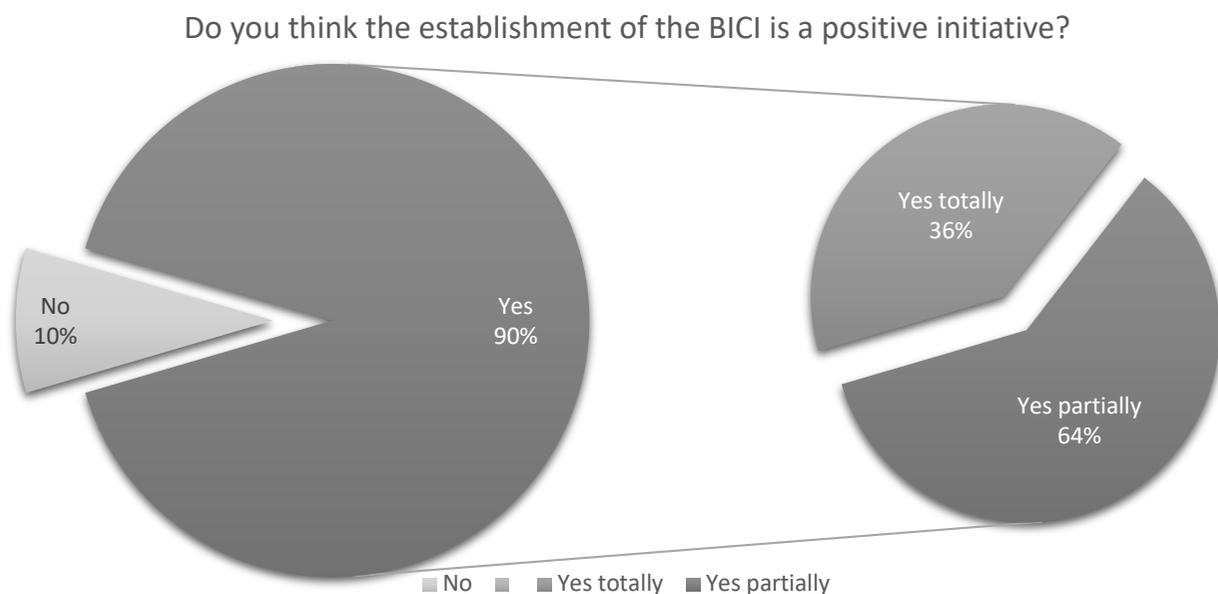


Figure 1: Opinions about the establishment of BICI: is it a positive initiative?

The purpose of the establishment of BICI was to improve human rights and put an end to violations as well as finding solutions to the political crisis in Bahrain. All countries and human rights organizations, have welcomed this step because they believe in the value of justice, stability and democracy. The committee received considerable support from all parties, but some of them considered that it was only accepted either by the government alone, or by the opposition only (not simultaneously accepted by the government and the opposition). Overall, the committee was welcomed by the majority of the politicians (60%).

In addition, the statements of some countries on their positions regarding the goal of BICI do not differ from the vision of the politicians in Bahrain.

The graph below shows that 60% of participants considered that the establishment of the BICI was

accepted from all parties. However, 20% said that it is only accepted by the pro-government groups because it serves their interests, and 10% saw that it was accepted by the opposition because they are victims, as they consider themselves.

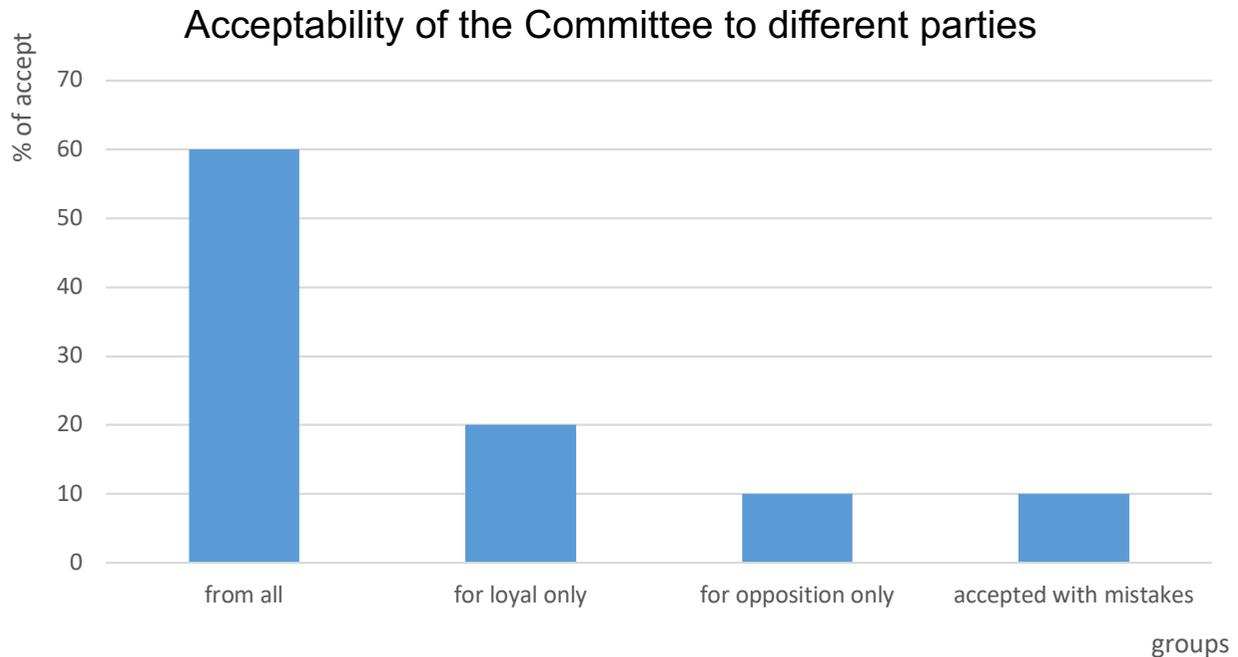


Figure 2: Acceptability of the BICI to all parties.

On November 23, 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) issued a 500-page report summarizing its findings regarding the February-March 2011 popular uprising and the government's heavy-handed response. The report was presented to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and was published in English and Arabic.

The committee analyzed all the information contained in its database after completing its classification and without any delay. It used, in this analysis, the expertise of its members; it also used a large number of investigators and experts in various legal, medical, engineering and information fields.

The Commission began its investigation on the 20th of July 2011 and received 8110 complaints and statements about various human rights abuses relevant to its mandate.

In addition, the Commission received and examined reports from national and international organizations and media agencies, all of which were also entered into the database.

The Commission's analysis of all information sources with respect to allegations of international

human rights violations is included in various Chapters and Sections of this Report.

The Commission's methodology comprised the following activities: interviewing individual complainants, meeting with government of Bahrain officials, civil society organizations, opposition groups, professionals of different categories and religious leaders. Furthermore, it conducted on-site visits to prisons, hospitals, demolished places of worship and other locations (Bassiouni, et al., 2011).

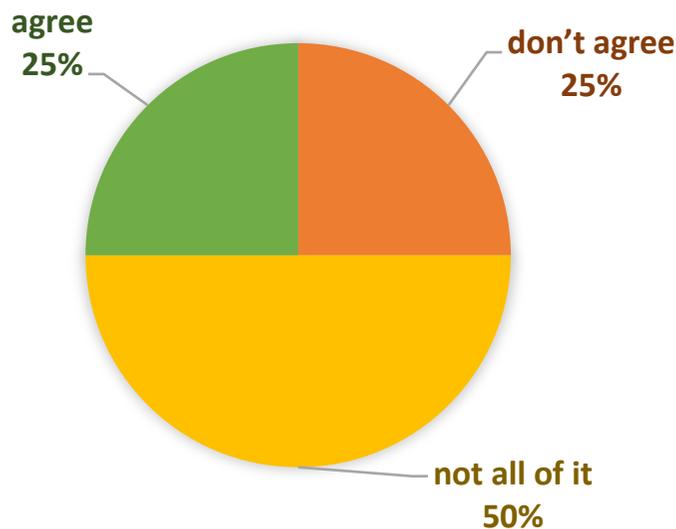


Figure 3: Percentage of agreement with the BICI report.

Based on the above, not all parties accepted the report: 25% disagreed with the report, another 25% agreed on it, and the other 50% had some concerns and comments; they thought that it was not totally true.

As for the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Committee in Bahrain, 50% of the politicians, who participated in this study, believe that all recommendations have been implemented. Others didn't share the same opinion and believed that most of the recommendations are still being demanded by the international community and human rights organizations.

The Independent Commission of Inquiry recommended that the Government of Bahrain should prepare a program of national reconciliation. The program would address the groups who believe that they are deprived of equal political, social and economic rights to benefit the entire Bahraini population.

In our study, the answers to the question related to the opportunity of the BICI report to create a positive atmosphere for the national reconciliation were similar. A percentage of 60% of the participants

considered it as a very important opportunity to build an appropriate platform for building the national reconciliation project. Moreover, they were willing to forgive and disregard the past, and plan together to build a prosperous future for Bahrain (figure 4).

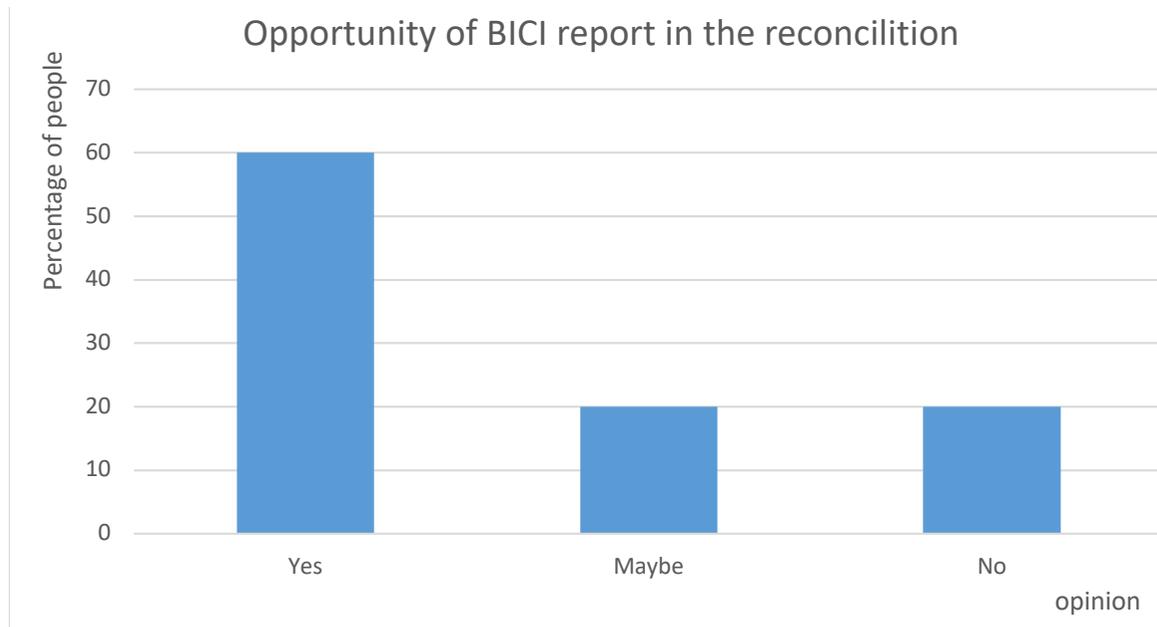


Figure 4: Opportunity of the BICI report in the national reconciliation in Bahrain

“Do you think that the solution to the political crisis can be through national reconciliation? If yes, what parties can play an effective role in this reconciliation?”

In response to this question, 70% of participants said that the reconciliation is the only solution, if all parties participated, both the loyal and the opposition groups. The majority of them considered that the reconciliation must be from Bahrain itself without any external interventions. Other answers ranged between the intervention of the USA or the Human Rights communities. For those who responded negatively, they considered that this is not a political problem, but a security one, which can be resolved through a governmental intervention.

Discussion

The current study aimed to depict the opportunity of the BICI's work and recommendations to make way for National reconciliation in Bahrain. This should reveal the importance of achieving reconciliation and its fundamental role in building peace. Furthermore, this is accentuated by analyzing a lot of studies which claimed that dialogue is the only solution, especially in the crisis of Bahrain.

Based on the above, our study was focused on the role of BICI and the extent of its work in implementing national reconciliation. It was a subject of comparison between politicians pro-government and others from oppositions. As for the units of measurement, they are as follows: opinions on the establishment of BICI, degree of acceptability of the BICI, percentage of agreement with the BICI report, degree of implementation of the recommendations of BICI, especially those related to national reconciliation and also linked to the solution of the crisis in Bahrain.

For the majority of the participants, there was a consensus on the importance of the national reconciliation's role in peace-building, as well as the need for establishing it immediately with a view to resolve the current political problem. However, the opinions about the implementation of the BICI report were significantly different.

The purpose of the BICI establishment was to improve human rights and put an end for the violations, as well as finding solutions to the political crisis in Bahrain. Therefore, it was considered as a positive initiative for almost all participants despite the the flaws in applying it. Thus, this confirms that the establishment of the Committee is an important and purposeful initiative, and the consensus on the subject is a positive indicator showing that it's not prejudiced.

The BICI report was welcomed by the international community as a potentially critical step toward resolving the country's escalating political crisis.

While everyone praised the establishment of the Commission, some had several concerns. Among them, some considered that they were the only ones who accepted it and that the opposition did not agree to it, and vice versa. The reality is that most of these comments were only illusions.

This is a good indicator that the majority of the opposition and loyalists (60%) consider the committee as acceptable to everyone.

Other comments opposing this view cannot be ignored, as they constitute one of the categories of the society in study. Those who were considered acceptable by the opposition were regarded as

such on the grounds that the Commission sought to highlight what the opposition wanted to clarify, particularly regarding violence and the use of excessive force.

On the other hand, some opposition parties considered that the establishment of the committee was an opportunity for the Bahraini government to silence the international community and foreign governments. The king hastened to establish an internal Bahraini committee to prevent any possible intervention from another country or any international committee.

The committee worked professionally and issued, on November 23, 2011, a report of five hundred pages summarizing its findings regarding the popular uprising. This report has been the subject of many research and analysis, ranging from acceptance to rejection.

One of the most criticized points of the report was that while the documentation of the events of February and March 2011 was extremely thorough, the report's mandate and its 26 recommendations to the Government of Bahrain did not extend far enough to resolve the country's political crisis. Nonetheless, observers in Bahrain and the international community were hopeful that these recommendations – if implemented swiftly, sincerely, and thoroughly – could set the stage for genuine national reconciliation and a process of meaningful political reform (POMED, 2012).

While a quarter of the respondents said that they fully agree with the report and its recommendations, another quarter expressed its total rejection. Those who agreed with some of the comments were the majority.

It should be noted that the comments and observations that were made as a justification for partial or full refusal were mostly due to the failure of the recommendations to be completed, in addition to holding the ones concerned responsible.

Thus, although the recommendations were considered fair, the failure to implement them by the government is what was considered unfair and lead to the dissatisfaction of the people.

In addition, the answer to the question of the extent to which the recommendations are implemented by the government, confirmed what was mentioned.

In 2011, the Bahraini Government accepted 26 recommendations issued by the BICI, a panel of jurists and international human rights experts.

The participants were split into two halves: some considered it to be fully accomplished, while others completely rejected it. Therefore, we have examined the studies that have evaluated the achievements

of the Government in relation to the Committee's recommendations.

The Government of Bahrain has announced that it will issue soon its own report regarding the implementation of the BICI recommendations, but it has not issued it yet.

Then, the Government claimed it had fully implemented all 26 recommendations in May 2016, citing the chairman of the BICI, Cherif Bassiouni, as evidence of its progress. However, on May 10 2016, Bassiouni stated that he was falsely quoted and asserted that the Government had only implemented 10 out of the 26 recommendations and had failed to address "priority" reforms such as those pertaining to accountability and prisoners of conscience (CIVICUS, 2017)

However, a report published in November 2012 by the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), entitled 'One Year Later: Assessing Bahrain's Implementation of the BICI Report,' concluded that 'the Government of Bahrain has fully implemented three of the BICI Report's 26 recommendations. Two other recommendations were impossible for us to properly evaluate due to a lack of available information, and 15 recommendations have only been partially implemented (POMED, 2012)

Bassiouni's report suggested the implementation of certain principles and mechanisms of international law, including promoting justice, compensating, and guaranteeing that violations won't happen again. These principles and mechanisms still need a strong will to put them into practice and, hence, all Bahraini parties need to work together to find a common ground and agree on a number of principles and laws which will support and help in the implementation process of the recommendations (Ishak, 2011).

Therefore, it is clear that the government has not completed all the recommendations, and that the achievements were limited, which construes the dissatisfaction of the opposition.

Furthermore, according to Fakhro, BICI report has neither provided the closure the ruling family hoped for, nor satisfied the expectations of the political and popular opposition (Fakhro & Ullrichsen, 2012).

It was the same response on the implementation of national reconciliation, and it was confirmed by the report of POMED, where it mentioned that recommendation 1725b – related to the reconciliation - has been partially implemented.

With regards to national reconciliation efforts, many political, social and economic programs have been put into place. The help of international expertise has also been used to settle the problems resulting from the crisis. These efforts include promoting the principles of national reconciliation in

order to decrease the effects of the crisis and promote trust between the various social components. These steps also include the initiative of the Ministry of Social Affairs to allocate half a million dollars for civil society organizations which participate in social reconciliation programs. There have also been some initiatives that were concerned with supporting the unity of Bahraini society by promoting the ideas of citizenship and co-existence

In her article, Fakhro said that “we argue that the limited measures taken post-BICI have not yet been sufficient to restore confidence in the reform process” (Fakhro & Ulrishsen, 2012).

As for the participants in this study, the majority (70%) acknowledged that national reconciliation is the only solution to the political crisis in Bahrain. However, some considered that there is no political crisis, and that the problem is a flaw in security; a view that was denied by the government.

The majority of participants consider that the reconciliation in Bahrain must be from within, without any external interventions. Other answers range between the interventions of the USA or Human Rights communities.

Therefore, these statistical results are evidence that establishing reconciliation is desired by all parties. It should be noted, however, that there have been some failed attempts to establish national reconciliation. Therefore, any subsequent initiative must be subjected to the conditions of dialogue and reconciliation mentioned at the beginning of the research.

Conclusion

Through this study, it can be concluded that the Commission's report was comprehensive and acceptable to all. However, the lack of work and its application, during the years of its release, is being rejected by the majority of the Bahraini people.

We, therefore, note that the majority are demanding the implementation of the proposed recommendations. These include national reconciliation which, according to the majority of views, is considered the ideal opportunity to resolve the crisis in Bahrain and, thus, building a better future for the country.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are both the sample size and time restriction. The sample of the study was small and, therefore, using a larger sample might have allowed for a better observation of significant changes. Moreover, there was a time limitation because of the huge number of studies which evaluate the BICI report and its implementation.

Perspectives

The promising results suggest that further studies should look into the details of applying for a national reconciliation program. Moreover, the models of countries in which effective reconciliation has been successful could be used as a benchmark.

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