

The Collision of Liberation and Post-Liberation Politics within SADC

A study on SADC and the Zimbabwean Crisis

ELDRIDGE ADOLFO



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| Title | The Collision between Liberation and Post-Liberation Politics within SADC |
| Rapportnr/Report no | FOI-R--2770--SE |
| Rapporttyp Report Type | Användarrapport/User Report |
| Månad/Month | Juni/June |
| Utgivningsår/Year | 2009 |
| Antal sidor/Pages | 57 p |
| ISSN | |
| Kund/Customer | Försvarsdepartementet/Ministry of Defence |
| Kompetenskloss | 1 Säkerhetspolitisk omvärldsanalys |
| Extra kompetenskloss | |
| Projektnr/Project no | A12018 |
| Godkänd av/Approved by | Maria Lignell Jakobsson |
| FOI, Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut Avdelningen för Försvarsanalys | FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency Division of Defence Analysis |
| 164 90 Stockholm | SE-164 90 Stockholm |

Sammanfattning

På uppdrag av Försvarsdepartementet har Afrikagruppen vid FOI under 2009 genomfört en serie av studier relaterade till södra Afrika. Denna rapport ingår i serien, och fokuserar på hur befrielseörelsementaliteten fortfarande präglar södra Afrika och hur den har påverkat SADC som organisation vad gäller dess hantering av Zimbabwe- krisen. Rapporten ger en inblick i varför SADC-länderna har antagit en politisk linje som innebär tyst diplomati gentemot Robert Mugabe och hans parti ZANU PF. Den undersöker vidare hur denna mentalitet, som härstammar från befrielseörelsetiden, ställer krav på och ibland skapar problem för SADC-länderna i dagens politik, till exempel vad gäller frågan om Afrikansk solidaritet eller om nationalism och omfördelning av resurser. Rapporten belyser också aktuella spänningar mellan den partipolitik som bygger på befrielseörelsen och en Marxistisk övertygelse, och de nya partiernas väg mot flerpartidemokrati. Rapporten avslutar med att lyfta fram en rad områden där det finns behov av insatser och stöd för att bygga och stärka ett demokratiskt förhållningssätt i SADC-regionen

Nyckelord: Afrika, afrikansk säkerhet, fred och säkerhet, AU, SADC, Southern Africa Development Community, APSA, den afrikanska arkitekturen för fred och säkerhet, SADCBRIG, Zimbabwe, befrielseörelsen, södra Afrika

Summary

On commission from the Ministry of Defence, the FOI Studies in African Security team is currently engaged in a number of studies relating to Southern Africa. The report has as a focal point the liberation movement mentality in southern Africa and its influence on SADC as an organisation with regards to the Zimbabwean crisis. It provides insights into why the SADC states have pursued a policy of quiet diplomacy towards Robert Mugabe and his Zanu PF party in view of the crisis in Zimbabwe. It examines the constraints the liberation movement mentality places on the SADC states; the role the politics of African solidarity plays; the roles nationalism and resource redistribution play in post settler colonies; and the tensions created by the juxtaposition of the colonial past and liberation Marxist persuasion against the new post-liberation political parties drive towards more democratic forms of governance. In conclusion, it gives some thoughts for the future and points to areas in need of support in order to shape a more democratic future for the SADC region

Keywords: Africa, African Security, SADC, Southern Africa Development Community, Peace and Security, Frontline States, Liberation, APSA, African Peace and Security Architecture, SADCBRIG, Zimbabwe,

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Executive Summary

Introduction

A political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis has unfolded in Zimbabwe over the last decade, which has left the world expecting SADC to take a firm stance against Robert Mugabe and his Zanu PF party. Instead, SADC has chosen to take the route of quiet diplomacy and the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, was given the task of mediator.

Considering the negative effects the Zimbabwean crisis has had on SADC as a region, the question inevitably becomes why has SADC chosen this route? This paper explores the role played by the Liberation Movement's of Southern Africa's mentality and solidarity as a basis for SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis. It also deals with the question of why SADC took this approach.

During the research, the paper identified eight key points in its thematic scope that highlighted the role of the liberation influence in SADC's response to the Zimbabwean crisis. These key points – 1) Historical background to liberation history; 2) African Solidarity and personalities; 3) Legitimacy to rule; 4) Self preservation; 5) National democratic deficits; 6) Resource redistribution; 7) The racial framing of the crisis that brings an anti-colonial sentiment to the fore; and 8) A pragmatic rather than principled approach – form the analytical framework.

Cultivating the Liberation Ties in SADC

The liberation parties in the SADC region have gone through a very painful shared history, where they fought bloody wars together and for each other as brothers/sisters and comrades for many years (and even decades). It is important to acknowledge that these SADC states are still very young and the liberation wars they fought ended as recently as fifteen years ago. Most of the people who were engaged in the liberation struggle - including the peasantry that felt the wrath of both colonial and liberation forces – are still alive. Therefore, this history still holds some significance for the peoples in the SADC region and cannot just simply be swept away.

The liberation parties within SADC have continued to develop and strengthen their relationships. This was perfectly illustrated in 2001, when in response to the Zimbabwean crisis, senior members of the ANC including the then party secretary-general and now former interim South African President Motlanthe, formed a regional network of southern African liberation movements. This was arguably aimed at strengthening their solidarity as well generating support for Zanu PF. It also broadened the role and scope that the liberation movements

played in SADC with regards to Zimbabwe and almost guaranteed Mugabe their support.

The Politics of African Solidarity

The discussion on African solidarity moves outside of SADC, and into the greater politics in Africa, but is important for the case of Zimbabwe. In exploring the relations between African states one must understand that in African regional relations, the region is a critical arena within which the state and its leader's security have been threatened (e.g., as was seen in Apartheid South Africa's politics of destabilisation in the SADC region). However, the region has also provided protection for states and their leaders (e.g. the politics of exile and most liberation armed struggles were launched and fought from neighbouring countries).

This 'insecurity from within the region' is something that the liberation leaders in SADC are very sensitive to as it is a potential threat to their own security. The liberation parties have had to fight against proxies in their struggles, and the cases of RENAMO in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola, and even to some extent Inkatha in South Africa in the early 1990's are but a few examples. Therefore, one should not under-estimate the weight of Mugabe's referral to 'neo-colonialism' and 'imperial puppetry' within SADC. To counter the regional security threat, solidarity within the region becomes of extreme importance.

This paper develops a line of argument that focuses on African Solidarity as an explanatory factor in African regional relations, which is a break from the popular theories of African regional relations being centred on non-interference and indifference. While it may be fair to say that non-interference and indifference have played a crucial role in African politics, once the battle grounds are shifted beyond the African continent, and become a case of an individual African state versus a – hitherto – Western state, the politics of African solidarity come into play.

Despite South Africa's economic and military wealth it has not been able to turn this into soft power, and so gain consent for its ideas and values, and lead as a result of and based upon them. Political power in Africa comes from solidarity as well as seniority and the relations built therein, as opposed to what Mahmud terms diplomacy 'grounded in the concept of power ...'¹

¹ Mahmud, S. Controlling African States' Behaviour: International Relations Theory and International Sanctions Against Libya and Nigeria. In "Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory." Edited by Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw. Palgrave Publishers, London. 2001. p. 138.

Legitimacy to rule

The legitimacy to rule derives, of course, from the origins of the liberation movements and how they developed during the liberation struggle and in its aftermath. The liberation movements in the SADC region were mostly driven by nationalists who at the time tried to accommodate all groupings and factions under one umbrella. The focus was on fighting the national question of colonialism.

In the transformation of liberation movements into political parties, the liberation party which classified itself as the official representation of all the people – all classes, races, ethnic groups, etc, - became the only legitimate body that could, and indeed, should govern the country.

Self Preservation

The liberation parties - it would appear - in their support for Robert Mugabe are just as equally fighting for their own survival. They have very similar situational features to that of Zanu PF, such as having their legitimacy to rule deriving from the liberation struggle and the liberation legitimacy that goes with it. They would like that to remain intact and are thus cementing their political positions in their own national constituencies.

Democratic Deficits

The internal practices of the liberation movements during the liberation wars were undemocratic and authoritarian. These practices have persisted into the post-colonial liberation parties and are exhibited in the intolerance of criticism (especially in the public domain) and in non-conformity, which are seen as signs of disloyalty or even betrayal.²

There have been some positive steps taken, most visibly in South Africa which is a good democratic role model for the region. Nevertheless, there have also been many negatives. This makes it difficult for many SADC leaders to condemn Robert Mugabe for practices they sometimes practice in their own national constituencies.

It is also important to bear in mind that during the liberation struggle these parties were first and foremost concerned with Decolonisation and not Democratisation. Democratisation was in essence seen to be a by-product of the decolonisation process.

² See also Dobell, L. SWAPO's Struggle for Namibia, 1960-1991. 1998.

Resource Redistribution

Most of the SADC countries are all faced with the prospect of having to deal with resource redistribution in one way or another. It is fair, however, to say that the settler colonies of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are the most affected, and this may explain why these three countries have been major actors in SADC with regards to the Zimbabwean crisis.

Looking at a post-settler country (Zimbabwe in this case study) we see that by simply moving to a rights-based system without addressing the socio-economic imbalances inherent in the colonial systems (that were structured along racial lines), quite simply maintains the colonial status quo under the guise of black majority rule. Tanzania carried out a redistribution exercise after independence and the former President 'Nyerere was more explicit on the racial dimension of his socialism: "When asked in June 1997 about nationalization policies that his government had implemented during the 1970s, Nyerere replied that he had no choice. If he had left the country to the private sector, he argued, it would have become entirely Asian and this would have produced unacceptable racial conflicts".³

The challenge for post-settler governments is not simply about choosing between the immediate installation of democracy and the entrenchment of civil rights such as the respect for private property on the one hand or immediately dealing with social and economic justice on the other hand. It is about levelling the playing field so as to create the conditions for all to enjoy the benefits of a rights based democratic system.

Race, Ethnicity and Anti-(neo)Colonialism

On the back of these socio-economic problems and the waning of Mugabe and Zanu PF's support and legitimacy in Zimbabwe, Mugabe and Zanu PF went on the offensive to try to turn the tide. Land redistribution was a populist move but it also easily raised the questions of race – and particularly racial inequality - privilege, colonialism, etc. As soon as race and nationalism become an issue, the liberation parties retreat to an anti-colonial stance and the issues of race become very clear. Race and nationalism have played a profound role in the liberation movements and are therefore not taken lightly. The Mugabe regime understood this.

This Afro-radical discursual assault on neo-colonialism and more so on the opposition in Zimbabwe had a profound resonance within the SADC states, the African continent and the non-Western world in general.

³ Aminzade 2003: 47. Quoted in Mkandawire, T. Prof. (Director vid UNRISD). "From the National Question to the Social Question." Unpublished lecture, p. 11.

Mugabe's position was further enhanced by the framing of the Zimbabwean crisis in Western media as being largely one of race. This played right into Mugabe's hands and actually weakened SADC's ability to manoeuvre. African solidarity with Mugabe in opposition to Western criticism and sanctions has played a big role in shaping SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis.

To explain the position SADC has taken towards Zimbabwe, one has to look at the role Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF played in African regional relations. They took an active aggressive role in churning out a discursive assault in their national and foreign policy that appealed to the many marginalised African peoples as well as African leaders because it identified with their struggles.

Pragmatic rather than Principled Approach

Beyond the liberation mentality and the politics of African solidarity, there may well be a much more rational explanation as to why SADC took the approach it did. From a practical point of view, there was not too much that SADC could do in the case of Zimbabwe. From an organisational point of view, 'The SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, the jurisdiction of the Organ (article 11 (2))'⁴ does not allow for military intervention in Zimbabwe. The SADC Protocol also stresses the principles of strict respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aggression. It also stresses a preference for the use of peaceful means to conflict resolution through avenues such as conciliation, negotiation, mediation and arbitration in the cases of inter- and intra-state conflict, even if it does reserve the right – as a last resort – 'to consider enforcement in line with international law.'⁵ One of the key issues here was that the nature of the Zimbabwean crisis did not merit a military intervention.

Therefore, SADC took a pragmatic approach rather than a principled one, and focused on what it could actually do. What it could do was to try and contain the problem and usher in a period of transition.

Conclusion

It is often the circumstances that dictate events. In this particular case of SADC and Zimbabwe, it was the historical circumstances – represented in the eight key components of this paper - that dictated how SADC responded. While the eight key points are not all necessarily directly linked to each other, it is important to view these points as both stand alone and as an accumulation of events, struggles

⁴ Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, 28th June 1996.

⁵ Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, 28th June 1996.

and histories that have had a compounding effect on how SADC responded to the Zimbabwe crisis.

Some thoughts for the future

It is important to continue working with the SADC region in the areas of democratic development, good governance, transparency and the respect for and practice of human and civic rights.

This new generation of post-liberation parties needs to have their capacity built to effectively have internal party democracy. Internal party democracy would be a great step towards the practice of national and regional democracy.

There should be a focus on developing the post-liberation parties to represent a government in waiting as opposed to simply an opposition to status quo. Clear policies and clear programmes to implement the policies need to be developed while in opposition. The risk is that these post-liberation parties are so focused and concerned with the fight to overthrow the liberation parties' that once they get into government, they find that they do not have any real concrete plans for how to govern.

Support could be given to instruments that are locally devised within SADC and that allow the SADC states to critically appraise themselves along the lines of the "Peer Review Mechanism" suggested in NEPAD. This of course failed at the African continental level, but within SADC, if it were developed gradually, through processes that move inch-by-inch over years, the states would become more accustomed to it.

All organisations are susceptible to influence and SADC is no exception. However, in terms of institutional capacity, SADC as an organisation needs to be strengthened throughout. If SADC's capacity to work as an organisation was increased, it would strengthen the organisation's ability to move in the direction of its stated common vision and could possibly reduce the amount of political influence that steers it.

1 Introduction

A catastrophic political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis has unfolded in Zimbabwe over the last decade. Most political analysts have placed the blame for this crisis squarely on the shoulders of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, his party Zanu PF and their oppressive regime. Calls to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) by the international community for a firmer stance against, and even removal of, Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF, have been deafening. Given the enormity of the downward trajectory in Zimbabwe; the spilling over of the crisis into the neighbouring SADC countries (and the adverse economic, social and humanitarian strains that have been placed on the individual SADC states resources and economies); the international attention it has received; the bad image it gives of the SADC region affecting investment and stability; and the diplomatic pressure that has been exerted on the individual SADC states for not acting against Zimbabwe; it should then follow that a firmer stance would be taken by SADC towards Zimbabwe. This has not followed. Instead, SADC's response to the Zimbabwean crisis has been one of quiet diplomacy⁶ - behind the scenes cajoling – and mediation.

The official response from SADC has to some extent masked the internal ructions within SADC that have almost seen the organisation split along the lines of liberation parties on one side and post-liberation parties on the other. The countries governed by post liberation parties⁷ - Botswana, Malawi and Zambia - have been willing to openly criticise both Robert Mugabe and his Zanu PF party. The liberation parties have not criticised the Mugabe regime and have instead chosen to use the multilateral organisation of SADC to articulate their positions, which have in essence been support and understanding for Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF.

There are a plethora of theories and explanations that can be put forward as to why SADC has taken this approach. No doubt, the answer lies in a combination of circumstances and reasons that have all conspired to produce this outcome. The aim of this paper is to explore the role played by the Liberation Movement's of Southern Africa's liberation mentality and solidarity as a basis for SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis. It will also deal with the question of why they took this approach.

⁶ Quiet diplomacy as originally developed by the late Dag Hammarskjöld, entails a style that is characterised by "skilful negotiations, conducted with tact, persistence, and impartiality, but without fanfare" See also Bennet, A le R. *International Organizations: Principles and Issues*, 6th edition, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1995, p. 157.

⁷ By "Liberation Party" this paper refers to the political parties that were born out of and fought the liberation wars against colonial minority rule in the SADC states.

1.1 Method

A combination of desk research and interviewing was the basis for informing this document. The desk research consisted of a study and analysis of a wide range of academic material produced on SADC and its individual countries: liberation movements and parties; democratic governance and electoral practices; and a variety of lecture papers by scholars, politicians and civil society practitioners in the SADC region. This included studying SADC official communiqués on Zimbabwe and a plethora of randomly selected media articles from across the globe covering the period 1999/2000 to April 2009. A systematic analysis of all the media reporting on the subject was not possible as this would be an exhaustive exercise that would not have fitted into the limits in time and scope for the production of this paper.

Interviews were carried out with SADC specialists, scholars, political organisations, journalists, politicians and former military personnel from the SADC states, former SADC personnel, democratic and conflict practitioners in SADC were included as well as former government personnel from the SADC states. The interviews were carried out in person and over the telephone, and the eventual choice of interviewees was partially influenced by their availability. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject at hand as well as the current positions many of the interviewees hold, most of the interviews were carried out in confidence, and the interviewees preferred to remain anonymous. In total twenty-three interviews were carried out.

Because this paper seeks to understand the influence that the liberation movement parties have had on SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis and why, it was important to understand the informal aspects of SADC politics that informed the formal responses. Therefore, this paper focuses on the politics behind the politics. This is important because SADC carries out its discussions behind closed doors and the internal ructions inside SADC are not reflected in their formal communiqués. A more detailed discussion on the politics of SADC as an organisation is conducted in the SADC & South African Hegemony section below.

The assessment made in this paper is an overview of the fifteen SADC states.⁸ The assessment does not specifically deal with each individual state's position in detail, although specific reference is made where examples are given. The assessment identifies the main actors in SADC with regards to the crisis in Zimbabwe and has a bigger focus on the roles they have played. A focus on the main actors in SADC with regards to the Zimbabwean crisis invariably becomes

⁸ The fifteen states are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

a discussion on South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, this is not to be dismissive of the other powerful and important states within SADC, especially Angola.

The main actors in SADC with regards to the Zimbabwe crisis have primarily been South Africa and Zimbabwe with the tacit support of Angola and Namibia. Mozambique and Tanzania consolidate the liberation stronghold in SADC. However, Tanzania has shifted in the last two years under President Kikwete and has become more critical of Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF. Botswana has been the main SADC state to openly criticise Mugabe and Zanu PF, and is joined in this by Zambia. The other countries have not taken a central role but have generally been in support of Robert Mugabe.

1.2 Outline

The paper will focus on the following eight key areas it has identified in relation to the liberation parties' camaraderie and solidarity that has influenced SADC's approach to the crisis in Zimbabwe. These eight key points originate from this paper and have been identified during the analysis of the material collected throughout this study. The eight points form the analytical framework of this paper and have been sequenced in the following sections.

1). Historical background to liberation history; 2). African Solidarity and personalities; 3). Legitimacy to rule; 4). Self preservation; 5). National democratic deficits; 6). Resource redistribution; 7). The racial framing of the crisis that brings an anti-colonial sentiment to the fore; and 8). A pragmatic rather than principled approach. The paper will explore these eight points through discussion and illustrate how and why they have had an influence on SADC. They are discussed under the heading: Insights: Liberation influence on SADC in the Zimbabwean Crisis, under the sub headings from 4.1 to 4.8.

The eight points – while they are all linked to the liberation movement mentality – some are not necessarily directly linked to each other. At the same time, many of these points do not have clear cut distinctions between each other and, in-fact, overlap with each other to a large degree. In reality, these points co-exist as part of an intricately woven whole, and it is only for analysis and the convenience of the human mind that the paper separates them and makes a distinction between these points that really ought to remain together. As a result, there are many instances in the text where concepts appear to overlap. The conclusion brings the concepts into concert with each other and ties the paper together.

A quick reading of the eight points listed above reveals some contradictions. Issues like solidarity, liberation camaraderie and social justice that are associated with the more emotive human attributes do not sit well with the more rational concepts like pragmatism. Having said that, it is important to point out that as any crisis evolves, the actors involved in the crisis/conflict display both emotional and rational traits and in many cases even take up positions that contradict or prevent them from achieving their goals, needs or interests.⁹ The Zimbabwean crisis in SADC is no different.

Because this paper seeks to view the political reality in SADC there are in some cases contradictions between, on the one hand, what actors proclaim they stand for in policy terms, and on the other hand, how they act. This tension is also present in how the different actors choose between the different options in front of them. What may appear to be straightforward and logical decisions or choices, become clouded in other interests – such as the desire to balance power, opting for relative gains or trade offs, others choosing to bandwagon, etc. One might view this paper and its contents as a selection of choices placed before states that must make the right choices now. However, it being the real world, the challenges presented to the states have not been kind enough to sequence themselves to the convenience of the state leaders, their governments and political parties. Therefore, they make choices based on the circumstances at the time with all things considered. Hence, it is reasonable to expect contradictions in their behaviour. This paper will highlight some of these tensions which have been evident in the case of SADC and Zimbabwe.

1.3 Thematic Scope

It is important to point out that this paper's thematic scope focuses on the role played by the liberation movement camaraderie and related concepts. However, it is fair to say that there are a great many other areas that this paper has not touched upon that have also had an influence on SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis. This document acknowledges this and it is not dismissive of those other components. The thematic scope of this paper represents but only one facet of the crisis.

The paper will also seek to explore the various facets of the liberation movement's mentality by highlighting the issues from the liberation parties' perspectives and thus lend some insights into the liberation parties' conceptualisation of the issues and challenges.

⁹ See International Alert. Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building: tools for peace and conflict impact assessment. 2006.

An Historical perspective of SADC

Before we analyse the eight key areas identified in this study, a brief background is presented here that focuses on the tensions faced by the liberation movements during the 1970s and 1980s that led to the creation of SADC. A more detailed and chronological description of the official mechanics of the Frontline States (FLS), Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) can be found in “SADC Peace and Security,” by Hull and Derblom, as part of this series.¹⁰

The Background to SADC has been a transitive one from the FLS, through SADCC to what is now known as SADC. The transition from one to the other has not always been in a formal setting and particularly the transition from a mainly security function in the FLS to one of economic cooperation and integration in SADC.

The FLS – a name which was indicative of these states’ geographical proximity to the liberation struggles in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia - began in the 1970’s. The FLS was a diplomatic alliance of states and liberation movements from Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. It was fully committed to the anti-apartheid cause in Southern Africa. Zimbabwe joined at independence in 1980 and considerably strengthened this group, which became the driving force behind the creation of SADCC. The other SADC countries were also included in the SADCC with Namibia and South Africa joining at independence and the ending of the apartheid regime respectively. Zimbabwe is said to have been the anvil upon which SADCC was formed,¹¹ though it is fair to say that countries like Tanzania were of great importance to this process. SADCC was an organisation whose primary objectives, as Nyang’oro explained, were ‘to reduce the economic dependence of the region on South Africa; to forge links to create conditions for regional integration; and to coordinate regional economic policies for purposes of economic liberation’¹²

The FLS was the alliance that formed SADCC in direct opposition to South Africa's Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) strategy. CONSAS was South Africa’s strategy for a southern African regional economic and security order in an anti-Marxist mode. Zimbabwe was the key state here, for apart from South Africa, it was the most developed state with superior

¹⁰ Hull, Cecilia; Derblom, Markus: *Abandoning Frontline Trenches? Capabilities for Peace and Security in the SADC Region*. FOI-R—2768—SE, June 2009.

¹¹ Evans M. The Front-line States, South Africa and Southern African Security. *Military Prospects and Perspectives*. Department of History, University of Zimbabwe. *Zambezia* (1984/5), XII.

¹² Nyang’oro, J. The 2005 General Elections in Tanzania: Implications for Peace and Security in Southern Africa. *Occasional Paper 122*, February 2006. Page 13. (Institute for Security Studies, South Africa).

infrastructure compared to all other FLS. Had Zimbabwe fallen into the hands of the UANC led by Bishop Able Muzorewa, it would have joined CONSAS and the two economies – South Africa and Zimbabwe - would have been formidable and SADCC would have had an even steeper uphill struggle. Zimbabwe went to Zanu PF and thus enabled the creation of SADCC which was established and institutionalised internationally in the 1980's. This also spelt the end of CONSAS.

Zimbabwe joining SADCC, and its celebration, sparked a new strategy of destabilisation by South Africa through counter-revolutionary warfare in what was dubbed the policy of *swaardmag* (the power of the sword) that lasted throughout the 1980's. Evans describes this policy:

*'The aims were, and remain, simple: smash the stability of the FLS and blunt the development of SADCC while simultaneously striking at the ANC and its host nations. The result has been a deadly brew of offensive counter-revolutionary warfare, tactical escalation, economic bludgeoning and the utilization of proxy forces – the MNR in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola, the Lesotho Liberation Army, the Zambian Mushala group and various Zimbabwean dissidents.'*¹³

According to Green, it is estimated that by 1989 the FLS had suffered damages in the region of \$65 billion US, as well as a loss of over 1.6 million lives.¹⁴ The FLS who at the time resembled a nineteenth-century style "concert of powers," were also officially SADCC which was primarily an economic organisation. SADCC had attached to it the informal *Inter-State Defence and Security Committee* (ISDSC) which allowed for the FLS to have military and security pacts against South Africa, although there remained much scope for unilateral activities, including security discussions and accords with South Africa.

¹³ Evans M. Op. Cit., p. 4-5.

¹⁴ According to R. Green, *Africa 1975-95: the Political Economy of Boom, Decline, Conflict Survival and Revival?* (United Nations Non Governmental Liaison Service, New York, 1992.) Quoted in Thede, N. and Beaudet, P. *A Post-Apartheid Southern Africa?* (eds), 1993. p. 1.

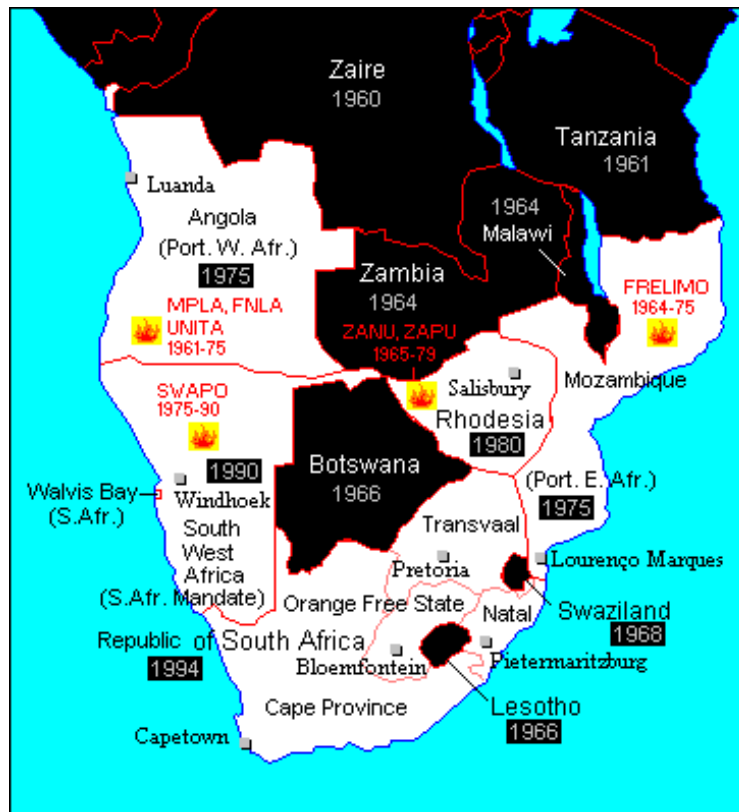


Figure 1, Map of the SADC region highlighting the liberation periods of the different countries.

Between 1980 and 1990, Zimbabwe militarily supported the FRELIMO government in Mozambique against the apartheid South African sponsored RENAMO. Furthermore, between 1998 and 2002, Zimbabwe also fought in the Congo War alongside Angola and Namibia to defend the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) against what they called a Rwandan and Ugandan-sponsored invasion. It was in these times, from the 1950's to the 1990's, that the ties and camaraderie in the liberation movements in Southern Africa were not only forged, but cemented.

South Africa joined SADC at the end of the apartheid era in 1994 and it was then agreed that the FLS mission, which was pursued through SADC against apartheid South Africa, had fulfilled its purpose.

As stated above, SADC's original mission was to promote socio-economic co-operation and integration amongst the southern African states in opposition to CONSAS, but it has now taken on the responsibilities of enhancing political and

security cooperation amongst its member states. The implicit assumption in this was that economic and social integration cannot take place in the absence of peace and security. SADC's extended mission now encompasses a wide range of issue areas including economics, politics, peace and security (by setting up the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS)) preventing HIV/Aids, the eradication of poverty and environmental sustainability within the sub-region.

2 **Insights: SADC's Liberation influence on the Zimbabwean crisis**

Below, an analysis of the eight key areas identified as the main forces driving the liberation movements in their engagement of Zimbabwe in this study is presented.

2.1 **Cultivating the Liberation Ties in SADC**

First and foremost, it is important that the liberation ties as well as the liberation history and struggles that were fought then are not trivialised. The liberation parties in the SADC region have gone through a very painful shared history, where they fought bloody wars together and for each other as brothers/sisters and comrades for many years and even decades. It is important to acknowledge that these SADC states are still very young and the liberation wars they fought ended as recently as fifteen years ago. Most of the people who were engaged in the liberation struggle - including the peasantry that felt the wrath of both colonial and liberation forces – are still alive. Therefore, this history still holds some significance for the peoples in the SADC region and cannot just simply be swept away.¹⁵

Due to his liberation and post liberation advocacy and fight against colonialism, the Zimbabwean President “comrade” Robert Mugabe is a liberation hero in the SADC region. He has formed very strong ties with the liberation parties that are now governing the states in the SADC region. The liberation ties¹⁶ are still very strong within the Liberation parties and this legacy has been passed on within the parties. These parties have been good at perpetuating themselves through the generations using their ideologies and histories. This has been more so with regards to their liberation histories and the “important” role the party played in “granting” the nation independence.

SADC's strong resistance to the constant and global calls for a firmer stance to be taken against Zimbabwe, including the implementation of regional sanctions

¹⁵ This history has significance, although this should be the whole history and not just the few selected narratives filling the discourse today. It has been argued that liberation parties have been using a few selected narratives from the liberation struggle to entrench themselves and make legitimate their dominance at national level. See also Melber, 2003, 2006; Raftopoulos 2005.

¹⁶ By liberation ties, this paper refers to the socio-political bonds and the social capital that is expendable between the liberation parties within the SADC region.

is an illustration of this. As the then ANC head of international affairs and policy, Mavivi Myokayaka-Manzini put it, 'We can't do that at the ANC. Firstly, we have historical ties with Zanu PF ... These are our Comrades we fought with in the struggle ... Our relations have been sealed in blood'¹⁷

With this as a backdrop, it is not surprising that the SADC states, through SADC as an organisation, have been keen to give their comrade Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF as much support, time and space as they need to turn the crisis in Zimbabwe around. This was perfectly illustrated in 2001, when in response to the Zimbabwean crisis, senior members of the ANC (including the then party Secretary-General and now former interim South African President Motlanthe), formed a regional network of southern African liberation movements.¹⁸ This was obviously aimed at strengthening their solidarity as well as generating support for Zanu PF. It also broadened the role the liberation movements played in SADC with regards to Zimbabwe and almost guaranteed Mugabe their support.

2.2 The Politics of African Solidarity

In discussing the role the liberation parties played in SADC with regards to Zimbabwe and why they played that role, it is important to take up the discussion on the politics of African solidarity. It moves outside of SADC, but in a way, one cannot divorce SADC from the greater politics in Africa, particularly with regards to the Zimbabwean crisis.

The politics of solidarity are caught up in the spirit of Pan-Africanism and play an important role in the SADC states' relations and indeed in Africa as a continent. When exploring the relations between African states one must understand that in African regional relations, the region is a critical arena within which the state and its leader's security has been threatened. (For example, as was seen in Apartheid South Africa's politics of destabilisation in the SADC region) However, the region has also provided protection for states and their leaders. (e.g. the politics of exile and most liberation armed struggles were launched and fought from neighbouring countries).

This security from within the region is something that the liberation leaders in SADC are very sensitive to as it is a direct threat to their own security. It is important to remember that these liberation parties have had to fight against proxies in their struggles and the cases of RENAMO in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola, and even to some extent Inkatha in South Africa in the early 1990's are

¹⁷ Mail and Guardian, <http://archive.mg.co.za> 2 March 2001.

¹⁸ See Bond, P. And Manyanya, M. Zimbabwe's plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the search for Social Justice. University of Natal Press, Scottsville, 2002, p. 131.

but a few examples. Therefore, one should not under-estimate the weight of Mugabe's referral to neo-colonialism and imperial puppetry within SADC. To counter the regional security threat, solidarity within the region becomes of extreme importance.¹⁹

African solidarity is within the framework of pan-Africanism but has been strongly influenced by Africa's colonial history. The fight against colonialism has encouraged a protection of each other and as a result, Africans in general reject the notion of sanctions by the West on other African states as a means of punishment.²⁰ Mahmud contributes this to the cultural attributes of African relations and argues that, 'Western diplomacy is grounded in the concept of power and influence, where the African approach emphasizes mutual respect and cultural reciprocity'.²¹ However, like Western diplomacy, African solidarity is built upon developing relationships as well as norms and rules for their regional relations. What differs is the form and content of these relationships including the ordering of hierarchies. This will be explored in a little more depth in the sub-section "South African Hegemony" below, save to say here that the focus in African regional relations is on constructing and building friendships. Thus, it would appear that SADC has pursued the archetypal African politics of solidarity with regards to Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF.

This line of argument that focuses on African Solidarity as an explanatory factor in African regional relations is indeed a break from the popular theories of African regional relations being centred on non-interference and indifference. It is fair to say that the notion of non-interference has been a feature of Africa political relations, although there is a formal shift away from this practice as is witnessed in the African Union (AU) policy of "Non-indifference". However, once the battle grounds are shifted beyond the African continent, and become a case of an individual African state versus a – hitherto – Western state, the Politics of African Solidarity come into play.

It is worth pointing out that African solidarity is also somewhat caught-up in the North-South ideology which sees the Southern countries in constant struggle

¹⁹ One needs to also critically appraise this proxy theory because the RENAMO, UNITA and Inkatha proxies present a double-edged sword. While they were used as proxies by apartheid South Africa, they did also enjoy popular national support, as was demonstrated in the elections of the 1990s in the three countries. The liberation parties were happy to condemn them as puppets because it also served to discredit them as opposition political parties. This is no different to the way Zanu PF is dealing with the MDC by calling it a puppet of the West in order to mask its national support and undermine it as a genuine opposition party with popular support.

²⁰ See Alden, C and Schoeman, M. *The Hegemony that wasn't: South Africa's Foreign Policy Towards Zimbabwe*. 2003.

²¹ Mahmud, S. *Controlling African States' Behaviour: International Relations Theory and International Sanctions Against Libya and Nigeria*. In "Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory." Edited by Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw. Palgrave Publishers, London. 2001. p. 138.

with the Northern countries: and with the Northern countries seen as dominant, exploitative countries due to their colonial past and continued global dominance. This North-South ideology may have been best expressed by the Non-aligned Movement which nurtured south-south solidarity versus the global north. At times though, this North-South ideology is portrayed in very simplistic notions of race: the North being white and the South being black or non-white. This simplistic view creates tensions when the West attempts to intervene or punish recalcitrant southern states, as this is almost immediately taken in racist terms of white oppression of non-whites. It is a dangerous divide that is easily exploited by some southern leaders who can easily get the ear and hearts of the globally marginalised poor in the south. This will be discussed further in the sub-section on “Mugabe and the Western Media” below.

Conversely, the politics of solidarity are not a grant to walk all over the other states and their leaders. As an interviewee from SADC parliamentary forum commented, ‘The leaders may not publicly criticise each other, but they do have frank discussions and do issue out forms of punishment.’²² A good example was at the SADC summit held in Luanda in October 2002, where it was decided that Zimbabwe would no longer serve as deputy chair of the Summit (the deputy usually becomes the chair), but would be replaced by Tanzania. This was a way of saying to Mugabe he was not fit to chair SADC and that peace, security and stability were valued in the SADC region. Chairing the SADC meeting was Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos who simultaneously renounced sanctions against Zimbabwe.²³

2.2.1 SADC & South African Hegemony

With regards to the Zimbabwe case, SADC has been dominated by South Africa and Zimbabwe firstly, then aided and abetted by Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania (until recently), as the liberation bedrock. The emergence of the post-liberation states – Botswana²⁴, Malawi and Zambia - bifurcates SADC’s ideology and has contributed to the serious internal divisions that are not reflected in their official communiqués. This feature of two political camps within SADC – the liberation parties on one side and the post-liberation parties on the other – has meant that SADC has become a battle ground for politics as opposed to a regional organisation driving one common goal of socio-economic

²² Interview 7, Comment in an interview with a former SADC Parliamentary Forum member from an opposition party. April 6, 2009.

²³ See Alden, C and Schoeman, M. Op .cit.

²⁴ Botswana is not exactly an emerging post-liberation state as the same BDP party has been in power since Botswana was released as a Protectorate, 43 years. However, Botswana appears to be the state leading the post-liberation movement within SADC and is illustrated in their expressly-declared oppositional stance towards the Zanu PF regime and what Botswana sees as Zanu PF’s undemocratic existence.

and political integration. An interviewee commented that, 'This was clearly illustrated during the November 2008 to January 2009, when the crisis between Botswana and Zimbabwe threatened to split SADC in two. I think that SADC did very well to negotiate itself through a very tricky situation.'²⁵

The liberation parties in SADC are of a Marxist origin and once in government, most of these parties have practiced a form of Marxist one-party centralised state – *de jure or de facto* – with an emphasis on political economy as opposed to market economy. While the liberation parties have formally signed up to multi-party democracy and economic liberalisation, they are still of a Marxist inclination. This is juxtaposed against the post-liberation parties (including the opposition parties that are not in power) in SADC who are of a more liberal democratic persuasion and seek to expand the democratic space in line with global developments in democracy and economic liberalisation²⁶.

South Africa exacerbates this tension by being both. The ANC is a liberation party with many of its internal structures and cadres committed to the liberation movements in SADC. Simultaneously, South Africa's constitution is a classic liberal democratic constitution and – at least under Thabo Mbeki – not only proffered but has also been an aggressive practitioner of economic liberalism in South Africa, SADC and beyond.

The SADC states have a common vision and shared ideas, values and norms as stated in the SADC organisation charter and its various organs to which the SADC states have formally signed up. However, in practice there have been instances where states have not shown a willingness to commit themselves to this shared common vision. An excellent example is that of SADC Guidelines for Free and Fair Elections.²⁷ All the states have signed up to abide by them, yet there has been electoral controversy in many SADC states, e.g. Angola throughout the 1990's and Zimbabwe up until 2008. The lack of commitment by the SADC states to the common vision as well as the divide between the liberation parties and the post-liberation parties, has somewhat weakened SADC as an organisation in that it is not always pushing or pulling in the same direction. This has also provided one of the reasons as to why many of the SADC states have been unwilling to cede national sovereignty to an organisation that

²⁵ Interviewee 10, London, England, 13 April 2009.

²⁶ Botswana and its BDP that has been in power for the past 43 years would not seem to qualify as a state committed to multi-party democracy. However, Botswana has always formally endorsed multi-party democracy; has practiced it in running regular elections that have largely been free and fair and without much political violence; it has been a vociferous advocate for democracy in SADC and it has largely been run without serious political tension. The one blemish Botswana has to its multi-party democracy is that it has not changed political parties in power at all. This may be due to the very small size of the country (a population of less than 2 million), the lack of a viable or alternative opposition party or the dominance of the BDP.

²⁷ SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. 2 September 2004.
<http://www.sadc.int/archives/read/news/167>

may not always represent that particular state's vision, values and norms. The lack of resources within SADC to cover the high governance costs associated with a strong regional organisation also inhibits SADC from acting in a coherent manner.

Another aspect of SADC and African politics in general is the importance of personalities. Bhebe and Ranger wondered if 'nationalism's glorification of the leader gave rise to a post-colonial cult of personality'²⁸ Both Mugabe and Mbeki have big personalities and they have used their personalities to dominate SADC. One of the reasons for their dominance of SADC has been because the political wing of SADC has a weaker existence relative to the defence structures. As Hull and Derblom argue:

*'the politico-security wing of SADC, has yet to manifest itself to match its envisioned task. The Organ's support structures can be described as being two legged: One leg, represented by the [Inter-state Political and Defence Committee] ISPDC, dealing with political 'soft power' issues, and the other, the [Inter-State Defence and Security Committee] ISDSC, with defence and 'hard power' related matters. As argued earlier, the Organ was for many years defunct and inoperable. Its defence and security leg, nonetheless, managed to at least somewhat keep on track during the 1990s due to the fact that it had inherited most of its informal structures from the FLS. In contrast, the political leg was weakly conceptualised, poorly institutionalised and is still, despite being active since the beginning of this decade, lacking some of the staff and capabilities that exist within the defence related structures'*²⁹

2.2.2 South African Hegemony

Before moving on to discuss South Africa's role and hegemony, it is important to point out that the other SADC states have also played a role, but in the main they have bandwagoned in support of the Mugabe regime. The main players have been South Africa and Zimbabwe with the unwavering support of Namibia, Angola and the DRC; even if the latter two have not been as vocal. Mozambique and Tanzania have supported the Mugabe regime and will support the liberation

²⁸ Bhebe, Ngwabi & Ranger (eds) Nationalism, Democracy and Human Rights, Volume Two: Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacies, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2003. Quoted in Maroleng, C. "Zimbabwe: Increased securitisation of the state?" Institute for Security Studies, Situation Report, 7 September 2005. p. 6.

²⁹ Hull, C. and Derblom, M. Abandoning Frontline Trenches? May 2009. p. 30. Reference to Hwang, K D. 2006. 'The Remaking of SADC politico- security regionalism in the post cold war era'. Chapter 7 in K.D Hwang, The Mechanisms of Politico-Security Regionalism in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa: A Comparative Case Study of ASEAN and SADC. University of Pretoria, p 165.

cause, but they have been somewhat distant. Tanzania has even taken on a stronger tone towards Mugabe in the last two years since Kikwete has taken over as President.

Taking into account the fact that South Africa and its liberation party, the ANC, are committed to neo-liberalism including democratic governance and the respect for human and civic rights, the question remains: “why have they supported instead of condemned the Mugabe regime” Why has South Africa not stood up for its own constitutionally enshrined principles of democratic governance? If there is a country in SADC that can do something against Zimbabwe – both economically and militarily – it is South Africa. After all, it has great military strength and economic might that dwarf most other African nations and not only those of SADC.

Understanding SADC under South Africa’s dominance requires one to see things in the greater perspective of President Mbeki’s grand designs. Thabo Mbeki had a foreign policy that extended beyond South Africa’s immediate interests and these designs can be seen in his efforts for the African Renaissance³⁰; Nepad³¹; the push for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council (2006)³²; one of the founding fathers and first chairman of the African Union³³; as well as a main player in the Non-Aligned Movement³⁴ and more. This was coupled with Mbeki’s determination to show that Africa could apply African solutions to African problems. In order for him to achieve these grand goals that encompassed complex and delicate balances between the West, Africa and the globe, Thabo Mbeki needed Africa on board as South Africa’s base.

Unfortunately for South Africa, it has since 1994 been struggling for acceptance by its African counterparts. While South Africa has not been accused of being an instrument of the West, there have been silent whispers on the African continent suggesting that South Africa may at least be acting as a conduit for Western ideas and influence. Some, however, have not been so silent, namely the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who explicitly called NEPAD ‘a project of former colonizers and racists’³⁵ NEPAD is of course, the brain child of Thabo Mbeki. The incessant pressure put on South Africa - particularly from the West – to out

³⁰ See ‘The African Renaissance, South Africa and the World,’ in South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki Speaks at the United Nations University, 9 April 1998.
<http://www.unu.edu/unupress/Mbeki.html>

³¹ See ‘The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)’ October 2001.

³² See ‘South Africa secures seat on UN Security Council’ in South Africa, The Good News. Tuesday, 17 October 2006.

³³ Cherian, J. African Union Arrives. Frontline, World Affairs. Volume 19 - Issue 15, July 20 - August 02, 2002.

³⁴ See Sneyd, A. Non-Aligned Movement. Globalisation and Autonomy. McMaster University. 2005.

³⁵ Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 16 June 2002. Quoted in Oliver, G. Is Thabo Mbeki Africa’s saviour? International Affairs, vol. 79, issue 4, 18 November 2003. p. 822.

rightly condemn Mugabe and even humiliate him on the world stage has made it even more difficult for South Africa to take that route and not appear to be siding with the West. Thabo Mbeki and South Africa have had to prove their solidarity with Africa.

A further issue comes into play – as was mentioned earlier with regards to African Regional Relations and diplomacy - in that ‘SADC has always operated on the basis of privileging seniority, solidarity, secrecy, and sovereignty.’³⁶ Therefore, in dealing with the Zimbabwean President, “comrade” Robert Mugabe, the SADC leaders (including Mbeki) have to deal with someone who they have long respected and who is far more senior and seasoned than most of them. As an interviewee has put it, ‘Mugabe is used to dealing with the SADC leaders’ fathers. He was negotiating with Govan Mbeki when Thabo was just a boy’.³⁷ Mugabe is rumoured to have said to the Botswana President Ian Khama, “your father would never have criticised me in public”.³⁸ This playing of the elder-statesman card works well in SADC.³⁹

Furthermore, Robert Mugabe is a senior liberation hero who has not only fought against colonialism in Zimbabwe, but he has also assisted in the fight against colonialism and for independence in many of these very same SADC countries. He has indeed been very instrumental in the FLS and the creation of SADC as an organisation. Thus, it is not entirely surprising that the final resolutions on Zimbabwe centred on mediation efforts focusing on negotiation, unity and calling for elections in Zimbabwe to be conducted in compliance with the SADC Guidelines for Free and Fair Elections. SADC also did not want to negotiate a solution that would leave them vulnerable to accusations of siding with the West in asking for a change of regime.⁴⁰

Hegemony consists of pre-eminence in wealth and military might, but most importantly, in gaining consent for your understandings, values, rules, norms and patterns of authority over those you seek to lead.⁴¹ Despite South Africa’s economic and military wealth it has not been able to turn this into soft power and gain consent for its ideas and values and lead as a result of them and based upon them⁴². African leaders such as Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria, Meles Zenawi in

³⁶ Dr Cheryl Hendricks, Head: Regional Projects, ISS Tshwane (Pretoria). SADC on Zimbabwe. 27 August, 2007.

³⁷ Interviewee 13, 16 April 2009.

³⁸ Interviewee 3, 21 March 2009.

³⁹ However, this may not have cut-ice with Ian Khama who is said to dislike politics and politicians. He is a very powerful individual in Botswana, with or without the Presidency.

⁴⁰ See Dr Cheryl Hendricks, Head: Regional Projects, Institute for Security Studies. Tshwane (Pretoria). SADC on Zimbabwe. 27 August, 2007.

⁴¹ See Knutsen, T. The Rise and Fall of World Orders. 1999, p. 63.

⁴² South Africa has a history of being unable to turn its hard power into soft power and this is dated back to the apartheid period. A clear example of this was the attempted coming together of Northern and Southern Rhodesia together with Nyasaland (today known as Malawi) to form a

Ethiopia, Yoweri Museveni in Uganda, Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Eduardo dos Santos in Angola and very definitely “brother leader” Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, do not accept that South Africa knows the true way forward for Africa. They are also under no illusions that South Africa should lead them. When it comes to the pecking order of African leadership, regardless of South Africa’s wealth and military strength, the former South African President Thabo Mbeki is seen as a relative junior. Political power in Africa comes from solidarity as well as seniority and the relations built therein, and not only in what Mahmud terms as diplomacy ‘grounded in the concept of power ...’.⁴³

South Africa’s commitment to liberal democracy and respect for human rights, as well as the internationally recognised moral high ground it has as a result of overcoming its apartheid history, (combined with Nelson Mandela’s statesmanship) has made South Africa a good role model in Africa. However, one should not confuse a good role model with hegemony. In line with hegemonic theory as stated above, South Africa may be moving towards hegemony in SADC, it is a super power in Africa and a medium power in the world. But it is not the hegemony of the African continent at this juncture. This lack of hegemonic consent, also limited what South Africa could do within SADC with regards to Zimbabwe.⁴⁴

An intended consequence of SADC’s handling of the Zimbabwean crisis was that it would allow South Africa to start carving out its African solidarity credentials. South Africa has proved to be its “brother’s keeper”. A speedy resolution to the crisis may have worked well, but its dragging out for a decade has proved costly. The cost may have been higher than desired – and certainly unintended – and this act alone will not guarantee South Africa’s acceptance on

federation of states in order to neutralise South Africa’s dominance in the region. This was at a time when the other states were all under colonial government at the time. See also Chitiyo, K. The Struggles for Zimbabwe, South Africa and SADC. The RUSI Journal. 01 June 2008.

⁴³ Mahmud, S. Op. Cit., p. 138.

⁴⁴ Of course economic interests played a big part too. After a quick look at South Africa’s foreign policy since 1994 one sees that it is dominated by trade. This is reflected in the South Africanisation of the continent and a reason why South Africa has had to be cautious in how it puts its foot forward. Anecdotal evidence is found as one travels throughout Africa and cannot help but see South African products literally falling out of the shops. The South African corporates and multinationals have un-relentlessly spread throughout Africa and have very much sunken their teeth into the African economy. It may be the case that this prosperity has become a source of resentment and therefore it is important that they do not tarnish themselves. Also see Chitiyo, K. Op. Cit., 01 June 2008.

the continent. South Africa will have to fight on, but this has put another “rung” as it were, in South Africa’s C.V ladder. This will go a long way to helping South Africa achieve African hegemony in the long run. (However, it is fair to say that the South African government and the ANC have expressly played down any hegemonic ambitions themselves).

2.3 Legitimacy to Rule

The legitimacy to rule derives, of course, from the origins of the liberation movements and how they developed during the liberation struggle and in its aftermath. The liberation movements in the SADC region were mostly driven by nationalists who at the time tried to accommodate all groupings and factions under one umbrella. The focus was on fighting the national question of colonialism.

‘In general, nationalist movements everywhere have, for strategic and tactical reasons, avoided posing the problem in a manner that might pit one group against another, the belief being that it could be divisive and only distract and destabilize the nationalist movement. This view was often based on [the] strategic calculation that success in the national struggle required the allegiance of every possible sector of society and the different social groupings were seen as divisive and therefore weakening the fight for the national question’⁴⁵

The different groups that formed these movements were encouraged – and in some cases even coerced - to subordinate their different sectoral interests for the good of obtaining the immediate priority and common goal of toppling the colonial government. The liberation movements were spurred on by the famous mantra of the late Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah: “*Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all other things shall be added on to you*”⁴⁶

However, the liberation movement mentality goes further and appears to have taken on the perspective that as liberation heroes they are the only legitimate leaders of their countries. Furthermore, they feel that they have a legitimate right to stay in power derived from the liberation struggles they fought. This is in no small measure a reflection of how the liberation parties governing the SADC states view their positions. Once these liberation movements that were set-up to fight colonialism and acquire political power were turned into political parties, they viewed these processes and their culmination in independence, as “the end

⁴⁵ Prof. Thandika Mkandawire (Director vid UNRISD). “From the National Question to the Social Question.” Unpublished lecture, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

of history”.⁴⁷ Thereafter, the liberation party which classified itself as the official representation of all the people – all classes, races, ethnic groups, etc, - became the only legitimate body that could, and indeed, should govern the country.

At the time of independence, however, the transition of political power from the colonial state to the now independent African state, was handled solely by the nationalists who formed liberation political parties. This transformation from liberation movement to liberation party generated narratives and official histories that did not acknowledge or give credit to the roles played by other sectoral groupings that formed part of the liberation movements such as civil society, students, churches, etc. The liberation party claims to be the entire liberation movement. Thus, the liberation party and only the party is credited with the struggle to end colonialism and therefore the only legitimate leadership.⁴⁸

In the national discourse, the liberation parties continued to place all sectoral interests in the country under the umbrella of the liberation movement, which was now a political party. By extension then, the party then came to represent the nation as a whole. The roll-on effect of this was that since the party was already conflating all things to the party, it conflated the government to party. Thus, the party became the government and in its continued mode of conflation, it conflated the state to the government. And since the party was the nation, the nation was the government and the government was the state, then logically, the party was the nation state.

This polygamous matrimony of liberation movement, liberation party, nation, government and state, has meant that the party became Omni-present, featuring everywhere in the national polity and conflating all aspects of the government, state and society to party activity. It also meant that no other political party, group or sectoral interest could legitimately provide national leadership. The prevailing logic becomes that, since the liberation party is representative of the entire nation, the nation could surely not, possibly, oppose itself. Thus, any opposition to the one and only legitimate liberation party is seen as an opposition to the nation itself and thus – following this logic - the opposition is correctly labelled traitor, sell-out or puppet. This logic has resulted in it becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Hence, the SADC liberation parties see a sort of theology in Zanu PF - being a consequence of its liberation history - as the only legitimate leadership in Zimbabwe. This, conversely, is a reflection of the SADC liberation parties' legitimacy claims in their own individual states.

⁴⁷ See Melber, H. "From Controlled Change to Changed Control: The Case of Namibia." In *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The Unfinished business of democratic consolidation*. 2003. p. 132-148.

⁴⁸ See Raftopoulos, B. "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left." Public lecture delivered at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 23 June 2005. (An Associate Professor, Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe)

2.3.1 Intolerance to Pluralism

In order for the liberation movements to seriously challenge the non-democratic, authoritarian and efficiently violent colonial systems, the liberation movements had to imitate many of these traits inherent in the colonial system. This has meant that the internal practices of the liberation movements during the war were non democratic, authoritarian and had a lack of respect for human rights. These practices have persisted into the post colonial liberation parties⁴⁹ and are exhibited in the intolerance of criticism - especially when it comes in the public domain - and non-conformity which are seen as signs of disloyalty or even betrayal.⁵⁰

Viewing the liberation parties as governments in the 1970s and 1980s, one sees that in some cases a *de jure* one-party system was declared and all other political parties were banned. Examples of this in SADC were Angola under the MPLA, the DRC under Mabuto, Malawi under Banda's MCP and Mozambique under Frelimo. Other countries did not officially declare one-party states but carried out *de facto* one-party states as was the case with Tanzania under CCM and Zimbabwe under Zanu PF. In all cases the declared reasons behind establishing a one-party state were for the overriding need for nation building or national integration and development.⁵¹

The opposition to pluralism is also derived from the Marxist foundations of the liberation movements in SADC. Because of the ending of the Cold War and the triumph of neo-liberalism, the liberation parties were forced to abandon their Marxist positions and desire for one-party systems. They have had to embrace multi-party democracy and all its attendants to human and civic rights as well as good governance. As a consequence, the countries in SADC formally signed-up to a rights'-based multiparty democracy. However, this formal position of the SADC states is not always reconcilable with their actual practices.

2.4 Self Preservation

The liberation parties in SADC are not entirely lacking in commitment to the democratic process. There are forms of commitment to the democratic principles and steps have been made in all fifteen countries to move towards a more democratic form of government. SADC as an organisation is also committed to

⁴⁹ See Chitiyo, K. The Struggles for Zimbabwe, South Africa and SADC. The RUSI Journal. 01 June 2008.

⁵⁰ See also Dobell, L. SWAPO's Struggle for Namibia, 1960-1991. 1998.

⁵¹ See Salih, M. and Nordlund, P. (IDEA). "Political Parties in Africa: Challenges for Sustained Multiparty Democracy." 2008, p. 42.

democratic processes and in more straightforward and clear-cut cases SADC has demonstrated this. A good example was most recently seen in the case of Madagascar. After the military take over, SADC condemned Andry Rajoelina and his actions in the strongest terms. SADC has asked for Andry Rajoelina not to be recognised and has even suspended Madagascar from SADC and the African Union (AU). SADC in its statement says it would immediately engage the AU, UN, and all other role players to help define a comprehensive and coherent strategy that will lead to the resolution of the problem.⁵² SADC is even willing to seek help from outside Africa to resolve the problem. But then again SADC has always been very sensitive about how political power changes hands. SADC would definitely not condone illegal means of taking political office and it has expressly outlawed it in SADC. An illegal political take-over would also be seen as a direct threat to the liberation political parties in power.

The liberation parties, it would appear, in their support for Robert Mugabe are just as equally fighting for their own survival. Firstly, the liberation parties have been dominant parties in their countries and a victory for MDC (a party lacking liberation credentials and therefore lacking the inherent legitimacy) over Zanu PF (a liberation party) would serve to encourage the opposition parties in the individual SADC states and start to demystify their legitimacy. The liberation parties have in all cases been in power since their countries gained independence, with the exception of the DRC, Malawi and Zambia. Even the most vocal of SADC states in condemning Mugabe, Botswana (which also happens to be a non-liberation country), still has the same Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in power for the last forty-three years. As mentioned above, with the ending of the Cold war these liberation parties that advocated or practiced one-party state systems formally abandoned them and moved to multiparty democratic systems.⁵³ However, in practice, a 'dominant-party system' remained firmly in place throughout SADC.

2.4.1 Dominant Party Syndrome

Dominant-party-systems exhibit similar characteristics to One-party-systems, but they are not the same. 'A dominant-party system is competitive in the sense that a number of parties compete for power in regular and general elections, but is dominated by a single major party that consequently enjoys prolonged periods in power.'⁵⁴ Examples of contemporary dominant party-systems in SADC are Angola (MPLA), Botswana (BDP), Mozambique (Frelimo), Namibia (SWAPO), Seychelles under (SPUP), South Africa (ANC), Swaziland under the monarch,

⁵² SADC statement on Zimbabwe and Madagascar, March 13, 2009.

⁵³ This, of course, did not include Namibia and South Africa who both gained independence after the Cold war and did not have a one-party state system as a formal option.

⁵⁴ Salih, M. And Nordlund, P. Op. Cit., p. 49-50.

Tanzania (CCM), and Zimbabwe (Zanu PF). While Zambia has changed parties, the previous regime under Kenneth Kaunda lasted twenty-seven years, and a post-liberation party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) has been in power for nineteen years. The same goes for Malawi where Hastings Kamuzu Banda's Malawi Congress Party (MCP) was in power from 1960 to 1994, to be replaced by a post-liberation party, United Democratic Front (UDF), who have subsequently been in power for the last fifteen years. Since independence, South Africa has had four different presidents, but they have all belonged to the same party (ANC), who will be in power for what will be twenty years at the end of this current term in 2014. Botswana is also often cited as a progressive democracy in SADC, but even this country has had the same party in power since independence forty-three years ago.

The difficulty with a dominant party system is that it makes government less accountable to the legislature and both government and legislature answerable to the party first. This eliminates checks and balances and makes the government and legislature less responsive to the citizenry.

With virtually all the SADC states under a dominant party state, it is very difficult for them to point the finger at Mugabe and say it is time to leave. Even the post-liberation parties in Malawi and Zambia both had constitutional crises with the heads of state wanting to circumvent the constitution to allow them to remain in power as presidents. Thus, there has been no incentive for SADC to raise these issues.

2.5 Democratic Deficits

The leaders of the liberation movements ran the movements in a military authoritarian style and this worked well. When the liberation parties entered into government, this was the only way they knew how to run an organisation. The parties also had faith in this type of governance and their faith was backed up by the success that this system had yielded through the liberation struggle. The deposed colonial governments had in place a structure within the administration that was very much set up along similar authoritarian lines. In many cases in SADC, the liberation party simply supplanted the outgoing colonial master and found it easier to continue very similar administrations as those they inherited. As an interviewee commented: 'Nothing in the administrations changed, the liberation parties carried out the same processes and procedures in running the state. This went down to even the simplest things. For example, even if you go into a government office for a passport in Botswana today, you will fill in the exact same form as they used forty three years ago. They have not changed the

big or small things of the administrations, so the same oppressive instruments of the colonial government are still in place in many of these countries today⁵⁵

The fact that most of the liberation parties in SADC were of a Marxist persuasion has meant that these 'parties are subject to strict ideological discipline, in accordance with the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, and they have highly-structured internal organizations in line with the principles of democratic centralism'. These are cadre parties in the sense that membership is restricted on political and ideological grounds'.⁵⁶ Promotion within the parties is based on loyalty to their command and comply structures and not due to the creative or intellectual personal attributes of the party members.

In a study on political party structures in Africa comprised of two hundred political parties in fifteen countries, Salih and Nordlund found that 'the political parties have all adopted centralized party structures, whereby the central or national office takes all the major and minor decisions affecting the functioning of the political parties'.⁵⁷ Issues such as patronage as well as ethnic, regional and religious cleavages play a prominent role in the internal party structures. Further, these parties have become quite exclusivist, elitist and non-transparent.

Therefore, it would seem unreasonable to expect the liberation parties in the SADC region to behave democratically on the national and regional scene when they do not behave democratically within their own parties.

Illustrative of the democratic deficits found at the national level in SADC are the constant postponement of elections in Angola by the ruling MPLA in order to make certain victory for itself; the manipulation – or attempts at manipulation – of constitutions to prolong presidential terms as was seen in Malawi, Namibia and Zambia; election violence in most SADC countries; corrupt practices; the executive powers held by many SADC presidents that can bypass parliament or declare states of emergency; the repression of opposition parties; presidents stepping down from presidential office but remain leaders of their respective political parties – for example Joachim Chissano in Mozambique, Sam Nujoma in Namibia and Bakili Muluzi in Malawi.

Yes there have been some positive steps taken, most visibly in South Africa which is a good role model for the region. Nevertheless, there have also been many negatives. Democracy in SADC has been good in form but not in content. Formal democratic systems and structures have been put in place, but the practices have in many cases been quite un-democratic.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Interviewee 8, 9 April 2009.

⁵⁶ Salih, M. And Nordlund, P. Op. cit., p. 44-45.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See also Melber, H. Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The Unfinished business of democratic consolidation. 2003. p. 143-145.

This does make it difficult for many SADC leaders to condemn Robert Mugabe for practices of which they have themselves practiced. It becomes a case of, “he who casts the first stone” ‘Mugabe actually goes to SADC meetings saying “I want to see who will say a thing about me. They have all done the same things”⁵⁹ In fact he is present at the SADC meetings to ensure criticism of him is minimal.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, these liberation parties that are quite autocratic in some cases, may not feel the need to exhaustively pursue democratic principles, especially not when these principles can be thrown back at them. A former SADC parliamentary forum member who spent eight years in SADC has stated, ‘there is no real commitment to the democratic principles on the part of the liberation parties or their leaders. Yes, they are high on rhetoric, but very low on commitment. They assume that democracy must come from within the party – not that the parties are necessarily internally democratic’⁶⁰

With regards to national democracy in the SADC states, it is important to point out that during the liberation struggle these parties were first and foremost concerned with *Decolonisation* and not *Democratisation*. Democratisation was to be a by product of the decolonisation process. As Knox Chitiyo writes:

‘It should also be pointed out that the popular assertion that Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF have betrayed the democratic ideals of the liberation war is based on a fundamental misconception; the liberation ideal was much less about Western democracy than it was about black empowerment through Marxist appropriation and the use of force. This ethos would endure to the present day.’⁶¹

As a result, the expectations that a post colonial SADC would see the swift implementation of liberal democratic values and norms including the respect for human and civil rights have not been met at both national and SADC regional level.

2.6 Resource Redistribution

On the front of resource redistribution, most of the SADC countries are all faced with the prospect of having to deal with the redistribution of resources in one way or another. Although it is fair to say that the settler colonies of Namibia,

⁵⁹ Interview 7. Comment in an interview with a former SADC Parliamentary Forum member from an opposition party. April 6, 2009.

⁶⁰ Interview 7. Former SADC Parliamentary Forum member from an opposition party. April 6, 2009.

⁶¹ Chitiyo, K. Op. Cit., 2008, p. 81

South Africa and Zimbabwe are the most affected and that may explain why these three countries have been major actors in SADC with regards to Zimbabwe.

While resource redistribution may not necessarily be a question of land redistribution in some countries like South Africa with a strong urban base, access to the main sectors of the economy and economic advancement of the black majority and the emerging black middle classes and *bourgeoise* is still definitely a question. The SADC states, with the exception of Tanzania, are acutely aware of the fact that they have not dealt with this issue – which Zimbabwe claims to be dealing with through its land redistribution programme.

Centring the discourse on redistribution is only one selected narrative from the liberation struggles and history. Other narratives that also made up part of the liberation movements were the struggle for equal rights, non-discrimination and democracy, but as stated above, the focus was first and foremost on decolonisation, not democracy.

Looking at a post-settler country – as in our case Zimbabwe - by simply moving to a rights-based system without addressing the socio-economic imbalances inherent in the colonial systems that were structured along racial lines, quite simply maintains the colonial status quo under the guise of black majority rule. Moreover, the retention of the colonial status quo perpetuates these socio-economic inequalities into the future, thereby never breaking with the past. Tanzania carried out a redistribution exercise after independence and the former President Nyerere was more explicit on the racial dimension of his socialism: “When asked in June 1997 about nationalization policies that his government had implemented during the 1970s, Nyerere replied that he had no choice. If he had left the country to the private sector, he argued, it would have become entirely Asian and this would have produced unacceptable racial conflicts”⁶²

The liberation movements called for democracy, non-discrimination, human and civic rights and economic empowerment. If resource distribution sometimes lacked an explicit expression, it was always implicit in the liberation struggles. The populace always understood that they would benefit economically from gaining political independence. When writing about Zimbabwe, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that ‘The problem of the continued domination of the economy by the white settler combined with the failures of the post-colonial state to deliver on promises of complete decolonisation plunged the country into crisis at the beginning of the new millennium as the African constituencies, including the

⁶² Aminzade 2003: 47. Quoted in Mkandawire, T. Prof. (Director vid UNRISD). “From the National Question to the Social Question.” Unpublished lecture, p. 11

emergent African *petit bourgeoisie*, reached the highest level of impatience about the slow pace of the process of *embourgeoisement*⁶³

The challenge for post-settler governments is not simply about choosing between the immediate installation of democracy and the entrenchment of civil rights such as the respect for private property, or immediately dealing with social and economic justice. It is about levelling the playing field so as to create the conditions for all to enjoy the benefits of a rights'-based democratic system. The ills of the past and the subsequent distortions and imbalances to society it has created cannot just simply be ignored, but neither should they form the central focus of the post-colonial discourse.

*'... what Zimbabwe does illustrate (once more) is that the demagogic appropriation of a progressive nationalist discourse by a bureaucratic capitalist stratum, invariably drives a wedge between radical third world nationalism and democracy. We need to challenge the monopoly of the nationalist discourse enjoyed by this stratum, just as we need (certainly here in SA) to challenge the dominance of the discourse to defend ill-begotten wealth from the past. ...'*⁶⁴

The other settler-colony states in SADC - South Africa and Namibia - have very similar structural problems to Zimbabwe⁶⁵ and are going to face these problems. In 'Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation' Hammar and Raftopolous clearly articulate how these socio-economic tensions from every sector in Zimbabwe in the 1990s started pressurising the ruling Zanu PF party for the immediate resolution of the unresolved questions that rolled over from the liberation struggle: land, resource distribution, reconstruction of nation

⁶³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni was making reference to I. Mandaza, 'Reconciliation and Social Justice in Southern Africa: The Zimbabwe Experience,' in M. W. Makgoba (ed.), *Africa Renaissance: the New Struggle*, Mafube Publishing, Cape Town, 1999, p. 83. This particular reference was taken from Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. *The Nativist Revolution and Development Conundrums in Zimbabwe*. (ACCORD) Occasional Paper Series: Volume 1, Number 4, 2006. p. 6-7.

⁶⁴ Nzimande, B. 'Towards an alternative Southern African Developmental path: Notes for input to Policy Workshop on Zimbabwe - An SACP Perspective.' Paper presented at the launch of the Zimbabwe Institute, 27th Feb 2004, Johannesburg, South Africa.

⁶⁵ These three countries were settler colonies that had sizeable permanent white populations. In the case of land people were forcibly and continuously pushed off all the fertile land and onto barren land that could not provide for their subsistence, in order to force them into the labour market where they were used as cheap or enforced labour. This has had two results: many farms were of enormous size and the black majority does not have access to the land and the main sectors of the economy. This was by design on the part of colonialism and not default. See Mhone, G.C.Z. *Enclavity and Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity in Southern African Economies*. ILO. Discussion Paper No. 12. 2000.

and citizenship, and the re-making of the state and modes of rule.⁶⁶ We may already be witnessing this agitation in South Africa with the propelling of Jacob Zuma to the Presidency, as the poor look for the socio-economic benefits of political independence.

Therefore, it was and is important for the SADC states to approach the Zimbabwe crisis with caution as they understood that whatever they did would set a precedent on how resource redistribution should be dealt with within the region and that they should expect the same treatment. The mould would have been set. This may also explain South Africa's and Namibia's insistence on quiet diplomacy through SADC as they understood that they were probably next in-line.

2.7 Race, Nationalism and Anti-(neo-) Colonialism

On the back of these socio-economic problems and the waning of Mugabe and Zanu PF's popular support and legitimacy in Zimbabwe, they went on the offensive to try and turn the tide. Land redistribution was populist but it also easily raised the questions of race (and particularly racial inequality) privilege, colonialism, etc. As soon as race and nationalism become an issue, the liberation parties retreat to an anti-colonial stance and the issues of race become very clear. Race and nationalism have played a profound role in the liberation movements and are therefore not taken lightly. The Mugabe regime understood this, and as Brian Raftopolous has written, they:

*'articulated a repressive national politics to a broad anti-imperialist, pan-africanist, with essential notions of race as the central markers of the conflict. This process has been a reminder of the power of the idea of "race," precisely, as Gilroy reminds us, because "it supplies a foundational understanding of natural hierarchy on which a host of other supplementary social and political conflicts have come to rely." With great intensity in Zimbabwe, but with increasing frequency in South Africa, the mobilisation of race as a legitimating force has been used to justify the battle against historical inequalities, while attempting to conceal the structures that increase such inequality.'*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See Hammar, A. and Raftopolous, B. Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation. 2002.

⁶⁷ Raftopoulos, B. Op. Cit., 23 June 2005. p. 8.

This coincided with the Afro-radical ideology/nativist and resurgent nationalism⁶⁸ in the face of a rampaging globalisation in SADC and Africa in general.⁶⁹ This rhetoric appealed to a broader Afro-radicalism. As a result, Robert Mugabe became the leading authority on Afro-radicalism and its nativist tilt that demanded the restoration of land to its rightful and native owners. His portrayal of the land problem in Zimbabwe as “colonial settler robbery” carried out by “British Thieves”⁷⁰ stating that, ‘We are now talking of the conquest of conquest, the prevailing sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe over settler minority rule and all it stood for including the possession of our land ... Power to the people must now be followed by land to the people’⁷¹

This Afro-radical discursual assault on neo-colonialism and more so the opposition in Zimbabwe had a profound resonance within the SADC states, the African continent and the non-Western world in general. How can it find resonance, one might ask, at a time when the end of history has been proclaimed and when International relations (IR) specialists argue that ideology no longer plays a role in IR?⁷² The answer is because many of the liberation leaders in SADC see themselves involved in a constant struggle with what they call “the imperialist bullies of the West”. For them, ideologies mean more as they give a dialectical view of world affairs.⁷³ This ideological component of African international relations is evident in the regional theatre where Mugabe – like Gaddafi of Libya and Abacha of Nigeria before him (in the 1990s)⁷⁴ – scored vital points. In SADC, with all the liberation parties still in power it was easy for Mugabe to drive home his discourse among leaders who saw things his way – particularly with their liberation history - and who see each other as their “brother’s keepers”. Re-igniting the discussion on African solidarity and ideology (from the section above on “The Politics of African Solidarity”), it is important to make the point with regards to colonialism. While colonialism may seem like some abstract concept from the 18th and 19th centuries to many in the West, to the SADC states and their liberation leaders this is a very real and tangible entity. In fact, it is such a real and concrete entity to the liberation parties in SADC that they had to literally, “take a gun and shoot at it”. Thus, when Mugabe invokes such things as neo-colonialism, it is taken very seriously by the leaders of the liberation parties in SADC.

⁶⁸ For a full description and explanation of the concepts, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. Op. Cit., 2006. p. 10-14.

⁶⁹ See Oliver, G. Op. Cit., 18 November 2003. p. 822. ‘(20 per cent of the world’s population are Africans, and half of them, about 350 million, live on less than on US\$1 per day), as well as their uneasiness about radical resistance against the inequities of globalization and neoliberalism.’

⁷⁰ The Independent, London, England. Saturday, 19 April 2008.

⁷¹ The Herald, Harare, Zimbabwe, 6th December, 1997.

⁷² See Fukuyama, F. The End of History and the Last Man. 1992.

⁷³ See Mahmud, S. Op. Cit., 2001. p. 136.

⁷⁴ See Ibid.

Furthermore, the MDC's creation out of the urban labour movement and coalition of civil society organisations occurred at a time when globalisation was shrinking time and space. The MDC representing a post-liberation ideology and favouring a liberal democratic form of governance directly linked up into the international community where it easily found support for its ideas and values. The liberation parties in SADC did not welcome the MDC and the MDC did not establish especially good relations with the post-liberation governments in Zambia or Malawi either, but has continually fostered close relations with Botswana, which happens to be a non-liberation country. The MDC has not had close links with other African states outside SADC either. Conversely, it has on the other hand appeared to have very close links with the West and particularly Zimbabwe's former colonial masters, Britain, who Mugabe accuses of neo-colonialism. Mugabe has said that Britain were "thieving neo-colonialists ... today they are like thieves fronting their lackeys among us"⁷⁵ referring to the MDC. This is somewhat problematic for the MDC in terms of African politics of solidarity, and with the liberation parties in SADC who some accuse of being neurotic about colonialism.⁷⁶ Whether this is a neurosis or a reality is up for discussion, but the mere fact that these leaders and their parties suspect a neo-colonial agenda has contributed to how SADC has approached the Zimbabwean crisis.

This has effectively galvanised the SADC states behind Mugabe in solidarity against neo-colonialism. Furthermore, African solidarity also carries a measure of identity with it, and part of that identity in the pan-Africanist sense is an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist stance, which – as mentioned earlier – can easily go over to the simplistic racist view sometimes portrayed in the North-South ideology.

2.7.1 Mugabe and the Western Media

Mugabe's position was further enhanced by the framing of the Zimbabwean crisis in the Western media as being largely one of race (invasion of white farms; white businesses being targeted; white farmers assaulted and murdered, white Supreme Court judges harassed and intimidated, etc). This played right into Mugabe's hands and actually weakened SADC's ability to manoeuvre. Mugabe was always going to play the race card against Western criticism of him and now he could champion himself as the defender of Africa against Western imperialism. He was standing up to the big racist bullies and this resonates well with liberation parties and the continent in general. Mugabe simply used the

⁷⁵ The Independent, London, England. Friday, 18 April 2008.

⁷⁶ Media Monitoring Project, Harare, Zimbabwe. (Telephone interview, 22 April 2009)

international criticism of him as proof that his opponent's actions were being orchestrated or influenced by "white" Western opinion,⁷⁷ accusing the opposition of being "stooges" and "puppets" of the West. This was supported by his SADC neighbours and some even joined the debate, for example SWAPO in Namibia described the opposition in Zimbabwe as "neck-chained political stooges"⁷⁸

African solidarity with Mugabe in opposition to Western criticism and sanctions has played a big role in shaping SADC's approach to the Zimbabwe crisis. As Henning Melber has observed: 'In the light of the polarisation between the loyalty offered by most African leaders to 'Comrade Bob' and the interventionist position of those in the Western world through imposing sanctions, Zimbabwe almost turned into an issue of Africa against the rest of the world.'⁷⁹ In South Africa for example, the white media pressured the government to take a strong line on Zimbabwe which contributed to the racial undertone in the debate. This prompted a more traditional African response from the racially sensitive Mbeki who lashed out not only at white South Africans, but also at all "white supremacists" who criticised [SADC's] response to the crisis in Zimbabwe.⁸⁰

From an international perspective, the damage done to western government attempts at intervening in Zimbabwe, due to the emphasis on race in the reporting of the crisis was acknowledged by the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Ms Anne Grant, during a lecture at the University of Pretoria on 17 September 2002.⁸¹

In fact, so strong was the resonance of this message that even the MDC and civil society in Zimbabwe, who were the opposition that Mugabe branded as neo-colonial puppets and lackeys have felt the weight of his words. The blacks in these movements found themselves needing to reassess their relations and positioning with regards to the non-blacks in the movement. Brian Raftopoulos shares some of his experiences:

'For as in Zimbabwe, where the legitimacy of nationalism has faced substantive challenge, the resonance of aspects of Mugabe's 'race' message has been felt even within the opposition forces. I have witnessed the difficult attempts to deal with white and other minority involvement in the MDC and the civic movement in the face of both Mugabe's characterisation of the MDC as a foreign white creation, and as a result of certain complaints about the predominance of whites in certain leading

⁷⁷ See Alden, C and Schoeman, M. Op. Cit., 2003.

⁷⁸ See Melber, H. Liberation Movements as Governments: The Unfinished Business of Decolonisation. In Outside the Ballot Box, 2006. p. 17.

⁷⁹ See also Melber, H. Liberation Movements as Governments: The Unfinished Business of Decolonisation. In Outside the Ballot Box, 2006. p.21.

⁸⁰ Mbeki, T. Quoted by IRIN-SA, www.irinnews.org, 2 April 2002.

⁸¹ See Alden, C and Schoeman, M. Op. Cit., 2003, p. 12.

*positions in both movements. Given the weak history of non-racial opposition in Zimbabwe this is not surprising, but I have been struck by the ease with which opposition activists slip into such narrow nationalist positions, under the strain of trying to develop different modes of operation.*⁸²

To explain the position SADC has taken towards Zimbabwe, one has to look at the role Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF played in African regional relations. They took an active aggressive role in churning out a discursal assault in their national and foreign policy that appealed to the many marginalised African people as well as African leaders because it coincided with their struggles. They found the African audience more important and directed their rhetoric towards the African audience while exploiting the simplistic racist notions of the North-South ideology. They appeared to be quite happy to irritate the West where Mugabe was already condemned. Zimbabwe's missions in SADC and other African countries played a vital role in mobilising moral and diplomatic support for Zimbabwe within SADC and the African Union.

2.8 Pragmatic rather than Principled Approach

Beyond the liberation mentality and the politics of African solidarity, there may well be a much more rational explanation as to why SADC took the approach it did. From a practical point of view, there was not too much that SADC could do in the case of Zimbabwe. From an organisational point of view, 'The SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, the jurisdiction of the Organ (article 11 (2))⁸³ does not allow for military intervention in Zimbabwe. The SADC Protocol stresses the principles of strict respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aggression. It also stresses a preference for the use of peaceful means to conflict resolution through avenues such as conciliation, negotiation, mediation and arbitration in the cases of inter and intra state conflict, even if it does reserve the right – as a last resort - to consider enforcement in line with international law.'⁸⁴ One of the key issues here was that the nature of the Zimbabwean crisis did not merit a military intervention - in the sense that military action would have escalated to armed conflict and the results would have been worse for both Zimbabwe, the people of Zimbabwe and the SADC region.

⁸² Raftopoulos, B. Op. Cit., 23 June 2005. p. 8.

⁸³ SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

⁸⁴ SADC. 2001. Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, Blantyre, article 2 d, e.

SADC understood that Zimbabwe had serious problems and that simply taking a tougher stance against Mugabe and publicly criticising him or humiliating him, would have actually been counter-productive. This may have made things worse and even escalated the crisis to the extent that one of the major power bases in Zimbabwe – the military – would have come to the fore. As a Zimbabwean Senator has said, ‘SADC were afraid of what might have happened - a *coup d’état* – which would have created a violent conflict and destabilised the region further’.⁸⁵

Therefore, SADC took a pragmatic approach rather than a principled one, and focused on what it could actually do. What it could do was to try and contain the problem and usher in a period of transition.

The downside of a pragmatic approach is that SADC has ended up compromising on important principles that the organisation stands for such as the principles of democratic governance. In the process, SADC has taken some steps backwards. However, as an organisation being pragmatic, SADC made the appropriate calculations of their pragmatism and made a decision. In hindsight, though, it is doubtful that SADC had calculated the cost of their approach to be this high on all fronts.

Simultaneously, the make-up of the MDC as a party – it being a coalition of all forces – was and is not seen as the answer to Zimbabwe’s problems in Zimbabwe, in SADC or in the Diaspora. It is seen as a transition party and many questioned what would happen if the MDC did come into power. Once it achieved its goal of ousting Mugabe and Zanu PF, would it split-up with all the various factions retreating to their respective corners? Furthermore, at the beginning of the crisis, the MDC was a rather unknown quantity – only a few months old – with no clear policies and programmes and thus completely unpredictable. It has taken the MDC the best part of a decade to come up with policy positions. However, it is fair to say that SADC has taken the MDC somewhat seriously since it has engaged the MDC since 2001.

⁸⁵ Interviewee 14, Zimbabwean Senator. Harare, Zimbabwe, 17 April 2009. (Telephone interview).

3 Concluding Remarks

It is often the case that circumstances dictate events. In this particular case of SADC and Zimbabwe, it was the historical circumstances – represented in the eight key components of this paper⁸⁶ - that dictated how SADC responded. While the eight key points are not all necessarily directly linked to each other, it is important to view these points as both stand- alone and as an accumulation of events, struggles and histories that have had a compounding effect on SADC and thus its response to the Zimbabwean crisis.

A number of key lessons have been learnt from the SADC-Zimbabwe case. Firstly, it highlights the importance of the social, cultural and historical context within which the politics in SADC (as a region and an organisation) are encapsulated. An understanding of the context and the perspectives of the actors and organisations involved in SADC is important as it illuminates the possibilities, tensions and constraints that will affect any planned interventions. A seemingly straightforward issue like condemning the actions of a so called “tyrant” has proven to be much more complex and cumbersome.

Furthermore, there appears to be a lot of “unfinished business” in the SADC region relating to the shift between colonial and post-colonial periods. The question becomes: If these liberation parties are unable to deliver on many of the liberation promises, will we see a repeat of the Zimbabwean “style” crisis in other SADC countries?

3.1 Some Thoughts for the Future

There are a number of ways to deal with the complexities presented by the liberation mentality. Firstly, with regards to the liberation movement mentality, it is fair to say that nature will at some point dispose of this generation of politicians. However, as mentioned above, these liberation parties have been good at perpetuating themselves and thus there is the risk that this generation will be replaced by a somewhat diluted version of the same from within their own parties. The post-liberation movements are gaining momentum and will soon be at the fore of politics in SADC as is seen in Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and probably even Zimbabwe. Thus, it is important to continue working with the

⁸⁶ The eight key points as stated in the beginning of the paper are: 1). Historical liberation ties; 2). The Politics of African Solidarity; 3). Legitimacy to Rule; 4). Self Preservation; 5). Democratic Deficits; 6). Resource Redistribution; 7). Race, Nationalism and Anti (neo) colonialism; and 8). A pragmatic rather than principled approach.

SADC region in the areas of democratic development, good governance, transparency and the respect for and practice of human and civic rights.

While the strengthening of democracy has been focused mainly on civil society and non-government, non-political organisations, there is a great need to focus on political parties. As our discussion has shown, the liberation parties replicated their predecessors and over time this has had the effect of establishing a certain type of political culture within the SADC states: namely a dominant party state with low levels of internal party democracy and an intolerance to pluralism. The post-liberation parties do not exist in a political vacuum immune to the national political culture and there is therefore no guarantee that the post-liberation parties in SADC will not replicate the liberation parties. The examples of the constitutional crises in Malawi and Zambia have made this clear. This new generation of post-liberation parties needs to have their capacity built to effectively have internal party democracy. Internal party democracy would be a great step towards the practice of national and regional democracy. If it is true that the liberation parties' in SADC became authoritarian because they were forced to imitate the colonial governments in order to successfully fight them, then the same holds for the post-liberation parties.

Secondly, a focus on developing the post-liberation parties to represent a government in waiting as opposed to simply an opposition, is important. Clear policies and clear programmes to implement the policies need to be developed while in opposition. The risk is that these post-liberation parties are so focused and concerned with the fight to overthrow the liberation parties' that once they get into government, they find that they do not have any real concrete plans for how to govern, or for how to formulate real policies and transform them into practical implementable programmes. Being political parties – liberation or post-liberation – their motivation is to remain in power, and if they arrive in government without clear policies and practical programmes for implementation as well as with undemocratic governance habits, it is quite likely that the post-liberation parties could take the same route as the liberation parties.

Thirdly, it is important to give support to instruments that are locally devised within SADC that would allow the SADC states to critically appraise themselves along the lines of the "Peer Review Mechanism" suggested in NEPAD. This of course failed at the African continental level, but within SADC, if it were developed gradually, through processes that move inch-by-inch over years, the states would become more accustomed to it. An example of where this could be started is within the SADC Election Observers Missions. The SADC Observer missions are present at all SADC elections – including the seven to be held in 2009. A strengthening of the capacity in this organ could take steps towards it functioning as a form of internal SADC peer review.

Fourthly, all organisations are susceptible to influence and SADC is no exception. However, in terms of institutional capacity, SADC as an organisation needs to be strengthened throughout. If SADC's capacity to work as an organisation was increased, it would increase the organisation's ability to steer the SADC in the direction of the commonly stated vision and could to some, admittedly limited, extent reduce the amount of political influence that steers it. However, due to the minimum amount of power the SADC states actually have over various issues within their constituencies, e.g. their economy, access to information, the production of knowledge, etc, they may be unwilling to cede the little power they do have, especially to an organisation that might not actually drive the same vision and goals as the individual state.

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| AU | African Union |
| BDP | Botswana Democratic Party |
| CCM | Chama Cha Mapundika |
| CONSAS | Constellation of Southern African States |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| FLS | Frontline States |
| FRELIMO | Frente de Libertação de Moçambique |
| ISDSC | Inter-State Defence and Security Committee |
| ISPDC | Inter-State Political and Defence Committee |
| MCP | Malawi Congress Party |
| MDC | Movement for Democratic Change |
| MMD | Movement for Multiparty Democracy |
| MPLA | Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| RENAMO | Resistência Nacional Moçambicana |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SADCC | Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference |
| SWAPO | South West Africa Peoples Organisation |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNITA | National Union for the Total Independence of Angola |
| Zanu PF | Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (Patriotic Front) |

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