

**NATIONAL RECONCILIATION OR POLARISATION? PRELIMINARY  
REFLECTIONS ON THE POLITICS OF THE GHANA NATIONAL  
RECONCILIATION COMMISSION**

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**ABSTRACT:** National socio-economic development moves in tandem with national stability, cohesion, and togetherness. It seems, therefore, that efforts at promoting reconciliation across social, political and ethnic divisions through the setting up of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in some African and Latin American countries are geared, among others, at also creating the congenial national environment for development. Successful reconciliation of political entities with entrenched mindsets may be part of the elixir for national consensus necessary for development. However, the possibility of a botched reconciliation process hamstringing national development efforts cannot be ruled out of the equation. These probable contrasting outcomes inform this study. Even though the success of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission has become the benchmark for subsequent ones in other African countries, one must be cautious about the ability of others to chalk similar successes in the light of national circumstances and the threshold of national tolerance. The focus of this paper fundamentally is the politics of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) in Ghana. The paper, therefore, outlines the differing circumstances that engender the setting up of the genre of reconciliation commissions and examines the antecedent as well as the ongoing politics surrounding Ghana's (NRC). The supposition is that given the nature of dictatorial governance, either civilian or military, and the dictates of democratic accountability, TRCs are necessary for many African countries. Whereas the possibility of either facilitating reconciliation or engendering national polarization are real, it is argued, however, that successful reconciliation must be construed in relative terms and be gauged in terms of the ability to prevent future occurrences of what led to the setting up of the reconciliation commission in the first place. That would imply carrying along on the reconciliation bandwagon the support of a significant proportion of the people but not necessarily everybody. This is because every political decision is bound to have proponents and opponents depending on the context. The national interest, which must be assessed to be having the blessing of majority of the people, should be the yardstick.