

The Botswana's Responses to The Zimbabwe Crisis 2008 to 2018

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Abstract: Botswana is Zimbabwe's immediate neighbour sharing a common border of 813 km long. As noted by (Jonas, Mandiyanike and Maundeni (2013), there is a high level of people to people between Botswana and Zimbabwe as such it comes naturally that Botswana takes keen interest in development in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Crisis is as old as history can tell, there is debate on when really the problem started or what really probed the current status quo. Others date it to colonial or pre-independence, others to the Ndebele genocide of the 1980s, others to globalization and the 1990s SAPs, others to the Land Reform Act. Thus, this paper examines the responses of the Botswana government to the Zimbabwe Crisis. The responses by Botswana have been divided into categories of positive responses, negative responses and no responses. As to whether the responses were successful the most consensus was that Botswana has been a lone voice in trying to bring Zimbabwe to order. The data was collected through interviews conducted using Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), and experts on international relations and regional integration were targeted for their knowledge on the topic.

Keywords; Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Crisis, Regional Integration

I. INTRODUCTION

Botswana lies in the centre of southern Africa, bordered by Namibia to the west, South Africa to the south, Zimbabwe to the northeast, and having a point of contact with Zambia—as well as Namibia and Zimbabwe—at Kazungula. Most human settlement and crop production is concentrated in the relatively less arid eastern third of the country. In the past, hunting and gathering supplemented or substituted agro-pastoral production, especially in the central and western regions. However, hunting has since become a marginalized activity following the imposition of a hunting ban in 2014. Mining of high-quality diamonds occurs mostly in Central and Southern districts, with more recent developments in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). Botswana also has a long history of mining copper-nickel and soda ash and has rich—but largely untapped—deposits of coal. Wildlife-based tourism has expanded considerably, especially in the northwest, and is now the most important non-mining economic sector. Almost entirely rural at independence, a majority of the population by 2001 was urban; the 2011 census found 64.1 per cent of the population residing in cities, towns and urban villages with populations of more than 5,000 (Statistics Botswana, 2015).

Several factors drive urbanization, including development of the state and associated expansion of the civil service after independence; the concentration of transportation infrastructure, educational opportunities, and other public services in larger settlements; constraints on agricultural development and a dearth of non-agricultural rural economic opportunities; larger urban markets and access to regional markets; and the emergence of financial services as an important sector. Urbanization amplifies the regional skew in population as urban centres are concentrated in the east and particularly the south-east.

Botswana is a multi-party democracy which, since its independence, holds free and fair elections every five (5) years. The latest elections were held in 2019. Policy, accountability and governance institutions are fully fledged and functioning. The branches of government in Botswana comprise the National Assembly, the Executive, the Judiciary and the House of Chiefs (Ntlo ya Dikgosi). Local Government comprises 17 Administrative Districts and 17 District Councils in which district, town and city councillors are regularly elected. Election to political office is generally determined through the ballot system at all levels, except for Specially Elected Members of Parliament.

Zimbabwe has been in economic, political and social crisis since the turn of the 21st century. The crisis is the result of the combined effects of misgovernment, political intolerance, economic mismanagement by the ruling elite and a severely deleterious economic meltdown. International ostracism of the country in the wake of its controversial fast track land reform since 2000 and the human rights abuses precipitated the economic collapse. Shortages of the foreign currency and the disruption of the country's agricultural industry led to a collapse of the local manufacturing industry, high levels of unemployment and inflation and severe shortages of basic necessities of life (Mlambo, 2006).

Conceptualising The Zimbabwe Crisis

Once one of Africa's most bountiful and promising lands, by 2008 Zimbabwe had descended into political violence, economic deprivation, and institutional decay (Bratton, 2014). The conceptualization of Zimbabwe Crisis was influenced by Tofa (2020) in that it is indeed a crisis. Tofa (2020) is of the view that even though it is a crisis there is no agreement of what really the source of the crisis is. It is a crisis in terms of

social, economic and political dimension, as such it is a multilayered crisis (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2008) (Sachinyoka, 2003) (Tofa, 2020). At the center of this crisis is the question of legitimacy, the legitimacy of political authority. Zimbabwe is a country whose political authority legitimacy is contested particularly because the process and outcome of elections especially from the year 2000 going forward (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2008).

According to Tofa (2020), when talking to somebody from civil society or opposition political parties, they will tell you that the crisis is that of legitimacy which process, and outcome are contested. This therefore leads to a crisis because for instance the opposition reject the outcome of such election, when rejecting the outcome, it does not cooperate with the government. It criticizes the government, fights with the government and for example support the imposition of sanctions against Zimbabwe, because it believes that the political authority is not a legitimate authority because it had not emerged under a conduct of free and fair elections (Tofa, 2020).

When the political authority is regarded as having no legitimacy then there is no incentive to cooperate with such a political authority, so it has to rely on the use of power than on the cooperation of citizens. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) opines, the Zimbabwean nationalist paradigm has become bankrupt and has reduced itself to unproductive patronage, cronyism, violence, and lawlessness as a survival strategy. It also accepts that Zimbabwean nationalism has now lost its noble emancipatory ideals and has become impervious to the human rights and democratic demands of the people. That is at the center of the Zimbabwe Crisis.

When a political authority is perceived to have no legitimacy, it also affects the economic dimension because political spends a lot of time fighting for legitimacy instead of focusing on the economic development of the society, that is how the politics affect the economic aspect, making it not only a political crisis but also a social and economic crisis. According to Tofa, (2020), when the economic performance of the government is affected the government's capacity to provide public goods becomes undermined.

Tofa, (2020) refers to it also as a crisis of leadership where leaders are not leading the society in accordance with the aspirations of the people, a leadership which is not accountable to the people. It is a leadership which does not tolerate diversity and lacks moral value, that's why we have seen shocking levels of corruption in Zimbabwe (Tofa, 2020). It is also a crisis where international actors have played a role, especially Britain and the United States of America according to (Tofa, 2020). It is a multilayered crisis which causes are quite diverse and both internal and external.

The Zimbabwe Crisis fits what is referred to as a politicicide. In politicides violence or conflicts, the victimised groups are targeted by their political opposition. Similar examples

include targeting of opposition in South and Central America; Chile 1973-76, Argentina 1976-80 and El Salvador in 1980-89 (Goldstone, et al., 2010). Politicides often results in fewer victims than civil wars; the extreme nature of the violence here which only involves the attempt to destroy and eradicate a particular group warrants the inclusion in the study of instability and as such the researcher in this work adopts the phrase Zimbabwe Crisis as a variable in this paper.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper sought to explore the responses of the Botswana government to the Zimbabwe crisis focusing specifically from 2008 to 2018. It therefore explored the qualitative research design. This is important to the study due to its appropriateness in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. It is also able to assist in gaining a richly detailed understanding of a problem in question because it is concerned with the depth as opposed to quantity of things (Babbie, 2007). Furthermore, it can use methods which are also suitable in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status to mention but a few. It is due to its non-numerical method of presenting data of both primary and secondary data that it will be used for this study.

existing literature was used to help in discussions. The interviews were conducted via Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) models specifically Skype, WhatsApp, Google meet and Zoom calls. These interviews were thus conducted between the 06/10/2020 and the 09/11/2020. Securing interviews followed a common pattern. Emails requesting interviews with respondents were sent along with necessary attachments. Once interview permission was granted, a semi-structured interview was carried out at the interviewee's preferred mode of communication. A common interview guide with three parts was used to ensure that all aspects of the topic were covered during each interview. After the interviews were conducted they were transcribed manually and then subjected to thematic analysis. This is a process which entails identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data. The researcher analyzed data following Braun and Clarke phases of analyzing transcriptions. Respondents were selected using Expert Sampling because of their knowledge in Regional Integration and Security and their knowledge on the Zimbabwe Crisis.

Table 1: Summary Of Respondents

NO	PSEUDONYM	INTERVIEW DATE	INSTITUTION CATEGORY
	RESPONDENT A	06/10/2020	CIVIL SOCIETY
	RESPONDENT B	07/10/2020	CIVIL SOCIETY
	RESPONDENT C	13/10/2020	ACADEMIA
	RESPONDENT D	21/10/2020	ACADEMIA
	RESPONDENT E	22/10/2020	ACADEMIA/ZIMBABWEAN

	RESPONDENT F	23/10/2020	ACADEMIA
	RESPONDENT G	02/11/2020	GOVERNMENT
	RESPONDENT H	03/11/2020	INDEPENDENT EXPERT
	RESPONDENT I	09/11/2020	INTERNATIONAL RESEACHER

Source; author's construct.

III. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Changes In Botswana's Sub-Regional Policy

Examining how the Zimbabwe crisis has affected the sub-regional policy choices of Botswana was the objective of this research. This part answered the question how has the crisis affected the sub-regional policy choices of Botswana? The Respondents were asked about measures Botswana put in place as a response to the crisis in Zimbabwe and the extent to which they were successful. This focused on respondents' view on whether Botswana has in any way responded to the crisis. From their views the responses are represented in the following themes, no Botswana has not responded; Botswana responded negatively; Botswana responded positively. As to whether the responses were successful the most consensus was that Botswana has been a lone voice in trying to bring Zimbabwe to order.

Positive Responses

One respondent argued that Botswana is one of the countries in its individual capacity which has really a distinctive role in efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean Crisis. Botswana's response has been largely characterized by two approaches. Firstly, according to Respondent I is that Botswana has tried to assist Zimbabwe through the provision of private loans. Provision of loans to the private sector, to try and promote economic tabulation in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a country under sanctions without line of credit open to the country. Thus, it cannot borrow from international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It does not have access to loans and credit facilities. The offer of private sector loans was in order to support business and consequently the economic growth of the country in distress.

It was claimed in addition to the above by Respondent D, that Botswana has made some financial contributions to assist the Zimbabwe government. There are some instances where money was given for fuel purposes to address the fuel shortage problem in Zimbabwe in the form of loan to assist the Zimbabwean regime.

One other response was calling for good governance in Zimbabwe. If you look at the Botswana's former President Ian Khama, he is one of the few people who have been calling for accountability to settle the Zimbabwean situation, as far back as 2008. According to Respondent I, there was a time in which Botswana was trying to mobilize the international community and Southern African Development Community

(SADC) to put more pressure and even diplomatic pressure to try and resolve the situation in Zimbabwe. Respondent G added to that by saying "*perhaps the most formidable response in the foreign policy front where the then President Lt. Gen Seretse Khama Ian Khama regularly spoke out against his then counterpart and President Robert Mugabe for human rights violations*".

Respondent E said that the most public position is that the former President Khama has (was?) been vocal regarding the governance in Zimbabwe. Speaking publicly about elections and any topic, he was perhaps the only SADC leader who came out to oppose Mugabe directly.

One other positive response which depends on the speaker is what Respondent D refers to as providing home for Zimbabweans. According to Respondent D Zimbabweans were well received by the state in Botswana as a place of refuge in the wake of the crisis. As much as illegal immigrants were returned home, those who had necessary documents and meeting all other immigration requirements were given an opportunity to stay in Botswana. In Respondent D's opinion this alleviated the burden on the Zimbabwe government.

In addition, some respondents mentioned diplomatic engagements with Zimbabwe as another positive response by the government of Botswana. For instance Respondent A is of the view that Botswana responded at a diplomatic level within the SADC context and on bilateral level with Zimbabwe. On the bilateral context Respondent A claims that Botswana has engaged Zimbabwe on many platforms as a partner to try and help resolve the situation in Zimbabwe from the Robert Mugabe presidency. That Botswana engaged at a presidential level as well as at ministerial and institutional levels. This respondent does point out that those engagements sometimes did not bare any fruits.

At the SADC level Botswana was seen doing a lot of work especially on the SADC-OPDS, Botswana try to push the situation to the top of the agenda every time to see that the issue is brought to attention. The response also depended on the presidency or the president in power. For instance during the Mogae Administration Botswana was not too critical of the Mugabe Administration as the Khama Administration and also the current regime in Botswana is not critical of the Mnangagwa alleged atrocities against the citizens.

Negative Responses

Most of the respondents to the question of ways in which the Government of Botswana (GoB) responded to the Zimbabwe Crisis were objective enough to speak of both the positive and the negative ways or ways in which could undermine the SADC integration agenda. Botswana during the Khama administration (2008-2018) was seen to be critical, vocal and open against the corruption, bad governance, human rights violations by the Zimbabwe government against the citizens. Thus Botswana became the lone voice in SADC criticizing Zimbabwe.

Respondent I recalls of moments when Botswana was accused by Zimbabwe of training opposition supporters/elements with the agenda to remove the government. Because Botswana has been calling for accountability, for Zimbabwe to respect human rights, to conduct free and fair elections. Botswana has been exceptional on that. But the problem is that it has been a lonely voice not supported by SADC as an institution and other SADC member states in their individual capacity.

Botswana has tried but without much success to reduce illegal immigration through border patrols and deportations. One of the measure taken by the government was increasing of the security personnel to ensure they cut down the influx of illegal migrants into Botswana from Zimbabwe. Respondent C opines that Botswana has put a number of measures as a response to the Zimbabwe Crisis. Firstly, according to Respondent C, it was with regard to repatriation, through the Botswana Police Service (BPS) and the Botswana Defence Force (BDF).

We have had so many repatriation missions where Zimbabweans were mostly involved. There are even operations to trace and arrest the illegal Zimbabwean immigrants in this country. Especially in the Northern part where we share a border with Zimbabwe. Many times we have seen the BPS and BDF embarking on missions of arrest. Thus arrest and later repatriate the Zimbabweans back to their country. This was largely in response to crimes that are allegedly committed by Zimbabweans when they here. The first one of course being that they are illegal immigrants or border jumpers. (Respondent C)

Respondent C goes on to expand that there has been an increase in border security along the Botswana side of the border. *The Special Support Group (SSG) and the BDF now run a 24/7/365 patrol on the Zim/Bots border, this is among others to curb crimes and illegal border crossing. Botswana has mostly done inland control to try and curb border jumping as well as repatriate those that have managed to cross border without being detected and those who have overstayed.* (Respondent C)

Botswana is known to be one of the countries with quite strict immigration laws. Further according to Respondent C, we have seen a response through its Immigration Act to limit a number of days that Zimbabweans can spend in the country. Because if we are just going to issue resident permits to Zimbabweans without special considerations we will end up with an influx that does not necessarily add any value to this country. So we have seen Botswana limiting a number of days, although not only special to Zimbabweans, but it was a measure trying to curb that influx, to a maximum of only 90 days in a year. So that is Botswana saying we cannot have an influx of Zimbabweans, if so at the end of the day we are going to have our economy not being able to sustain our people.

The other negative response brought up by one of the respondents was mainly in terms of how Botswana has been dealing with Zimbabweans citizens in Botswana. This respondent says this is two layered. One at the level of society. That the people of Botswana themselves in terms of xenophobic vows against Zimbabweans in Botswana. The other level is at the level of government in trying to make it difficult for Zimbabweans in terms of provision of papers and permits for Zimbabweans to go to Botswana.

I know that Botswana has banned the driving of vehicles by Zimbabweans from Namibia to Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans used to import vehicles via Namibia and drive through Botswana to home, but Botswana outlawed that. People now have to use Tanzania for example. This has been one of the responses trying to limit the freedom of the people of Zimbabwe to travel in and through Botswana. (Respondent I)

No, Botswana Did Not Respond

Some of the respondents were of the view that the Botswana government has not responded to the Zimbabwe Crisis, with one respondent holding the view that Botswana is actually indifferent to the Zimbabwe Crisis. Particularly, Respondent B was of the view that there has not been any tangible measure by the Botswana government. This respondent made a comparison between leaderships or regimes in Botswana. That during the Mogae Administration the response has always been a diplomatic stance just like the rest of SADC leaders. That the Mogae Administration was not critical of the Zimbabwe Crisis, it was an attitude of cautious approach, that in terms of sovereignty let them deal with their problems.

Another respondent was of the view that if the government responds its policy will be in bits and pieces and more reactionary in that it is not informed by long term plan or strategy. It is really unclear what Botswana is doing, it is just diplomatic speeches here and there, media releases (according to Respondent H)

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Botswana is Zimbabwe's immediate neighbour sharing a common border of 813 km long. As noted by Jonas, Mandiyanike and Maundeni (2013), there is a high level of people to people between Botswana and Zimbabwe. As such, it comes natural that Botswana takes keen interest in the development of Zimbabwe. The objective of this paper was to the changes in Botswana's sub-regional policies as a result of the Zimbabwe in the period between 2008 and 2018.

It is not surprising that as a country Botswana has put some measures in place as a response to the events in Zimbabwe as suggested by the findings from this study. What was actually difficult to prove in this study is whether in fact the Zimbabwe Crisis has influenced Botswana's sub-regional policy choices. It is possible that the events in Zimbabwe cannot influence Botswana's sub-regional policy choices because this was also the case in South Africa as was claimed by van Wyk (2002),

despite the existence of a Joint Commission between South Africa and Zimbabwe with a dedicated subcommission on foreign affairs, South Africa was until now unable to influence events in Zimbabwe. Although van Wyk (2002) findings are from almost two decades there were reiterated by few other researchers at different points during the Zimbabwe Crisis for instance (Raftopoulos & Savage, (2004), De Jager & Musuva, (2016) and Primorac & Chan, (2007).

As the events in Zimbabwe unfolded, South Africa's handling of the issue took the form of various non-coercive diplomatic measures such as international appeals (moral persuasion to conflicting parties), governmental fact finding missions, participation in various observer teams, various bilateral and multilateral negotiations, third party informal diplomatic consultations, track two diplomacy (by non-official, non-governmental parties), various conciliatory gestures and continued economic assistance of which South Africa's continued trade with Zimbabwe and electricity supply via Eskom are examples (van Wyk, 2002). It has been the same with some of the responses taken by Botswana brought up in this research. That Botswana has in some instances engaged with Zimbabwe at a bilateral relation and opted for quiet diplomacy, thus under the presidencies of Mogae (1998-2008) and the current presidency (2018-present). Botswana has also sent observer missions during elections. The findings of this study also suggested that Botswana has given out some financial assistance to Zimbabwe as the case with South Africa's economic assistance and electricity supply.

On the other hand this research also found that Botswana has put in measures that maybe detrimental to the general objectives of the SADC regional integration agenda. For example 'strengthened regional solidarity, peace and security in order for the people of the region to live and work together in peace and harmony' (Southern African Development Community, 1993). As claimed by Jonas, Mandiyanike and Maundeni, (2013), with thousands of Zimbabweans illegal immigrants already staying in the country and contributing to the levels of crime, Botswana sought to prevent a war situation that could have produced a much larger influx of refugees. The problems of refugee influx into Botswana would have created great problems for the country. Perhaps Botswana was trying to avoid a situation predicted by (Ruegger, 2019), that refugees contribute to regional instability through economic decline, pressures on public health or the import of rebels and weapons.

Furthermore the findings of this research suggests that Botswana has one of the strict immigration laws. One could say Botswana is more of a protectionist looking at the immigration laws. These findings are in line with those claimed by (Betts, 2013), that Botswana has been recognized as having the most exclusionary policy towards Zimbabweans in the region. The study by Betts (2013) claims that in contrast to South Africa where Zimbabweans had at least access to territory and a brief period of moratorium against deportation,

Botswana has drawn a sharp dichotomy between refugees and economic migrants. Researching has found out that those entering the asylum system have been detained in Francistown pending refugee status determination and then encamped in the Dukwi Refugee Camp, if successfully recognized. Those who have not entered the asylum system or who have fallen outside the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee have received no assistance and have faced the risk of roundup, arrest and deportation-despite the virtual collapse of the Zimbabwe state. This has also come out in this research work that we have seen many times the BPS and BDF embarking on missions of arrest and later repatriate the Zimbabweans back to the country.

This dichotomy between refugees and economic is thus detrimental to the SADC vision of a strengthened regional solidarity and as rightly observed by Betts (2013), has had significant human consequences for desperate Zimbabweans outside the asylum system. As captured in the above sections of this research work, this Zimbabweans are eager to make money to remit back home than being trapped in detention or refugee camp. Their illegal presence have put them at high risk of exploitation and has forced them to live in poverty. Those with HIV/AIDS have been denied access to ARVs and basic health care, this was actually the motive for this research as the research have interacted at a personal level with some of the illegal immigrants especially those with children and minors who have lacked access to education. Some as being present illegally have been exploited by the police who takes bribes for them or else risk arrest and eventual deportation.

The negative reaction of Botswana can be explained through constructivism lenses. The constructivist theory posits that truth and meaning is socially constructed. Constructivism is about the role of ideas, images, and by extension ideology and how this has an influence on how states interact and their relations with each other. According to constructivism just like human beings states are living in the world of our making characterized by the discourse of norms, identity and culture (Biswaro, 2011). The government of Botswana had thus identified or marked the illegal Zimbabweans as security threat to the people of Botswana. The surge worsened relations between the two neighbors. Botswana viewed the exodus of Zimbabweans into the neighboring countries as a burden to the SADC region. Botswana securitised Zimbabweans migrants as security threats in Botswana. The securitisation of migration in Botswana is better understood through constructivism lenses as Botswana constructed images, beliefs and perception that Zimbabweans were 'bad' citizens who needed to be dealt with and sent back to their country (Moyo & Ndimande, 2018). The findings of this research are in line with those of Moyo and Ndimande (2018) where they suggested that Botswana responded by securitizing Zimbabwean illegal migrants as security threat and prioritized the issue as high politics requiring urgent response. At the centre of securitisation, lies the Botswana President (former President SKI Khama) who acted as securitising actor through

speech acts which was then accepted by the Botswana audience. To further show Botswana's resentment of Zimbabweans migrating to its territory to the interior of Botswana, the Government of Botswana constructed an electrified fence along the border with Zimbabwe with hopes of preventing the entry of cattle infested with foot and mouth and Zimbabwean illegal migrants.

V. CONCLUSION

Botswana as an immediate neighbor to Zimbabwe has been interested by the happenings in that country. There is a high level of people to people contact between Botswana and Zimbabwe as such it comes naturally that Botswana takes keen interest in developments in Zimbabwe. The response of Botswana to the Zimbabwe Crisis is twofold, on the one hand it is positive on the other hand is negative response. On the positive, Botswana has been there for the people of Zimbabwe by offering the government financial assistance, for instance at a time when there was fuel shortage in the country. Botswana engaged Zimbabwe at a bilateral relations level and sent observer mission during elections. Botswana has put measures that are detrimental to the objectives of the SADC and undermine the objective 'strengthened regional solidarity, peace and security for the people of the region to live and work together in peace and harmony'. Measures like arrest and deportation of illegal migrants, strict immigration law of only 90 days visit days allowed per year.

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