

**Understanding Quiet Diplomacy: A critical analysis of South Africa's  
intervention in Zimbabwe, 2000-2009.**

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## **ACRONYMS**

ZANU-PF – Zimbabwe African Union –Patriotic Front

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-T - Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai

MDC-M – Movement for Democratic Change- Mutambara

GPA – Global Political Agreement

GNU – Government of National Unity

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People’s Union

MPLA – The People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola

PAIGC – African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde

ZESN – Zimbabwe Election Support Network

EA – Electoral Act

SAIIA – South African Institute of International Affairs

OSISA – Open Society Institute of Southern Africa

ZCTCU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

AU – African Union

OAU – Organization of African Unity

DFA – Department of Foreign Affairs

PTA – Preferential Trade Agreement

ESAP – Economic Structural Assessment Program

ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

MK – Umkhonto We Sizwe

UN – United Nations

USA – United States of America

POSA- Public Order and Security Act

ANC – African National Congress

PAC – Pan African Congress

SWAPO – South West Africa People’s Organization

FRELIMO – Liberation Front of Mozambique

ZEC – Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

SIPO- Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ

SEOM – SADC Electoral Observer Mission

FLS – Front Line States

SADCC – Southern African Development Coordination Conference

SADC – Southern African Development Community

NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa’s Development

DRC – The Democratic Republic of Congo

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

CIO – Central Intelligence Organization

EU – European Union

HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

SADC-PF– Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum.

OPDSC – Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security Cooperation

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Program

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## **Chapter 1:**

### **1.1. Introduction.**

Independent Zimbabwe formerly known as Rhodesia in the colonial period, is a product of liberation struggle. Zimbabwe's independence was acquired on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1980. It emerges as the final product of the Liberation war of the white minority government led by Ian Douglas Smith, against the military wings from the two liberation movements; the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) under the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) led by His Excellency (H.E) Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and on the other hand, the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) under Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) led by the late Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo. Joshua Nkomo was born in the year 1917 June 19<sup>th</sup> in Matabeleland, Semokwe. He was a revolutionary and a freedom fighter who dedicated his efforts to lead ZAPU and its military wing ZIPRA in the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. He served as the President of the National Democratic Party (NDP) from 1960 to 1961; a black radical movement launched in Highfield near Salisbury in Zimbabwe whose main philosophy and objective was to fight for majority (black) rule and a whole takeover of power from the white Rhodesian government (Pritchard, 2018: 108). When the NDP was banned by the Rhodesian government, he later founded and became president of ZAPU in 1961 to 1962; and served as President of the African National Council in 1975. He also served both as a Member of Parliament and a Minister of Home Affairs in 1980. He ascended to the position of Vice-President of Zimbabwe in 1990 until his death in 1999 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017: 30).

Both H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo were significant figures in the struggle for liberation in Rhodesia, and they played significant roles in the liberation war between the white settler Rhodesian government and ZAPU and ZANU. H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe was born on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1924 in Kutama district in Zimbabwe. He assumed a career as a teacher where he taught both in Zimbabwe and Ghana from 1945. He later joined the National Democratic Party (NDP) as secretary in 1960. Almost two years after its formation the NDP is transformed into ZAPU in December 1961, but it is ultimately banned in 1962 September. In 1963, ZAPU split into another formation, the birth of

ZANU. H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe became a member of ZANU as a breakaway movement from ZAPU. He is later sent to prison together with other political figures like Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo from 1964 to 1974. After his release from prison in 1974, H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe led ZANU rebels in the continuous fight for liberation of the people of Zimbabwe to the very end in 1979, and ultimately into the victory of independence from Britain in 1980. The subsequent cessation of the colonial white minority government in the year 1980 ushered in a new reality in Zimbabwe. This monumental period is comprised of a ceasefire agreement which is embodied in the Lancaster House Constitution. H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe ascended to the echelons of political power as Prime Minister in 1987, and later as President after the Lancaster House Agreement in 1990.

Brian Raftopolous and Alois Mlambo indicate that “the constitution that emerged from the Lancaster House Agreement embodied some compromises over minority rights especially the future of land ownership” (Raftopolous and Mlambo, 2009: 12). These compromises, however, cause major problems in the politics of contemporary Zimbabwe in the early 2000s through the undertaking of the “Fast Track Land Reform Program” (FTLRP). The Fast-Track Land Reform Program is not an isolated program. It emerges from other various land reform programs that the Zimbabwean government had undertaken prior, in the quest to redistribute land in the hands of the white minority. There are two land reform programs that precede the Fast-Track Land Reform Program of July 2000 to December 2001).

Prior to the FTLRP program, the government in Zimbabwe adopted a Land Reform Resettlement Program (Phase 1) in 1980 to 1997. The objective of this program was to redistribute about 8,5 million hectares of land. However, by 1997, only about 3.5 million hectares have been purchased or acquired and 71 000 families had been settled compared to the planned target of 162 000 families (United Nations Interim report, 2002: 5). These figures, as the report prompts, proved to have been relatively small but by no means insignificant achievements because they were subject to constraints by the rules of the Lancaster House Agreement. So, between 1998 September and 2004 December, the Zimbabwean government resolved to adopt yet another Land Reform Resettlement Program (Phase 2), to acquire about 5 million hectares and settle 91 000 families and the GDP would be increased by the planned increased commercialized small-scaled farmers to contribute to the reduction of

poverty (United Nations Interim report, 2002: 7). The two land reform program phases (1 & 2) prior to the FTLRP in July 2000 to December 2001 explain the compromises and limitations that the Lancaster House Agreement advanced as Raftopoulos and Mlambo indicated earlier. However, in the implementation of the Fast-Track Land Reform Program (which is still Phase 2 but at an accelerated pace), the target number of hectares shifts from 5 million to 9 million to cover 160 000 families (United Nation Interim report, 2002: 7). But there is seemingly a slight change on how the government resolved to undertake the FTLRP compared to the prior adopted land reform programs. The FTLRP becomes a violent encounter and a significant element of the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe.

Muna Ndulo (2012) and Godfrey Kanyanze (2003) articulate how the consolidation of independence in Zimbabwe came with the inheritance of colonial power institutions like the security forces and the economic institutions respectively. The significant point made in relation to the emergence of the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe post-1999 is that these inherited colonial institutions continue to assume the role of determining factors to the explanation of the political instability and violence. For instance, the inherited colonial power structure or institutions like the security sector, which is the army, police, and intelligence that Eldred Masunungure speaks about, indicates how the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) engages the leaders and supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as the main and largest opposition party.

This signifies the use of the inherited power structure to impose violence on those who are deemed dissent in post-1999 Zimbabwe (Masunungure, 2011: 50). This became a norm in how ZANU-PF engages dissent post-1999. ZANU-PF is a political party resulting from the merging of and the signing of the unity accord by ZAPU and ZANU leaders on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1987 (Makumbe, 2003: 22). Both ZAPU and ZANU prior to the merging played significant roles in the liberation struggle against the Rhodesian government. Accustomed to the violent nature of political interactions with the Rhodesian government, the ZANU-PF (ZAPU and ZANU) government would use violence and brutality to engage the MDC as the largest opposition party. The MDC is a political party that was established in the year 1999 by the late Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. Morgan Richard Tsvangirai was born in the year 1952 March 10<sup>th</sup> in Gutu Zimbabwe. He was elected as the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Congress of

National Federation of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in 1988. ZCTU is a Trade Union Movement that dates as far back as 1890s with the objective amongst others, to organize, develop, and maintain a powerful, effective, democratic independent and united trade union movement in Zimbabwe; to protect and defend workers against all forms of discrimination, exploitation, and abuse (ZCTU, 2021). Upon being ZCTU's secretary, he was later elected as the chairman of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA); a movement established in 1997 to support the creation of a new constitution in Zimbabwe (Britannica, 2020). In the year 1999, Morgan Richard Tsvangirai established the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the largest opposition party to challenge the ZANU-PF's hegemony (Britannica, 2020). The nascent MDC exerted its dominant influence in its victory against the ZANU-PF over the national referendum to amend the constitution in the year 2000.

The MDC in its influence as the largest and most influential opposition proves its existence in the elections from the year 2002, 2005 and 2008, respectively. The MDC became a staunch challenger and opposition to ZANU-PF post-1999. However, Morgan Richard Tsvangirai's conviction and dedication towards challenging the ZANU-PF and calling for change in Zimbabwe came with repercussions. He endured arbitrary arrests from the year 2000, 2003, and in 2007, he was assaulted and arrested (Mail & Guardian, 2007). Morgan Richard Tsvangirai would later become Prime Minister from the year 2009 to 2013. However, this milestone follows through from a crucial period in the Zimbabwean political life (1999-2009); politics that embody violence and anguish amid those who are not supporters of the ZANU-PF.

### **The importance of post-1999 period in Zimbabwe – inception of political instability and violence.**

The post-1999 Zimbabwe is characterized by a hostile political environment and a violent form of engagement between the ZANU-PF and MDC. It is also comprised of a government with elements of an authoritarian regime and a one-party government system dominated by the ZANU-PF. However, this political set up is disrupted by the emergence of the MDC in 1999 and its potential threat and challenge to the ZANU-PF. This culminated into a culture of political intolerance. Moreover, members of the MDC were gruesomely murdered, and others intimidated and tortured to quell dissent and maintain hegemony by the ZANU-PF.

Being the government of the day, ZANU-PF managed to rope in and deploy the security forces against the MDC supporters in a disguised manner of “maintaining order”. These security forces initiated the most gruesome violence on the supporters of MDC in the quest to protect the incumbent government and as a tactic to instill fear and intimidate MDC supporters (Mhandara and Pooe, 2013: 10). This presents a problem of the violation of basic human rights and freedoms of the ordinary people in Zimbabwe especially those who are affiliated with the MDC. It further extends to the general populace during election periods.

Patrick Dzimiri presents an observation regarding electoral related human rights abuses when Zimbabwe was preparing for 2002 presidential elections, in addition to the repressive draconian laws like the Public Order and Security Order (POSA). This law facilitated “harassment, intimidation and torture of MDC supporters” (Dzimiri, 2017: 56). Additionally, the use of the “Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act” (AIPPA) barred journalists from covering and reporting the arbitrary arrests, torture and murders of MDC supporters, and Morgan Richard Tsvangirai’s arrest a week before the 2002 election (Dzimiri, 2017: 56). Subsequently, in the 2005 parliamentary elections, over 600 MDC members had lost their lives due to police brutality.

Similar acts of violence and human rights abuses are seen in the lead up to the 2008 elections. For instance, in the operation ‘Makavhotera papi’ undertaken by the army and the police prior to the second round of elections in 2008, “many people were displaced, maimed, murdered and abused and terrorized by the army and police” (Chinyere, 2014: 77). This observation by Petra Chinyere presents a view that signifies the atmosphere through which political engagements occurred in Zimbabwe. There is also a case whereby MDC offices in Jerera were bombed and resulted in one person losing their life and two others being disabled (Chinyere, 2014: 78). This is the nature of some of the political interactions that took place in Zimbabwe.

There are several common factors that emerge in the quest to understand the political instability in Zimbabwe post-1999. These include, as already highlighted, the emergence of the MDC as the largest opposition political party and the failure of the ZANU-PF as the ruling party to successfully adopt a national constitutional referendum. Moreover, the situation is worsened by how ZANU-PF responds to these political developments. Sithole and Makumbe capture the gist of ZANU-PF’s response

by stating that the political instability and violence has been informed by “the need to maintain ZANU-PF hegemony in Zimbabwe against all odds, through the use of the security sector and populist policies” (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 132). In addition to using the state security sector and populist policies, there are several actors involved in the operations of the violent political engagements amid ZANU-PF’s interaction with the MDC.

There exists a ZANU-PF Youth brigade or Youth militia which is used to wage targeted attacks against MDC supporters. On the other hand, War Veterans were also involved strategically in the forced farm invasions or the “Fast Track Land Reform Program” (FTLRP) in 2001 and 2002. All these different actors are used by the ZANU-PF to wage targeted campaigns of repression in a bid to retain control. Thus, the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections were marked by politically incited violence and human rights violations (Ndulo, 2012: 189). The justification by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intervene to resolve the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe can be thought of as partly driven by the calamity of political intolerance and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

This political intolerance on the part of the ZANU-PF is seen through the increased human rights violations during and after elections. Also, the economic meltdown and the wake of a deadly virus, HIV/AIDS, provided reasonable peace and security issues and concerns that SADC needed to address before they spillover to other countries (Mlambo, 2007: 58). Alluding to what specifically led to SADC to resolve to intervene, is the violence and human rights abuses that surround elections. For instance, one considers the campaign called ‘operation Makavhoreta papi’ which is translated into ‘operation who did you vote for?’ in the lead up to 2008 elections (Masunungure, 2011: 56).

The extent of the gruesome torture, murder and acts of intimidation and violence meted out on MDC supporters and the general populace warranted an intervention by SADC. Also, it accounts to the acknowledgement of the potential threat that the continuation of the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe posed towards the entire Southern African region. The rationale for SADC’s intervention is driven possibly by the foresight of the potential political, humanitarian, and economic damage that Zimbabwe would create across the Southern African region. Arrigo Pallotti indicates

that the resolution by SADC to intervene through South Africa as an envoy was due to the calculation of key political and economic roles that Zimbabwe played in Southern Africa (Pallotti, 2013: 29).

Patrick Dzimiri also observes that the resolution by SADC to intervene has been driven by the need to mitigate the threat that Zimbabwe's political instability and violence posed to other neighboring countries and to control the potential spillover of the crisis' (Dzimiri, 2017: 64). This intervention is spearheaded by South Africa led by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, as an envoy of SADC to initiate a peaceful political solution in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2009 through the practice of quiet diplomacy. H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki was born on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1942 in Idutywa, Transkei. Verging into politics at a young age, he joined the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in early 1950s. He goes on to become an assistant secretary to the revolutionary council of the ANC in Lusaka in the year 1971 (The Presidency RSA, 2000). In the year 1975, he became a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC; and three years later the secretary in the office of the President of the ANC (The Presidency RSA, 2000).

He was elected as the Director of Information and Secretary of Presidential Affairs. His contribution to the ANC's liberation struggle as a freedom fighter has seen him participating in all the negotiations that took place between the apartheid South African government and South African liberation movements, leading up to the interim constitution of the Republic of South Africa (The Presidency RSA, 2000). He is later elected the Chairperson of the ANC in 1993, and in the following year, is elected to become the Deputy President of the Government of National Unity in the period May -1994 to June - 1999. He was elected as the President of the ANC on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1997; and ultimately became the President of the Republic of South Africa in the year 1999. Furthermore, he is elected as the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) in July 2002 – July 2003. In the year 2004, he embarked on a second term as the President of the Republic of South Africa until when he resigned in 2008. It is after this period when he is mandated by SADC to spearhead negotiations in Zimbabwe of which he does so through quiet diplomacy approach.

Quiet diplomacy is referred to as "a set of soft diplomatic approaches mostly behind the scenes engagements to facilitate pacific settlement of disputes" (Mhango, 2010:

16). The nature of quiet diplomacy rests in its practice of behind-the-scenes engagements between the conflicting parties mediated by a third party which proposes a solution that both the conflicting parties agrees to.

In this case, South Africa proposed a solution which it encouraged MDC and ZANU-PF to consider. The adoption of quiet diplomacy as a non-threatening approach by South Africa is informed by amongst many factors, “the historical ties between Zimbabwe and South Africa and the liberation movement ties” (Landsberg, 2016: 127). It is informed also by the need to maintain African solidarity and to advance the notion of “African solutions for African problems”. The implication of the notion of ‘African solutions for African problems’ is used as a geo-political mechanism by South Africa to block external ideas and influence from taking central place in its conflict resolution endeavors especially in Africa.

This is due to the pressure and challenges that South Africa faced in relation to its engagement with the West, particularly the United States of America and European Union as the advocates of megaphone diplomacy or military intervention. James Hamill and John Hoffman argue that, part of the challenges of quiet diplomacy is that “it is supportive where it should be critical” (Hamill and Hoffman, 2009: 383). The idea is that to maintain its posture as a good neighbor, South Africa’s practice of quiet diplomacy limited its ability to intervene substantially, but in the same manner, it consolidated its posture as an equal partner in Southern Africa as opposed to presenting itself as a hegemon.

Another challenge faced by South Africa in its quiet diplomacy approach has been to assure the people of Zimbabwe and the international community at large about the strategic progress that was being made, especially the timing factor. Because due to its nature, it was not in the interest of quiet diplomacy strategy to inform the public and make public announcements about every significant element of the constructive behind the scenes engagements. H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki’s assertion that “quiet diplomacy precludes loud pronunciations from rooftops” attests to this challenge. For instance, the time factor reflects the critical sentiments shared by scholars like George Mhango to say that, the quiet diplomacy approach is a ‘naive approach’ mainly because it was not catching up with the mounting developments in Zimbabwe (Mhango, 2010: 14). However, in the consideration of the objectives that

South Africa set out to achieve in Zimbabwe, there is an element of success that is subject to the practice of its quiet diplomacy approach.

Thus, in 2008, South Africa succeeded in bringing ZANU-PF and MDC to adopt the “Global Political Agreement (GPA)”, which presented an opportunity for both the parties to get into a power-sharing arrangement which is the “Government of National Unity (GNU)” in 2009. This is the outcome that resulted from South Africa’s commitment in the practice of quiet diplomacy. This power-sharing arrangement has been the core basis for how South Africa mediates in countries going through political conflict like in South Sudan and Burundi. Its approach within Africa has been driven in most part, by its aspirations to provide political solutions that emanate from its own experience of a negotiated political solution.

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos captures the model of conflict resolution by South Africa in Africa, in that, “it employs the moral authority it derived from its own experience of national reconciliation and democratization” (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 3). Through these efforts, South Africa managed to restore political contestation in countries like Burundi and DRC, as in the case of Zimbabwe where elections although fragile have brought about political stability and functioning governments (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8). In addition, one considers the successful political solution facilitated by South Africa and the successful holding of the 2008 national elections as the cornerstone of the SADC mandate that was given to South Africa.

The adoption of the GPA in 2008 and the implementation of the GNU in 2009 account as successful political solutions that emerged through the practice of quiet diplomacy and as the central objective set out by South Africa. The most important element of this political solution was to put Zimbabwe in a path to self-actualize. The people of Zimbabwe had the ultimate power to see it that they create their own fate. South Africa only intervened to assist in the facilitation of a political solution, which would see the ending of the conflict between ZANU-PF and MDC and not to infringe on Zimbabwe’s sovereignty. Additionally, the mandate that SADC set out for South Africa was to ensure that the elections in 2008 would be undertaken in an “atmosphere of peace and tranquility and for people of Zimbabwe to freely choose and vote for leaders of their choice” (SADC, 2007). South Africa successfully delivered the SADC mandate. Both SADC and South Africa’s objectives were met in the intervention in Zimbabwe.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem.**

There is insufficient understanding of South Africa's quiet diplomacy objectives in its mediation efforts in the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2009. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a critical analysis of South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach because it will clarify how South Africa understood and set out to deal with the crisis of political instability and violence in Zimbabwe.

## **1.3. Research questions.**

What are the factors in relation to peace and security in the Southern African region that influenced South Africa's commitment to Quiet Diplomacy in Zimbabwe?

Did South Africa achieve its quiet diplomacy objectives in Zimbabwe during the 2000-2009 period?

## **1.4. Research objective.**

To explore the factors that influenced South Africa's commitment towards quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe in the 2000-2009 period.

## **1.5. Aim.**

This paper aims to analyze South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in the crisis of political instability and violence in Zimbabwe (2000-2009).

## **1.6. Rationale.**

South Africa commits itself as a peace enforcer throughout the Southern African region through its peace missions and interventions in Africa as a commitment to contribute towards peace and security in the Southern African region and the African continent.

Thus, the rationale for this paper is to explore what South Africa has achieved through quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe in the 2000-2009 period and the objectives that it set out to achieve in Zimbabwe through quiet diplomacy. There is a great debate on whether South Africa's mediation in Zimbabwe has been successful or not. Part of the rationale for this paper is to contribute to the on-going debate by offering a critical analysis of South Africa's quiet diplomacy objectives in Zimbabwe with a focus on the 2000-2009 period.

## **1.7. Methodology.**

The methodology that this paper follows is qualitative. It builds from a deductive approach to research. It is a single non-comparative explorative case-study research. Qualitative methodology, as Pierce notes, is best used to “explore complexities of political and social life within states” (Pierce, 2008: 45). Strauss and Corbin argue that qualitative methodology is best utilized “to uncover what lies behind phenomena which little is known” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 19). This paper also utilizes George and Bennett’s Within-case analysis that comprises of the Congruence method used in small-N-analysis and single case studies (George and Bennett, 2005).

The significance in this method lies in its quest to establish the value of quiet diplomacy approach by South Africa and the results that it provided in Zimbabwe. It is used to consolidate the arguments made by Joseph Nye in the theoretical framework in terms of how soft power application or South Africa’s quiet diplomacy approach brought the results it did Zimbabwe. In this sense, the within-cases analysis method is used to ascertain the value of quiet diplomacy and the data is analyzed in relation to the conduct of South Africa in Zimbabwe, to explain the outcomes of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe (George and Bennett, 2005).

### **1.8. Theoretical framework.**

To understand the soft diplomatic approach (quiet diplomacy) by South Africa towards Zimbabwe, this paper utilizes Joseph Jr Nye’s soft power theory, known also as ‘Co-optive power’. Joseph Nye Jr’s idea of ‘soft or co-optive power’ as a theoretical framework is used to understand how South Africa through the intervention exercised its power in Zimbabwe during the intervention.

Joseph Nye defines power as “the capacity to do things, but more specifically in social settings, the ability to affect others to set outcomes one wants” (Nye, 2021: 2). This is considered in respect to the outcome in the negotiations spearheaded by South Africa in Zimbabwe. Meaning that, the soft power approach by South Africa is used to frame and understand the outcome, which is the “Global Political Agreement” of 2008, and the power sharing arrangement, the “Government of National Unity” in 2009. This fits perfectly with Joseph Nye’s theorization of soft power which is premised on the mediator’s ability to influence the conflicting parties into an agreement that it wants. In other words, to co-opt conflicting parties to consider the outcome initiated by the mediator as the best solution there is to be provided. Equally considering the impact

on the part of the countries that are in conflict and the costs that military or hard power yields for mediators to affect the outcomes of conflict resolutions that they may want (Nye, 1990: 164).

Joseph Nye presents an argument in relation to the changing world of international politics and in general the post-Cold War era in that, military power has become costly and too difficult to apply as a way for a country to get what it wants, instead intangible forms of power have become increasingly important (Nye, 1990: 164). This would then signify a lens through which power is seen today, and the way South Africa conducted itself in Zimbabwe can be viewed through this lens. Nye points out that by practicing soft power, a state can get other states to want what it wants by determining a framework that shapes others' preferences through ideology, culture, and institutions' (Nye, 1990: 166). In this sense, a state like South Africa, championing democratic values and promoting negotiated settlements, would use its own experiences to co-opt other states where it intervenes or mediates to choose its ideal solutions as it has done in most of its historical interventions and mediations throughout the African continent.

For this fact, it was important for South Africa to opt for soft power approach instead of hard power but also considering the nature of conflict resolution models in the post-cold war era. Military conflict resolution was declining greatly. This therefore put preventive diplomacy and other non-military conflict resolution frameworks in the center of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa assumes a non-threatening, non-military approach of soft-power to mediate; a key element of soft-power. Furthermore, a soft-power approach is epitomized by South Africa's foreign policy which accords significant importance on peace missions as opposed to military intervention (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8). To consolidate the theorization of soft power to understand South Africa's approach in Zimbabwe, Chris Landsberg asserts that "a dominant feature of South Africa's African agenda centers on the push for negotiated solutions that ultimately lead to inclusive governments" (Landsberg, 2009: 16). This is basis through which the soft power theory is applied to fully understand how South Africa shaped its quiet diplomacy conflict resolution approach in Zimbabwe.

### **1.9. Literature review.**

The political instability and violence in contemporary Zimbabwe emerge from the establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as an alternative political party and a challenger to the ZANU-PF hegemony. But also, on the failure by the ZANU-PF to successfully adopt the national constitutional referendum. The subsequent forced land invasions, human rights violations and economic meltdown result from MDC's establishment and the response by the ZANU-PF government to its failure regarding the national constitutional referendum. The extent to which this political instability and violence calamity unfolds, warranted SADC's resolution to intervene through South Africa as an envoy to stabilize the situation in Zimbabwe so that it could not spillover to other neighboring countries. The outcome of SADC's efforts are the GPA and GNU arrangements as well as stability in terms of elections.

### **Political instability and violence in Zimbabwe – 1999-2009.**

The emergence of the MDC in 1999 and the subsequent failure of the ZANU-PF government to pass a constitutional referendum in the same year, account to the genesis of the contemporary political instability and violence in Zimbabwe. The failure of the national constitutional referendum presented the MDC with an opportunity to consolidate its presence in the political arena and “as a threat to the long-standing dominance of the ZANU-PF” (Mlambo and Raftopolous, 2010: 2).

This imminent threat posed by the MDC towards ZANU-PF is seen from its agitation for a new post-nationalist Zimbabwe, signifying a move from national liberation movements' politics, which were seemingly not in the best position to present constitutionalism and pluralism in the political sphere (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003: 100). On the part of the ZANU-PF, the failure to push for the successful amendment of the national constitutional referendum was a wake-up call and a painful acknowledgement of the presence of the MDC and a loss of trust by the people. Additionally, this failure presented the ZANU-PF with an opportunity to redefine its political prowess.

James Muzondidya asserts that the government in Zimbabwe led by the ZANU-PF party used the rhetoric of “the return of the land to its rightful owners” to conceal its policy shortcomings. Also, to manipulate and encourage those who recognize the land ownership inequality between whites and blacks, to rally behind the ZANU-PF government’ (Muzondidya, 2011: 15). The adoption of the “Fast-Track Land Reform Program” (FTLRP) and the subsequent invasions of commercial farms mostly owned

by white farmers, culminated into a great destruction of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe. Moreover, prior to the year 2000, in the agricultural sector, farms produced over 2 million tons of maize only to decline to 450 000 tons of maize by 2002 after the forceful seizure of the same farms (Howard-Hassmann, 2010: 899). However, these violent farm invasions by the veterans of war extend to the political engagements between the ZANU-PF and the MDC.

There is an indication of a wave of terror and excessive brutality in the engagements between these two political parties. In essence, this brutality and terror is imposed on MDC leaders and supporters by the ZANU-PF government. The significant part of this engagement is that, due to the fear of losing its grip on power, the ZANU-PF mobilized the security forces to torment, intimidate and murder MDC supporters (Mlambo and Raftopolous, 2010: 3). Manase Kudzai Chiweshe points out similar perspective in that, independent Zimbabwe has elements of a “patrimonial state whose inherent objective is based on the control of state apparatus to ensure continued grip on power and thus, violence and intimidation became a central part of everyday life in Zimbabwe” (Chiweshe, 2015).

Thus, the issue of the nexus between state and ZANU-PF and security forces comes to the fore in that, the security forces as institutions of the state, and not the properties of the ZANU-PF, were deployed to initiate the most gruesome violence on the supporters of MDC in quests to protect the incumbent government and as a tactic to instill fear and intimidate MDC supporters (Mhandara and Pooe, 2013: 10). This culminated into a gross violation of human rights towards the people in Zimbabwe especially those who are affiliated to the MDC. The violence in Zimbabwe has been informed by “the need to maintain ZANU-PF hegemony in Zimbabwe against all odds” as per Sithole and Makumbe’s argument (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 132). In essence the violence has been undertaken using the security sector and populist policies” (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 132). Thus, the increased use of “state institutions such as the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), Police, Army, and Media were used together with populist policies on land, employment, and indigenization of the economy” by the ZANU-PF to garner support in quests to remain in power (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 132).

The political instability and violence in Zimbabwe are exacerbated by other various factors like the economic meltdown, an increased tyrant-like repressive behavior by the ZANU-PF leader, H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe, manipulation of state institutions, lawlessness and the wake of a deadly virus, HIV/AIDS (Mlambo, 2007: 58). The worsened economic conditions in post-1999 Zimbabwe can be partly attributed to the failure by the ZANU-PF government to adopt a national constitutional referendum in 1999. Prior to 1999, Zimbabwe adopted an Economic Adjustment Structural Program (ESAP) in 1991. The effect of the ESAP initiative which was meant to ignite economic growth and improve the lives of the people of Zimbabwe provides explanatory value to the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe.

For instance, ESAP was meant to achieve objectives such as “to achieve GDP growth of 5% by 1995, to increase savings and investments to 25% of GDP each, to raise export growth by 9% annually, to reduce budget deficit from over 10% to 5% by 1995 and reduce inflation from 17, 7% to 10% in the same period” (Kanyanze, 2003: 56). However, figures in the same period (1991-2000) indicate that ESAP could not achieve these objectives and they subsequently deteriorated. Poverty figures increased in the same period from ‘40, 4% to 63, 3% from 1991 to 1996, and absolute poverty went from 16, 7% to 35% by 1996’ (Kanyanze, 2003: 65). By 2001, Zimbabwe’s currency had already lost 99% of its value, with its worth of less than the US cent, turning it into a worthless piece of paper.

In addition to these issues, Sandra Maclean posits that the various misguided economic decisions that the ZANU-PF government adopted especially in the late 1990s have a connection to the development of the post-2000 period in Zimbabwe. Amongst the misguided economic decisions, is the issue of the land reform program, and the “unpopular military involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)” (Maclean, 2002: 522). The problematic deployment of military into the DRC is captured by Maclean in terms of the economic impact that resulted because of this involvement, to say that “Zimbabwe spent 10 billion Zimbabwean Dollars (200 Million USD) in just two years in the DRC” (Maclean, 2002: 522). Moreover, these expenditures are made whilst the Zimbabwean economy was rapidly declining. For instance, “real GDP fell from \$645 in 1995 to \$437 in 1999 while GDP growth fell from 7, 3% in 1996 to 1% in 1999” (Maclean, 2002: 522).

In addition to these economic factors, H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe opted to award war veterans a lump sum of 50 000 Zimbabwean dollars and a monthly amount of 5 000 dollars' (Mlambo, 2007: 57). The figures provided earlier by Kanyanze denote a declining economy and the 10 billion expenditure together with the lump sum paid to war veteran overburdened the already struggling economy in Zimbabwe. By 2005, Alois Mlambo shows the effects of the failures of the Structural Economic Plan by his observation that, inflation rate rose to 400% in 2003, 622, 8% in 2004 before its decline to 142, 2% in 2005 (Mlambo, 2007: 59). This economic predicament that Zimbabwe was faced with created a ripple-effect in that, it overflowed to other sectors of the economy particularly the social services sector inclusive of Healthcare and Education. Meaning that, healthcare system broke down, worse, in the time when the HIV/AIDS pandemic was rife in Zimbabwe, and the education system also felt the heavy weight of the economic meltdown due to limited budgets and funding.

The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe happens alongside a tyrant-like, authoritarian repressive ZANU-PF led government especially during elections. Elections serve as the cornerstone of a democracy whereby citizens get the chance to vote for and elect the leaders of their choice without undue coercion. Fidelis Chikerema and Vincent Chakunda capture the importance of elections by identifying that, "elections are the most important ingredients of democratic governance because they ensure political participation of citizens in the political system and the determination of national leadership" (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014: 62).

Thus, in a politically safe environment, 'elections serve to deepen and consolidate democratic governance and political stability. However, on their own, elections are not synonymous with democracy' (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014: 62). Elections in Zimbabwe are many a times presumed to be characterized by "institutionalized intimidation, fear, violence, lawlessness, selfishness, patronage, manipulated state institutions, theocracy, rigging, selective application of the law and the inability to accept defeat" (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014: 63). Although Zimbabwe successfully held regular elections, elements such as violence, intimidation, and the inability to accept defeat are embodied in the elections. For instance, the operation 'who did you vote for' clearly encapsulate these elements as the Zimbabwean Police personnel were violently engaging citizens who voted for the MDC. This operation was undertaken in the lead up to the second round of March 2008 elections in Zimbabwe.

It is arguable that this operation was undertaken as a tact to instill fear and intimidate citizens who have and would otherwise vote for the MDC again in the second round of the March 2008 elections. Evidently, the post-2000 Zimbabwe has gone through a violent streak during election periods. This violence is mostly imposed towards supporters of MDC and its leaders as well those who are deemed dissent towards the ZANU-PF government. James Muzondidya quotes Masipula Sithole (1988) to say that, “the ZANU-PF government relies on the commandist nature of mobilization and politicization which it developed during the days of liberation struggle, which rests on the politics of fear, gruesome violations of human rights and intimidation towards the opponents” (Muzondidya, 2011: 9). This culture involves approaching “elections as battles and opponents viewed as enemies” to be destroyed through the Gukurahundi strategy that involves intolerant, commandist violent policy towards the opposition’ (Muzondidya, 2011: 9). This is the cornerstone of the political environment during elections in Zimbabwe.

In the lead up to the 2000 General Elections, 35 MDC supporters were killed by ZANU-PF Militias and others injured in the rural areas, the epicenter of violence against MDC supporters (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001: 7). On the same account, several MDC Members of Parliament were intimidated. For instance, there was an attack on Job Sikhala in his home by Army personnel in the year 2000. Job Sikhala was born on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1972, he is a politician, professional lawyer, and was a member and part of the national executive of the MDC from 1999. He was a Member of Parliament for Zengeza West after the 2000 elections. On the other hand, Williams Madzimure was assaulted and had his property damaged and belongings looted by ZANU-PF Militias in May 2001 (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001: 7). Williams Madzimure born on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1962; was a member of the MDC since its inception in 1999 and he later became provincial secretary for information and publicity in Harare. He went on to be elected as the second deputy speaker of parliament in Zimbabwe in 2008. He was also the spokesperson of the MDC on foreign affairs from 2005 to February 2008. In 2011 he became the secretary for MDC in Harare (Parliament Network, 2018). Like Job Sikhala, he was a victim to the gruesome attack due to his political affiliation.

The deployment of the Army to fight party-politics indicate a very thin line between the state, government, and the ZANU-PF as a political party. The issue of violence is seen

mostly during elections in Zimbabwe as Muna Ndulo notes that, “the ZANU-PF government deployed war veterans, youth militia, police and army to wage a targeted campaign of repression in a bid to retain control”. Thus, this provides explanatory value to the violence and human rights violations that occurred in the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections” (Ndulo, 2012: 189). A similar pattern of violence is seen in the 2005 and 2008 elections in Zimbabwe. More importantly, in the 2008 March 29<sup>th</sup> Elections in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF lost in the first round of the elections and then brutality and violence became a central tool for the ZANU-PF to deal with the loss.

The aftermath of this 2008 election loss in the first round, was gruesome torture, human rights violations, and brutality. It is undertaken by the mobilization of chiefs of Army, the Police, Air force, and Intelligence and Prison services by H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe. These different institutions led by the Army and the Police conducted a campaign called ‘operation Makavhoreta papi’ which is translated to English as ‘operation who did you vote for?’ (Masunungure, 2011: 56). This campaign was undertaken with the aim to murder, intimidate people who voted for the MDC, and to garner support or to intimidate people into voting ZANU-PF in the second-round of 2008 elections.

Simbarashe Moyo speaks of this problematic nexus of the ZANU-PF and Security forces in Zimbabwe, which is aimed at terrorizing citizens, stabilizing the ZANU-PF government and to shield the ZANU-PF from any possible takeover of power by the MDC (Moyo, 2014: 29). This is one instance amongst many that signifies the political instability and violence in independent Zimbabwe. The brutality and gruesome human rights violations that surround the 2008 election period unfolded to a point where the Southern African Development Community (SADC) resolved to intervene to initiate peace. SADC held an Extra-Ordinary Summit for Heads of state in 2007 March 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> to deal with the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe. Upon which, a resolution was made to mandate H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki to continue facilitating the dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC in Zimbabwe (SADC Communique, Extra-Ordinary Summit Troika, 2007). SADC’s Extra-Ordinary Summits are held at irregular intervals upon which an urgent issue threatening peace and security arises in one of the member states. These summits are mainly operated through the SADC’s Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security Cooperation (OPDSC)

which is managed on a troika basis and is responsible for promoting peace and security in the SADC region. It is mandated to steer and provide Member states with direction regarding matters that threaten peace, security, and stability in the region (SADC, 2022). This is different from a Summit of heads of state and Government which is responsible for the overall policy direction and control functions of SADC (SADC, 2022). A summit is comprised of heads of state and Government of each Member state and it is held annually on a rotational basis, in contrast to an Extra-ordinary Summit Troika that is comprised of a Chairperson, incoming Chairperson and Outgoing Chairperson and reports to the SADC Summit Chairperson (SADC, 2022).

Because the crisis had the potential to destabilize peace and security in the Southern African region, as an envoy of SADC, South Africa was mandated through an Extra-ordinary Summit Troika in 2007 to spearhead the intervention in Zimbabwe, which it did through the strategy called quiet diplomacy. George Abel Mhango refers to quiet diplomacy as ‘a set of soft diplomatic approaches mostly behind the scenes-engagements to facilitate pacific settlement of disputes’ (Mhango, 2010: 16). Through these constructive behind-the-scenes engagements between the leaders of both the ZANU-PF and MDC together with H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, as the point man. South Africa successfully managed to influence H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and Morgan Richard Tsvangirai and Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo to adopt the “Global Political Agreement” and the ultimate implementation of the “Government of National Unity” in 2009. Both the GPA and GNU speaks to the approach that South Africa implements towards Africa and Zimbabwe in particular.

### **South Africa’s approach towards Africa and intervention in Zimbabwe.**

The intervention by South Africa in Zimbabwe comes because of a resolution from SADC upon the realization of the potential threat to peace and security that the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe could yield into the broader Southern African region. Thus, South Africa was tasked as an envoy of SADC, to intervene to initiate a political peaceful solution. However, South Africa as a regional power has its own policy aspirations towards the region to maintain and broaden its impact or influence.

Chris Landsberg and Kwandi Kondlo observes in terms of influence, how South Africa aims to use its ‘democratic experience, economic development, and governance to

position itself strategically to shape the development agenda of Africa and to build mutual co-existence with other African states' (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 1). South Africa has indeed been committedly involved in numerous conflicts across Africa, such as the conflicts in Lesotho, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and others alike, in quests to initiate peaceful political solutions amongst the conflicting parties. There are three broad policies that the post-apartheid South Africa established in relation to Africa, and SADC.

These policies deemed as 'pillars' of post-apartheid South Africa, as David Monyae identifies, include 'strengthening Africa's institutions regionally (SADC) and continentally, African Union (AU), the implementation of NEPAD, and strengthening bilateral and socio-economic relations by dialogue and cooperation' (Monyae, 2006: 10). Not only did South Africa commit to the 'African Agenda' to create good neighborliness and non-hegemonic relations with other African states, but it also sought to use its position and power to formulate strategic partnerships with fellow African states in quests to promote peace, stability, and development in the region through diplomatic means and persuasion as opposed to military power' (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 2-3). South Africa also commits to soft diplomacy and centers its approach to relations with other African states on the 'non-threatening military posture to enhance confidence and security in Africa and beyond'. It also affords great value to quiet diplomacy and preventive diplomacy to push for negotiated solutions and inclusive governments in conflict ridden states (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 7-8).

To indicate how H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, the then president of South Africa sought to handle the political crisis in Zimbabwe, Alois Mlambo quotes H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki's words in defining South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe that, "There was no viable alternative to quiet diplomacy in the campaign to resolve the Zimbabwean political instability and violence because by its very nature diplomacy precludes loud pronouncements from rooftops". Quiet diplomacy, therefore, was South African policy approach towards resolving the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 and beyond. There are various understandings to what informs South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe.

Chris Landsberg posits that South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach is informed by notion of African Solidarism and the need to offer 'African solutions for African

problems' and it is also driven by South Africa's quest to treat other African countries as its equals rather than imposing a hegemonic attitude (Landsberg, 2016: 128). Landsberg further asserts that it involves little media involvement and coverage, and it provides for non-violent engagement between conflicting parties (Landsberg 2016: 128). In this manner, South Africa's approach has been based on the need to advance African solidarism and peace in its intervention in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, James Hamill and John Hoffman contend that "South Africa's quiet diplomacy is informed by its quest to present itself as a good neighbor towards its Southern African fellow countries, its quest to advance the 'African Renaissance vision' and the solidification of historical liberation movement ties" (Hamill and Hoffman, 2009: 375-377).

#### **1.10. Structure of the report.**

This report is comprised of five chapters based on qualitative primary and secondary sources. The first chapter provides an introduction and background on Zimbabwe's political instability and violence. The second chapter features an analysis of SADC's vision towards democracy and peace in Southern Africa. On the third chapter, this report provides a review of South Africa-Zimbabwe relations from a liberation struggle perspective to leadership in SADC. In chapter four, this report provides an analysis of South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe and the nuances of its quiet diplomacy strategy. Upon a close analysis of the findings made in this report, chapter five provides observations and reflections which are followed by a conclusion based on the analysis provided.

## **Chapter 2: SADC, democracy, and peace in Southern Africa: intervention in Zimbabwe.**

### **2.1. Introduction.**

#### **The evolution: from SADCC to SADC.**

(“We rightly put the accent on the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life of our people but we also and equally rightly stressed the need for us to reduce economic dependence particularly but not only on South Africa.”) – Robert Gabriel Mugabe (Salisbury summit, 1981)

The above utterances by H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe capture the essence and most important philosophy and the objective of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and the rationale for its creation. The Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was established in 1980 by Frontline States (FLS) with two overriding objectives which are, “to achieve development in the member states’ resources so that they benefit citizens, and to reduce economic dependence on apartheid South Africa. This strategy was a necessity towards the achievement of the development envisaged” (SADCC, 1981: 1). The SADC founding Declaration and Treaty of 1992 summarizes this objective to say that “it was a vehicle for the reduction of economic dependence and equitable regional integration, an appropriate sequel to the political emancipation of the region” (SADC, 1992).

The FLS that founded SADCC are Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. These states set four objectives in the founding declaration of SADCC “towards economic liberation” at the Lusaka Summit in 1980, which include firstly, “the reduction of external dependence and in particular, dependence on apartheid South Africa. Secondly, they sought to create an operational and equitable regional integration. Thirdly, to mobilize domestic and regional resources to carry out national, interstate, and regional policies to reduce dependence and build genuine regional coordination. Lastly, to coordinate a joint action to secure international understanding and practical support for the SADCC strategy” (SADCC, 1981: 1).

The threat that the FLS perceived in their relationship with the apartheid South Africa is based on the consideration of South Africa's military and economic power with which the FLS assumed that this power was used by South Africa to destabilize them.

Thus, the reduction of the FLS's dependence on apartheid South Africa was "necessary for development centered on human dignity and the needs of the people of Southern Africa" (SADCC, 1981:1). Additionally, the FLS established that the most significant factor in the quest to lessen their dependence on the hegemonic apartheid South Africa, was to "initiate a transport and communication system that is independent of South Africa's influence" (SADCC, 1981: 1).

H.E Former President Samora Moises Machel captures the problematic system of economic dependence on apartheid South Africa as he asserts that, "the economies of Southern African countries were conceived and organized as functions of South Africa" (SADCC, 1981: 3). This statement alludes to the acknowledgement by the FLS that 'transport, communication, employment, sources of food, petroleum and manufactures, all centered on South Africa, and thus, the subordination by South Africa has impeded development in the Southern African region' (SADCC, 1981: 3).

Kyu Deng Hwang (2007) provides an argument made by Matlosa (2001) that the establishment of SADCC was in essence, a "part of the strategy by the FLS to counter destabilization by apartheid South Africa, to reduce their dependence, and to coordinate foreign aid and investment in the region" (Hwang, 2007: 68). But also, the strategy was to "promote regional cooperation, assisting one another and to reduce their dependence on apartheid South Africa" (Modeni, 2016: 25).

Laurie Nathan on the other hand, argues that the establishment of SADCC was in reality, "a move to promote regional co-operation through joint development projects and to mobilize development assistance, partly, to reduce the dependence of member states (FLS) on South Africa" (Laurie, 2006: 607). Maxi Schoeman with similar sentiments contend that, not only was SADCC an economic pillar, but it was also a "politically motivated response by Frontline States (FLS)" to the government of P.W Botha in South Africa. Moreover, it was an "anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle in the Southern African region" (Schoeman, 2002: 3). Essentially, SADCC was focused on economic co-ordination and liberation of the FLS and to lessen their dependence on South Africa, which explains its exclusion from the founding members.

It focused less on democratic values and governance to only economic considerations. Additionally, SADCC was not underpinned by a legal treaty or a formal agreement which included compliance and accountability clauses as well as checks and balances (Schoeman, 2002: 3). The decentralization and lack of central authority on the part of SADCC creates the basis through which SADCC differs and can be juxtaposed with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which was formed based on a legal document with a legal persona.

Thus, in the year 1992, SADCC was dissolved and a declaration and founding treaty were adopted in Namibia, Windhoek, to form the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with South Africa, which was previously excluded from SADCC now becoming a member. SADC differs from SADCC in three aspects, firstly, “it includes the regional power, South Africa. Secondly, its primary objective transcends economic co-ordination to encompass regional integration. Thirdly, its mandate includes political and security aspects” (Laurie, 2006: 608). Article 3 in the founding SADC Treaty provides that “SADC has a legal status and shall be an international organization with legal personality, with a capacity and power to enter into contract, acquire, own or dispose of movable or immovable property and to sue and be sued” (SADC Treaty, 1992). This signifies the core difference between SADCC and SADC.

The shift in philosophy from ‘Towards economic liberation’ in 1980 into a vision that says ‘Toward a Southern African development and a shared future’ in 1992 is consolidated by the principles set out in Article 4 and the objectives in Article 5 of the SADC founding Treaty of 1992. The principles set out in the SADC founding Treaty involve the commitment to guard the “sovereign equality of all member states” in the SADC region. This implies the commitment to defend the sovereignty of SADC member states in the face of an attack. It also involves the principle of non-interference in the political affairs of member states. This therefore extends to the need to “maintain solidarity, peace and security” in SADC in addition to the core principle of “protecting human rights and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law” throughout the region.

Lastly, the founding Treaty provides that “disputes shall be settled through peaceful means”, which implies amongst many preventive diplomacy channels, the use of dialogue to resolve issues (SADC, 1992). These principles altogether that SADC

advocates for, permeate across the vision toward 'democracy, peace and security' in the broader sense that SADC envisions for Southern Africa. Although the SADC founding declaration and Treaty mentions democracy, peace, and security, it however, does not refer to how it plans to realize these principles. However, there are various structures that are established to undertake the duties to realize SADC's commitments on democracy, peace, and security.

## **2.2. SADC's position on democracy, peace, and security.**

On democracy, peace and security, SADC's agreement on amending the Treaty in 2001, Article 5 indicates that SADC seeks 'to promote common political values and systems which are democratic, legitimate and effective. In this interest, it seeks to consolidate, defend, and maintain democracy, peace and security, and stability' (SADC, 2001: 5). Based on these commitments, the SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISP) 2004, indicates that in the event of the lack of democratic systems, peace and security and good political governance, there is an increase in political intolerance, the absence of the rule of law, corruption, civil strife, and war (SADC, 2004).

Moreover, economic development and growth will not be realized in the presence of these anomalies. Thus, SADC commits itself to the ideals of African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) 'which identifies democracy and good governance, peace and security among other principles like post-conflict reconciliation as the prerequisites for sustainable economic growth' (SADC, 2004). These provisions inform SADC's position on "democracy, peace and security". The subsequent structures that are promulgated are based on the quest to realize democracy, peace and security which would then provide a fertile ground for sustainable economic growth.

In reference to democracy and the plan of action to realize it in the Southern African region, SADC refers to the importance of 'democratic elections that are held at regular intervals' (SADC, 2004). Moreover, there are principles that SADC implement to realize democracy. These principles are comprised in the 'Guidelines and Principles Governing Democratic Elections' (2004), as the results that emerged from the SADC Summit in Mauritius in August 2004. These principles and guidelines are to ensure that citizens are actively participating in political processes and that there are not

discriminated against based on the party of their choice. This extends to the need to assess and observe that citizens enjoy the freedom of association without the fear of being persecuted or intimidated. But also, assessing that elections are held at regular intervals so that citizens can vote for the party of their choice and equally, enjoy the right to be voted for.

The guidelines also seek to assess that the independent electoral body in the target country provides adequate voter education to citizens. In addition, these guidelines are used to assess whether the judiciary in the target country can practice its duties independently and without influence from individuals or parties. They also provide channels through which parties, being dissatisfied with the election results, can challenge the results within the confines of the law (SADC, 2004). These principles illuminate SADC's position regarding democracy in the Southern African region and how it intends to ensure and guard democracy.

Additionally, to attain democratization, peace and security in the Southern African region, SADC established a "Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) in 1997, a regional inter-parliamentary body seeking 'to promote regional integration and with the determination regarding democracy, to promote peace, security and political stability in the SADC region, also contributing to socio-economic development'" (Matlosa and Lotshwao, 2010: 36). The SADC-PF is comprised of the parliaments of the 12 member states of SADC, and it is aimed among many objectives to, "promote multi-party democracy, good governance, peace and security and political stability, respect of the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region" (SADC-PF, 2002: 1). In its pursuit of all these objectives, SADC-PF has sought to achieve these by observing elections in several countries in Africa since 1999 July, amongst them being the elections in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Mauritius in 2000, and Zambia in 2001 (SADPC-PF, 2002: 1).

Moreover, the aim of the SADC-PF's Election Observer Mission is to "determine the openness, freeness and fairness of democratic elections. This is undertaken to learn lessons from the experience gained during these observer missions to strengthen the democratic processes and transparency of the conduct of democratic elections in the region" (SADC-PF, 2002: 1). The operation of SADC-PF continues in its deployment to go and observe the nature of elections across Southern Africa. In March 2002, the

SADC-Parliamentary Forum embarked on an Electoral Observer Mission in Zimbabwe guided by the norms and standards of SADC in terms of elections in Southern African region, to observe the nature and the environment of elections on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March 2002, in Zimbabwe (SADC, 2002).

In 1998, SADC established yet another forum, the Electoral Commissions Forum (SADC-ECF) “to give moral support to SADC members on electoral and democracy building issues, as well as to promote conditions for free, fair and transparent elections and to promote democracy as a political system of responsible governments through electoral processes” (Matlosa and Lotshwao, 2010: 37). The SADC-ECF launched in 1999, is an “independent entity that facilitates cooperation among electoral authorities of the Southern African Development Community. It is governed by the constitution that mandates it to strengthen cooperation among electoral commissions in the SADC region, also, to promote conditions conducive to free and fair and transparent elections within SADC” (Van der Vieuten and Hulse, 2013: 37).

The SADC-ECF, like the “Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections”, provide the basis for SADC’s position on democracy meaning that, ideally, elections play a crucial role in SADC’s view as the central element to the realization of democracy. Furthermore, the SADC Summit in Mauritius promulgated the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) inter alia, to determine the nature and scope of elections in the region, ‘to ensure that a conducive environment is presented so that free and fair and peaceful elections are held, and to ensure that constitutional and legal rights and freedoms of citizens are guaranteed’ (SADC, 2004). SADC’s Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) is presumed to have an observation role as opposed to monitoring elections, and it is based on the founding treaty and the protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (SADC, 2004).

SEOM is predisposed to various guidelines when observing the nature and scope of democratic elections, these include assessing and observing the neutrality of the environment with which elections will be held. Meaning that, the polling stations must be situated in neutral spaces whereby all the parties involved have equal opportunity and the same advantage. In addition to this, the overall protection of the rights and freedoms of the citizens is a pertinent matter of observation of the SEOM. Essentially, this is undertaken with the aim to observe whether citizens have free will to associate

and to vote for the party of their choice without undue discrimination and persecution (SADC, 2004).

These observations are crucial to SADC's announcement of the scope of elections as well as its conviction to determine that elections were indeed held in a free and fair environment or whether they were not. In other words, these guidelines provide SADC with the basis through which a conclusion on the scope of elections can be made. If the target country scores a good mark in most of these guidelines, meaning that, for instance, if it protects the freedoms and rights of citizens, provides voter education and citizens can freely associate and voter for the party of their choice, SADC will presume such elections as free and fair.

In 2005, SEOM, led by Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was mandated by SADC to observe elections in Zimbabwe, March 2005. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 1955 in South Africa. She assumed a career as a teacher and later taught at the Mpumalanga Teaching Training College in the period 1981 to 1983 (The Presidency, 2000). She went on to work with the United Nations (UN) World Young Women's Christian Association after her role as a teacher at Mpumalanga college. As a seasoned politician and a member of the ANC, she became a Member of Parliament in 1994 and a Deputy Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry until 1999. Furthermore, from 1999 she became the Minister of Energy until the year 2005 (The Presidency, 2000). She went on to become the first female Deputy President in the Republic of South Africa from 2005 to 2008 (United Nations, 2021).

The mandate on SEOM with Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the helms was in terms of SADC's Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, to go into Zimbabwe to observe the environment and the nature of the parliamentary elections that Zimbabwe was undertaking in March 2005 (SADC, 2005). This presents the view that SADC holds in terms of democracy promotion and, it equally shows how SADC values democratic elections as the appropriate outlet through which people can communicate their grievances and satisfaction alike, through the ballot. The deployment of the various Electoral Observer Mission is undertaken arguably, to observe, (although not having the jurisdiction to impose or guard against irregularities) the environment, nature, and scope of elections, to provide its expert observations and recommendations thereafter on the elections. Also, the observer missions, as one

would argue, provide SADC with the opportunity to see firsthand the complexities surrounding democratic elections and for it to be able to suggest ideas and recommendations going forward.

In the case of the 2002 Zimbabwe elections, the SADC-PF observed that Zimbabwe lacked an independent Electoral Commission, which compromised the nature and authenticity of the 2002 elections in Zimbabwe (SADC, 2002). But this also presented SADC-PF with an opportunity to recommend and suggest to SADC and Zimbabwe to establish an independent Electoral Commission, which Zimbabwe eventually did in 2004 prior to the holding of the 2005 Parliamentary elections. To give life to the notion of free and fair democratic elections as promoted by SADC, Zimbabwe established an Independent Electoral Commission, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) in 2004, charged with the monopoly over voter education and electoral processes (Modeni, 2016: 34). This resulted from SADC-PF's recommendations to Zimbabwe after the 2002 elections.

With reference to peace and security, the structure that SADC promulgated to ensure peace and security in the Southern African region is the Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (OPDSC) founded in June 1996. The Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (SIPO) by SADC (2004) indicates the general objective of the Organ as "to promote peace and security in the region" (SADC, 2004: 55). The specific objectives of the Organ in relation to peace and security include amongst many, the commitment "to protect the people in the SADC region and safeguard the development of the region against instability arising from the breakdown of the law and order, and inter-intra state conflicts. Secondly, to prevent, contain and resolve inter-intra state conflicts by peaceful means.

This is undertaken through channels such as preventive diplomacy which advances dialogue as the basis through which peace can be attained. Thirdly, it is premised on the need to promote development of democratic institutions across Africa and to encourage the observance of universal human rights as provided for in the charters and conventions of the Organization for African Unity and United Nations" (SADC, 2004: 55). Since peace and security shall emerge from the absence or the minimization of conflict, Article 11 of the SIPO by SADC provides ways in which conflict prevention, management and resolution can be undertaken. Further indicating that the

OPDSC Organ 'is obliged under international law, in accordance with the United Nations, to refrain from the threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state other than for the legitimate purpose of individual or collective self-defense against an armed attack' (SADC, 2004: 61).

The most stressed concept in relation to peace and security by SADC is the issue of settling disputes through peaceful means. SADC through SIPO provides that inter and intra conflicts must be resolved through peaceful means. This includes channels such as preventive diplomacy, negotiations, conciliation mediation, good offices, arbitration, and adjudication by an international tribunal (SADC, 2004: 63). The rationale for the establishment of the OPDS according to Anne Hammerstad (2003) is that it came from the realization by the SADC that its abilities to fight poverty through economic integration were limited if political instability and political conflicts were prevalent in the region (Hammerstad, 2003: 3).

In essence, stability in political affairs and a peaceful environment would contribute substantially towards development, which would then, result in an improvement in the lives of people in Southern Africa. So, the OPDS is intended to serve three distinct functions namely, "to address human security needs during inter-intra state conflicts and general political instability, to advance common regional policy and political cooperation and democracy, and lastly, to respond to sub-regional conflicts through peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding" (Bekoe, 2002: 5).

For instance, as mentioned earlier, SADC's deployment of its Parliamentary Forum to observe elections in Zimbabwe in 2005, was undertaken in line with the objectives of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation. Arguably, the drive to address political instability and advance democracy can be partly attributed to SADC's resolution to observe elections in the Southern African region. These are practical instances in relation to SADC's drive to resolve conflicts and pave the way for economic integration, reduce poverty and promote peace and security and the common values (Modeni, 2016: 25).

The central focus of the interventions is to consolidate and open where there are constraints, the political contestation in these various countries to set the tone for a better engagement towards economic integration and consolidation of democratic values and to resolve conflicts, like its part in Zimbabwe's political instability crisis.

### **2.3. SADC's intervention in Zimbabwe.**

SADC's involvement in the Zimbabwean political instability crisis happens after the Parliamentary elections that took place in 2000 (Yingi, 2018: 156). The violence that surrounds these elections and that which precedes the 2000 Parliamentary elections informed much of SADC's "acknowledgement" of the situation in Zimbabwe. As Yingi asserts, SADC only officially acknowledged and debated the Zimbabwe political crisis after the Parliamentary elections of 2000. In 2001 September, SADC held a summit on the developments in Zimbabwe whereby a Task Force was established by the SADC heads of state to work with Zimbabwe on the economic and political issues with the objective of finding a solution (SADC, 2001).

In addition to acknowledging the situation in Zimbabwe in 2000, SADC deployed several Elections Observer Missions in Zimbabwe as part of its intervention efforts in 2002 and 2005 respectively. As far as a hard stance is concerned, it was only in 2007 when it mandated H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki as a mediator and facilitator to deal with the situation in Zimbabwe after the attacks on opposition members by the police (Yingi, 2018: 156). From the year 2000 to 2007, SADC has been engaging the developments in Zimbabwe quietly and through elections observer missions. Furthermore, there are several possible explanatory factors might have in one way or another influenced the reason for SADC to intervene however late the intervention may be perceived to be. The Zimbabwe crisis in its early stages has already negatively influenced the economic fortunes in SADC region. For instance, in the first quarter of the year 2000, Foreign Direct Investment to SADC was 40% below that of 1999 due to amongst many reasons, the negative international publicity about Zimbabwe (Peters-Berries, 2002: 201). Moreover, the crisis has led to the stagnancy of Intra-Trade traffic because of the disruption on the smooth operations of the transport network in Zimbabwe due to the fuel crisis between 2000 to 2001; the central link in transport network in the SADC region (Peters-Berries, 2002: 202). As a result, it was difficult for service trucks to pass Zimbabwe in route to landlocked states like Malawi and Zambia (Peters-Berries, 2002: 202). So, this makes it very difficult for regional integration to take place and in turn furthers the economic destabilization of the region. Therefore, SADC borne the responsibility to address these issues in one way or another.

Additionally, a driving factor for SADC's intervention could have been that it emerged from the fear of the destabilization of the SADC region due to the presence of unresolved land reform processes and the destabilization of uneasy racial relations in member states like South Africa, Malawi, and Namibia (Peters-Berries, 2002: 203). The intervention in Zimbabwe could be understood to have been a move to curtail a further spillover of the issues in Zimbabwe to other member states whose political history is like that of Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, as per Yingi's argument, the reason for SADC's involvement in the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe was because "the crisis was epitomized by economic collapse linked to violation of human rights emanating from toxic political and electoral contestation" (Yingi, 2018: 156). This violation of human rights that Yingi observes is not only limited to the domestic affairs of Zimbabwe, but it also speaks of a direct violation of SADC's principle of human rights, democracy and the rule of law enshrined in the founding treaty of 1992. Additionally, the deterioration of the situation in Zimbabwe has over the years, created "a huge influx of economic refugees into neighboring countries and in the process worsened the instability in the region" (Yingi, 2018: 156).

SADC sought to address this problem and the potential regional crisis that was looming. Khabele Matlosa also indicates that the primary goal for SADC, has been towards creating foremost, a solution to the governance crisis that Zimbabwe was plagued with, and then should a steady recovery, reconstruction and renewal of Zimbabwe's ailing economy occur (Matlosa, 2016: 54). Moreover, SADC was cognizant of the potential spillover of the political instability crisis and it resolved to take measures to address the economic element of the situation before it deteriorated (Dzimiri, 2017: 64). It was a strategic move from SADC to attempt curbing the crisis before it spreads across the whole of Southern Africa, which would have presented a mammoth task for SADC to resolve.

SADC intervened as a legal regional organization which is recognized by the United Nations, to have powers to mitigate security threats and resolve conflicts in the Southern African region. A significant part of SADC's key objectives in the founding treaty includes the commitment "to promote and defend peace and security...through integration" (SADC, 1992). SADC intervened through South Africa as an envoy. The

2007 SADC Communiqué, 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March – “The Extra-ordinary SADC summit of heads of state and government” in Tanzania, resolved to mandate H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki to facilitate dialogue between the MDC and ZANU-PF, which would see the initiation of a political solution (SADC, 2007). Accordingly, this is a prerequisite for SADC’s strategy to assist Zimbabwe recover economically.

Arrigo Pallotti identifies this objective that, SADC sought to facilitate a dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC, and one between the Zimbabwean government and Western donors. The aim was to restore economic stability and to control the potential spillover of the crisis to other countries (Pallotti, 2013: 32). SADC further held another Summit in 2007, August, whereby H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki was commended as well as encouraged to expedite the dialogue process between ZANU-PF and MDC to conclude, so that the next elections would be held in an environment of peace and tranquility and for people to vote for leaders of their choice (SADC, 2007). With all these developments, there are factors which influenced SADC’s position in Zimbabwe. In other words, there are various limitations that constrained SADC’s ability to provide a substantial solution in Zimbabwe. One limitation as indicated by George Mhango is SADC’s subscription towards ‘sovereignty politics of juridical statehood that takes precedence over freedom, rule of law and human rights’ (Mhango, 2010: 20). Although Mhango is correct in his observation of the apparent inaction on the part of SADC during the human rights violations and the infringement of the rule of law by the Zimbabwe government, this report takes a critical view on the insinuation that SADC presumes superiority of the principle of sovereignty over human rights and the rule of law. But instead, argues that, the focus must be directed at the source of this apparent limitation in terms of intervention which is the SADC’s Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation.

The functionality and operationalization of this organ is the central limitation on the part of SADC’s efforts to provide substantial solutions. In the earlier discussions, there are accounts of SADC’s Electoral Observer Missions undertaken within the requirements of the organ in Zimbabwe’s 2002 and 2005 elections. Contrary to Mhango’s observation, this is the action that SADC took with the objective to observe human rights, rule of law and people’s freedom during elections in Zimbabwe. The problem that arises is that SADC’s observer missions lacked the jurisdiction to enforce accountability where freedoms and human rights were infringed upon and violated.

The SADC's Electoral Observer Mission's only task was to observe and acknowledge the existence of such violations, pending recommendations instead of enforcing action to address these immediate issues. This is a major limitation on the part of SADC.

Another major limitation on the part of SADC to implement substantial solutions in Zimbabwe stems from the lack of an authoritative structure to settle and make the final call on the division of perspectives within its member states on how to best handle Zimbabwe. It lacked a structure to resolve the deadlock resulting from competing views of members towards Zimbabwe. Gavin Cawthra observes that in the violent events surrounding the 2008 presidential elections in Zimbabwe, Botswana started being critical and vocal about its condemnation of Zimbabwe, further calling for 'internationally supervised elections' (Cawthra, 2010: 30). Zambia and Tanzania also consolidated their weariness towards the ZANU-PF government and supporting positions held by the MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T); a faction of the MDC after its split in 2005 due to disagreements between party members and leader, Morgan Richard Tsvangirai over the boycotting of senate elections. Members of SADC were deadlocked on how to best resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe and there seemingly was a lack of authority to make the final call.

The lack of unity and dedication of members of SADC towards a single accepted mode of response to Zimbabwe, with some members pulling to one side, and others the other side, presented SADC with a problem. These disagreements although playing a significant role in ensuring that all views are expressed and debated, could not yield a result. Instead, the members were stuck in a stalemate position and seemingly without an authority to make the final decision. This has limited SADC's ability to present a structurally substantial intervention plan in Zimbabwe. SADC is also divided across historical liberation movement ties which extends to the solidarity of Front-Line states; with former liberation movements like the ANC, FRELIMO, SWAPO, and ZANU-PF lining up in solidarity (Cawthra, 2010: 30). This culminated into seemingly various understandings of the nuances of the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe within SADC itself. On one end, there is Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania, whose reflection of the conflict puts human rights abuses at the centre, and South Africa on the other end with the DRC, Mozambique, Namibia and others, whose perspective on the conflict in Zimbabwe lies in their perceived 'constructed attack on Zimbabwe's sovereignty and an attempt to enforce regime change by the West' (Raftopoulos,

2012). Arguably, the focus of some SADC members such as South Africa and Namibia, was therefore, on the need to use Zimbabwe to present a regional solidarity front in response to the perceived attacks by the West, as opposed to chartering implementing proper long-lasting solutions for the people of Zimbabwe.

#### **2.4. Conclusion.**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a legal regional organization emerges from the now defunct Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) whose mandate was to lessen economic dependence of Front-Line States on other states, the improvement of regional integration of FLS members, and to lessen dependence on South Africa in particular. SADC's commitment and vision towards democracy, peace and security, and common shared political legitimate values has seen its various intervening commitments in conflicts in the Southern African region, with the objective to preserve peace and security, as well as political stability in the region.

Several structures are promulgated by SADC in its quest to have substantial impact on its objectives such as promoting peace and security and democracy in the region. Structures such as the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security with the aim to preserve peace and security and resolve conflicts in the region were established. Others such as the Parliamentary Forum, Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, and Elections Commissions Forum focused on the importance of democratic elections in the consolidation of political stability and peace in the region. SADC makes use of these structures to observe the nature and scope of elections in various parts of the Southern African region. It has done so in Tanzania, Mauritius, Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe included, and many more elections in the Southern African region.

SADC's impact in Zimbabwe's political crisis is subject to various limitations such as the lack of an authoritative body to oversee and make final decisions in a situation of a deadlock between member states. Moreover, SADC lacks a mechanism that would enforce law and accountability on the part of its member states that infringe upon and commit human rights violations. The SADC Election Observer Missions only observe the political environment in a host state but does not have legal powers to have the legal authority to hold people to account for violations of human rights before and

during elections. It can only make recommendations back to SADC at a later stage without the guarantee that accountability will prevail.

## **Chapter 3: South Africa-Zimbabwe relations: From struggle to leadership in SADC.**

### **3.1. Introduction.**

South Africa's policy vision towards the SADC region and its relations with Zimbabwe can be understood through an investigation into its historical liberation struggle past. This political past includes being subjected to a racist oppressive minority government which infringed upon the rights of black people as equal citizens of the land in South Africa. This culminated into the emergence of liberation movements like the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC), both whose main objective sought to fight for the liberation of black people in South Africa.

These liberation movements later forge ties with liberation movements across Southern Africa, and Africa in their common unified objective which is the liberation of their people. In terms of Rhodesia as a specific case, liberation movement ties between South Africa and Rhodesia (ZAPU-ANC armed wing alliance) emerges in the 1960s and extends beyond the two countries' attainment of their independence. Their historical liberation relations are later cemented by their being the official governments in their respective countries post-independence (ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe and ANC in South Africa).

### **3.2. A review of the historical relations between apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia before 1980.**

Prior to Rhodesia's gaining of independence and the nature of relations that emerges between the two countries soon after Rhodesia gains independence, Rhodesia led by Ian Douglas Smith as Prime Minister, and apartheid South Africa led by John Vorster as President and Hendrik Verwoerd as Prime Minister enjoyed cordial political and economic relations. Both these countries have a past that predates both their independence, and as Wilfred Mhanda articulates; the past that these countries share is "a past history that is premised on their efforts to fight racism and black domination by racist white minority regimes" (Mhanda, 2002: 152).

This presents a relationship between the two regimes which is premised on a common goal, the domination of the majority which is, black people in both countries. Martin Rupiya notes two instances in the nature of the cordial political and economic relations

between the two countries in his observation that in the year 1963 after the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland split up, 'apartheid South Africa provided Rhodesia with a Preferential Customs and Concessionary Tariff Agreement (PTA), aimed at giving Rhodesia an opportunity to export goods into South African market with eased tariffs and customs duties' (Rupiya, 2002: 162).

Taku Fundira notes that this bilateral trade agreement provided Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa with access to certain agricultural products, manufactured goods, and textiles (Fundira, 2017: 1). In terms of trade, this agreement provided an "ease of access" to various goods between the two regimes to cooperatively trade with. In terms of economics, Lotti Nkomo in his thesis "Zimbabwe-South Africa interstate relations, 1980-1999", notes that; "South African capital was present in all key areas or sectors of the Rhodesian economy and the substantial amount of Rhodesia's trade was with or passed through South Africa" (Nkomo, 2018: 23). As white settler minority ruled regimes, their objective of maintaining racism and black majority domination was consolidated through a working relationship around trade.

This trade agreement presented Rhodesia with an opportunity to export various goods like tobacco, beef, and gold into South Africa, but equally gave South African service industries invested in Rhodesia an opportunity to grow (Rupiya, 2002: 162). This element of close trade ties between these two regimes tied together by their common objective to guard and maintain racism, white minority rule, and the domination of the black majority is seen from their relations from as far back as early 1940s.

Lotti Nkomo articulates the special kind of harmonious relationship that Rhodesia and South Africa shared as early as the 1940s and how these two countries "mirrored each other politically, economically and culturally, on the basis of their common social ideology of racial separation and white supremacy" (Nkomo, 2018: 23). In this period, substantial infrastructure was built in the sectors of transport and telecommunications to benefit the two regimes, provided that close links remained intact. In the year 1967, when the United Nations (UN) adopted economic sanctions against Rhodesia, 'apartheid South Africa became Rhodesia's only source of trade, commerce and political recognition' (Rupiya, 2002: 163).

This infrastructure set up from the 1940s presented South Africa as a passage of Rhodesia in terms of trade and it factors in the manner through which Rhodesia and

later, independent Zimbabwe interacts with independent South Africa (Schwartz, 2014; 103). Richard Schwartz presents an idea of the extent through which Rhodesia and later Zimbabwe would have its telecommunications and transport traffic pass through South Africa even after independence in both countries. The importance of this infrastructure built by the South African minority white settler regime in its political and economic relations with Rhodesia and the timeless manoeuvre of this trade infrastructure as it factors into independence, is seen once again in how both these countries in their independence interact. The role that apartheid South Africa assumed as a passage or channel for Rhodesia, goes in greater length to extend to the entire Southern African region.

One remembers the words of H.E Former President Samora Moises Machel of Mozambique in the establishment of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 that, “the economies of Southern African countries are conceived and organized as functions of apartheid South Africa” about areas such as transport, telecommunications, petroleum, manufactures and other sectors (SADCC, 1980). This is the economic reality that independent Zimbabwe, as part of these Southern African countries, had to experience in its relations with South Africa.

### **3.3. Relations between the ZAPU, ZANU-PF and the ANC as liberation movements.**

(“I stand here today as an elected representative of the people of South Africa thanks in good measure to the fact that the liberation movement of Zimbabwe acted practically to ensure that we too should gain our freedom. I am pleased to take this opportunity publicly to salute President Mugabe the rest of the leadership and the people of Zimbabwe for what they did to ensure our liberation from apartheid tyranny”) - Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki.

These words by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki paint a picture of the nature of the historical relations that Zimbabwe has had with South Africa. Scholars like Chris Alden (2002) and Chris Landsberg (2016) mention historical ties between South Africa and Zimbabwe when analysing South Africa’s approach towards Zimbabwe. It becomes imperative to have a brief hindsight of the nature of this historical relation that scholars refer to, to unpack what drives South Africa’s foreign policy approach towards Zimbabwe later.

Liberation movements in Rhodesia established ties with other neighbouring countries in the liberation struggle in the early 1960s 'upon the obvious realization that the white settler government was not willing to grant black people their voting rights' (Ngwenya and Molapo, 2018: 78). This culminated in the establishment of liberation movement ties by Zimbabwe's two liberation movements, ZAPU and ZANU. Individually, these liberation movements developed ties with liberation movements across Southern Africa. For instance, ZAPU's armed wing, ZIPRA developed close ties with the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, whilst ZANU's armed wing, ZANLA, developed ties with the PAC of South Africa and with FRELIMO armies in Mozambique (Ngwenya and Molapo, 2018: 80).

This was a promulgation of a unified front of the liberation movements in the Southern African region because the ANC on the other hand, was also establishing close ties with the liberation movements in other countries like Mozambique's Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO), Angola's People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and even outside the Southern African region, with "Guinea's African Party for the Independence of Guinea (PAIGC)" (Ngwenya and Molapo, 2018: 80). In terms of the specific liberation struggle relations between Rhodesia and South African liberation movements, Alois Mlambo indicates that South Africa's ruling party, "the African National Congress (ANC) has had a long history of working together with Zimbabwe's liberation leaders, and nationally, these two countries have a relationship that has gone through all the motions of apartheid, destabilization, liberation, decolonization, and democratization" (Mlambo, 2007: 66).

Relations between ANC and Rhodesian Liberation movements date back to many years when "the ANC was battling to dismantle the racist apartheid system in South Africa and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was engaged in a similar battle in Rhodesia to dismantle Ian Douglas Smith's racist regime" (Mngomezulu, 2020: 115). Moreover, back in the 1960s and 1970s when liberation politics gained momentum in Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa, cooperation between Rhodesian liberation movements, the PF-ZANU and the ANC joined ranks, seeing both their armed wings establish an alliance to consolidate their efforts (Nkomo, 2018: 25).

The historical ties between the two countries' liberation movements emerge from their experience of fighting for a similar cause against a common enemy, the racist white

settler minority governments. Zimbabwe's People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), an armed wing of ZAPU collaborated with Umkhonto We sizwe (MK), an armed wing of the ANC 'to wage wars to liberate people in their countries and they worked side-by-side until Rhodesia eventually attained independence' (Chakawa and Nyawo-Shava, 2014: 36). ZAPU was led by Akim Ndlovu and Dumiso Dabengwa whilst the MK was led by Chris Hani, Joe Modise and Zola Zembe. Both the ANC and ZAPU entered into an agreement in 1967 to undertake joint military operations which ultimately led to the undertaking of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns (Chakawa and Nyawo-Shava, 2014: 41).

In a joint press statement in 1967, both the ANC and ZAPU leadership is quoted saying, "we wish to declare that the fighting is presently going on in the Wankie area and is indeed being carried out by combined forces of ZAPU and ANC, which marched into Zimbabwe as comrades-in-arms on a common route, each bound to its destination" (ANC, 1967). The fighting in the Wankie and Sipolilo areas were fought by the combined forces of ZIPRA and MK, with the objective of liberating the people of Rhodesia. Moreover, 'to create an opportunity for MK fighters to establish bases along the Rhodesia-South Africa border for the expeditious incursions into South Africa' (Ngwenya and Molapo, 2018: 80). Thus, these campaigns were necessary for the MK to charter routes and movements to transport resources back into South Africa and to consolidate liberation movement's underground work.

Importantly, the Wankie and Sipolilo fighters pioneered the attempts "to open a corridor leading into South Africa with the aim to send trained cadres back into South Africa to reconstruct the political underground work and resuscitate the struggle inside the country" (Lissoni, 2008: 293). Janet Cherry adds on the discussion to say that the undertaking of the "Wankie and Sipolilo" campaigns led to the activation of some of the newly trained MK fighters in military operations, but also, it assisted the ANC's objective to create a passage through Rhodesia for MK fighters back into South Africa (Cherry, 2011: 37). This signifies a liberation brotherhood between ZAPU and ANC in the quest of assisting one another continue the liberation struggle in their respective countries.

On this note, in addition, in the declaration statement by the ANC and ZAPU, they declare that "it is the determination of the combined forces to fight the common settler

enemy to the finish, at any point of encounter as they make way to their respective zones” (ANC, 1967). Relations between the two countries extended to post-1980 as the ANC interacted with the ZANU-PF government to establish offices in Harare to carry out its liberation activities. Additionally, the ZANU-PF provided and ‘assisted the ANC and MK fighters by providing them with safe houses’ (Mngomezulu, 2020: 115). ZANU-PF also assisted the ANC with safe havens to move its arms to arm fighters who carried out underground work in South Africa (Mngomezulu, 2020: 115). Mngomezulu Bhekithemba also mentions that this mutual relationship between the liberation movements continued until the ANC eventually came into power in South Africa in 1994, further creating a platform for government-to-government relations and mainly because they shared similar historical experiences (Mngomezulu, 2020: 116). Furthermore, Rhodesia became the biggest trading partner to South Africa, an area that is still intact to date.

#### **3.4. Zimbabwe at independence and its relations with apartheid South Africa, 1980 onwards.**

(“We cannot have any political and diplomatic relations with South Africa until it puts its own house in order and kills the repugnance and revulsion we have to apartheid”) – Robert Gabriel Mugabe (1986)

After a hard-fought liberation war, Rhodesia became independent Republic of Zimbabwe in 1980. At the forefront of this monumental period was Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the Prime Minister. He assumes this role until the year 1987 when he is elected the President of Zimbabwe. As a liberation struggle fighter and hero, H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe’s perspective and philosophy on politics in Africa and the Southern African region would inform much of his interaction with apartheid South Africa thenceforth. Foremost, Tatenda Mashanda notes that upon assuming office after independence, President H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe’s foreign policy articulation included an ‘opposition to all forms of injustice, imperialism and oppression’ (Mashanda, 2021: 49). To apartheid South Africa which was still premised on racism and oppression of the black majority, Zimbabwe’s independence and foreign policy articulation presented a threat and the basis through which Zimbabwe and South Africa interacts.

This threat that Zimbabwe's independence presented to apartheid South Africa was premised on the impact it has on other African countries and their liberation movements (Dzimba, 1998: 42). Additionally, in terms of the foreign policy articulation, the hostility towards apartheid South Africa is seen from the remarks by Witness Magwende as Zimbabwe's Minister of Foreign Affairs in his address to the United Nation General Assembly in 1982, saying that, "regarding the obnoxious apartheid system in South Africa itself, Zimbabwe likes to see the total dismantling of apartheid and racist minority rule in South Africa. Further demanding that a democratic system of government which recognises people of South Africa regardless of race, religion, language and sex, as equal citizens of the land, must be adopted" (Dzimba, 1998: 68).

This stance by the Zimbabwean government is what informs the breakdown in diplomatic relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe. While addressing the United States of America's vice-president, George Bush, in Harare, 16 November 1982, H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the Prime Minister in 1982 said that; "the conditions that exist in South Africa are unacceptable to most of the people in that country and to the rest of us in Africa namely the maintenance of harsh and undemocratic minority rule. We wish to see freedom in South Africa and the equal treatment of all its citizens without regard to race, colour or creed. For that reason, we support all efforts that are being made by the people of that country to oppose and dismantle the apartheid system" (Southern Africa Record, 1982: 54).

The government of Zimbabwe articulated its commitment and advocacy to multilateral and institutional governance as its avenue to pursue foreign policy (Mashanda, 2021: 49). This signified the beginning of a hostile relation between the two countries. As a newly established independent state, Zimbabwe's foreign policy's undertones embodied a desire to continue fighting for the liberation of others especially for the liberation of black people in South Africa. In the few months into its independence, Zimbabwe declared that it did not diplomatically recognize South Africa due to its apartheid system, further terminating their diplomatic relations (Nkomo, 2018: 27).

Taking further action, Zimbabwe ultimately terminated its diplomatic relations in all ministerial facets with South Africa in 1980, stating that, the maintenance and continuation of such relations accords international legitimacy to South Africa's apartheid government and most importantly, the continuation of such diplomatic

relations would betray the anti-apartheid struggle (Nkomo, 2018: 27). Tatenda Mashanda postulates regarding the termination of diplomatic ties by Zimbabwe that; it emerges from a commitment to a Pan Africanist policy which views the world through racial terms (Mashanda, 2021: 49). This is the position that Zimbabwe adopts post-independence when dealing with apartheid South Africa. However, South Africa, being cognizant of the economic and military power that it wields in relation to Zimbabwe, adopted a policy of destabilization in the quest to respond and exert pressure towards Zimbabwe.

This destabilization policy by South Africa from 1980 to 1989 to deal with Zimbabwe's revolutionary stance and agitation for equal rights and the liberation of black people in South Africa, had adverse economic effects towards Zimbabwe. John Dzimba argues that, as an intentional economic sabotage strategy, "South Africa held Zimbabwean cargo at its ports, causing major delays, sometimes for several weeks" (Dzimba, 1998: 91). Additionally, about "300 000 tonnes of Zimbabwe cargo were stranded in South African ports in 1981, and the great intentional delays in diesel imports adversely affected Zimbabwe's maize harvest" (Dzimba, 1998: 91). Moreover, as Lotti Nkomo observes, the average waiting period which was initially 14 days in the period before Zimbabwe's independence, rose to over 24 days after independence.

It becomes apparent that South Africa's destabilization policy towards Zimbabwe was a well curated and intentional tool of destruction especially in targeted sectors significant to Zimbabwe's economy, like agriculture. Whilst Zimbabwe was still reeling from the impact of the agricultural losses, South Africa diversified the destruction to the Zimbabwe's transport sector. This has been carried out by withdrawing 25 diesel locomotives loaned to Zimbabwe. Apartheid South Africa's foreign ministry stated that concessions will be made if Zimbabwe approach South Africa at a ministerial level based on politico-diplomatic recognition (Dzimba, 1998: 92). This is an area where Zimbabwe vowed to not interact with apartheid South Africa on.

In addition, Zimbabwe's embedded links to South Africa's railway system created a predicament because as with its economy and volumes of trade, they passed through or originated in South Africa (Nkomo, 2018: 39). Thus, the revoking of the pre-1980 locomotive agreement was detrimental to Zimbabwe's economy due to its vulnerability and close ties to South African infrastructure. This economic sabotage extends to the

mining industry, and as Dzimba observes, Zimbabwe lost between 4Z\$ to 6Z\$ million in lost export opportunities annually (Dzimba, 1998: 95). This hostile diplomatic impasse between South Africa and Zimbabwe extends even in the trade relations, although this sector was still operative even amid the diplomatic row, South Africa's announcement of a 12 months' notice of termination of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1981 proves brutal intentions from South Africa.

The PTA as covered earlier, has been in operation since 1964 and it has been structurally significant as it provided a lifeline towards Zimbabwe during the international economic embargo against Rhodesia (Nkomo, 2018: 46). In essence, the apartheid South Africa responded to Zimbabwe's termination of diplomatic relations by destructing its economic diplomacy, railway diplomacy, and trade diplomacy. Seemingly, the idea or the main objective of South Africa's undertaking of these tactics was to "prevent Zimbabwe and the Front-Line states from adopting policies that might jeopardize the continued existence of white minority rule in South Africa. In addition, to discourage the Front-Line States together with Zimbabwe from supporting liberation movements in the SADC region; and lastly, to bar Zimbabwe from launching diplomatic efforts to isolate South Africa" (Dzimba, 1998: 34).

Although this diplomatic row between the two countries has caused irreparable economic damage to Zimbabwe, it equally consolidated Zimbabwe's position as an advocate and fighter for liberation of its fellow neighbour countries in the Southern African region. This culminated in Zimbabwe's adoption of a regionally focused approach when handling the apartheid South Africa. Meaning that, Zimbabwe perceived apartheid and the oppression of fellow black people in South Africa based on race, as a regional predicament that needed to be addressed. Tatenda Mashanda's quotation of H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe when he says that "for us in Southern Africa, the universality of human rights remains limited as long as those rights are denied to our brothers and sisters in South Africa", speaks to this idea (Mashanda, 2021: 49). Moreover, the drive to ensure that these rights are attained in other parts of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe embarks on a drive to formulate and sustain some of the historical ties Zimbabwe has with liberation movements in the Southern African region.

For instance, in addition to establishing relations between the ZANU-PF and the African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe also extended its reach to Namibia's liberation movement, "South West Africa People's organization (SWAPO) in order to consolidate SWAPO's efforts to end South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia" (Nkomo, 2018: 27). Extending allegiance to Namibia, Prime Minister, H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe articulated in 1982 that, as Zimbabwe, they were concerned about the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa, stating that, "there is no doubt that the people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO are justified in their heroic war to end political subjugation, racial oppression, economic exploitation and foreign military occupation" (Southern Africa Record, 1982: 21).

However, more importantly, Lotti Nkomo indicates that "although rhetorical, a central feature of post-independence Zimbabwe's relations with South Africa was its open support of South Africa liberation movements, the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC)" (Nkomo, 2018: 32). This was in part, the strategy by Zimbabwe to ensure that the agitation for the liberation of the people of South Africa continues. Thus, Zimbabwe being cognizant of the closeness of its economy to that of South Africa and their trade relations, it refrained from taking a hard stance economically. In his address in Pyongyang in 1980, Prime Minister Robert Gabriel Mugabe is quoted saying that "my country has, despite South Africa's aggressive activities, committed to a policy of peaceful coexistence with all our neighbours including South Africa. Acting however, based on the principle in accordance with the Organization of National Unity (OAU) charter and resolutions, our young republic has refused to maintain any political and diplomatic relations with South Africa, though recognizing as all our neighbours have done, the reality of existing economic ties with and dependence upon South Africa" (Schwartz, 2014: 105).

But, in addition to these remarks, Zimbabwe did express support of international sanctions campaigns against South Africa, in a bid to exert pressure on South Africa to concede to majority black rule (Mashanda, 2021: 48). The rationale was that Zimbabwe was of the belief that the South African racism and apartheid was a direct threat and the cause of instabilities in the region (Mashanda, 2021: 49). The drive to work with liberation movements in the Southern African region can be partly attributed to Zimbabwe's quest to resolve these instabilities in the region by dealing specifically with the apartheid South Africa first to ensure the liberation of black people in South

Africa. Upon gaining power in Zimbabwe in 1980, black liberation leaders who became important policy makers were vehemently against apartheid South Africa, and through foreign policy, they articulated that a liberated Southern African region was not complete without black majority rule in South Africa (Mashanda, 2021: 47).

Considering the historical relations between Zimbabwe and South Africa and how Zimbabwe continuously fought to ensure that South Africa too shall see independence, which it eventually attained in 1994. The question of how independent South Africa, as a product of liberation struggle, engages through foreign policy with Southern Africa and Zimbabwe, which contributed pivotally towards fighting for South Africa's independence is considered below.

### **3.5. South Africa's foreign policy vision towards SADC region and Zimbabwe – post-1994.**

Foreign policy encompasses strategies, guidelines, and agreements that national governments use to perform their objectives and is formulated to safeguard and promote national interests in international relations (Ahmed, 2020: 787). This provides the basis for a nuanced investigation into South Africa's foreign policy, with the objective of understanding its vision towards SADC and Zimbabwe. Post-Apartheid South Africa's foreign policy is based on the belief that "South Africa's future is inextricably joined to the overall future of the African continent and that of the Southern African region".

This belief is based on three assumptions: firstly, "the strengthening of African institutions continentally through the African Union (AU), and regionally through SADC. Secondly, through ensuring the implementation of Africa's socio-economic development programmes, and those of NEPAD. Thirdly, through strengthening bilateral political and socio-economic relations by effective dialogue and cooperation" (Monyae, 2006: 10). In the birth of democracy in South Africa in 1994, The African National Congress (ANC) policy documents (1994) present the core principles which inform South Africa's foreign policy in 1994.

These principles involve the commitment to protect basic human rights as well as ensuring the promotion of democracy. As far as peace is concerned, the principles stipulate that peace is a goal that all nations must channel all their efforts and strive for. Most importantly, in pursuance of these principles, the ANC policy document

asserts that South Africa's policy must reflect the interests of the African continent (ANC Policy documents, 1994). The 2001 Yearbook on South Africa's foreign policy captures three foreign policy objectives of South Africa as follows.

The first objective sought "to promote democratization and respect for human rights in the African continent. The second objective is a drive towards preventing the emergence of conflicts while promoting peace through conflict resolution channels like quiet diplomacy which advances dialogue as means to create long lasting solutions and peace. Thirdly, South Africa's quiet diplomacy objective has been aimed at spearheading sustainable development and eradicating poverty" (SA Foreign Relations Yearbook, 2001: 267). These objectives provide the direction through which South Africa sought to influence developments in the African continent.

These objectives have been central to South Africa's commitment and contribution to the establishment of organizations like the AU, SADC, and other programmes like NEPAD. Also, in the partaking in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and stability in countries like Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sudan, DRC, Lesotho, and championing interests of developing countries in the international arena (SA Foreign Relations Yearbook, 2001: 267). The manner through which these core beliefs would be guaranteed derives from South Africa's embracement and commitment towards democracy and human rights which form the core basis for post- South Africa foreign policy.

These beliefs emanate from South Africa's own historical past experiences of being subjected to an oppressive racist minority government before 1994 when democratization took place. Roger Pfister expands on this issue to indicate that a significant factor that shaped post-1994 foreign policy of South Africa is the termination of apartheid in that, for the first time, "South Africa could establish and maintain contacts with African states on equal terms" (Pfister, 2000: 1). Hence, South Africa became involved in issues of conflict resolution throughout the continent. In other words, post-apartheid South Africa uses its own past experiences to partake in the liberation of others in the African continent which forms the central part of the overall foreign policy vision of South Africa.

In addition, the principle of Ubuntu is what encompasses the commitment to democracy and human rights in that, seeing itself through the lens of others, "South

Africa accords central importance to African neighbourhood in the continent in its quest to address shared challenges of underdevelopment as well as to promote global equity and social justice” (SA Foreign Policy White Paper, 2011: 4). The 2011 South African White paper on Foreign Policy indicates in the broader sense that, “South Africa’s approach towards Africa is based on the belief that a better life in South Africa is inextricably linked with the pursuit of a better Africa in a better world.

Moreover, South Africa is inextricably linked to the Southern African region which makes it an integral element in its foreign policy” (SA Foreign Policy White Paper, 2011: 20). In essence, South Africa’s foreign policy vision for Africa is that of an integrated and united Africa whereby the drive to strengthen regional integration and the increase in intra-African trade is possible. This would therefore present South Africa with an opportunity to contribute effectively to socio-economic development in the African continent.

### **3.6. South Africa’s Foreign Policy approach towards Africa and Southern Africa.**

In the 2005 Strategic Plan of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the vision for South Africa’s foreign policy is stated as “towards an African continent that is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united and to contribute to a world that is just and equitable” (DFA Strategic Plan, 2005: 18). This vision consolidates the acknowledgement by South Africa that its future is inextricably linked to the African continent and the SADC region.

In other words, the approach towards Southern Africa is featured in relation to a broader African continent perspective. Chris Landsberg and Kwandi Kondlo articulate the key foreign policy vision for South Africa towards Africa to say that, it is one that seeks “to position South Africa so that it becomes a critical player in shaping development agenda in Africa through its African agenda vision” (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 1). On this note, South Africa contributed extensively to the founding of the African Union and the establishment of NEPAD.

The Southern African region is not an isolated area of focus in terms of South Africa’s foreign policy vision. It falls within and forms part of a broader objective of South Africa’s foreign policy vision. To expand on the specific focus on Southern Africa by South Africa, it is imperative to briefly indicate the general focus and policy objective towards Africa. Chris Landsberg observes that since 1994, “South Africa’s foreign

policy agenda towards the African continent has been based on the understanding that socio-economic development cannot take place without political peace and stability” (Landsberg, 2009: 1). In corroboration to Landsberg’s observation, perhaps the source of this observation is the DFA’s strategic plan of 2005 whose main goal towards Africa has been “to resolve conflicts and to build frameworks for socio-economic development” (DFA Strategic Plan, 2005: 19).

In a broader sense, the approach towards Africa is precipitated on the realization by South Africa that peace and political stability are the prerequisites for socio-economic development. Thus, this culminated into a foreign policy formulation that is comprised of frameworks that seek to achieve the objective of peace and political stability. South Africa utilised its influence as a member of the African Union (AU) to advance its post-1994 policy vision called the “African Renaissance” advocated for by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki and introduced throughout the continent.

The values for both NEPAD and SADC are inspired by the vision of African Renaissance which was primarily formulated to meet the foreign policy objectives. These objectives have been geared towards advancing democratization throughout the African continent and the economic recovery of Africa. Furthermore, South Africa seeks to mobilize African people to take ownership of the economic growth and development agenda in Africa. But also, to ensure that the neo-colonial relations between Africa and powerful countries come to an end (Monyae, 2006: 14).

### **3.6.1. New Partnership for African Development- NEPAD.**

The establishment of NEPAD in 2001 is in line with the broader objective of the African Renaissance vision. To comprehend South Africa’s foreign policy vision towards Southern Africa, it is important to investigate NEPAD as a framework that is focused on the broader African continent with which South Africa envisions itself as an inextricable party to. This is significant in a sense that the vision that South Africa takes into the SADC region derives from a greater source, which is NEPAD.

The core objectives of NEPAD are “to reduce and eradicate poverty in Africa, to place the continent on a path of sustained development as an integral bloc within the global trade and investment community” (Hughes, 2004: 73). Tim Hughes further indicates the core principle of NEPAD to say that “peace and security are the prerequisite for

development in Africa, however, good governance is the basis for establishing peace and security” (Hughes, 2004: 74).

Chris Landsberg indicates that NEPAD is an African development blueprint which, after decades of failures resulting from legacies of colonialism, has helped spur development in Africa. NEPAD is based on “democratic values and principles, governance and peace and security, infrastructure and information, human resources, agriculture and market access” (Landsberg, 2009: 11). These are the values and principles that inform South Africa’s vision towards Africa. For instance, in terms of peace, security and democracy, South Africa has committed itself since 1994 to help resolve conflicts in Africa using its moral authority which it draws from its own process of national reconciliation and democratization (Sidiripoulous, 2007: 3). This has culminated into South Africa taking part and using its influence to contribute to conflict resolution in various countries across Africa like in its interventions in Nigeria, Burundi, Lesotho, and many more African countries which were experiencing either conflicts or political instability.

### **3.6.2. SADC region.**

In addition to the broader objective of an Africa that is prosperous, peaceful, and democratic; South Africa has a specific foreign policy vision that is specific to the experiences of the Southern African region. The South African foreign policy Yearbook of 2001 indicates that regarding the Southern African region, “South Africa’s foreign policy vision reflects a close diplomatic, economic and security co-operation and integration, adherence to human rights, promotion of democracy and the presentation of regional solidarity, peace and stability” (SA Yearbook, 2001: 272).

In the area of peace and security, South Africa’s foreign policy vision for Southern Africa remains closely connected to that of Africa, which is to maintain an environment that has limited conflicts and the consolidation of political stability, a prerequisite for socio-economic development. There are multiple bilateral consultations that took place in countries like Burundi, Sudan, DRC and in Zimbabwe; all whose aim were to initiate peace processes in these countries by South Africa. For instance, the drafting of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement as an attempt to bring peace in the DRC conflict reflects a commitment by South Africa to bring about peace and stability within Southern Africa (SA Yearbook, 2001: 73).

South Africa's foreign policy vision towards Southern Africa contains elements of economic considerations. The interrelatedness of political stability and economic development has led South Africa to adopt a leading role towards 'addressing issues of collaboration and economic integration in Southern Africa through establishing a Free Trade area and the building of infrastructure and human resources to spur economic development in the region' (Saurombe, 2010: 127). The 2005 DFA Strategic Plan indicates that in terms of economic considerations, 'South Africa commits itself to the economic uplifting of the countries in the Southern African region due to its proximity and the direct impact that events in these countries have towards South Africa' (DFA Strategic Plan, 2005: 24).

Thus, it could be argued that the need to promote peace and stability and economic development in the Southern African region is driven also by South Africa's objective to protect its own national economic and political interests. Chris Landsberg notes that 'South Africa has been an active investor in all SADC countries given its proximity, further providing an instance whereby trade relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe and Mozambique rose to 860% between 1992 and 2002' (Landsberg, 2009: 26). The 2011 White Paper on South African foreign policy indicates the importance of SADC countries and what their integration means for South Africa's global competitiveness and the economic development of the SADC region. Moreover, it provides that "South Africa advances a developmental integrated agenda in Southern Africa that combines trade integration and infrastructure development" (SA Foreign Policy White Paper, 2011: 22).

In this agenda, South Africa's foreign policy vision seeks to strengthen institutional capacity within SADC in quests to ensure economic viability in the Southern African region (SA Foreign Policy White Paper, 2011: 22). This resonates with the point made earlier that South Africa foreign policy "accords central importance to African neighbourhood due to proximity and the commitment to address shared challenges of underdevelopment in the region as well as to promote global equity and social justice" (SA Foreign Policy White Paper, 2011: 4). Through SADC as a chair of SADC Summit Heads of state and government in 1999 and 2008, South Africa under the leadership of H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki used its vision of African Renaissance "to emphasize the link between growth, governance, peace and security, and cooperation at regional and sub-regional level" (Akanji, 2016: 109).

In this period, foreign policy was initiated 'to address peace and security issues in Southern Africa on the operationalization of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence, Security and Cooperation (OPDSC), and resolving conflicts in the DRC, Angola, and Burundi' (Akanji, 2016: 109). Beyond the objective to achieve regional integration and economic integration in Southern Africa, the interventions in the DRC and Angola consolidate South Africa's commitment to peace and security and the emphasis that 'militaristic approaches to inter-regional security and co-operation have no place in the reconstruction of the Southern African region' (ANC policy document, 1994). This signifies a resolution by South Africa's foreign policy vision that military intervention must be the last resort when dealing with issues of conflict and political instability in the Southern African region.

### **3.7. Conclusion.**

Zimbabwe and South Africa share a historical past that predates both countries' independence in 1980 and 1994, respectively. In the period prior to their independence, they shared harmonious political and economic relations tied together by their common racist agenda and the need to maintain racist minority rule. Equally, liberation movements in both countries were undertaking their liberation struggle activities in their quest to end the racist white minority rule in their countries. Both the ZANU and ZAPU in Zimbabwe and the ANC in South Africa adopted an alliance for their common liberation cause against a common enemy.

After attaining its independence in 1980 before South Africa, Zimbabwe continued to agitate and cooperate with liberation movements like FRELIMO, SWAPO, and ANC to liberate black people in the hands of white settler minority rule in the Southern African region. Zimbabwe's agitation is met with brutal response from apartheid South Africa's racist white minority government which, upon Zimbabwe's termination of their diplomatic ties, adopted a policy of destabilization to destruct the economic infrastructure of Zimbabwe. This further cemented their diplomatic hostilities. In 1994, South Africa eventually attained its independence.

It adopted a foreign policy that is driven by the commitment to protect human rights and promote democracy driven by the vision of African Renaissance and African agenda. Within the SADC region, the idea of African solidarity, good neighbourliness and the principle of non-interference informs to a greater extent, the relations between

South Africa and SADC members. In the specific case of Zimbabwe, South Africa adopts a policy of quiet diplomacy; a non-confrontational policy with a set of soft diplomatic approaches driven by behind-the-scenes engagements to deal with the political instability in Zimbabwe due to its proximity and the historical ties between the ANC and ZAPU and later ZANU-PF.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis of South Africa's mission in Zimbabwe.**

(“There was no viable alternative to quiet diplomacy in the campaign to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis because by its very nature quiet diplomacy precludes loud pronouncements from rooftops”) – *Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki*

### **4.1. Introduction.**

In the analysis of South Africa's mission in Zimbabwe, it is significant that a perspective on SADC is provided because it is the organization that delegated South Africa's mission into Zimbabwe. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) established in 1992, emerges as an organization with a regional focus, a fact that distinguishes it from the now defunct, Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). SADCC was established in 1980 by Frontline States (FLS). It was formulated with a focus on reducing dependence of the FLS towards South Africa, as outlined in the Lusaka Summit of 1981.

The initial focus provides that “the reduction of dependence on South Africa is necessary to achieve development centered on human dignity” (SADCC, 1981). But, also with a focus on working towards economic integration that is independent from South Africa. This drive for independence was aimed towards specific areas such as transportation, communication, employment and, petroleum and sources of food’ (SADCC, 1981). The dissolution of SADCC culminated into the establishment of SADC in 1992. SADC is inclusive of South Africa and it is aimed at a greater and broader regional objective in the political, cultural, and economic affairs of the Southern African region. The SADC founding Declaration and Treaty of 1992 provides this objective to say that, it will serve as a vehicle for the reduction of economic dependence and equitable regional integration; an appropriate sequel to the political emancipation of the region” (SADC, 1992).

One of the most important objectives of SADC as outlined in Article 5 is the need “to achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, and to enhance the standard and quality of life for the people in the Southern African region” (SADC, 1992). SADC promulgated several structures to advance these objectives in the Southern African region. In the specific area of peace and security in the Southern African region, the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security (OPDS) takes center stage. This Organ was established in June 1996, with the aim “to promote peace and

security in the Southern African region” (SADC, 2004: 55). Amongst the many objectives, the Organ sought to “protect the people and safeguard the development of the Southern African region against instability arising from the breakdown of the law and order, and inter-intra state conflicts. But also, to promote development of democratic institutions and practices within the territories of state parties and encourage the observance of universal human rights” (SADC, 2004: 55).

The Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security provides two pertinent points regarding SADC’s conflict prevention, management, and resolution. Firstly, it provides that “state parties shall manage and seek to resolve any dispute between two or more of them by peaceful means. Secondly, the Organ shall seek to manage and resolve inter-intra state conflicts by peaceful means” (SADC, 2004: 61). Prior to SADC’s resolution to intervene in Zimbabwe through South Africa as an envoy in 2007, Zimbabwe has been grappling with a problem of normalized electoral related human rights abuses. Arguably, in all its post-2000 elections, there have been reported cases of human rights violations that manifested through state-sponsored intimidation, torture and at times, the killing of some members of opposition political parties especially MDC’s. SADC has undertaken several missions in Zimbabwe in its quest to provide lasting solutions to the issues that Zimbabwe was faced with.

For instance, in 2002, SADC’s Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) undertook an electoral observer mission consisting of 70 members (39 members of parliaments in the SADC region, and 31 support staff) in Zimbabwe’s presidential elections of March 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> upon the invitation by H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe (SADC, 2002). Above All, the SADC-PF’s election observer mission which was guided by norms and standards for elections in the SADC region, as well as the constitutional framework of Zimbabwe, observed a high level of polarization, political intolerance, and violence in all the provinces during the election period (SADC, 2002).

Brian Raftopoulos also indicates that regarding the outcome of the 2002 presidential elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), like SADC-PF, observed that the election procedures were compromised by violence, discrimination and intimidation, and lack of transparency (Raftopoulos, 2002: 422-

433). This corroborates the point made earlier on the issue of violence during elections and how it compromises the determination of democracy in Zimbabwe.

The SADC-PF also observed the lack of an independent electoral commission in Zimbabwe as well as the acts of intimidation and abductions which were embarked on to compromise free movement of party agents across the country. Thus, SADC-PF made a recommendation to SADC and Zimbabwe to establish an independent electoral commission that would safeguard the authenticity of the electoral processes in Zimbabwe going forward (SADC, 2002). In the 2005 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe, SADC deployed 55 observers to go on an election observer mission (SEOM) in the quest to observe the nature of the election processes as SEOM's core objective, from 15<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005.

In this period, the observer mission was headed by South Africa as a chair of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (OPDSC), with Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as the head of the observer mission in Zimbabwe's 2005 Parliamentary elections (Madakufamba, 2005). This mission by SADC was undertaken through its structure, the Principles and Guidelines governing Democratic Elections adopted in Mauritius in 2004. SADC's Election Observer Mission's role to determine the nature and scope of elections is based on numerous principles which include amongst many, the aim to observe freedoms and rights of citizens in the host country. In addition, to observe the environment and to assess whether it is conducive to holding free and fair peaceful elections.

Furthermore, the neutrality of the polling stations falls in this category, which extends also to the quest to assess whether voters experience discrimination based on the party of their choice. (SADC, 2004). It is on this basis that SADC deployed several observer missions in Zimbabwe as in the case of the 2002 and 2005 elections. This has been mainly due to the nature of violence that MDC supporters experienced during elections. The central objective of SEOM is to only observe the elections based on the principles listed above. The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) report captures SEOM's objective to say that, "it aims to assess whether elections will be held in a free and fair atmosphere, reflective of the will of the people, and also, the purpose is not to supervise elections, but to observe them in line with SADC's standards and norms" (SAIIA, 2002: 15). Additionally, it also extends to observing and

analyzing the conduct of democratic elections which is based on the principle to observe whether citizens are fully participating in the political process without fear or discrimination.

Also, to observe whether there is political tolerance, in that, citizens with differing political affiliation and views can co-exist and mutually exercise their rights to freely associate and vote for the candidate or political party of their choice. The principles are also premised on the need to assess whether equal opportunity is being accorded to all political parties to access the media. In other words, this is based on the notion that all parties shall play at an equal footing and that no unfair advantage shall be experienced by any. Lastly, to encourage that all parties accept and respect the election results proclaimed to be free and fair by electoral authorities (SADC, 2004).

This is the pinnacle of SEOM's involvement in Zimbabwe's 2005 parliamentary elections. There are various observations made by SEOM in Zimbabwe's 2005 elections. The predominant one that paints a broad picture is the assertion by Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as the head of SEOM that "the picture that emerged at the close of the poll was an election rally which was peaceful, and this confirm the determination of the people of Zimbabwe to do their best to implement SADC Principles and Guidelines governing Democratic Elections – which guided the observer mission" (Madakufamba, 2005).

Progressively, Zimbabwe established an independent electoral commission going into the 2004 prior to the parliamentary elections in 2005. The establishment of the independent commission results from a recommendation made by SADC-PF in 2002, upon observing the complexities in the 2002 elections in Zimbabwe. SADC made great progress in this regard in Zimbabwe through its observer missions because as it has recommended in 2002, Zimbabwe indeed made some electoral reform. These include the establishment of Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the Electoral Act (EA) both in 2004.

In the area of democratic elections, for SADC-PF, the 2005 elections in Zimbabwe presented an improvement from the nature of elections observed in 2002. Moreover, SADC observed the 2005 parliamentary elections as credible and peaceful. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka congratulated the people of Zimbabwe for "holding peaceful, credible and well managed and transparent elections" (SADC, 2005).

However, this election period has its own casualties as is the previous elections in Zimbabwe. For instance, the targeted campaign called ‘Operation Murambatsvina/ restore order’ in the 2005 elections whereby urban housing and other properties were demolished. Also, the issue of arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture, and killings meted against MDC supporters (Dzimiri, 2017: 52). Although this is the case, SEOM observed a high level of political tolerance and political maturity, helpful presence of police personnel and cooperation of election authorities in the 2005 parliamentary elections (SADC, 2005).

An observation from the Amnesty International (2013) as quoted by Rich Mashimbye, states that the ‘Operation Murambatsvina was a major systematic state-sponsored human rights violation committed against supporters of the opposition and individuals perceived to be opponents to Former President H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe’ (Mashimbye, 2017: 50). SADC has been monitoring the political and economic developments in Zimbabwe as far as intervention is concerned. For instance, in the SADC records of the year 2001, SADC held a Summit on September 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> in Zimbabwe, Harare. This Summit was attended by Heads of state and government whom upon acknowledging the political and economic issues in 1999 in Zimbabwe, resolved to establish a Task Force to work in Zimbabwe.

The objective of the Task Force has been to ‘work with the government in Zimbabwe on political and economic issues with the aim to assist Zimbabwe in finding solutions’ (SADC Communique, 2001). At this stage, SADC perceived the political developments in Zimbabwe through the lens of the land question which needed to be addressed by the people of Zimbabwe. H.E Dr. Elson Bakili Muluzi, the Former President of Malawi and chairperson of SADC in 2001 is quoted asserting the need for “an equitable land reform and resettlement program in Zimbabwe. Moreover, the pledge for SADC’s support towards Zimbabwe in this land reform programs and alluding to the importance of dialogue and working together amongst People of Zimbabwe” (SADC, 2001).

In the Extra-ordinary summit held in Malawi, Blantyre, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2002, H.E Dr. Elson Bakili Muluzi, as the chairperson of SADC still expressed the desire for sustainable peace, security and stability in the Southern African region while acknowledging the adverse impact that conflicts present towards all the economies in the region. His pledge was that SADC is determined “to perfect and consolidate

democratic values and structures whilst equally welcoming the strides that Zimbabwe was undertaking to respect human rights, freedom of opinion and association and peaceful assembly for all People of Zimbabwe” (SADC Communiqué, 2002).

In 2003, SADC held yet another summit in Tanzania, Dar-es-salaam 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August. Regarding Zimbabwe, the summit resolved ‘to continue opposing the sanctions by European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA), as they hurt the region not only Zimbabwe. A general definition of a sanction entails a penalty for disobeying the rule of law. In this case, a sanction entails a set of measures adopted by the party that impose a penalty towards the party that disobeyed a rule or law. Since the year 2000, a set of sanctions have been imposed on Zimbabwe by the EU, USA, United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Canada for various reasons ranging from; the need to democratize Zimbabwe, the political emancipation of the people of Zimbabwe from a renewed form of colonialism by the ZANU-PF (Chingono, 2010: 67). For instance, in 2001, the World Bank (WB); an international financial institution founded in 1944 in Bretton Woods, United States; that assists low-middle countries with loans and grants suspended Zimbabwe as it could not be able to repay arrears owed to the World Bank. Also, prior to the 2002 elections in Zimbabwe, the European Union imposed targeted travel and financial sanctions against the H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and particular ZANU-PF officials (Lee, 2003: 14). As far as targeted sanctions are concerned, an argument can be made that these sanctions were to punish mostly the ZANU-PF government officials.

In the year 2002, the United States of America imposed similar sanctions imposed by the European Union on Zimbabwe. A year later, on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2003; the assets of the Former President H.E Robert Gabriel Mugabe and several ZANU-PF officials were frozen (Lee, 2003: 14). An example of a financial sanction (penalty) is provided by Vittoria Moretti (2017); that over EUR 1,5 billion of development assistance to Zimbabwe were channeled through non-state actors such international Non-Governmental Organizations. Whilst over EUR 128 million that was supposed to be directed to the government for support was halted (Moretti, 2017: 5). On the other hand, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which was founded in 1944 at Washington, D.C. is an international financial institution and an agency of the United Nations that also participated in the sanctioning of Zimbabwe. In June 2003, the IMF suspended Zimbabwe’s voting rights upon failing to repay arrears owed and ultimately

halted the possibility of Zimbabwe having access to resources any furthermore (Moretti, 2017: 6).

A dominant factor that is understood to be marking the genesis of the Western sanctions is the Fast-Track Land Reform Program adopted by the Zimbabwean government in 2000 to forcibly dispossess white commercial farmers of their ill-gotten farms (Chingono, 2010: 67). Moreover, it is argued that the Western sanctions were the result of their dissatisfaction with the level of human rights abuses and the disregard for property ownership rights of the minority in Zimbabwe (Chingono, 2010: 67). This argument is made in relation to the West fearing the eruption of the second chimurenga; a revolution from ensuing which would have threatened the lives of white commercial farmers (Chingono, 2010: 68). From this, an argument can be made that it was on the notion of good governance or the elements of it thereof that informed partly the resolution of the West to sanction Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the Western nations believed that Zimbabwe lacks or purposely infringes on the elements that make up a good democracy (Chingono, 2010: 69). These are some of the reasons that are understood to be amongst the significant informers of the Western sanctions towards Zimbabwe.

Beyond the scope of sanctions, the 2003 SADC summit resolved to continue working with Zimbabwe to address the issues within the framework of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security' (SADC, 2003). The philosophy of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security towards conflict resolution is based on the belief that states shall strive to settle disputes through peaceful means. The idea of the pacific settlement of disputes informs SADC's behavior in the periods already covered (2001/2002/2003) in Zimbabwe. It took yet another violent occurrence on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007 for SADC to finally resolve to intervene in Zimbabwe through South Africa as an envoy.

The Open Society Institute for Southern Africa (OSISA) report reflects on the events that took place on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007 in Zimbabwe. The report holds that the MDC held a prayer meeting in Highfield, just outside Harare. The organizer of the March 11<sup>th</sup>, Prayer Meeting in 2007, identified in the report as KF, recalls how the political and state-sponsored violence started on this day. He is quoted saying the following when being interviewed about how the violence started.

“Unfortunately, before the prayer meeting could start, we saw police details all over the place. They ordered us to disperse claiming that we are not coming for a prayer meeting but a political meeting. As we resisted, they started beating us. They indiscriminately started beating people with clubs’ teargas. Then there were water cannons. So, there was confusion all over the place” (OSISA, 2007: 12).

FK also recalls the encounter when his friend, Gift Tandare was shot and killed by the police on this day, when he says, “They started firing live ammunition into the crowd eventually, they shot Gift in front of me” (OSISA, 2007: 12). The political violence on this day extends to women equally. A woman named Sekai Holland recalls how approximately 60 women, herself included, were tortured by the ZANU-PF militia on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 (OSISA, 2007: 16). Notwithstanding some of the incidents that took place prior to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007. For instance, the OSISA report provides that, in 2006 13<sup>th</sup> September, “police arrested and tortured 15 leaders and members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) after their attempts to hold peaceful protests regarding the social and economic ills in Zimbabwe” (OSISA, 2007: 6).

Additionally, in 2007 February, over 400 civil society activists were arrested and reportedly tortured for attempting to hold a peaceful demonstration (OSISA, 2007: 6). These numerous occasions of state sponsored violence that unfolded without any form of accountability, resonate with and are in corroboration to Chikerema and Chakunda’s argument. They argue that, since independence, Zimbabwe has been associated with violence, a predicament that spreads down to grassroots reaching uncontrollable levels (Chikerema and Chakunda, 2014: 59). The culture of impunity defines the political landscape in Zimbabwe and is premised on the need to acquire and consolidate state power because it is seen as an outlet for the attainment and consolidation of economic power (Chikerema and Chakunda, 2014: 61). Thus, the constant violent interactions even prior to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007 are in fact, in line with the earlier observations provided by Chikerema and Chakunda. Amid the increasingly alarming rate of human rights violations orchestrated by the state, Zimbabwe was still expected to go into the 2008 elections.

Regarding how SADC mandated South Africa, the OSISA report present that in late March 2007, SADC launched an initiative called the ‘Mbeki Initiative’ in efforts to negotiate a resolution to Zimbabwe’s political instability and economic crisis. The

Mbeki initiative gave H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki the responsibility to facilitate dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC as substantial progress in talks was marred by the continued violence against individuals deemed opponents of the state and labeled as terrorists (OSISA, 2007: 7). SADC held an Extra-ordinary summit in Tanzania, Dar-es-salaam, 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007, and whilst affirming its solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe, it mandated H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki to continue facilitating dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC. It also encouraged diplomatic contacts in efforts to find solutions to the crisis in Zimbabwe (SADC, 2007). On the 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August 2007, SADC held another summit to deliberate on the progress made in Zimbabwe from which, H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki was encouraged to expedite the dialogue or mediation processes.

SADC's drive to expedite the dialogue processes was aimed at ensuring that the 2008 elections would be held in a peaceful and tranquil environment for people of Zimbabwe to freely choose and vote for their leaders (SADC, 2007). Equally, SADC has been involved with the EU, Commonwealth, and the US in efforts to encourage them to lift the sanctions in Zimbabwe as they were adversely affecting the ordinary people in Zimbabwe (SADC, 2003). The mandate towards South Africa was necessary because there was a need to contain the possible spill-over effects of the political instability crisis from Zimbabwe into other neighboring countries (Dzimiri, 2017: 64). The spill-over would be because of both political and economic refugees from Zimbabwe into other neighboring countries. Economically, this would mean that the disturbance of trade flows within Zimbabwe due to the crisis would impact adversely impact trade flows in other neighboring countries.

Moreover, in the 2003 SADC communique, there is an acknowledgement that the sanctions imposed in Zimbabwe, and the political instability itself was adversely affecting the economies of the countries in the Southern African region (SADC, 2003). In 2008, this was still a reality. Arguably, the H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki mandate was a drastic measure taken by SADC to contain a possible humanitarian crisis throughout the region. Because already, the economic hurt due to the developments in Zimbabwe was felt throughout the region by the economies of the SADC region. The mandate also extends to the need to stabilize peace and security in the region through Zimbabwe. On this logic, this is the reason SADC indeed needed to find a solution to contain the possible spillovers of the political crisis in Zimbabwe,

but most importantly, Zimbabwe was “a key political and economic actor in the Southern African region” (Pallotti, 2013: 29). This is to provide the basis for the rationale of the efforts from SADC’s resolution to intervene in Zimbabwe.

In terms of the basis for South Africa’s resolution to accept the call to intervene as an envoy of SADC, it is significant to reflect on its foreign policy vision for Africa and the Southern African region. This is the basis through which South Africa’s resolution to accept SADC’s call is considered. South Africa’s foreign policy endeavors since 1994, reflect a country that is prepared to go across Africa in its quest to assist other countries to democratize and, to stabilize the Southern African region in terms of peace and security. The African National Congress (ANC) policy documents indicate that since South Africa’s own democratization experience in 1994, South Africa, through adhering to principles such as human rights and the promotion of democracy, sought to engage actively in initiating greater unity amongst the people of Africa (ANC Policy Documents, 1994).

The initial objective of South Africa has been to get involved and contribute to democratization processes and matters of peace and security in Africa as a front runner and a leader. South Africa also contributed to the establishment of NEPAD in 2001, whose main aim was to eradicate poverty in Africa through the provision of resources that would enhance governance in African countries and as a result, impact peace and security (Hughes, 2004: 73). On this note, one considers South Africa’s efforts in the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002 and the promotion of peace and security in countries like Burundi, DRC, Sudan, Lesotho, and many others (SA Foreign Policy Yearbook, 2001).

Arguably, the SADC’s call to South Africa resonated with its own domestic foreign policy endeavors and its goal to consolidate itself as a leader in matters of democracy, human rights, and peace and security in Africa. It could also be that SADC considered South Africa’s capability as a mediator based on its past successful missions in various African states. But also, in consideration of South Africa’s proximity to Zimbabwe and as a SADC member itself, it is probable that the call came due to its vision for the SADC region. For instance, towards the Southern African region, South Africa commits itself towards “close diplomatic, economic and security co-operation and integration, adherence to human rights, the promotion of democracy, and regional

solidarity and peace and stability” (SA Foreign Policy Yearbook, 2001: 273). This is also seen through its contribution towards the Lusaka ceasefire Agreement in 1999, to end the conflict and promote peace in the DRC.

Ultimately, in terms of the 2007 SADC mandate given to South Africa, there are two major breakthroughs that result from South Africa’s efforts in Zimbabwe. These breakthroughs are the “Global Political Agreement (GPA)” and the “Government of National Unity (GNU)” in 2009. The GPA emerges from the 2008 contested presidential and parliamentary elections. In perspective, the 2008 elections held on 29<sup>th</sup> March saw the ZANU-PF losing the first round of the elections to the MDC, which also could not attain a clinical threshold of 50% and plus of the total votes. This ultimately led to the run-off or a second round of elections to take place as provided for by the constitution in Zimbabwe, which would then take place on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (Masunungure, 2011: 54). Masunungure further articulates the terror and violence that the ZANU-PF government unleashed towards the general populace through the operation “Makavotera papi/ who did you vote for?”, which was undertaken by chiefs of the army, police, air force and prison services with the objective to instill fear and intimidate voters (Masunungure, 2011: 56).

The unfolding of these horrific events between March and June 2008, led SADC to consolidate its call towards South Africa which it has mandated in 2007 as an envoy to ensure that the second round of 2008 “harmonized” elections take place in a safe environment for the people of Zimbabwe to choose their leaders. Eventually, the 2008 harmonized elections took place in a less horrific political space and ultimately led to the adoption of the GPA. Considering both the GPA and the subsequent GNU, one is reminiscent of the profound words contained in a statement published by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) led by Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma in 2002, to say that “the people of Zimbabwe need to speak through the ballot” (DFA, 2002). The GPA ultimately led to the implementation of the GNU, a power-sharing set up that allowed both the ZANU-PF and the MDC to share government ministries. These developments emerge because of South Africa’s commitment to quiet diplomacy as a strategy to assist the people of Zimbabwe to resolve their governance issues.

#### **4.2. Quiet diplomacy.**

The definition of quiet diplomacy that this paper utilizes and settles for is the one that is provided by George Abel Mhango which indicates that, 'quiet diplomacy is a set of soft diplomatic approaches mostly behind-the-scenes engagements aimed at facilitating pacific settlement of disputes' (Mhango, 2010: 16). Chris Landsberg provides the elements of quiet diplomacy to say that, "it involves little or no media involvement as it is premised on less appearance in the public domain when undertaking actions. It is further comprised of a calm space and tactful but persistent negotiations in a non-threatening atmosphere, particularly behind the scenes. These engagements take place between the mediator and the leadership of the target country through bilateral and multilateral efforts" (Landsberg, 2016: 128).

In furtherance thereof, George Mhango highlights that quiet diplomacy propagates traits of "preventive diplomacy which is traditionally anchored in multilateralism". Additionally, "preventive diplomacy is concerted action designed to resolve, manage or contain disputes before they become violent. Thus, a third party or mediator must be involved to mediate the conflicting parties through negotiation to reach a negotiated settlement" (Mhango, 2010: 16). This mediation is carried out through bilateral meetings between heads of state and senior officials to find common ground. It is apparent that quiet diplomacy is a non-violent method of resolving disputes and because it is mostly a private session exercise, it differs from Megaphone diplomacy that holds public press releases and announcements. Quiet diplomacy also differs from military intervention because it does not use force to coerce parties to adopt or to impose on them a solution but rather, it relies on the art of persuasion and negotiation.

Quiet diplomacy centers around the utilization of negotiation and mediation that is non-confrontational. As is in the case of H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki's approach in Zimbabwe, which espoused the use of mediation, negotiation, and the determination to get the disputants to the negotiation table. So that, they can deliberate issues of contention until they mutually find common ground or in other words, resolve their issues by chartering peaceful political solutions (Akanji, 2016: 115). As a non-confrontational approach, quiet diplomacy is aimed at nudging parties towards negotiation rather than imposing solutions from outside. Thus, in the case of Zimbabwe, 'South Africa has been geared towards persuading H.E Former President

Robert Gabriel Mugabe into a negotiated settlement with the opposition' (Akanji, 2016: 118).

The central objective is therefore not the imposition of an external solution to the issues that the disputants are battling with, but to get them to sit on the negotiation table for them to deliberate their issues. Thus, this introduces the critical belief in terms of ownership of political solutions and the responsibility in the chartering of these solutions that the disputants ultimately bear. This is mainly because quiet diplomacy approach puts them in the center of deliberations as opposed to being sidelined and being given a solution by an external mediator.

#### **4.3. South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe – Rationale and factors.**

There are several perspectives on what constitute how South Africa relates and interacts with Zimbabwe through foreign policy especially during H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki's administration in South Africa. Analysts of foreign policy observe that South Africa's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe is understood in the context of its principles such as "the rule of law, social justice and peace, and the objective of African agenda" (Maphaka, Rapanyane, and Maphotho, 2020: 127). South Africa's foreign policy also considers its historical struggle for liberation. Thus, it champions human rights, the promotion of democracy, and the rule of law as the cornerstone of democratic South Africa (Maphaka, Rapanyane, and Maphotho, 2020: 127). South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe rest on these cornerstone principles.

Like how South Africa relates to other SADC member states, its intervention in Zimbabwe is guided by "the principles of good neighbourliness, anti-racism and anti-Western-imperialism and is also driven by African experiences" (Maphaka, Rapanyane, and Maphotho, 2020: 127). These African experiences derive from the countries' common historical fight in the liberation struggle against racist white settler governments. Especially in terms of Zimbabwe and South Africa, these two countries' liberation movements joined ranks and cooperated in their common cause to liberate their people from the oppression that was imposed by racist white settler minority governments.

Through noting these African experiences and the desire to consolidate good neighbourliness, South Africa adopts a non-confrontational and non-violent form of

interaction towards Zimbabwe, its historical liberation struggle ally. This non-confrontational form of communication is referred to as quiet diplomacy. South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach towards Zimbabwe is also informed by African Solidarity and the quest to offer African solutions to African problems and the desire to interact with SADC members on equal terms (Landsberg, 2016: 128). Arguably, this is undertaken to present South Africa as an equal sovereign partner as opposed to being a hegemon when interacting with its fellow Southern African neighbors.

South Africa's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe falls within the greater objective of the African Renaissance, African solidarity, the principle of non-interference in the affairs of other member states, good neighborliness, and multilateralism. The adoption of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe does not occur in a vacuum, it is a direct result of the provisions in South Africa's foreign policy around conflict resolution.

South Africa's foreign policy provides that there is a need for peace missions that are more inclusive and foremost political rather than military in nature (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8). This embodies the commitment to resolve conflicts through peaceful means as opposed to adopting a military posture that seeks to impose solutions rather than facilitating a dialogue that would see the conflicting parties contribute to the solution themselves. On this note, therefore, South Africa's quiet diplomacy intervention towards Zimbabwe was to assist the people of Zimbabwe resolve the governance crisis through dialogue. This is the major stance that South Africa undertakes in Zimbabwe with a clear indication that, the ultimate responsibility rests with the people of Zimbabwe to decide their destiny through democratic voting processes.

Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, indicates that, "a lasting solution to the problems in Zimbabwe can only be achieved when the people of Zimbabwe themselves agree to it" (DFA, 2002). This signifies that at the outset, South Africa's position in Zimbabwe has always been reliant on mediation and the respect of the sovereignty of Zimbabwe as an equal state, as opposed to intervention that imposes a solution. Chris Landsberg speaks on the issue of 'accelerated regional engagement' as a Geo-political a strategy by South Africa to capitalize on the phenomenon of regional solidarity and partnership. This is undertaken with the objective to turn SADC into a platform to solve the crisis in Zimbabwe through regional consensus (Landsberg, 2016: 139).

In addition to regional efforts, South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe was aimed at 'getting the conflicting parties within Zimbabwe on a negotiation table for them to deliberate, find common ground and make compromises before the official negotiations' (Zondi, 2012: 21). South Africa as a mediator was acting strategically in Zimbabwe to avoid any course of action that would worsen the situation for both Zimbabwe and the Southern African region. On this note, military coercion, sanctions, and violent confrontation are the actions that South Africa sought to avoid at all costs in its quiet diplomacy strategy towards Zimbabwe.

There are various perspectives as to what informs South Africa's commitment to quiet diplomacy approach towards Zimbabwe even during the violation towards a core principle of South Africa's foreign policy which is the protection of human rights. Lawrence Mhandara and Andrew Pooe provide an indication that South Africa's approach towards Zimbabwe is a result of multiple external factors rather than a choice. To say this, they argue that H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki had a responsibility to correct some of the pitfalls of unilateralism in diplomatic consultations on African peace and security concerns that have occurred under H.E Former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's leadership. H.E Former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Mvezo in the Eastern Cape in the year 1918 July 18<sup>th</sup>. From Qunu where he began his primary education, he went on to obtain a degree in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in the University of South Africa. He entered politics in 1942 and only joined the African National Congress in 1944 and was amongst those who formed the ANC youth League. (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2022). He spent a sum of 27 years in Prison for his activism role and as a dedicated freedom fighter and a revolutionary. He last released on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1990 and is later elected the President of the ANC in 1991. On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1994 he was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected President and eventually stepped down in 1999 (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2022). As the President of South Africa, he took part in various interventions across Africa like in Nigeria and Lesotho. In 1998, for instance, he undertook a military intervention in Lesotho (Mhandara and Pooe, 2013: 18). In addition to having diplomatic issues with Nigeria, South Africa's position in Africa was hegemonic. H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki sought to address this phenomenon. Thus, the notion of African solidarity created a problem for H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki because 'he sought not to infiltrate it by

harshly dealing with H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe because other African countries would have isolated him' (Landsberg, 2016: 131).

Additionally, as a reasonable factor, South Africa's conflict resolution model which rests on three critical pillars namely, preventive diplomacy (Quiet diplomacy being an element), peacebuilding and peacemaking, is identified by Elizabeth Sidiropoulos as the basis through which the decision to opt for quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe lies on (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8). Contrary to some of the various perspectives expanded earlier as to what informs South Africa's resolution to undertake quiet diplomacy approach towards Zimbabwe, Sidiropoulos contends that it is purely a commitment to foreign policy objective by South Africa and not external motivations. Sidiropoulos further provides that it is the need by South Africa to build and strengthen governance and constituents. This provision is indicated in the white paper that, the rule of law, independent judiciary, fair criminal justice systems, peaceful democratic elections are some of the core elements that South Africa's peace missions seeks to consolidate where it intervenes (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8).

The undertaking of these peace missions across Africa by South Africa extends a corroborative element towards the argument by Landsberg and Kondlo that "the assumption of the role of a peacemaker and a negotiator in Africa, and the championing of African interests abroad presents a key aspect of South Africa's foreign policy" (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 1). The African Renaissance vision also played a crucial role as factor that influenced how South Africa handled the political crisis in Zimbabwe. Meaning that, it was influenced by the desire to reassert Africa's sovereignty and to provide African solutions to African problems without being dictated by Western superpowers (Mhandara and Pooe, 2013: 20).

An underlying belief to South Africa's quiet diplomacy is that "this model reflects traits of preventive diplomacy, which respects sovereignty of states and, it is based on the idea of African solidarity and comradeship underpinned by the unspoken rule that African governments do not openly criticize each other" (Mhango, 2010: 17). In consideration of the human rights violations that have taken place in Zimbabwe while South Africa is actively involved but silent on the human rights violations, it becomes probable that the need to maintain African solidarity preceded the need to protect human rights.

Along similar understanding, Dale McKinley postulates that ‘South Africa had to ensure that it was not perceived by other African states as associating with the West or embarking on a West-sponsored policy’ (McKinley, 2003: 3). In essence, the urge to present a united Africa and to preserve historical liberation ties made it practically impossible for South Africa to adopt any other policy approach towards Zimbabwe. Thus, the quiet diplomacy approach towards Zimbabwe is a carefully calculated decision by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki in consideration of the impact of past experiences of South Africa acting unilaterally and presenting itself as a hegemon when dealing with other African states. It is also a calculation of the repercussions that South Africa would have borne should it have taken a different strategy.

H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki sought to avoid repeating the same mistakes that H.E Former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela committed when dealing with other African states. According to Mhandara and Pooe, the various factors that led to South Africa committing to quiet diplomacy is foremost, the consideration of the impact that H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe holds in the African continent, the fear of South Africa’s isolation by other African states, the need to have a stable and peaceful state than to deal with a failed state, and lastly, the historical liberation ties that South Africa and Zimbabwe share (Mhandara and Pooe, 2013: 20).

An economic perspective of what informs South Africa’s quiet diplomacy approach is provided by Chris Alden to say that ‘South Africa’s economy is too closely linked to Zimbabwe to impose sanctions, and, as a regional leader South Africa had to choose careful persuasion over confrontation and multilateralism over unilateralism’ (Alden, 2002: 9). The strategy has been centered on presenting itself as an equal partner to Zimbabwe and to deal with the political instability in a manner that does not jeopardize South Africa’s image and relations with Zimbabwe and other African states. These various perspectives present the factors or at least attempt to, on what inform South Africa’s commitment to quiet diplomacy approach towards Zimbabwe.

The question of what exactly South Africa does in practice towards Zimbabwe to show its commitment to quiet diplomacy is answered by George Mhango’s analysis of South Africa’s behavior. Mhango indicates that for South Africa, quiet diplomacy means “shielding Zimbabwe from public criticism in international organizations, endorsement

of questionable results, persistent negotiations dubbed constructive engagements and the provision of economic packages with the aim to motivate change within Zimbabwe by the people of Zimbabwe” (Mhango, 2010: 16).

The International Crisis Group (ICG) along similar observations, indicates that for South Africa, the practice of quiet diplomacy and perhaps the strategy, has been to abstain from criticizing Zimbabwe’s governance and human rights record (International Crisis Group, 2020: 9). This has been done by South Africa as the ICG argues, to build confidence and friendly influence with Zimbabwe (International Crisis Group, 2020: 9). Moreover, the provision of economic packages as Mhango observes is in line with South Africa’s quiet diplomacy tactics to initiate or to encourage change from within Zimbabwe by the people of Zimbabwe.

Jo-Ansie Van Wyk observes that ‘despite international and domestic pressures and criticism, South Africa continued trade relations with Zimbabwe and it also continued to provide electricity to Zimbabwe’ (Van Wyk, 2002: 215). This entails a careful consideration and analysis of the detrimental consequences that South Africa’s enterprises would have borne if trade operations were disturbed in Zimbabwe especially towards South African firms and corporations operating in Zimbabwe. Moreover, South African parastatals provided credits to their Zimbabwean counterparts to keep trade operations on going (Van Wyk, 2002: 216). Part of the strategy as it seems, was to keep the lights on in Zimbabwe and to not criticize the government in public but continue engaging in multilateral and bilateral efforts to resolve the political instability crisis (Van Wyk, 2002: 215).

For instance, in its quest to present itself as a “good multilateralist”, South Africa’s opting for continuous engagements with other African countries in the Abuja Agreement of 2001, represents a strategy by South Africa on its part to address the governance crisis in Zimbabwe through dialogue as opposed to imposing its military power. The strategy to opt for multilateralism as opposed to unilateralism as Kuseni Dlamini argues, was for South Africa to avoid a course of action that would lead to a further collapse of Zimbabwe (Dlamini, 2002: 176). South Africa’s task in Zimbabwe has been to assist Zimbabwe resolve the governance crisis and to redeem it from becoming a failed state. However, the ultimate responsibility rested with the people of Zimbabwe to decide their fate.

This perspective has been echoed throughout South Africa's involvement in Zimbabwe by the likes of H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki as President and Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to say that, "a lasting solution to the problems in Zimbabwe can only be achieved when the people of Zimbabwe themselves agree to it" (DFA, 2002). This signifies that at the outset, South Africa's position in Zimbabwe has always been reliant on mediation and the respect of the sovereignty of Zimbabwe as an equal state. With Zimbabwe being exposed to the myriad of problems like unemployment, domestic debt, inflation, and deteriorating living standards that it was faced with and as a close neighbor, it was either South Africa tackles the governance crisis in Zimbabwe carefully or deal with an influx of political and economic refugees fleeing from Zimbabwe.

Thus, South Africa has opposed and refused to be part of the sanctions policy that the European Union (UN) imposed on Zimbabwean government officials (Mlambo, 2007: 67). In a statement in 2002, the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) led by Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma wrote that "it finds it regrettable and unfortunate that the European Union chose to impose targeted sanctions against Zimbabwe, moreover, the DFA is of the belief that sanctions will not achieve intended result, on the contrary, they may further compound the situation" (DFA, 2002). These sentiments are carried through and still expressed by South Africa throughout its intervention in Zimbabwe. This decision by South Africa shows allegiance to Zimbabwe and a commitment to the vision of African brotherhood.

This is the reason why although Zimbabwe depended on South Africa for power and exports which South Africa could have used earlier into the political crisis to force H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe into a dialogue and compromise with the opposition, South Africa still did not opt for that avenue (Ngubentombi, 2004: 155). Like sanctions, the cutting of electricity by South Africa would have impacted the lives of ordinary people of Zimbabwe more than it would do political officials who would easily afford alternatives. The strategic resolution to keep providing Zimbabwe with power is a calculated decision that has been made in consideration of the impact that a contrary decision would have had on the people of Zimbabwe and in retrospect, the Southern African region. In essence, these are the actions that the adoption of a quiet diplomacy policy has compelled South Africa to take in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.4. South Africa's quiet diplomacy performance in Zimbabwe.**

It is significant that when analyzing the performance of South Africa's quiet diplomacy mission in Zimbabwe, there must be a consideration of the specific objectives that South Africa sought to achieve in its mission through quiet diplomacy. This crucial in the analysis of South Africa's quiet diplomacy performance in Zimbabwe.

It is equally imperative to acknowledge the fact that South Africa did not intervene in Zimbabwe to impose a solution or to solve the socio-economic problems that Zimbabwe was faced with. Former president H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki speaks on this issue in his Synopsis in 2016 to say that, as a facilitator, his approach the quiet diplomacy; was informed by the "unwavering determination to respect the right of the people of Zimbabwe to determine their own future, firmly opposed to any foreign intervention including South Africa, to impose solutions on the people of Zimbabwe" (Mbeki, 2016). This assertion by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki presents the idea that South Africa's approach towards Zimbabwe as a democratic state, was aimed at stabilizing the political spectrum by resolving the governance crisis. This was done strategically to open the conversation to ensuring that regular elections were held in a safe environment because they serve as the basis through which the people of Zimbabwe could determine their own future as is in any democratic state.

In the work that H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki has done as a facilitator in Zimbabwe through quiet diplomacy, his contribution can be derived from the objectives that he sought to achieve. On "the role of SADC in the management of Zimbabwe's crisis", Khabele Matlosa argues that, 'the primary objective that H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki sought to achieve has been to resolve the governance crisis which would in turn impact the recovery, reconstruction, and renewal of the Zimbabwe's economy' (Matlosa, 2016: 53). This governance crisis that Matlosa alludes to, speaks directly to the heart of the problem in Zimbabwe, which was foremost political in nature.

Meaning that, because there was an apparent instability in the political domain, the economic sphere also suffered the consequences. This explains why South Africa's intervention is focused on the political sphere, particularly, the need to resolve the governance crisis and to prioritize elections because they serve as the basis through

which political stability can be achieved. Ultimately, this would have a substantial impact towards the economy in Zimbabwe. Thus, Matlosa provides the three pertinent objectives that H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki sought to achieve in Zimbabwe in the intervention period between 2007 & 2008.

These objectives are in line with SADC's mandate towards South Africa regarding the 2008 elections, considering the violence that accompanied the first round of elections in 2008. These objectives included the need to have H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and Morgan Richard Tsvangirai and Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo to agree to hold the 2008 parliamentary elections. Secondly, to have both parties agree on measures taken to ensure that they both accept election results as representing the will of the people of Zimbabwe. Thirdly, upon agreeing on the first two objectives, both parties further had to agree on the measures to be implemented to facilitate legitimate elections" (Matlosa, 2016: 54). In the overall assessment of these three objectives, one considers the critical assertion by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki on the creation of a platform conducive for the people of Zimbabwe to determine their own future.

SADC also encouraged the expedition of the mediation processes to a conclusion in the quest to ensure that the environment is fully prepared to hold peaceful, free, and fair elections; so that the people of Zimbabwe can make their informed political choices through votes, to choose their leaders (SADC, 2007). This therefore presents the guaranteeing of elections as a central part of SADC and H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki' quiet diplomacy strategy. So, the successful holding of the 2008 'harmonized elections' as referred to, has created a channel for the adoption of the Global Political Agreement in 2008 and the implementation of the power-sharing arrangement; the Government of National Unity in 2009. These two occasions can be thought of as elements through which the impact and performance of quiet diplomacy can be measured in Zimbabwe.

South Africa's quiet diplomacy mission in Zimbabwe was not intended to resolve the socio-economic issues that Zimbabwe was faced with. Its central aim was to resolve the governance crisis which was thought to be the source through which the many problems that Zimbabwe faced emerged from. The objective was to assist Zimbabwe in the governance area and not to impose a new solution or to remove the leadership

because after all, Zimbabwe is a sovereign state. Thus, South Africa's mission in Zimbabwe is measured in this area of governance and the objectives H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki sought to achieve through quiet diplomacy.

#### **4.4.1. Global Political Agreement (GPA).**

H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki in his own words asserts that “though South Africa acted as a facilitator, the fact of the matter is that the GPA was negotiated and elaborated by the three Zimbabwe political parties which had been democratically voted by the people of Zimbabwe in the 2008 elections. Moreover, no part of the agreement was imposed on the parties by the facilitator” (Mbeki, 2016).

The GPA emerges in 2008 because of South Africa's quiet diplomacy practice in Zimbabwe. It is an agreement between the ZANU-PF led by H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and the two MDC formations led by Morgan Richard Tsvangirai MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T); the founder of MDC in 1999 and the retainer of the MDC-Tsvangirai after the party split in 2005 (GPA, 2008). On the other hand, the president of the MDC-Mutambara (MDC-M) faction; Arthur Mutambara, who was born on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1966 in Zimbabwe. Assuming a political career in addition to being a scientist, he was a member of the MDC and later became president of the MDC-Mutambara faction; a breakaway faction from the MDC due to disagreements around some members who voted to participate in the senate elections whilst Morgan Richard Tsvangirai opted to boycott the elections in 2005 (Makonye, 2021: 81). Arthur Mutambara became Deputy Prime Minister on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009 after his role in the successful adoption of the GPA agreement.

Sibanda Modeni captures the essence of the GPA to say that, ‘it was intended to prepare the political process for a generally acceptable election after the debacle of the June 2008 Presidential run-off which followed ZANU-PF's defeat in March 2008’ (Modeni, 2016: 37). Among the several affirmations that ZANU-PF and the two MDCs make in the GPA include the “recognition of free political activity and the right of people to freely canvass and mobilize for political support without acts of harassment and intimidation” (GPA, 2008).

This has been done in relation to the idea that going forward, the people of Zimbabwe would have to partake in free and fair political interactions if they are to choose the political leaders of their choice. This consolidates elections as the cornerstone of

democracy, and the central element for South Africa's quiet diplomacy performance in Zimbabwe. Additionally, the GPA sought to end the political impasse in the political leadership affairs in Zimbabwe. But also, it was sought to give effect to the introduction of the GNU which would provide consideration on the measures like the sharing of ministries as a strategy to guarantee national unity (Raftopolous and Mlambo, 2009: 14).

This ultimately led to the implementation of the GPA provisions to adopt a power-sharing arrangement which would be the foundation on which the people of Zimbabwe would guard their national unity through political cooperation amongst the ZANU-PF and the MDC in governance. H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki eventually made great strides as a facilitator and mediator in seeing that the Government of National Unity is established.

#### **4.4.2. Government of National Unity (GNU).**

The GNU is a power-sharing arrangement which emerges from the agreements made in the Global Political Agreement between ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations. It is the result of South Africa's efforts in seeing that the people of Zimbabwe would be led by a government that is inclusive and to their benefit.

Informed by the way it attained its democracy, South Africa's prestige and conflict resolution in Africa is driven significantly by its 'foreign policy, which is predisposed towards quiet diplomacy to resolve disputes through negotiations' (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007: 8). The commitment to implementing negotiated solutions and inclusive governments by South Africa as informed by its experiences, has its mark in Zimbabwe through the adoption of GPA in 2008 and the ultimate implementation of the GNU in 2009.

The Government of National Unity as a power-sharing agreement, sought to incorporate both the conflicting parties, the ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations into governance, chief amongst them being the sharing of government ministries. The ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations had to find common ground to be ready for the functioning and set up of a power-sharing agreement which involved both working with one another. This is reflective of the observation by Chris Landsberg that a dominant mode of South Africa's Africa agenda strategy centers on the push towards negotiated

solutions or the commitment to establish inclusive governments (Landsberg, 2009: 16).

As far back as 1994, South Africa was involved in a conflict resolution action in Angola which proposed for the accommodation or inclusion into governance a rebel leader and war lord Jonas Savumbi from UNITA as its way of influencing peace and security in Angola (Landsberg, 2009: 16). On this note, South Africa successfully suggested its experience of an inclusive power-sharing government. This suggestion was adopted and consolidated by the inclusion of the MDC in the operation and functioning of government ministries by the ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, 2009. This resulted from the practice of quiet diplomacy by South Africa in Zimbabwe. Considering all the aspects mentioned above; a question would be raised asking whether the GPA and GNU really brought peace and stability that Zimbabwe needed? And the answer is, yes! There are several important factors to consider in the quest to answer the question.

Firstly, there is a need to consider the period and the nature of political events especially the period surrounding the 2008 elections prior to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) followed by the GPA and the subsequent adoption of the GNU. Secondly, a comparison of the two periods (Before and After GPA and GNU) even at face value is important. For instance, post the GPA and GNU, Zimbabwe has not witnessed the level of violence and killings of civilians like in the 2008 run-up elections. An argument is advanced that although having not ended the conflict in Zimbabwe, the GPA and GNU both made significant strides to de-escalate the political tension and further committed the leadership, both in the ruling party and opposition, on a post reconstruction process (Mashimbye, 2017: 68). Even in the slightest of value, beyond the GPA and GNU, one could posit that there has been some form of peace (in the sense that there is less violence) that could be understood through the stability that Zimbabwe has witnessed post-2009. Peace and security are far more complex to be attained by a targeted negotiated settlement that was solely focused on resolving a political impasse between the political elite. Peace and security, one would argue, transcend the limits of mediation because they require a dedicated national development plan that only the government and the people of Zimbabwe are collaboratively party to, and collectively bear the responsibility to work together in the execution of that strategy. As already mentioned earlier, in the analysis of the crisis in Zimbabwe, scholars like Ntshembo Marvel Mathye credits South Africa for having

been able to broker the GPA and ultimately the GNU; a move that resolved the impasse at political elite level (Mathye, 2013: 2). This has brought significant stability in the political affairs in Zimbabwe. However, it does not equate to peace and security, a phenomenon that is not yet realized in post-2009 Zimbabwe. The GPA and GNU have worked the ground and laid a foundation through which the people of Zimbabwe and the government can charter strategies that would see the realization of peace and security, as well as the resolution of the socio-economic issues in the future. As things stand, peace and security have not been achieved in Zimbabwe but there is political stability; an important element in the direction to attain peace and security.

#### **4.5. Conclusion.**

This chapter has reflected on the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe which has resulted in SADC embarking on electoral observer missions during elections in Zimbabwe. These election observer missions were undertaken in the quest to understand the situation on the ground during elections. Due to the nature of the crisis and the events surrounding it, SADC ultimately mandated South Africa as an envoy in 2007 to intervene in Zimbabwe to ensure that the 2008 elections were held in a peaceful space. Thus, South Africa adopted a policy of quiet diplomacy to deal with the crisis in Zimbabwe. Thereafter, South Africa's quiet diplomacy has resulted in numerous successful results in Zimbabwe.

When analyzing South Africa's mission in Zimbabwe, with the GPA and GNU in mind, it becomes apparent that South Africa has successfully completed its mission in Zimbabwe. This is the case because both the GPA and GNU resulted from the committed efforts by South Africa through continuous negotiations to put Zimbabwe in a path of political stability. This political stability had to emerge from having the governance issues that Zimbabwe encountered addressed. The resolution of the deadlock between the parties at the political helms thereof through quiet diplomacy has resulted in the stabilization of governance and political affairs in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it has created a platform for people of Zimbabwe to be able to determine their own destiny moving forward.

## **Chapter 5: Observations and conclusion.**

### **5.1. Introduction.**

The central objective of this study has been to understand South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe. This study has been undertaken by exploring, as a question, the factors that influenced South Africa's resolve to commit to quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe's political instability crisis in the 2000-2009 period. This question sought to address the arguments made by scholars that South Africa could have adopted an approach that is more substantial than quiet diplomacy. In other words, a firmer stance, like imposing sanctions towards Zimbabwe's leadership or adopting a megaphone diplomacy.

As such, there is vast literature that analyse South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe from a critical point of view, which ascribes the continuity of the socio-economic issues in Zimbabwe as resulting from the failure of South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe. This study takes a different outlook and focuses specifically on the practice and objectives of South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe. Thus, this led to the question, "Did South Africa achieve its quiet diplomacy objectives in Zimbabwe in the period, 2000-2009?"

This question sought to address the criticism towards South Africa, that, despite its efforts in Zimbabwe, scholars argue that it has not resolved the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe, which continues to pose a threat to peace and security in the Southern African region.

### **5.2. Observations.**

The establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a political party in 1999, set the tone for the emergence of the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe. This is further consolidated by the failure arising from Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) to have a constitutional national referendum passed. The ZANU-PF's response to these political developments plunged Zimbabwe into chaos; from adopting the Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) with the aim to seize farms from white commercial farmers, to adopting misguided economic policies. The effects of these political and economic decisions were felt greatly in the agricultural sector which experienced a rapid decline in production.

As a result, the Zimbabwean economy was in dire conditions with inflation rising and unemployment figures rapidly increasing together with poverty rates. Moreover, the prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe which at that time, and due to its economy declining, Zimbabwe did not have the necessary health facilities to deal with the pandemic. Altogether, these conditions made life unbearable for ordinary people in Zimbabwe. Thus, the emergence of the MDC as an alternative political party, presented the people of Zimbabwe especially those who were critical of the ZANU-PF, an opportunity to affect the change they envisaged in Zimbabwe. This placed the significance of elections in Zimbabwe at the centre of the violent political interaction between ZANU-PF and the MDC, and as an outlet through which people of Zimbabwe could choose their leaders.

SADC's Mandate towards South Africa was based on two things, firstly, for H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki to see the facilitation of the dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC which was focused on resolving governance issues to its completion. Secondly, SADC did not intend to resolve the multitude of issues that Zimbabwe was faced with. Its sole focus was on the guaranteeing and holding of democratic elections in 2008. As seen with its numerous SEOMs in Zimbabwe in the elections over the years prior to the 2008 harmonised elections. These election observer missions informed to a greater part, SADC's intervention efforts in the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe in the years before the 2008 harmonised elections.

The centrality of democratic elections has always been a crucial element of SADC's intervention efforts in Zimbabwe since its initial acknowledgement of the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe in the year 2000. But for SADC, the developments regarding the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe were understood as emerging from a 'governance crisis' and not necessarily a political instability crisis. Thus, the most important objective of SADC's intervention in the years prior to the 2008 harmonised democratic elections was to discover and resolve the anomalies in the holding of democratic elections in Zimbabwe, through its numerous observer missions. This is based on its initial objective in Article 5 of the amended treaty in 2001, which provides that, SADC commits to promote common political values and systems which are democratic, legitimate, and effective (SADC, 2001: 5).

It becomes apparent therefore that, SADC's vision for the resolution of the 'governance crisis' in Zimbabwe as it framed it, was undertaken within the greater objective of maintaining peace and security as well as ensuring stability through the consolidation of democratic election processes (SADC, 2004: 5). SADC's commitment on observing the nature and scope of elections in Zimbabwe prior to the 2008 elections, was a strategic plan to ensure that it learns the complexities of democratic elections in Zimbabwe. Upon learning of the complexities, SADC could make recommendations to maintain the authenticity of elections in Zimbabwe, and to ensure that democratic elections are held to a higher standard. The recommendation by SADC-PF in 2002 that Zimbabwe must establish an independent electoral body before the 2005 elections is one example.

Through all these recommendations that Zimbabwe often followed, SADC was clearing the anomalies in the holding of elections in Zimbabwe, so that in the years to come, democratic elections can be the only tool for citizens to choose their leaders. This is the case in that, in a sovereign state, the ultimate power to have regime change or any form of leadership changes, would be done through legitimate democratic electoral elections. SADC sought to strengthen the elements of elections in Zimbabwe, presumably for this reason. The objective is that the people of Zimbabwe had all the power and the responsibility to contribute to the resolution of the governance crisis through democratic elections. For instance, if many of them were dissatisfied with the government of the day, they had the responsibility to utilize democratic elections as the legitimate way of securing a leadership change in Zimbabwe.

Moving further to the period when the mandate towards South Africa emerges, the nature of violence during the prayer rally organized by the MDC in Zimbabwe, ultimately led to SADC's resolution to intensify its intervention efforts in 2007. This study has established that SADC as a regional organization with powers to resolve conflicts in the Southern African region, mandated South Africa as an envoy to intervene in Zimbabwe.

As a legal regional organization recognized by the United Nations, SADC commits itself towards the promotion of democracy and peace and security in the region. It has intervened in numerous countries in its quest to promote democracy and defend peace and security.

SADC undertakes its interventions to promote democracy and defend peace and security through the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security, which provides that, conflicts shall be resolved through peaceful means. There are also other SADC structures such as the Parliamentary Forum, and Elections Commissions Forum, which are focused on the undertaking of Election Observer Missions in the quest to consolidate political stability and peace in the region. What all these structures have in common is that they maintain a non-confrontational posture and a non-military operation to engage the target country. The notion of a peaceful resolution of disputes takes precedence. SADC's impact in Zimbabwe's political instability crisis is limited due to internal disagreements of the members over the operationalization of its organ on Politics, Defense and Security.

South Africa as an envoy on the other hand, although having been mandated by SADC to intervene in Zimbabwe, has its own national foreign policy vision towards the African continent, Southern African region, and Zimbabwe. South Africa upon the realization that its future is inextricably linked to the entire African continent, embarked on an African Renaissance foreign policy vision towards Africa. This vision sought to contribute to peace and democracy throughout the continent by assisting in resolving conflicts. More importantly, to initiate African solutions for African problems. This vision has seen South Africa actively partaking in the establishment of the African Union, as well as the creation of New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in 2001. This has been undertaken within the greater objective of contributing to socio-economic development, poverty reduction, and the economic recovery of Africa.

Towards Southern Africa, although guided by the vision of African Renaissance still, South Africa commits to close economic and diplomatic ties towards its SADC neighbours. It also commits to security cooperation that is premised on good neighbourliness, regional solidarity and the promotion of peace and security in the SADC region as an equal partner, through pacific means. Towards Zimbabwe, South Africa adopted a policy of quiet diplomacy, reason being its commitment to finding solutions through negotiation as opposed to the imposition of a solution to parties in conflict. It is inspired by factors such its rich historical liberation movement brotherhood with Zimbabwe, the adoption of an anti-racism and anti-Western posture to consolidate itself as an equal partner to Zimbabwe rather than a hegemon. This is shown by South Africa's attitude in its mission in Zimbabwe.

South Africa undertook its quiet diplomacy mission in Zimbabwe under the auspices of SADC in 2007, and acting on the SADC mandate to facilitate dialogue between the MDC and ZANU-PF. The SADC mandate emerged as a response to the violence by the police meted against MDC supporters and its leaders holding a prayer service. Acting on the mandate of SADC whose perspective on conflicts rests on the notion of preventive diplomacy, which includes pacific settlement of disputes as a tool to resolve conflicts, South Africa also had its own approach called quiet diplomacy.

George Abel Mhango asserts that, 'quiet diplomacy involves soft diplomatic approaches to resolve disputes' (Mhango, 2010: 16). On this note, in the analysis of South Africa's mission in Zimbabwe, this is exactly the approach that South Africa undertakes. This is a significant element of its foreign policy with regards to conflict resolution in the Southern African region. It accepted SADC's call to intervene in Zimbabwe because it resonated with its vision and commitment of promoting democracy throughout Africa and preserving peace and security through pacific means.

Considering all the socio-economic and peace and security issues that Zimbabwe was faced with, South Africa's main quiet diplomacy objective was to assist in the initiation of a political solution to the governance problem in Zimbabwe. This is a display of the link between the SADC mandate and South Africa's quiet diplomacy strategy towards Zimbabwe. However, its commitment towards quiet diplomacy was subject to various factors. Foremost, it was intervening as an envoy of SADC based on the 2007 mandate. Meaning that, the intervention was curated within the overall strategy of SADC which encapsulates pacific means to settling disputes.

One recalls that throughout its engagements with Zimbabwe since the emergence of the political instability, SADC adopted a policy of quiet diplomacy to engage Zimbabwe. It did not engage Zimbabwe through a violent form of intervention but rather, it operated through its summits to find ways through which Zimbabwe would be assisted. Mostly, its interventions in Zimbabwe were through the electoral observer missions which are non-confrontational in nature.

On the other hand, SADC's envoy, South Africa, sought to avoid unilateralism when intervening to resolve the conflict in Zimbabwe by carefully opting for persuasion and multilateralism (Alden, 2002: 9). As a factor, the fear of the consequences that

accompany a unilateral stance when intervening to resolve conflicts, accounted for a significant part, as the reason why South Africa committed itself to quiet diplomacy. South Africa also sought to present a united front and uphold an image of African solidarity in the face of Western pressure. So, the need to control Western influence in the matters regarding South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe became an important factor. This was due to the perception by South Africa and some members of SADC that, the West was launching an attack on the sovereignty of Zimbabwe and was attempting to enforce regime change in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos, 2012).

On this account, Zimbabwe had to be protected through a united regional front. Moreover, as a regional power, South Africa has had several successful relations with the Western countries more than any other state in the Southern African region. Thus, it had to dispel the doubts regarding its motives and to maintain that it was not perceived as advancing Western interests in Zimbabwe. This is partly due to other factors like the historical liberation struggle brotherhood that South Africa and Zimbabwe share, and the personal relationships that both the leaders of South Africa and Zimbabwe built over the years since the liberation struggle days.

South Africa followed its foreign policy provisions in terms of conflict resolution objectives in Southern Africa. As a factor that informed its commitment to quiet diplomacy, this is the area that is at the centre of debates. Because vast literature analyses the effectiveness of South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach about the nature of socio-economic issues in Zimbabwe post-South Africa's intervention. In doing so, scholars overlook the core objective that South Africa sought to achieve in Zimbabwe at the outset.

### **5.3 Application of the theoretical framework – analysing South Africa's intervention through Joseph Nye's soft power theory.**

In the application of Joseph Nye Jr's co-optive theory as the theoretical framework utilized by this report, it is imperative to consider the central point that Nye's theory makes regarding the practice of power in the contemporary political affairs. As articulated earlier, Joseph Nye considers power as "the ability to influence others to want the same outcomes that one wants" (Nye, 2021: 2). As an envoy of SADC, South Africa was mandated to resolve the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe. In

other words, it was given power by SADC to see that it resolves the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe.

The question of how South Africa exercises this power is answered by Joseph Nye Jr's perspective of the post-cold war era, whereby, military power has become too costly for countries to affect the outcomes they want (Nye, 1990: 164). This therefore puts preventive diplomacy and other non-military conflict resolution frameworks in the center of South Africa's foreign policy. When one considers South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2009, this becomes the apparent case. Throughout this period, South Africa assumes a non-threatening and non-military posture in Zimbabwe as it continues to engage the leadership in quests to find a long-lasting solution.

Moreover, the source of this non-military posture by South Africa derives from its own foreign policy which proposes that there is a need for peace missions that are more inclusive and foremost political rather than military in nature in the practice of conflict resolution (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 8). On this perspective, a successful peace mission is one that embodies the elements of dialogue and a successful implementation of a solution deriving from such deliberations, rather than a forceful imposition of one. As a regional power in SADC and due its proximity to Zimbabwe, South Africa was bound to be affected by the developments in Zimbabwe as is in other SADC member states.

Thus, it needed to exercise power in Zimbabwe to ensure that it influences the change it wants to see in Zimbabwe. The question of how South Africa practices Soft power or co-optive power in Zimbabwe is answered by its use of the quiet diplomacy approach. It does so by putting dialogue in the center of its engagements with the leadership in Zimbabwe.

More importantly, both SADC and South Africa understood the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe as a derivation from a governance crisis that engulfed Zimbabwe. As such, the basis of SADC and South Africa's intervention has been to address the leadership of Zimbabwe. To affect this, South Africa employed the "moral authority it derived from its own experience of national reconciliation and democratization in Zimbabwe" (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 3).

In its long and exhaustive behind the scenes engagements with the leadership of Zimbabwe, the mere fact that South Africa successfully had both parties, especially

H.E Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe to agree on and acknowledge a dialogue with the MDC leaders, is a commendable form of soft power that derived from persuasion. Although this process took years, it does eventually produce substantial results. On this note, it is worth recollecting that for South Africa, the central issue that it sought to address in its intervention in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2009 has been the governance crisis. In other words, to assist resolve the leadership impasse in Zimbabwe.

### **How did South Africa co-opt the leadership in Zimbabwe to want what it wants?**

Chris Landsberg postulates that “a dominant feature of South Africa’s African agenda centers on the push for negotiated solutions that ultimately lead to inclusive governments”, having both the conflicting parties in governance (Landsberg, 2009: 16). On this basis, it is arguable that South Africa’s conflict model rests on the commitment to reconcile conflicting parties into a power-sharing arrangement that leads to an inclusive government. This is opposed to the practice of advancing one party and denouncing the other. It provides a resolution that accommodates both the conflicting parties. It has done so in countries like Angola in 1994, and it is the same model that it employs in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, South Africa’s Soft power practice or its ability to co-opt the leadership of Zimbabwe to want what it wants is seen from the two important breakthroughs deriving from its long persuasive engagements with the leadership of Zimbabwe. These long persuasive engagements have culminated into the adoption of the Global Political Agreement in the year 2008, which both parties recognized and signed in Zimbabwe. This was followed by a power-sharing arrangement, the Government of National Unity; an inclusive government that South Africa successfully co-opted the leadership in Zimbabwe, both the ZANU-PF and MDC, to adopt after years of long negotiation processes.

This is understood along Joseph Nye’s theorization of soft power, which is in this case, premised on South Africa’s ability to have co-opted the conflicting parties in Zimbabwe into adopting a resolution. In other words, South Africa had successfully co-opted the ZANU-PF and the MDC to consider the outcome, a foreign policy objective of South Africa, initiated by H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, as the best solution available. This is the basis through which this report applies the soft power theory to

frame South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2009. However, it is also highly possible that the success of the co-option method by South Africa could be due to ZANU-PF's realization of the impact of their loss in the first round of the 2008 elections.

As a wounded political party with a foresight of a possible vacation in the helms of power, it could be that the adoption of GPA and GNU played in the ZANU-PF's interest because the provisions advanced in the negotiations still allowed them to retain power post GNU adoption. Morgan Richard Tsvangirai has long accused H.E Former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki of being biased towards the ZANU-PF through the mediation processes (The New York Times, 2008). So, the ZANU-PF's retaining of power post-GNU plays into this idea brought forward by Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. Therefore, in the theorization of the co-optive method of soft power whereby a mediator co-opts parties to adopt a resolution that it wants, it is also probable that ZANU-PF's retaining of political power post-GNU was the resolution that the mediator sought. Nonetheless, the resolution is presented as a compromise from both parties whereas in reality, one compromised more than the other. These are the possibilities that surrounds the soft-power application method in Zimbabwe but a major claim to fame for the mediator is that the conflicting parties eventually found some sort of common ground and the dispute resolution was influenced by the mediator.

#### **5.4. Limitations of the study.**

Because the study was purely conducted as a non-contact desktop research, methodologically it presented limits in terms of access to data which would have been otherwise acquired through interviews in a contact form of research. For instance, there is limited data on the SADC documents pertaining to the exact reasons why it mandated South Africa to intervene in Zimbabwe. Instead, a question of such magnitude can be asked through open-ended questions in an interview (contact) with SADC officials who took part in the Zimbabwean crisis. Secondly, there is a major limitation in terms of access to data on the processes of quiet diplomacy because it is conducted privately with only the agreements being made available. There is inadequate information on the process and nature of the quiet diplomacy negotiations in Zimbabwe prior to the signing of the GPA and adoption of the GNU. For instance, there is no data on how deadlocks or stalemate situations were settled before the

parties arrived at the GPA and GNU level. So, access to data from an internal source on how the process itself works from the inside is very limited. Data of that nature is difficult to access in the public information domain.

## **5.5. Conclusion.**

In today's political world, the interrelatedness of states whether in economics, trade, culture, and diplomacy, means that a crisis in one state has the potential to destabilize to a larger extent, other states close and afar. The political instability and violence in Zimbabwe fall within this notion in the SADC region. Thus, the need to control the prospects of such destabilization has seen SADC giving South Africa a mandate to assist in resolving the governance crisis in Zimbabwe to maintain stability and peace in the region. In doing so, South Africa encounters a set of factors influencing its commitment to the quiet diplomacy stance.

At the outset, it is established that South Africa remained committed to its foreign policy vision. Although it is arguable that factors such as the liberation movement historical ties, and the need to preserve good neighbourliness might have influenced how South Africa handled the political instability crisis in Zimbabwe. The fact of the matter is that most of these factors that South Africa encountered in its quiet diplomacy practice in Zimbabwe, are all directly and indirectly linked to its foreign policy vision. The African Renaissance vision presented an overarching element through which South Africa would impact socio-economic development and poverty through channels such as NEPAD in Africa as a whole.

But also, contribute substantially to conflict resolution through pacific means or quiet diplomacy in Southern Africa. This is to say that the most significant factor that influenced South Africa's continuous commitment to quiet diplomacy approach in Zimbabwe, has been its foreign policy. As pointed out earlier that qualitative methodology explores complexities of social life, the qualitative data gathered has shown how complex the political instability and violence is in Zimbabwe (Pierce, 2008: 45). Additionally, it also displayed the complexities around the various intervention efforts by SADC and South Africa.

In retrospect, the significance of the qualitative data, has helped establish the value of quiet diplomacy intervention by South Africa in Zimbabwe. The qualitative results have shown that the commitment to quiet diplomacy by South Africa accounts greatly to its

foreign policy objectives. Through the practice of quiet diplomacy, South Africa set an objective to resolve what it deemed as the governance crisis in Zimbabwe. This is what it sought to resolve in its intervention. Criticism towards South Africa's quiet diplomacy approach must be based specifically on this objective.

To answer the first research question, qualitative results presented numerous factors that influenced South Africa's commitment towards quiet diplomacy. The first being, SADC's philosophy regarding conflict resolution. As the source of the intervention mandate given to South Africa, the way South Africa would intervene in Zimbabwe had to be in line with the philosophy of SADC. Meaning that, because SADC advanced pacific resolution of disputes in the SADC region, it was South Africa's prerogative to follow this conflict resolution model. Additionally, the mandate given to South Africa, which was to ensure that negotiation processes in Zimbabwe go accordingly, could not be achieved with any other means except quiet diplomacy. This is because quiet diplomacy promotes and advances the need to deliberate and talk things as opposed to a violent or forceful form of intervention which would have not yielded the desired result pertaining to SADC's mandate.

Secondly, the need to maintain historical liberation struggle relations significantly influenced how South Africa opted to commit to quiet diplomacy throughout its intervention. This decision has arguably been the result of the consideration of African experiences, the need to maintain good neighbourliness, and to ensure that relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe do not deteriorate. Moreover, the need to avoid a unilateral action by South Africa accounts as one factor that shaped its stance on quiet diplomacy. This was due to the fear of isolation by other African states which would have deemed South Africa as a regional hegemon. Thus, the need to present itself as an equal partner in SADC meant that South Africa would maintain a stance that do not present itself as a hegemon.

Thirdly, due to its relations with the West, South Africa maintained the quiet diplomacy stance to ensure that it does not get perceived as imposing a solution in Zimbabwe but rather assisting in finding one. In fact, qualitative results indicates that South Africa was cognizant of the fact that it would be considered as advancing interests of the Western powers, had it adopted a different approach to quiet diplomacy. So, the commitment to quiet diplomacy was then a signal that it was not. This is seen by how

South Africa constantly rejected the pressure to impose sanctions on the leadership of Zimbabwe.

These are the factors that qualitative results presented to be amongst the dominant ones which influenced South Africa's continuous commitment to quiet diplomacy. However, a close qualitative analysis of South Africa's intervention in Zimbabwe presents foreign policy as the greatest factor that influenced South Africa. In the consideration of the objectives that South Africa sets out to achieve in Zimbabwe, there emerges a great direct link to its foreign policy as far back as the 1994 period and beyond. South Africa's foreign policy makes provisions regarding conflict resolution in Africa, and chief amongst them is the commitment to resolve disputes through negotiations. These negotiations, upon being successful, lead to the adoption of power-sharing arrangements as in the case of Angola in 1994 and Zimbabwe in 2009. So, foreign policy played a crucial role in shaping how South Africa intervened in Zimbabwe through quiet diplomacy. The commitment to quiet diplomacy, therefore, was not entirely the result of external factors only, but rather, to a greater part, a commitment to foreign policy objectives by South Africa.

To answer the second research question asked on this report, in the period 2000-2009, South Africa has successfully delivered on its quiet diplomacy objectives. The Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2008 and Government of National Unity (GNU) as a power-sharing arrangement in 2009 count as the biggest milestones that resulted from South Africa's quiet diplomacy efforts in Zimbabwe. In essence, these two breakthroughs momentarily resolved the governance issues in Zimbabwe. So, South Africa did achieve its quiet diplomacy objectives in Zimbabwe in the period, 2000-2009. Qualitative results presented in the report proved that there is a direct link between South Africa's quiet diplomacy objectives and the establishment of the GPA and GNU in Zimbabwe. The most crucial point presented here is that these two milestones fall within the framework of what South Africa sought to achieve in Zimbabwe in the first place. The objective has been to resolve the governance crisis in Zimbabwe.

Criticism regarding the continuity of the socio-economic issues post South Africa's intervention must be directed to the people of Zimbabwe and its leadership, because, as a sovereign state, the people of Zimbabwe have got the responsibility to see that

they resolve these domestic issues. South Africa cannot be subjected to criticism on the basis that it failed to resolve the socio-economic issues in Zimbabwe, because that was not its objective in the first place. Although its intervention had the potential to influence the nature of socio-economic issues in Zimbabwe, it was not its sole responsibility and doing so would be interfering in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe as a sovereign state. At most, political stability was the only viable result that South Africa's mediation could offer. Beyond that, the responsibility rested with the people of Zimbabwe to ensure that they protected the gains made by South Africa's intervention, and to shape the discourse on national matters in the way that they would prefer.

This report has established that there is a direct link between the quiet diplomacy objectives that South Africa set out to achieve in its intervention in Zimbabwe, and the impact that it has had through quiet diplomacy. This is to say that, by overlooking the objectives set by South Africa in the analysis of its intervention, scholars miss the opportunity to substantially engage and consider and realize the impact that South Africa has had in Zimbabwe. A point of note however, can be directed to both SADC and South Africa in terms of their post conflict resolution measures. There are two questions that linger from the observation and for further research purposes. These questions involve asking, what are the post-conflict resolution measures that South Africa employ to monitor the progress of the negotiated settlement and power-sharing arrangements? Additionally, does SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security in its current form have the capacity to affect a substantial conflict resolution that would guarantee peace and security post intervention?

These are questions which would assist in the discourse regarding the continuity of the deterioration of socio-economic aspects in Zimbabwe post South Africa's intervention. In so doing, the discourse will not only assist us as scholars to understand the nuances of the intervention by South Africa, but it will assist also in the formulation of new ideas pertaining to post-intervention measures that can be employed once the power-sharing arrangements have been consolidated as in the case of Zimbabwe.

For instance, in the case of Zimbabwe, there must be an acknowledgement of the foundation that South Africa has laid through the GPA and GNU, then, should a discourse on how to best utilize this foundation to serve beyond the governance spectrum to the greater populace occur. Going forward, this is the angle though which

SADC and South Africa's post-intervention measures, if any, can be looked at, to facilitate a substantial impact to the people at large and not only a resolution of leadership impasse. In essence, this presents an opportunity for scholars to address the limitations of SADC and South Africa's intervention approaches and to establish innovative ideas on how to best curate the approaches so that they have a greater reach post the actual intervention.

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