

ARE WE THERE YET? A RE-LOOK AT SADC'S ROLE IN THE ZIMBABWEAN CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

The Zimbabwean crisis, usually traced to the 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme pre-dates that period. Like all Sub-Saharan African states, Zimbabwe's history has a complicated pre-colonial genealogy and complex experience and memory of exploitative, repressive and violent settler colonialism. The nationalist struggle for independence was also a theatre of violence as settler colonial intransigence; brutality and violence provoked African nationalist counter-violence with far reaching implications for human rights issues. At the centre of the conflict is not only the racial question but also the ethnic question which has been subordinated to the nationalism rhetoric. The nationalist liberation was seriously affected by what Sithole (1999) termed 'struggles within the struggle.' The liberation struggle succeeded in politicising identities while failing to create common national patriotism. Thus, across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial historical interludes, Zimbabwe has experienced recurrent conflicts on a protracted basis since pre-colonial times. Thus, Zimbabwe has since independence in 1980 been confronted by instability culminating in the 2000-2008 crisis. This conflict came on the back of a crisis of legitimacy, ostracisation by the international community, economic decline and bad governance. In its early days, the conflict was treated like a normal internal problem, but things came to a boil beginning in 2005 with the government's urban cleanup campaign dubbed Operation Murambatsvina. The state sanctioned violence on the country's citizens reached unprecedented levels in 2008 when an orgy of violence led to the deaths of scores of opposition supporters in the run up to the discredited one man sham election of 27 June 2008. Against this background, in the spirit of brotherhood, and in pursuit of 'African solutions to African problems', the Southern African Development Community took up the mantle to resolve the Zimbabwean conflict with the African Union's (SADC) backing. In this regard, it is the prime objective of this paper to

analyse the efficacy of SADC's efforts towards a peaceful solution to the Zimbabwean crisis. The paper particularly examines the initiatives and processes taken by SADC countries to provide solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis through the facilitation of the Southern African Presidency. In this regard and in the wake of the failure to fully implement the 2008 Global Political Agreement, the study seeks to analyse SADC's role in the conflict through the SADC appointed facilitator's office. This will be done by analysing the achievements of the facilitation efforts, the inclusive government's reforms, the subsequent outcome from the harmonised elections held on 31 July 2013 and events in the aftermath of the 2013 harmonised elections.

Key Words: SADC, ZANU (PF), violence, GPA, MDC,

1. Introduction

The role of regional organisations such as SADC in the resolution of political and economic crisis in member states is fertile research territory. Within such a context, this paper emphasises the need for third-party intervention in African conflicts or crises as in the case of Zimbabwe. According to Agbu (2006:19) the term “third party intervention” is used to refer to a person or team of people who become involved in a conflict to help the disputing parties manage or resolve it. For Agbu (2006) states-mediators not only facilitate discussions, but they usually impose a structure and process on the discussions that are designed to move the parties towards mutual understanding and win-win agreements (Agbu, 2006). The concept of third party intervention is particularly crucial in the Zimbabwean case. The role of SADC and its mediators in Zimbabwe resulted in a power sharing agreement that was signed by the leaders of the opposition and the ruling party. However SADC faced a number of challenges with the full implementation of the power sharing deal, in such a way that the conflicting parties did not follow through on their agreements. This lack of follow-through is at least partly attributable to SADC. According to Murithi and Mawadza (2010) regional organizations are mandated to make the necessary interventions, but SADC's major weakness is that it makes ambiguous mandates and fails to effectively implement them. Given this situation, this paper is motivated by the need to examine the mediation strategies and methods that SADC used to try and resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe.

2. Objectives and Research Questions

2.1 Objective

This paper analyses and examines SADC's role in trying to resolve the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe?
- ii. Was SADC an appropriate mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis?
- iii. What methods or strategies were used by SADC to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis?
- iv. How effective were SADC's mediation efforts in transforming the Zimbabwean crisis into sustainable peace and stability?
- v. How can SADC improve its crisis and conflict mediation efforts in Zimbabwe and by extension in other member states?

3. Theoretical Framework

In the pursuit of clarity on SADC's role in resolving the Zimbabwean conflict, the paper uses Transformative Mediation Theory to analyse the intervention. Within the specific context of this chapter, it is instructive firstly, to highlight that Transformative mediation theory is based on the values of "empowerment" of each of the parties as much as possible, and "recognition" by each of the parties' needs, interests, values and points of view (Agbu, 2006:33).

The theory is rooted in the idea that human beings do not only seek to satisfy their individual needs: they also have a desire for connectedness. In other words, despite being conflicted, the conflicting parties seek some connectivity with each other. Durbin and Doogue, (1999:2) state that mediation is a process in which a third party works with parties in conflict to help them change the quality of their conflict interaction from negative and destructive to positive and constructive, and this is achievable due to the pursuit of connectedness. In looking at the theory, Green (2006:1) argues that "it seems that transformative mediation is best suited to on-going situations." Following Green's argument, it can be inferred that transformative mediation is best suited to any intervention in the Zimbabwe crisis which is an on-going

crisis. In line with this, Bush and Folger (1994) assert that the transformative approach to mediation does not seek resolution of the immediate problem, but rather, seeks the empowerment and mutual recognition of the parties involved, which is viewed as the approach taken by SADC in the Zimbabwean crisis. Mediation, in their opinion, can transform individuals. For mediators who adhere to the framework of transformative mediation, achieving this type of long-term change is more important than solving a specific problem between parties (Spangler, 2003). Transformative mediation theory fits well in the context of SADC's mediation efforts in the Zimbabwean crisis which needs a mediator who will help conflicting parties to transform their behaviour and attitudes towards each other in order to work together to bring about sustainable peace for the country.

Spangler (2003) says the primary objective of transformative mediation is to foster the parties' empowerment and recognition, enabling them to approach their current problem, as well as later problems, with a stronger, more open view. In line with this, Bush and Folger, (1994:6) "the chief goal of transformative mediation is to cultivate the parties' ability to empowerment and to empathize, thereby enabling them to approach their current problem, as well as future problems, with an effective, yet more open view." This approach, avoids the problem of mediator defectiveness which so often occurs in problem-solving mediation, putting responsibility for all outcomes squarely on the disputants (Bush and Folger, 1994:6).

Recognition means "enabling the parties to see and understand the other person's point of view to understand how they define the problem and why they seek the solution that they do" (Bush and Folger, 1994:5). As with empowerment, the effect of recognition in transformative mediation is to extend it beyond a particular conflict and into the parties' everyday lives. In the long term, achieving recognition in transformative mediation should help expand parties' ability and willingness to relate to others in a more understanding and considerate way (Spangler, 2003). Recognition is something one gives, not just something one gets. It is a process of acknowledging one's adversary as a human being with his or her own legitimate situation and concerns. According to Bush and Folger (2003) recognition must be based on empowerment in that parties must be confident in their freedom to make decisions regarding the course of the dispute. However empowerment and recognition are essential concepts that the conflicting parties in Zimbabwe lacked. The ruling party and opposition parties in Zimbabwe were constantly at loggerheads and they failed to empower each other even after

the signing of the GPA and they also failed to recognize each other's needs and perspectives and this in turn hindered the full implementation of the GPA. It can be inferred from the preceding statement that SADC's mediation efforts in Zimbabwe were insufficiently facilitative of empowerment and recognition of the conflicting parties, thus compromising the effectiveness of the implementation of the GPA.

4. The Zimbabwe Crises and SADC Intervention

4.1 A Historical Background to SADC intervention in Zimbabwe

A clear understanding of the SADC intervention in Zimbabwe is only possible to one who understands what the Zimbabwean crisis involves, thus it is important that a basic understanding of what the crisis entails be made before beginning the task. Consequently, this present section is descriptive in essence. Firstly, it attempts to establish the historical background of the Zimbabwean crisis. In this section, the causes and effects of the crisis are explored as well as the various linkages between them. Some of these include: the DRC intervention, drought of 1992, land invasions in 2002, hyperinflation, bad governance, weakness of opposition parties and election violence. Following Machakanja's (2010:5) submission, it is argued here that the Zimbabwean crisis should be understood as "a complex and inter-related, multi-layered and widespread disaster"; and as such it is better dubbed as "a series of Zimbabwean crises". More importantly it is emphasised that the section below provides an outline of key features of the Zimbabwean crisis.

The Zimbabwean crisis is rooted in the country's historical legacy which is characterised by violence. Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2010: 1) argue that the Zimbabwean crisis has been long in the making. As such, the momentous shape it took at the dawn of this millennium is only a reflection of its past history. Zimbabwe was born in April 1980 after a protracted armed liberation struggle that spanned over 15 years. This came against a background of a complicated pre-colonial genealogy and complex experience and memory of exploitative, repressive and violent settler colonialism. Taken together, these processes and experiences bequeathed on Zimbabwe a violent historical past which motivated a violent liberation struggle. The violence of the liberation war was to have even wider and worse effects on the nation.

Despite sacrifices done by Zimbabwean during the liberation struggle, the state was born as a neo-colony in which the erstwhile white settlers continued to hold onto their economic assets including the land and this implied that the country was haunted from birth by incomplete decolonisation which meant that another struggle was inevitable. This is because the land question was a major leitmotif of the national question that needed to be solved for peace to prevail. Furthermore the nationalist struggle was also a theatre of violence as settler colonial intransigence, brutality and violence provoked African nationalist counter-violence with far reaching implications for human rights issues. At the centre of the conflict was not only the racial question but also the ethnic question which was subordinated to the nationalism rhetoric. The nationalist liberation was seriously affected by what Sithole (1999) termed 'struggles within the struggle.' The liberation struggle had succeeded in politicising identities while failing to create common national patriotism. Thus, across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial historical interludes, Zimbabwe has experienced recurrent conflicts on a protracted basis. This is evidenced by the fact that in Zimbabwe contestation for power has consistently resulted in loss of human life; belonging to different political formations provokes hatred and violence; the question of equitable distribution of national resources and indigenisation of the national economy is still in the process of being resolved; and the historical questions of colonialism and coloniality continue to hang over the minds of people like a nightmare (Sachikonye 1996). As a result of these realities, conflict and violence have continued to be major challenges in Zimbabwe.

The deepening governance and human rights crisis which marked Zimbabwe's political landscape since 1999 followed the logic of a regime that has persistently blamed Zimbabwean woes on both external factors and droughts. Increasingly then, the state underwent systematic militarisation (Raftopoulos & Mlambo, 2008) culminating in excessive abuse of individual human rights, subversion of the judiciary, the total disregard of the rule of law (Mlambo & Raftopoulos, 2010: 5). In the post-colonial era, the country has experienced violent episodes like the incomplete decolonisation provoked *Hondo Yeminda/Third Chimurenga/Jambanja* (Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000). Ethnicity and inter-nationalist power-struggles provoked *Gukurahundi* (Matabeleland and Midlands Conflict 1982-1987). It was estimated that 20, 000 people were killed by government forces. By 2000, politically oriented violence had affected the rest of the country where widespread and indiscriminate harassment and battering of the political opposition progressively increased

over the years and reached its peak in the run up to the June Presidential runoff elections of 2008. Another development showcasing the abuse of human rights was the callous destruction of urban shelters during the controversial Operation *Murambatsvina* that had scores of hundreds of thousands left homeless with livelihoods ruined (Vambe, 2008), and Operation *Makavhotera Papi?* (Election related violence, literally meaning ‘where did you place your vote?’ 2008) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, Diamond and Plattner 2010: 346, Sadomba 2011: 229). These events were the outcome of ZANU-PF’s determination to suppress opposition to the government.

Thus, the emergence of political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe emanates from and is sustained by the interaction between politics and economics. In Mlambo and Raftopoulos’s submission, the Zimbabwean crisis is “rooted in the long-term structural political-economic legacies of colonial rule combined with the legacies of African nationalist politics” but gained momentum in the specific context of a “major threat to the political future of the ruling party ZANU-PF” (in Mlambo & Raftopoulos, 2010: 2).

As if the violence in the conflict was not enough, the crisis also has economic dimensions. A politically volatile atmosphere impacted negatively on the country’s national economy. For Sachikonye (2002: 14), the 1990s economic crisis was compounded by the implementation of the 5-year Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) administered under the auspices of both the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The programme failed to deliver the expected improvements. On the contrary, its implementation deepened Zimbabwe’s economic crisis. For instance, the growth level averaged below 1 percent per annum between 1990 and 1995; the unemployment rate grew from about 30 to 50 percent during same period. Consequently, the rapid de-industrialisation and growing unemployment led to the severe erosion of living standards of the majority (Mlambo & Raftopoulos, 2010: 2). While poor sequencing of the programme has been blamed for this low result, the orthodox basis of the conditionalities of International Financial Institutions’ (IFIs) sponsorship has also been called into question (Allen, 1999; Sachikonye, 2002: 15). In regard to poor sequencing of the programme, Sachikonye observes that the government did not regulate measures to restructure the public sector and social spending in a realistic and systematic manner.

According to Sachikonye, the more sustained economic meltdown which began in 1997 is rooted on the decisions of ZANU-PF's leadership. He highlights two decisions in particular. Firstly, President Mugabe authorised a payment of above Z\$5 million to war veterans who sought compensation for their role in the liberation struggle. Following this decision, which was unbudgeted in the first place, the Zimbabwe dollar weakened by 50 percent in value by November 1997. Secondly, August 1998 saw another unilateral decision on the Mugabe side which authorised Zimbabwean military involvement in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These twin decisions incurred large expenditure for which the government had not budgeted (Sachikonye, 2002:14).

The August 1998 DRC intervention received widespread condemnation for governmental mis-calculation (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009:13). The intervention led to an immediate IMF decision to suspend financial aid for land reform, since intervention would entail huge expenditures not accounted for in budgetary forecasts. The intervention was interpreted as Mugabe's attempt to assert some measure of regional authority. In this light, Dashwood (2001:88) argues that Mugabe's effort to gain a foothold in Southern Africa, and assert some form of hegemony, in order to compete with the rise of liberated South Africa in 1994, needs to be factored into any analysis of the "economic mayhem that engulfed Zimbabwe after 1997".

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), under Secretary-General, Morgan Tsvangirai, led mass strikes in 1998 to protest fuel hikes of 67 percent and the subsequent increase in prices of most other basic commodities. These strikes forced the government to "withdraw price hikes on fuel, but later in 2000 raised fuel prices again by 20 to 25 percent. The government also took steps to de-register and ban the ZCTU" (Cox and Anderson, 2007:2). The intricacies of the industrial crisis inevitably had an impact on the economy.

4.2 The SADC Intervention

As highlighted by the various definitions of mediation in the previous section, important elements of mediation are as follows: firstly, the existence of conflict; secondly, mediation is a voluntary process; thirdly, the neutrality of a mediator; fourthly, the need to reach some form of an agreement or settlement. However, perceptions of a mediator vary between scholars. Agbu (2006) sees a mediator as a professional dispute solver, while Moore (1996)

defines a mediator as one who is acceptable to those in conflict. Kochan and Jick (1978:5) describe a mediator as a neutral party, while Liebmann (2000:11) describes a mediator as impartial. Hence, a mediator is supposed to be acceptable, neutral and impartial to those in dispute in the hope of a fair settlement. In this light, the SADC choice of a mediator in Zimbabwe presented a number of problems.

SADC's impartiality as mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis was questionable given that some of its member states seemed to be loyal to Mugabe. As Hammerstad points out, (2005:80) Mugabe's role as one of the founding leaders of SADC especially for its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security made it difficult for the organisation to challenge his decisions. Hammerstad further notes that SADC chose to be loyal to Mugabe without protecting the human rights of its citizens (2005: 79-80).

Another element common to most literature on mediation is a mediator is supposed to be acceptable to parties in conflict. There is no doubt that Mbeki was considerably more acceptable to Mugabe than his predecessor. There remains, however, the question of the opposition. As noted by Gatsheni (2011) and Heine (2009), MDC-T expressed their dissatisfaction with Mbeki as an ally of Mugabe, arguing that SADC's mediation efforts under Mbeki focused on Mugabe and MDC-T seemed to be the least of Mbeki's worries. Hence, in the perception of MDC-T, Mbeki was not the right person to mediate in the Zimbabwean crisis. The point raised by Gatsheni and Heine respectively is elaborated by the International Crisis Group (ICG) report of 2008, which says SADC should have realised that Mbeki was too close to Mugabe to be sufficiently objective in his mediation approach. It can thus, be argued that SADC was not the appropriate candidate for such a mediation process. According to ICG (2012:3), "despite comprehensive protocols and agreements, SADC faces severe challenges characterised by tensions between member states, citizens' exclusion, social discontent, lack of resources and limited external and internal coordination." ICG further states that, regional security cooperation within SADC requires efficient structures supported by political commitment; however SADC's Secretariat structure seems too ineffective to ensure policy execution (2012:3).

In light of the arguments cited above, it seems reasonable to conclude SADC did not assume the role of a mediator *per se* in the Zimbabwean crisis but was more like a negotiating partner

with Mugabe. Hence, Mugabe's attitude was the determinant factor which shaped the outcomes of the compromise, not the mediation process itself. This paper argues that the nature of mediation carried out by SADC breaks most of the known rules of mediation because it considers the views of one party in conflict and almost ignores the other party. Given that the main architect of SADC's mediation strategy was Thabo Mbeki, the paper now scrutinises Mbeki's preferred strategy, namely, 'quiet diplomacy'.

4.2.1 Mbeki's 'Quiet Diplomacy' as a Problem-Solving mediation model

It is important to note that quiet diplomacy is not a problem solving theory *per se* but assumes a number of the key features of a problem-solving model. In other words, although SADC mediation was not tailor-made to the problem solving model, striking similarities can be noted, not least Mbeki's choice to ignore ('keep diplomatically quiet') anything that would hinder the speedy resolution of the crisis. Tellingly, he chose to ignore, or play down, state-orchestrated violence and correspondingly, the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe.

Burgess and Burgess (1997) assert that problem solving mediators are often highly directive in their attempts to reach a goal; they control not only the process but also the substance of the discussion focusing on areas of consensus and "resolvable" issues, while avoiding areas of disagreement where consensus is less likely. Although all decisions are, in theory, left in the hands of the disputants, problem solving mediators often play a large role in crafting settlement terms and obtaining the parties' agreement (Burgess and Burgess, 1997). This paper argues that by consciously choosing to ignore violent ethos of Zimbabwean politics, Mbeki was knowingly and intentionally controlling the outcome of the mediation. The paper further suggests that Mbeki was focused on achieving a rapid resolution to the crisis, and to that end, he disallowed any experiential truths or dissenting opinions which would impede his progress. Given his narrow and instrumentalist focus, he achieved the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008. The GPA committed its signatories to working together to create a sustainable and lasting solution to the Zimbabwean crisis (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009:9).

According to Bhengu (2010), Mbeki portrayed quiet diplomacy as a style of negotiating a crisis in foreign countries as opposed to military force or coercion. The principle behind quiet diplomacy is that, "it should be quiet and it should take place away from critical public and

media scrutiny” (Graham, 2006:116). The notion of Quiet Diplomacy is said to have three vital principles, firstly “the intervening party will not humiliate or attack in public either or any of the parties to the conflict and there is no moral grandstanding; secondly, punitive measures are taken off the table, and are not an option; and thirdly, talking and dialogue are used to seek an agreement between the warring parties” (Kennan, 2008:4). However, it is argued here that what made quiet diplomacy really ‘quiet’ was Mbeki’s decision not to offend Mugabe. Thus, Mbeki chose not to openly criticise the abuses of human rights. The GPA was signed in an assumedly violence-free void where coercion and intimidation were ignored because they were detrimental to the progress towards a settlement. Like the problem-solving model of mediation, everything which might jeopardise the settlement was ignored. The focus was on what the parties agreed upon. Ignoring what matters most to the crisis only serves to increase the chances of the implementation failure of that particular settlement. Hence, while the GPA achieved some improvements and a measure of political progress (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009); it did not provide a meaningful or long-term solution for a majority of Zimbabweans.

An instructive point is raised by Bhengu (2010), who observes that critics of quiet diplomacy maintain that Mbeki failed extensively to enforce his own agenda of African Renaissance in regard to the Zimbabwean crisis. For example, ignoring gross human rights violations in Zimbabwe contradicted his notion of a peaceful and inclusive African Renaissance. In specific relation to violence in Zimbabwe, the ICG (2008:8) submit that Mbeki refused to publicly criticise Mugabe or condemn increasing violence in Zimbabwe, “to wide disbelief, Mbeki denied that Zimbabwe was in the throes of a crisis and urged patience.” In similar vein, Murithi and Mawadza (2010), state that some observers have argued that Mbeki's mediation strategy could best be defined by a propensity towards denialism. “When Mbeki was accosted by journalists inquiring-about the Zimbabwe crisis, he replied to them with a bemused expression and declared: crisis, what crisis?” (Murithi and Mawadza, 2010:298). For them, whether this was a “politician's way of dispersing the gaggle of journalists, or whether it was an internalized perception of the situation will remain a contested issue.” (Murithi and Mawadza, 2010:299).

It is worth emphasising at this juncture in the paper that quiet diplomacy contains a serious flaw introduced by Mbeki. Indeed, Mbeki flouted one seminal rule of all theories of

mediation, namely, the neutrality and impartiality of the mediator/s. Heine points out that “Mbeki’s repeated visits to Harare and meetings with Mugabe at the State House, where they would enthusiastically hold hands in front of the press, showed not so much the presence of an international mediator, but as a colleague and friend of Mugabe’s trying to rescue him from a difficult situation.” Furthermore, Heine highlights Mbeki’s obvious dislike of Morgan Tsvangirai, whom Mbeki would rarely meet, if at all, [which] only reinforced the perception that he was not an honest negotiator searching for a fair solution (Heine, 2009). Nathan (2005:361) articulates a similar view, and adds that “Mbeki’s policy of quiet diplomacy was an ad hoc, haphazard approach which failed to deal with the crisis in Zimbabwe.” Hence, this paper argues that quiet diplomacy contained two fault-lines not inherent in a problem-solving model. Firstly, quiet diplomacy manifests a strong preference for one party in a dispute. Secondly, it has not been theoretically developed as a coherent and systematic conflict mediation strategy. It contains a markedly prescriptive orientation which is justified on ideological (as distinct from theoretical) grounds.

Finally, in this section, it also is instructive to note that according to some scholars, Mbeki’s policy of ‘quiet diplomacy’ is more illusory than real. For example, Alden (2003) asserts that the policy of quiet diplomacy is a policy where rationality and truth have no meaning.

4.2.2 Zuma’s mediation style in the Zimbabwean crisis

In 2009, following his election as President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma replaced Mbeki as primary mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis. Given that SADC's mediation role was allocated primarily to the government of South Africa and not to an individual, Zuma inherited the mantle of mediator by default rather than by design. As noted in the preceding section, Mbeki's era was typified by a soft stance on Zimbabwe and a predisposition to quiet diplomacy. Whether Mbeki's departure from the Zimbabwe mediation exercise marked a definitive end to the era of South Africa's quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe is a question addressed in this section. According to Murithi and Mawadza (2010:55), Zuma continued with the series of talks initiated by Mbeki, but also appointed a facilitation team comprised of his old African National Congress (ANC) comrade-in-arms, Mac Maharaj and one of his senior advisors, Lindiwe Zulu, to remain engaged with the situation in Zimbabwe. The facilitation team undertook a series of trips to Zimbabwe to meet with the principals of the political formations. The South African Department of International Relations and

Cooperation (DIRCO) played an instrumental role in providing the technical support for the interventions by the presidency and the facilitation team. Murithi and Mawadza (2010) add that in 2011, Zuma presented a report which indicated that the region and international community were losing patience with Mugabe who was seen as the stumbling block to the implementation of the GPA and smooth functioning of the Unity Government.

According to the ICG Report (2008:2:6), Jacob Zuma described the Zimbabwean situation as unacceptable and urged Africa to send a mission to the country. Chinaka (2008:12) argues that, during Zuma's presidential trip to London, he joined with Gordon Brown in a call for an end to the stalemate: a move that would have been inconceivable coming from Mbeki, who had strongly resisted Western pressure to take a tougher stance. The ICG report (2012:22) affirms that in 2011 SADC held a meeting in Livingstone, and that SADC's mediator, President Jacob Zuma, presented a report that accused President Robert Mugabe and his ruling party of holding back reforms. The report however triggered extensive anger within ZANU-PF and Mugabe asserted that his party had the right to formally reject Zuma's mediation should the interference of his country's domestic policy continue. Therefore "the attack exposed the fragility and multiple interpretations of SADC peace and security processes, especially in cases where regional leaders have been criticized" (ICG Report, 2012:22).

Commenting on (former) President Mbeki's mediation approach vis-a-vis President Zuma's approach, Tinhu (2013:1) states that, it was within the context of the international criticism and failure of Mbeki's approach that his successor, President Jacob Zuma opted for a tougher stance against President Robert Mugabe. Tinhu (2013:1) argues that, when Zuma took over the presidency, South Africa became one of Zimbabwe's most active critics. Unsurprisingly, this tough stance drew approval from the opposition and human rights groups in Zimbabwe, and the new South African President was deemed a saviour. The international community echoed the view that Zuma was doing a good job to take a tough position in dealing with Mugabe. However, Tinhu (2013) also comments that Jacob Zuma's tough stance with regards to the Zimbabwe crisis was based on an awful miscalculation that Mugabe and his party could be pushed around easily. Moreover, "Zuma's approach was interpreted by the ZANU-PF party as an effort to create conditions for a zero sum situation, in which Zuma wanted Mugabe's party to 'lose' in the negotiations process that he was facilitating on Southern

African Development Community (SADC)’s behalf” (Tihnu, 2013:1). Mugabe and ZANU-PF also intentionally ignored diplomatic respect as part of their ‘strategy’ to undermine Zuma and his mediation team. ZANU PF used state media perspectives and unexpected rhetoric, in such a way that Zuma and his negotiation team were treated in an apparently patronizing manner (Tihnu, 2013).

Tihnu further observes that, “ZANU-PF has a small unit of hardliners who are skillfully and systematically supported by their party to lash out at foreign dignitaries. One of them is Jonathan Moyo who continued to show unrestricted attack on the South African President.” For instance, “in a state owned Sunday Mail newspaper, Moyo labelled Jacob Zuma as erratic. Moyo added that the problem with Zuma is that his disconcerting behaviour has become a huge liability, not only to South Africa, but to the rest of the continent”. When Zuma continued to press for electoral and political reforms, Mugabe finally snapped angrily, and he opted to take up a risk of threatening to pull Zimbabwe out of SADC and it became excruciatingly clear to Zuma the kind of person he was dealing with (Tihnu, 2013:2).

President Robert Mugabe’s party had already made advances that revealed that it was capable of causing damage to Zuma’s effort to be re-elected by providing ideological and (allegedly) monetary support to Julius Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters. Certainly, in September 2011, “the South African National Congress (ANC) Secretary General accused ZANU-PF of influencing the thinking and actions of Malema, and in 2012, Malema admitted that he had acquired his inspiration from Mugabe, and added that South Africa should learn from Zimbabwe when it comes to issues such as Land Reform” (Tihnu, 2013:2). Therefore although Jacob Zuma initially had an honest intention to push for reforms in Zimbabwe, he was outmanoeuvred by Mugabe to an extent which threatened his re-election prospects, and accordingly, he withdrew from his tough standpoint when dealing with Mugabe.

Zuma would not willingly jeopardise his re-election bid by fighting a political battle on behalf of the opposition party in Zimbabwe. As Tihnu (2013:12) argues, Mugabe and ZANU-PF succeeded in reversing the usual procedure in International relations, in which “the big power dictates and the smaller power complies.” Thus stubbornness, rudeness, blackmailing and intimidation, were utilised by the Mugabe regime to effectively outwit their South African counterparts. Put bluntly, Zuma could not match Mugabe’s bulldozing political

strategy (Tinh, 2013). Whereas Mbeki saw Mugabe as a father figure and a fellow comrade in arms, Zuma was outplayed by a more experienced and wiler politician and leader than he is.

4.3 Are We There Yet? Successes and Failures of the SADC Intervention

In assessing the SADC intervention in Zimbabwe, Dzinesa and Zambara (2010:65) state that “the SADC mediation in Zimbabwe provided a litmus test for the regional body’s capacity to resolve conflicts using mediation as a constructive and non-violent tool. There is no doubt that some successes were scored and that Zimbabwe’s imminent implosion was halted.” However, although Dzinesa and Zambara acknowledge some successes scored by the SADC mediation efforts, they take a critical view of some of the implications of SADC’s intervention in Zimbabwe and the role SADC played in crisis management and conflict resolution and in preventing the country from collapsing. They argue that it would have been logical for SADC, as guarantor of the GPA, to assign a team of field observers for the duration of the transition and that the lack of a regional monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the agreement and of a strict time-table to review progress contributed to the slow pace of reform in Zimbabwe (2010:64). They conclude by highlighting the major concerns of SADC mediation process in Zimbabwe. One of the major concerns is that leaving political parties, who had been at each other’s throats for years, to implement the GPA on their own and monitor themselves through Joint Monitoring and Implementation Programme (JOMIC), was probably SADC’s most serious misjudgement.

Prega Ramsamy criticises the role of SADC in the Zimbabwean crisis. According to Ramsamy (2011:2) “SADC was seen in the early stages of the crisis as in full support of the events that happened in Zimbabwe. Solidarity was the keyword and no public statement against the government of Zimbabwe was made despite gross violations of human rights.” This resulted in SADC receiving widespread international criticism for failing to take a public stand against human rights violations, breaches of the rule of law and repression in Zimbabwe. He adds that SADC’s reaction to the international criticism has been one that respects national sovereignty. SADC opposed interfering internally in a sovereign country’s politics arguing that complete regime change would come through democratic, free and fair elections. Ramsamy further argues that SADC’s mediation effort to resolve the Zimbabwe crises faced several challenges. Two examples are that SADC failed to ensure the full

implementation of the GPA by all signatories to the agreement and there was lack of a common position within SADC regarding the Zimbabwe crisis. Ramsamy concludes by stating that SADC had much to do to resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe. SADC determination to resolve the situation in Zimbabwe through peaceful means is without question. However, for him everything depended upon the full implementation of the GPA, especially in a sequential manner that would have paved the way towards free and fair elections.

According to Pallotti (2012) the SADC intervention approach to the crisis in Zimbabwe suffered from two main political weaknesses. In the first place, “SADC had neither the political leeway nor the financial resources required to provide a lasting solution to the land issue in Zimbabwe (and in Southern Africa), and the regional leaders carefully avoided antagonising Mugabe and putting at risk their own political legitimacy among their electorates” (2012:17). In the second place, “SADC started debating the problem of land reform in Zimbabwe when the political situation in the country had already deteriorated to such a point that the national leadership had made the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) the mainstay of its strategy to remain in power” (2012:33). According to Robert (2004:4) African regional cooperation strategies have been characterised by "the slow development, if not outright absence of social considerations in the integration process and even when mechanisms for social policy development and social dialogue are created, these often remain dormant due to insufficient political or financial support.”

The foregoing review has highlighted key features of debates on the role of SADC in trying to resolve the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. A few scholars such as, Bhengu, (2010); Mlambo and Raftopoulos, (2010) have praised the role of SADC in trying to resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe. These scholars argue that the SADC mediation effort was successful because it resulted in a power sharing deal through the signing of the GPA. However these authors do not take into account that although the GPA was signed there was lack of genuine partnership between ZANU-PF and the opposition parties. This paper addresses this gap by finding ways in which SADC could have aimed to increase genuine partnership among the conflicting parties, through empowerment and recognition of the other; this is because the political parties in the country still saw each other as political enemies even after signing the Global Political Agreement.

Scholars such as Dzinesa and Zambara, (2010); Murithi, (2010); Ramsamy, (2011); Palotti (2012); Cawthra, (2010); Cox and Anderson, (2007); Moyo (2009); Makova, (2012); Alden, (2010) and Lunn, (2012), have taken a different stance. They have criticised the role of SADC in trying to resolve the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. These scholars argue that SADC failed to criticise the Zimbabwean government for gross human rights violations and that SADC did not sufficiently encourage the promotion of free and fair elections in the country. They also point out that SADC lacks sufficient funding and effective regional monitoring mechanism to oversee the full implementation of the GPA. The above scholars also focused on Mbeki's mediation efforts and the role that SADC played in the 2008 elections.

It is important to highlight some of the problematic issues which undermined the efficacy of the GPA. According to Bhengu (2010) ZANU-PF did not stick to the agreement and Mugabe resisted relinquishing power to the MDC. Bhengu asserts that the GPA has been an unequal agreement as ZANU-PF has preserved control of the dominant levers of the military and security sectors and thus has not fully implemented the terms of the agreement. The ICG report (2012:6) observes that after the signing of the GPA, the two formations of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) continuously condemned ZANU-PF's deliberate violation of the GPA and its unwillingness to implement some of the crucial aspects of the agreement. Furthermore, the ICG (2010:9) contends that since the creation of the GPA, it has been mired in disagreements over implementation around key posts, and ZANU PF has refused to consider any reform with regard to the control of the central coercive powers. The ICG report quotes Mugabe as saying that "ZANU PF as a party of the revolution and the people's vanguard shall not allow the security forces of Zimbabwe to be the subject of any negotiations for the so-called security sector reforms...that is the most dependable force we could ever have, it shall not be tampered with" (ICG, 2010:9). Thus, given that ZANU-PF obduracy has hindered the full implementation of the GPA, both the EU and the West have rejected the call to remove the targeted sanctions on President Mugabe and his party members. Similarly, Murithi and Mawadza (2010:297) argue that one issue that SADC has failed to implement with the GPA is the reform of the security sector in Zimbabwe. For them, the effective reform of the security sector in Zimbabwe is at the heart of the stabilization of the country. "Politicization of virtually all of the security sectors has witnessed the police and military being deployed to fight political battles by ZANU-PF" (2010:298). They further

point out that “any situation in which the force of arms takes precedence over the force of arguments is self-evidently a corruption of the social contract between the governed and the governors and is ultimately unsustainable in the long-run” (Murithi and Mawadza, 2010:299). For Murithi and Mawadza, ZANU PF negotiators have been reluctant to discuss security sector reform for fear of recrimination and to protect ZANU PF’s source of power and cohesion.

However, Cawthra and Niewkerk point out that Mbeki’s mediation resulted in a Global Political Agreement (GPA) in which Mugabe retained the presidency but the main opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, was appointed prime minister and dual executive power was established (Cawthra and Niewkerk, 2004:5), and that the resulting Inclusive Government, lessened the impact of economic collapse. Nonetheless, the GPA and Government of National Unity continued to be characterized by conflicts over key issues of power. Pallotti (2012:29) argues that it did not take long before these expectations turned into a sense of frustration, since SADC neither suspended Zimbabwe, nor adopted sanctions against it, nor has it been able, to date, to effect a real change of political leadership in the country. The recent 2013 election held in Zimbabwe testifies to the superficiality of the problem solving approach to mediation.

It goes without saying that SADC almost scored a historic success in bringing about a people driven new constitution to Zimbabwe. However, this achievement was diluted due to the fact that although a new charter was unveiled in March 2013, its contents were far watered down compared to what the people had demanded during outreach programmes. The fact that the final document was a compromise, negotiated document boils down to the lack of an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Global Political Agreement.

4.4 Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

SADC should develop an effective peace and security policy framework; harmonise and clarify its role with other SADC structures; broaden engagement with civil society; ensure member-state commitment to African Union efforts on human and people’s rights; and build capacity for evaluation and monitoring.

Arguably, the main mistake SADC made was that it did not establish impartial structures to

effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the GPA, which it had so painstakingly helped to negotiate. Lessons could have been learned from Kenya, where the process was completely different. Following the post-election violence in 2007, mediation by an AU Panel of Eminent African Personalities chaired by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan also led to the establishment of a coalition government as a means to institute comprehensive political reforms. Crucially, civil society was tasked with monitoring the unity government (Social Consulting). In the absence of a dedicated SADC mediation architecture, the SADC Secretariat in Botswana should ideally have played a more meaningful role in support of the intra-Zimbabwe dialogue.

The Organ for Politics, Defence and Security should be strengthened to spearhead peacemaking efforts on SADC's behalf. In line with this, the mistaken belief that conflicts and subsequent mediation should lead to conflict closure through elections should be reviewed – elections are by nature processes of contestation that easily destroy any gains that might have been made in the transitional period. This is very true of Zimbabwe – politics in Zimbabwe is toxic, acrimonious and violent.

Notwithstanding this, some critical issues became visible

- The development of SADC's mediation capacity is still a work in progress.
- Important institutional gaps were exposed during the process in Zimbabwe, particularly the lack of an effective monitoring mechanism.
- Oftentimes countries which have been in conflict have a tendency of sliding back into tension – as is happening in Zimbabwe today.
- SADC needs to send a strong a message to its member states that undermine treaties endorsed by this body. This will prevent parties from violation agreements without punishment.
- Persuasion might have worked in Zimbabwe, but SADC needs to set mechanisms that will prevent further election-related violence that leads to power sharing being a quick-fix in its intervention.
- SADC leadership should avoid displaying weakness by not agreeing on how to handle regional conflict. The division caused by the Zimbabwe crisis delayed intervention and

showed that SADC is not ready to act as a collective.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the appropriateness and effectiveness of SADC mediation and intervention in the Zimbabwean crisis. The paper has argued that SADC's mediation efforts lacked neutrality and impartiality which are important factors in any form of mediation process. The paper has observed that SADC's mediation efforts faced severe challenges characterised by tensions between SADC member states, lack of resources and a lack of an alternative mechanism to resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe. The paper has argued that one of the challenges that make SADC not to be an appropriate mediator is that it lacks the ability to distinguish between respect of human rights and the promotion of national sovereignty.

Secondly, the paper argues that it is time for SADC to consciously abandon the superficial approach of the problem-solving model. A serious limitation of the problem solving approach is its tendency to over-focus on constructing an agreement between conflicting parties, and to under-focus on a fair and equitable implementation of the agreement. The model assumes that (somehow) the agreement and its implementation are the same phenomenon. It is as if a problem-solving mediator assumes that his or her main task is to facilitate a rapid agreement to end the conflict, and that almost by definition, proper implementation of the agreement will follow. As the paper has shown, however, ZANU-PF's refusal to let go of its command of the country's security apparatus intentionally foiled fair and equitable distribution of power in the Unity Government. The bottom line of a state's existence as a state is its ability to monopolise the means of coercion. Given that historically, ZANU-PF has tended to conflate state interests and ruling party interests, it felt ideologically justified in monopolizing the means of coercion. This effectively emasculated the opposition party which, in any case, had been presented as an agent of western imperialism, and hence as the 'enemy'.

To achieve the above results, mediation in the Zimbabwean crisis should have been based on trust or at least trust should have been built during the process of mediation itself. Unfortunately, however, there was no trust between the opposition and the ruling party. By extension, any settlement reached when parties in conflict do not trust each other is bound to fail as was the case in the Zimbabwean situation. Moreover, given the intensity of the post-

2013 crisis in Zimbabwe, it is unlikely in the extreme that, in the absence of a mediator, the opposition will ever learn to trust the ruling party's capacity for crisis management. Thus, a continuation of mediation is a prerequisite for crisis resolution in Zimbabwe. Moreover, it is of the highest importance that all parties involved in the mediation process are able to trust the mediator.

The paper has also examined the mediation strategy adopted by Mbeki under the auspices of SADC. Mbeki used the policy of quiet diplomacy as his main strategy to try and resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe. However the paper pointed out that the policy of quiet diplomacy was not the right mediation strategy to employ in the Zimbabwean crisis because the crisis in Zimbabwe needs a constructive long term mediation approach that can fully transform the Zimbabwean crisis into lasting peace and stability. The paper tried to understand the policy of quiet diplomacy as a problem solving mediation as it aims to solve a problem and to reach a settlement in a short period of time. The paper argued that Mbeki managed to score a few successes with his mediation efforts in Zimbabwe for example, he managed to make the conflicting parties to sign the GPA and an Inclusive Government was formed. However Mbeki's biggest challenge was that he failed to be neutral in his mediation efforts and he was too close to Mugabe and this in turn decreased his objectivity in his mediation efforts in Zimbabwe.

The paper also displayed the different stances that Mbeki and the current President of South Africa Jacob Zuma took in trying to resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe. Zuma took over from where Mbeki had left off, he finalised the terms of the GPA but he faced a lot of challenges with regards the full implementation of the GPA. For example, the GPA failed to deal with the issues of security sector reform in Zimbabwe which is at the heart of stabilisation of the country. The paper assessed how the 2013 election in Zimbabwe witnessed the final collapse of the GPA. The paper argued that SADC failed to play an effective role in 2013 elections because they lowered the standards of free and fair elections by declaring Zimbabwe's election as free and peaceful. The paper revealed how the 2013 election failed to meet the SADC's principle and guidelines governing democratic elections. For example, the 2013 had many technical problems these include: lack of access to the electronic voters roll to stakeholders, chaotic special vote and uneven access to the public media. The paper also highlighted the post-election crisis in Zimbabwe. The paper argued that the Zimbabwean crisis is far from over and the country is still mired in poverty. For example Zimbabwe is still

facing several problems such as: lack of direct foreign investment; increased shortages of water and electricity supply; inability to pay and increase civil servants salaries; and the continuing collapse of social services such as health and education.

The paper introduced the transformative approach to mediation as an alternative to the quiet diplomacy used by Mbeki under the auspices of SADC. The study outlined arguments in favour of applying transformative mediation. Transformative approach is preferred for this study because it focuses on the problem or conflict more realistically and takes into serious consideration people involved in conflict as important and central to the conflict resolution process. This approach is understood as anchored on two pillars namely empowerment and recognition. These two pillars enable the mediation process to be seen as the initial stages of the implementation process and also an assurance of the possible success of the prospect of the mediation process.

The policy of quiet diplomacy which was adopted by Mbeki aims to seek for a resolution of the mediate problem without seeking the root causes and the nature of the crisis. Through empowerment and recognition transformative mediators seek deeper changes in interpersonal interactions of the conflicting parties beyond the short term superficial remedies of the policy of quiet diplomacy and problem solving mediation. The paper suggests that SADC mediators should settle in for the long haul by adopting and adapting a transformative mediation model to fit the contours of national conflict, and by working towards a step-by-step resolution of a seemingly intractable crisis situation in Zimbabwe.

Notwithstanding an (allegedly) ‘free and fair’ 2013 election, the Zimbabwean crisis is far from over and the country is still mired in poverty. Arguably, the country is worse off than it was under the previous Government of National Unity. According to the ZCBC (2013:1) “the 2013 election has left Zimbabweans more polarized than they were before and during the years of the Inclusive Government (2009-2013).” The debate about the legality and legitimacy of third party intervention in the “domestic” affairs of sovereign states has been ongoing. In this regard, the notion of African solutions to African problems hinges on the desire of African states to be subjects of their own destiny. This will firstly help Africans to drive their desire for self-determination without external interference which re-lives the experience of colonialism in Africa (Scanlon et al 2007:13). In this context, the African centeredness’ presented a problem in resolving the crisis. As Mutisi (2015) observes, as a

postcolonial organisation comprising of fellow The Crises of Postcoloniality in Africa comrades who fought the liberation struggle against colonialism and which advances a pan-African ethos, SADC is largely compromised especially when dealing with political novices who espouse a neo-liberal agenda such as the MDC. Resultantly the SADC intervention was lopsided and led to a failure to achieve the desired results. Judging from the above views, it seems that the Zimbabwean crisis is indeed far from over and on this note, SADC intervention can be largely blamed.

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