



Soft-balancing: SADC Former Liberation Movements' Responses to the Imposition of Sanctions on Zimbabwe 2002 -2015

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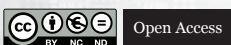
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Abstract

Background: This paper addresses a popular dichotomous African nationalist and independentist approaches to foreign policy mainly characterised by soft balancing and quiet diplomacy. This dichotomous approach has been dominated by the need to maintain independence from resurgent neo-colonial claws by promoting African agenda. The African nationalist and independentist prism are used to interrogate the misconceptions created by the resurgence of meetings of former liberation movements in Southern Africa.

Objective: This paper aims to proffer alternative political survival tools that can be adopted by the weak global south states against resurgent neo-colonialism.

Methods: Using the work of Machiavelli on international anarchy complemented by the soft balancing as a real-power politics theory, the paper offers alternative lenses to interpretation of impact of sanctions and subsequent strategic alliances formed after 2002 in Southern Africa.

Findings: Depending on the dominant realist paradigm to analyse sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, the paper confirms the anarchic nature of international society and that the formation of alliances was not an ad hoc reaction.

Conclusions: Arguing that the world is anarchic and there is no international arbiter, the paper recommends soft balancing as a political survival strategy.

Implications: This paper can be useful to concerned authorities of Zimbabwe in planning appropriate policies post sanction. For that purpose this study can serve as reference.

Keywords: soft balancing, sanctions, regime security, alliance formation, liberation movements, real politics

Paper Type: Review Paper

JEL Classification: B27, G15, K22, N4

Introduction

Soft balancing and quiet diplomacy are dominant dichotomies in African politics based on nationalist and independentist approaches to foreign policy. African politicians adopt these dichotomous approaches mainly because of the need to maintain independence from resurgent neo-colonial claws by promoting the African agenda. African perceptions of threats from international actions determine either vociferous confrontational militant opposition (hard power) or accommodation (soft balancing/soft power). Generally, these dichotomous responses have been more pronounced when there is a military threat than when the threat is subtle. There is limited literature dealing with how states have reacted to attempts at exerting subtle forms of Gramsci's hegemony and preponderance like sanctions. Proponents of hard power accuse those who utilize soft power as lacking strategy (Paul 2018), but it is the best alternative. Those who have interrogated hegemony and domination have focused on the international perceptions of military threats (Boucher 2012), general power politics (Wivel 2008) and an analysis of linguistically perceptions of sanctions (Chingono 2009).

Since there is limited literature dealing with African regional reaction to the imposition of sanctions on an independent sovereign, this paper seeks to interrogate the emerging misconceptions of western smart sanctions on Zimbabwe by analysing the resurgence of meetings of former liberation movements in Southern Africa. Through the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) and a set of European Union (EU) targeted sanctions, the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and the EU unilaterally imposed targeted sanctions on the Zimbabwean government. These illegal sanctions were arguably triggered by Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000 and participation in the 1998 Democratic Republic of Congo War. The sanctions escalated to an internationalised diplomatic tiff between Zimbabwe and the United States, Britain and their allies. As a retaliatory measure to the illegal sanctions, SADC's former liberation movements (hereafter referred as LMs) responded by allying with ZANU PF against the nations who imposed sanctions. The response began with the liberation movements meeting either on the side lines of every SADC meeting or of their annual conferences or congresses. These movements opted for soft balancing as a form of restraint (Paul, 2018, Denmark et al, 2019). These meetings on the side lines of every SADC Summit since 2002 created multiple interpretations from the opposition parties and other critics. The misconstrued interpretations included an array of accusations and counter-accusations against the LMs. The misconceptions are based on duality of perception hinged on the allegation that LMs are a club of dictators perpetuating their clinging to power, while on the contrary they view themselves as custodians of African independence. Accusations included allegations that the movements are buttressing dictatorship in the region (Chigora & Ziso, 2011, Moyo, 2011, James, 2012, Clapham, 2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), while counter-accusations glorified these movements as promoting good governance and defending sovereignty in the region, (Scarnecchia, 2006, Mbanje & Mahuku, 2013).

Using Machiavelli's perception of international anarchy complemented by the power politics theory of soft balancing, the paper advances different appreciations of impact of sanctions and resultant gravitation of liberation movements. From realist perspectives, the

paper interrogates the feasibility of alliances as a reaction to bullying by powerful nations and argues that if nations have to survive, then formation of coalitions is a relevant survival technique. This paper is significant to states in the global south as it contributes to literature and theory on soft balancing as a political survival strategy in the anarchic global arena. It provides an alternative method to handle the world bullies who thrive on the notion that the powerful will always do what they want. With the provided alternative of soft balancing, the weaker states thwart the world bullies.

This paper is structured as follows. First, it explores soft balancing as an alternative political survival theory to Machiavelli's political anarchy theory by juxtaposing the two. Secondly it examines the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe and looks at soft balancing (an alliance system) that emerged as a strategy to handle the unilateral and illegal imposition of sanctions on the Zimbabwean government. A critical appraisal of these sanctions is also done. Lastly, the relevance of soft balancing as a political survival strategy in an anarchic world is done. The next section focuses on the theoretical framework that informs the arguments in this paper.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

From a nationalist and independentist perspective, two frameworks inform the argument/position of this paper, one drawn from Machiavelli, a classical political philosopher who champions international anarchy, and the soft balancing theory that challenges Gramsci's hegemony and domination theory by promoting alliance formation. Both Machiavelli's theory of political anarchy and soft balancing theory seem to be influenced by political realist power theories. Realism is a dominant paradigm that views security as the key issue in international affairs and the state as the central actor (Walt, 1987). As such, states act to ensure their survival in a presumably hostile environment. From a realist perspective the states' perception of threat severity determines the nature of their action; whether to ally against a threat or to soft balance. Generally, states opt for soft balancing as a form of restraint (soft power) (Paul 2018). The following section discusses the relevance of the theory of political anarchy to the present study.

Machiavelli's Theory of Political Anarchy

Among realists who have offered their explanations of international relations, Machiavelli's theory of political anarchy sounds more plausible. Machiavelli projects the international political system as anarchic in nature by arguing that there is no superior power (an international arbiter or world government) for the wronged to appeal to. This absence leaves the weaker states being at the mercy of the powerful who bullies them wilfully. Despite post-World War II collective efforts to create a neutral arbiter called the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), great powers have often rendered it ineffective by making unilateral decisions that are an affront to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference. These

decisions are taken when the interests of powerful countries are under threat or when their perceived allies seemed to be under siege (O’Neil, 2010). For example, quite a number of proxy wars and unilateral interference in sovereigns have occurred courtesy of the US efforts to remove ‘a threat to world peace’, (Schwalb, 2003). These wars have been witnessed in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Afghanistan just to mention a few. The US has managed to bulldoze its way past UNSC largely because of structural handicaps such as veto power and also financial muscle. With veto power the US can stall any UNSC resolution against her actions. The financial muscle also makes US the biggest financier of UNSC budget and that compromises the latter’s effectiveness in policing the world, (O’Neil, 2010). Due to the above weaknesses, at times a jungle law manifests in unilateral decisions confirming the Machiavellian belief that the world without a neutral arbiter is anarchic. In a Machiavellian State, protection of interests becomes the prerogative of both state and non-state actors. This duty creates a fertile ground for the sprouting of nationalists¹ who engage in real-politic strategies such as alliance formation (soft balancing) and power balancing (soft bandwagoning). In the context of this paper, soft balancing seems to offer better insights for explaining the response of LMs to the unilateral imposition of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe by the US and her allies.

Soft Balancing

The balance of power is the cornerstone of realism in international relations. This balance can manifest itself either through soft balancing or soft bandwagoning. For diplomatic behaviour to qualify as soft balancing, the action has to be applied over time with use of institutions, limited alliances aimed at restraint and de-legitimation, (Paul, 2018). Thomson (2010) argues that soft balancing is when states and non-state actors create coalitions as a survival strategy in an anarchic environment. These coalitions are less threatening measures meant to delay or frustrate the effects of unilateral actions by bully states, (Denemark et al 2019, Cooley et al 2019, Lucia 2019, Paul 2018). Failure to forge an alliance may be moral, but may lead to collapse. The Ben Ali regime in Tunisia provides an example of a government that collapsed because of failure to forge strategic alliances with other entities. The existence of such casualties has seen statesmen adopting realism when confronted with challenges despite prevalence of shortcomings of realism. As observed by Salmon & Imber (2008), the basing of coalitions on national interests make them volatile as the latter are always in a state of flux. Volatility occurs because “all states exist in a state of anarchy, pursue self-interest and try to acquire power to secure themselves and ensure their survival in a system where no other state or states will come to save them if they fail to do so themselves”.² Though in theory non-state actors assume international arbiter positions, practically and from a Hobbesian standpoint, the powerful always do what they want and the weaker ones comply. Fukuyama (1995) uses these lenses to explain the evolution of an aggressive and insecure society through unilateral ‘big brother acts’ such as imposition of sanctions. To Fukuyama, (1995) the fall of Soviet

1 By nationalists, the paper means members who participated in the liberation of their countries using the doctrine of self-determination.

2 Mbanje B & Mahuku D (2013) ‘The political party that gave its soul to imperialism’ in *The Herald* Friday 3 May 2013

Union in 1990 paved the way for the permeation of soft bandwagoning as a political survival strategy in International Relations.

The need to survive an anarchic environment compels countries to adopt aggressive foreign policy strategies where power is crucial. This is in line with Hobbes' perception of the state of nature resembling universal insecurity (Edwards, 2002). As Machiavelli proposes this insecurity can only be addressed through alliance/coalition formation as common enemies are tackled and related interests are sustained. Chigora & Ziso (2011) concur and point out that despite being economically insignificant, states as rational actors are cognisant of the existing lawless international political atmosphere. States also appreciate and differentiate the power crescendos and ambiguities in international political affairs. The presumably 'small' states become ingenious, create associations and rifts among powers as a survival strategy, whilst big powers mutate their machinations. These dynamics create a complex international society with intricate political relationships. The intricate world political arena is complicated by unilateralism and manipulation of transnational organisations and at times their complete marginalisation. Considering this complexity, statesmen form supposedly small and militarily mediocre societies adopt international diplomacy. This diplomacy is arguably effective in dealing with the militarily preponderant since these mediocre societies faces defeat in the event of an outright war. In support Schwalb (2003) posits that with good diplomacy, agility and skilfulness these states survive bullying by the powerful. Agility and skilfulness may also be critical when manoeuvring economic structural reconstruction. All those regimes that attempted economic structural modernization and socio-political restructuring of their states have been besieged. For example, Nkrumah; a candid Marxist/Communist who championed quasi-Marxist policies, was overthrown through a coup code-named "Operation Cold Chop." Another visionary Patrice Lumumba of Congo was eliminated by the Belgian government, because they regarded him as a strategic risk to their commercial interests, (United States of America State Department, 1973). Likewise, Amilcar Cabral suffered the same fate from Portuguese imperialist agents on independence eve. For South Africa it was a double tragedy as two liberation stalwarts Chris Hani and Steve Biko were eliminated. Hani was assassinated using "Operation Thunderstorm", (O'Malley, 1993) while Biko was butchered by apartheid agents for redefining black identity. All these eliminated leaders had a passion for pan-Africanism, which was an anathema to western imperialism. Their elimination was a necessary evil in the eyes of the colonial masters and neo-colonial pundits. In the next section, the focus shifts from analysing theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of Machiavelli and soft balancing to an analysis of the EU-US- Zimbabwean relations. Following the imposition of sanctions by the two centres of power the former liberation movements thus came together.

The Imposition of Economic Sanctions on Zimbabwe

The EU and the US adopted sanctions in their quest to buttress the people of Zimbabwe's efforts to effect a non-violent egalitarian revolution against the rule of Robert Mugabe. For the US, the sanctions were legalised through the passing of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) in 2001. The ZDERA has been regularly renewed with new

clauses being smuggled in. These sanctions are part of the aggressive intervention strategies by the West in a sovereign state. These strategies were meant to isolate Zimbabwe, promote factionalism in the ruling party, generate general dissension as well as create an opportunity to bankroll the opposition political party. Isolation would ensure that the economy of Zimbabwe screamed as hyper-inflation sets in. Once the economy screamed, Zimbabwe would emerge as a failed state and the overthrow of Robert Mugabe would be imminent. Relative and superfluous barometers like rule of law, restoration of an asymmetrical land ownership structure that disempowered the black majority were set as conditions that were to be met for the US to repeal ZDERA. Another glaring fault of these sanctions was they were just unilaterally passed by the Western powers who impose sanctions on Zimbabwe without the approval of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Efforts to fast track their endorsement faced resistance especially from two permanent powers that enjoy veto power (China and Russia) hence they became illegal. These sanctions became an affront to Zimbabwean sovereignty as the Land Reform had been carried according to the dictates of the constitution. The Zimbabwean government argued that it was unconstitutional to let one percent of the population (comprising white colonists) own half of the agriculturally productive land, while the rest of the population in Zimbabwe were disadvantaged and landless. This argument was plausible to Southern Africa as the empowerment of citizens was a regionally agreed position.

Apart from the land reform, the ZDERA also punishes Zimbabwe for participating in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) thereby frustrating the West's Regime Change Agenda. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia participated in the DRC War. The three LMs from these countries used the DRC debacle to amalgamate their ties and MPLA in Angola and SWAPO in Namibia spearheaded the formation of ties (Damico, 2014). The leaders argued that alliances would reposition Southern Africa on the global arena. This reposition was in tandem with Global Agenda 2063 and not a dictatorship promotion gimmick as argued by Clapham (2012). Perceiving the coalition as promoting dictatorship is trivialising the African Agenda. In the next section, the paper explored the perceptions of former liberation movements about the sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe.

Liberation Movements' Perceptions of and Reaction to Sanctions on Zimbabwe

This section focuses on developments that stimulated the re-emergence of solidarity among LMs. For resurgence of solidarity, Bond & Manyanya (2002) and Muzondidya (2010) suggest that revolutionary diplomacy (a radical post-colonial diplomatic posture by African states), particularly needs to safeguard the gains of the liberation struggle and independence as the major factor. In Southern Africa, the promulgation of the ZDERA with its ramifications on the populace and regional ripple destabilising effects, provides an aerial view to the new impetus towards solidarity by the former liberation movements. Contrary to the above, Scarnecchia & Alexander (2009), identify intolerance of opposition parties and multi-partyism in the Southern African Region as a pull factor for resurgence of alliances. However, observations made are that these coalitions either promoted change in governance, (Chan, 2008) or promoted continuity of dominance by the LMs (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2011). As noted by Habib

(2009), the paper argues that the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe made the LMs realise that illegal regime change was coordinated by neo-colonialist forces bent on unseating them from power using discourses embracing democracy, human rights and rule of law discourses. These regime change efforts exposed the powerlessness of the UNSC in dealing with this abrogation of sovereign states (Herald 2013) largely because of limited expertise, institutional defects and financial limitations (O'Neil 2010). For this reason, Raftopoulos & Alexander (2006) juxtaposed liberal democratic values championed by a capitalism (promoted an economic blueprint that created global poverty) against authoritarian nationalism that stemmed from global inequalities. The unilateral imposition of sanctions without the blessings or concurrence of the UNSC revived the revolutionary diplomacy, resulting in the regrouping of Southern Africa's former liberation movements. Nkoana-Mashabane, (2012) suggests that initial motivation for solidarity was dissatisfaction with dependence syndrome; the depredations brought by apartheid and the neo-colonial threat. The solidarity was further reinforced by the internationalisation of bilateral issues between Zimbabwe and Britain exposing double standards practised by the West against the South. Thus, an attempt to deal with regime change machinations brought the former liberation movements together.

LMs perceived the world as anarchical in nature where survival was based on alliance-formation. The imposition of sanctions paved the way for the theory of solidarity, participate or perish mantra into Southern Africa's international relations. It mirror-imaged Gramsci's hegemony and domination theory by exposing the West's bullish attitude. The cannibalistic tendency or bully attitude by both western state and non-state actors was mainly because of the deepening global crisis of capitalism as well as the need to establish preponderance (Symonds 2014). Faced with this preponderance overture, the threatened were bound to come up with coping mechanisms. The coping mechanisms were based on their perceptions of the nature and magnitude of the threat they faced.

The United States of America policy of thuggish arrogance (where, any government that is viewed as a hindrance to the pursuit of American interests is aggressively targeted for destabilisation or overthrow through overt or covert means) was exposed (O'Connor, 2014). Quite a number of countries were cited as having suffered on the hands of the United States of America and British aggressive intervention strategies. Among these countries were Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and DRC just to mention a few. For Southern Africa, covert intervention strategies were seen through the mushrooming of mainly advocacy Non-Governmental Organisations in perceived rogue states especially towards elections. These NGOs were meant to shape public opinion towards western preferred candidates³. In the Zimbabwean case, these NGOs were cited as having supported or participated in the creation of the dossier that was used to justify imposition of sanctions.

The coalition of organisations and western states to meddle in Zimbabwe's internal affairs triggered a drift of the LMs towards each other. As these movements analysed the causation of imposition of sanctions and their legality, they adopted a combative coalition. Mutandi-

3 NGOs that included the MISA, ZUJ, IJAZ, MMPZ and Amani Trust were accused of interfering in the domestic issues of Zimbabwe especially towards elections by turning into government critics.

ri (2009) suggests that soft bandwagoning emanated from Mugabe's internationalisation of the land issue. Phimster & Raftopoulos (2004) attribute the internationalisation to Mugabe and ZANU PF's construction of alternative discourses around the need for renewed liberation struggle solidarity. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) finds that the renewed liberation mantra resonated well with Southern Africa's ideology that is deeply anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. The anti-colonial and anti-imperialist push factor became a strategy the LMs adopted to promote regime security. Regime security rallied the movements around Mugabe solely to protect their land and also to create a nascent security community, (Mutandiro, 2009) at the expense of good governance and democracy. By canvassing the EU, US and all their allies to view Mugabe as an international pariah, the British internationalised Zimbabwe's land issue. In return, Mugabe exposed the West's double standards and hypocrisy. To expose British hypocrisy, Mugabe published Clare Short's 1997 letter reneging on British obligations to fund the land reform programme. The resultant effect was the exposition of Clare Short's unwise repudiation of British diplomatic responsibilities. After the letter's publication the British Labour Party's resolution to meddle in Africa affairs became the cause of international annoyance. This annoyance sparked a reawakening among former liberation movements and triggered their regrouping.

Using international irritation with British diplomacy as a springboard, the SADC Organ on Politics and Defence urged LMs to forge alliances. Kiwaya (2014) indicates this irritation revived the liberation mantra of "United We Stand and Divided We Fall." This mantra created a polarised society where any party that opposed or had a different ideology to LMs came to be identified with the neo-colonialist agenda. Mutandiro (2009) analysed the ideologies of three opposition parties to LMs and concluded that it was easy for them to be lumped together. The opposition parties were presumed to be inclined to the West or former colonial masters and examples were cited in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. In these countries the ZANU PF, the SWAPO and the ANC were battling it out against Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), and the Democratic Alliance (DA) respectively. These opposition parties were perceived as being sponsored by their Western allies. For instances, Hamutenya, the RDP leader in Namibia, Zille of the DA in South Africa and Tsvangirai of the MDC in Zimbabwe were alleged to have special ties with the Germans, the Americans and the British. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) argues that the perceived connection with the former colonial master created general fear among governments controlled by LMs. This fear influenced them to reject the 2008 MDC victory in Zimbabwe elections as they argued that would set an uncomfortable precedent that might ricochet in their own countries. Instead of allowing triumph of democracy, the LMs called for the formation of closer ties and pledged not to relinquish power.

LMs perception of external interference in Zimbabwe through the illegal sanctions made them ignore democracy. Even political strides made by democratic movements and their subsequent winning of elections were attributed to sanctions. Instead of addressing undemocratic overtures by sister governments; they diverted their attention to trivial issues. As Maodza (2012) observed at a Windhoek Summit that LMs vouchsafed for the unreserved elimination of the West's illegitimate economic sanctions. This provided them an opportunity to retrace their history. Due to the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe, revolutionary po-

litical party diplomacy hinged on revolutionary mantra emerged with the SWAPO, the ANC, the FRELIMO, the CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI, the UNIP and the ZANU PF forging alliances. This soft balancing was meant to safeguard independence through regional protection of the interests and aspirations of downtrodden. Though this coalition is blamed for promoting revolutionary dictatorship, the 2007 ANC's Polokwane Conference emphasized strengthening linkages between the ANC and other former liberation movements, (ANC, 2011). Revolutionary dictatorship manifested through emergence of secretive pseudo-military activities and operations that were meant to force the population into acceptance. These tactics were more pronounced in the MPLA and the ZANU PF. The disagreement over whether Mugabe should participate at the EU-AU Summit in Portugal in December 2007 exposed the British snobbishness and aura of moral superiority in the EU and the AU. LMs questioned the source of this moral superiority. In addition, the revelations by Thabo Mbeki that there was external interference by states that labelled South Africa a "Rogue Democracy" for supporting Mugabe also swayed the former liberation movements, (Carter,2008) and re-integrated Zimbabwe into the community of nations at global level. Kinana (2014) further notes that this re-integration promoted Mugabe as sanctions failed to have the intended impact. It was noted that brotherhood and sisterhood relationships with their origins in the Frontline States existed among the LMs. As James (2009) summarised, the SADC was "a club of brother presidents" leading "sister movements" who were inclined to back rather than reproach each other. The tendency to align with each other exhibited itself when there was a governance crisis in Zimbabwe after the 2008 harmonized elections, only Botswana rebuked Mugabe, (Ndlovu-Gatseni, 2011). The LMs transformed to a club of dictators by ignoring the will of the people and concentrate on the security of their regimes. To achieve this security, South Africa⁴ argued for the Zimbabwean case at every international forum including the United Nations Security Council because of the strong ties existing between the ZANU PF and the ANC.

However, one can argue that soft balancing of the LMs had nothing to do with the increasing importance of political conditionality and the emergence of western demands for good governance. Rather, soft balancing was a political survival strategy hinged on the re-awakening of Africa, need to uphold the basic tenets of the liberation war and combating neo-colonialism. Mbeki (cited by Mutika,2013) argued that it was a common African responsibility to chart their destiny and defend their sovereignty. Myokaya-Manzini quoted by Aldermann (2010) argued that the liberation struggles created a binding comradeship or fraternal spirit that could not easily be dismantled. Cheng (2014) concurs that this fraternal spirit was rooted in the ideological imperatives of belonging or sharing a mutual liberation account, culture and values. Thus, the LMs had to regenerate into intimidating frontline liberal centre-left-mass parties, (Sandton, 2000). This regeneration could only be possible if there was ideological clarity and closer cooperation on transformational strategic issues. The closer cooperation by the MDC, the RENAMO and the Democratic Alliance helped in

4 With her independence in 1994 South Africa has assumed a big brother role in African socio-politico-economic affairs. Because of her economic development, South Africa has access to all international platforms ranging from the BRICS, the WTO, the UNSC, the G20 and many others. The lobbying for removal of sanction removal on Zimbabwe created the notion that they were illegal.

pushing the ZANU PF, the FRELIMO, and the ANC to unite and revive the revolutionary mantra that had gripped Africa during the 1960 Pan African honey moon. This cooperation exposed the Western origin and coordination of synchronised attacks on the LMs policies. In response, the LMs adopted a systematic coordinated response that was hinged on appreciating the dynamics in each country.

Tracking the historical antecedents to soft balancing in Southern Africa, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) identified the nascent RENAMO insurgency in Mozambique⁵ which threatened the independence of land locked countries like Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi as a pull factor for the LMs together. Furthermore, Chitiyo (2009), Muzondidya (2010), Nyakudya (2010), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Raftopoulos (2013) looked at the extensiveness of security sector reform discourse from intransigent components that push foreign regime change schemas as having caused the mutual attraction of the LMs towards each other. This vigorous promotion of security sector reform agenda in Zimbabwe, and the imposition of sanctions made Mugabe and his associates in the ZANU PF to successfully project themselves as victims of an imperialist onslaught, (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). This projection worked in their favour as the SADC became reluctant to apply direct pressure for any reforms. The imposition of sanctions on Mugabe promoted the paranoid African ruling elites' attitude towards opposition. This was mainly because in Zimbabwe it was the opposition that lobbied for outside imposition of sanctions. The sanctions were perceived as a regime change ploy and that triggered the consequent militarisation of African politics and the politicisation of the military. This reliance on the use of coercive state apparatuses inadvertently meant the leaders increasingly became dependent on the military for their survival, (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2011). Unfortunately, these power struggles resulted in political outcomes that weakened the legitimacy of governors (Ikome, 2007). This affected the legitimacy of various leaders, especially in Zimbabwe and Angola where Dos Santos and Mugabe have constructed a strong nationalist-military alliance with a civilian facade (Marquese de Morais, 2010). This amplified the conflict between an authoritarian national liberators and democratic participants, (Southall, 2003). The LMs continued to engage in a hegemonic and dominance struggle against participatory democracy. This was more evident in Zimbabwe where the ZANU PF continuously battled it out against the MDC.

Sanctions galvanised the SADC and they spoke with one voice. They were perceived as a clash of ideologies rather than the need to ensure accountability and democratic governance. Raftopoulos (2004) notes that because of sanctions, whether in the SADC or the AU, Mugabe called for the formation of an all-encompassing and aggressive black, Africanist coalition. With this call, the tussle for land was projected in the broader topography of global inequality politics in a manner that transformed Mugabe from an anti-democratic tyrant to a continental hero. It became the sole signifier of authentic, liberated nationhood for Mugabe did what Kaunda did. Ake (1991) noted that President Kaunda made the Mulungushi Declaration after disillusionment with multinationals especially the mining companies. Kaunda then, "em-

5 The RENAMO insurgency threatened the survival of the whole of Southern Africa as Apartheid South Africa and the RENAMO cooperated in their efforts to destabilise the whole region. This threat triggered the formation of the Frontline States.

barked on indigenisation, nationalisation and humanism”, (Ake 1991:20). Disillusioned by Claire Short’s 1997 letter to Minister Kangai, Mugabe embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform. Mugabe got sympathisers because former colonial masters imposed sanctions on him. Munene (2014) noted that sanctions were meant to control African states, legalise revolution, scandalise national establishments and make citizens drop confidence in the state. This loss of confidence creates reasons for socio-political turbulences and possible state collapse. The US passing of the ZDERA and the EU’s imposition of sanctions was viewed as attempts to create an ungovernable Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, because when Zimbabwe ‘coughs’, the whole of Southern Africa ‘sneeze’, the whole region rallied behind Zimbabwe. It should be noted that the movements upheld close connections embedded in shared liberation accounts and individual relations, which they drew on in times of crisis (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). However, it is clear that it was not only sanctions that drew the LM together.

Apart from the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe, efforts to topple the Equatorial Guinea government through the use of mercenaries on March 7, 2004 triggered a reconsideration of mutual security by all intelligence services in Africa. This gave birth to the CISSA in Abuja, Nigeria on August 26, 2004 which was a collaboration of intelligence and security services from 49 AU member states. (Comment in the Herald, Friday 3 May 2013). The CISSA provided Southern Africa with a wake-up call as son to former British Prime Minister Margret Thatcher, who was sponsoring the mercenaries. Thus, meddling by a former colonial master posed a security threat to African leaders, and Mugabe easily linked the mercenaries to the diplomatic stand-off that existed between Zimbabwe and Britain, and that affected how the SADC leaders perceived it (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2004; Badza, 2009). The capture of the mercenaries proved to the LMs that they were not safe from outside interference hence the need to closely cooperate.

The whole idea of Africa’s International Relations and Diplomacy based on unity and solidarity, eradication of all forms of interventionism from Africa and promotion of international collaboration, was revitalised by the imposition of sanctions (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2012). This revitalisation showed itself through soft balancing of the LMs — a reaction against perceived attempts at propagating neo-colonialism. Though the revival of collaboration by liberation movements was driven by increasing importance of political conditionality and the emergence of western demands for good governance, it was also a reaction to the western onslaught on the principle of sovereignty especially in Zimbabwe through sanctions. To make matters worse, states and ruling parties denounced labour movements that extended their reach into the political sphere. The rivalry, according to Raftopoulos & Sachikonye (2001), tended to assume the form of threat to the ruling party leadership in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For Zambia, in 1991, Frederick Chiluba, a trade union supremo swept a founding father with liberation credentials from power, (Chan, 2008). The fall of Kaunda was unprecedented in Africa. As observed by Raftopoulos (2001), the MDC in Zimbabwe presented an alternative political project around ‘democratisation’ and provided the former liberation movements with an excuse to form an alliance. The democratisation espoused this aspiration in the context of a neo-liberal economic agenda. As such, this policy orientation

allowed the ZANU PF the political space to launch renewed nationalist ideological assault around redistributive demands relating to the land question. The discourse adopted by the ZANU PF appealed to all the former liberation movements hence they formed alliances.

In a nutshell, Machiavelli's theory of political anarchy explains the bully attitude shown by the US, Britain and their allies when they imposed illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe without the consent or blessings of the UN, the international arbiter. Through these sanctions, the West intended to extend their dominance and hegemony in the global south. However, the LMs adopted the African nationalist and independentist prism to resist this bullying. They had used this strategy of gravitating towards each other during the liberation period and had managed to thwart western machinations. Their success was hinged on the combative strategy that resonated so well with the liberation mantra.

Conclusion

The paper investigated and confirmed the dichotomous approach to foreign relations in Machiavelli's anarchic international society where the powerful will always do what they want and the weaker ones have to comply. The objective of this paper is to proffer alternative political survival tools that can be adopted by the weak global south states against resurgent neo-colonialism. From a realist perspective, the paper is significant as it interrogates the feasibility of alliances as a response to intimidation by influential nations. It proffers formation of coalitions as a survival strategy to international bullying. This paper is significant to states in the global south as it contributes to literature and theory on soft balancing as a political survival strategy in the anarchic global arena. It offers an alternative way to handle the world bullies who thrive on the notion that the powerful will always do what they want. With the provided alternative of soft balancing, the weaker states thwart the world bullies. In the case of Zimbabwe, the lawlessness and hypocrisy of the West were exposed by the unilateral imposition of illegal sanctions by the US, the EU and their allies without the UNSC approval. This was a desecration of democracy and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. Confronted with such a threat to their survival, the former liberation movements adopted soft balancing to counter the bullying. Mugabe emerged a winner as the ZANU PF reached out for regional support when she was vilified by the British. Vilification was orchestrated by Western diplomats as they directly supported civil society against the government. To counter this interference, the LMs developed of post-imperial sensitivity and ignored governance issues by focusing more on regime survival. This regime survival strategy involved formation of alliance, carrying out diplomatic offences on any international conferences. Activities like lobbying the UNSC not to ratify the sanctions and the issuance of a regional communiqué condemning the sanctions after every the SADC Conference provided Mugabe with the impetus to succeed. Nationalists and independentists survived due to the domino group threats felt by the LMs. This domino threat determined the solidness of the alliances that exist in the SADC. Though realism is the dominant paradigm, the theoretical departure used does not address the influence of interstate relations in the formation of strategic alliances but non-state actors.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest existed while preparing this paper.

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