The Reality of Realpolitik: The Trajectory of the Negotiation Process to the Zimbabwean Global Political Agreement (GPA)

BY

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Dedication .............................................................................................................................. iv
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. v
Acronyms and Abbreviations .................................................................................................. vi
Abstract .................................................................................................................................. vii
Chapter 1: Introduction ............................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 Background to the Study ..................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................... 2
  1.3 Objectives of the Study ........................................................................................................ 3
  1.4 Hypothesis .......................................................................................................................... 4
  1.5 Justification of the Study ..................................................................................................... 4
  1.6 Delimitations ....................................................................................................................... 5
  1.7 Limitations of the Study ....................................................................................................... 5
  1.8 Theoretical Framework and Literature review ................................................................... 5
  1.9 Methodology ...................................................................................................................... 7
  10.0 Data Analysis .................................................................................................................. 8
    10.1 Dissertation Outline ......................................................................................................... 8
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.................................................. 10
  2.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 10
  2.2 Conflict, Conflict Management and Resolution ............................................................... 10
  2.3 Africa conflict and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution ............................ 11
  2.4 Theoretical Framework ..................................................................................................... 17
  2.5 Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 19
Chapter Three: The Zimbabwe Crisis: A Post 1980 Chronological Overview ....................... 25
  3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 25
  3.2 Background to the Genesis of the Zimbabwean Crisis ..................................................... 25
  3.2 Zimbabwe’s Self Discovery Period: 1980-1989 .................................................................. 26
3.3 1990-1999: Liberalisation Phase ................................................................. 30
3.4 2000- 2007 Crisis period: Boiling Pot......................................................... 33
3.5 Conclusion.................................................................................................. 37

Chapter Four: Critical Analysis of the Trajectory to the GPA.......................... 38
  4.1 Introduction................................................................................................. 38
  4.2 Domestic Actors: The expedition for state power..................................... 38
  4.3 International Actors: Self Determination versus Regime Change Agenda ......................................................... 43
  4.3 Mbeki the Facilitator and the South African Foreign Policy on Zimbabwe ......................................................... 48
Bibliography..................................................................................................... 58
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife Mathudi, our children Kaone and Kago, our families and everyone who believes in humanity.
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCORD</td>
<td>African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress of South Africa</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>CADSP</td>
<td>Common African Defence and Security Policy</td>
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<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Economic Structural Adjustment Policy</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GPA</td>
<td>Global Political Agreement</td>
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<td>IG</td>
<td>Inclusive Government of Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-M</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change Mutambara</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-N</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change Ncube</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-T</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African Nation Union –Patriotic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNLWVA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association</td>
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Abstract

In the last two decades, there is no country in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region that has managed to consistently grab the international attention better than Zimbabwe. At the centre of this attention has been the unorthodox method followed by the Zimbabwean government in its commonly referred to “revolutionary” land reform programme. Given that almost all the targets of this land reform programme were the white community with strong British lineage, the violent nature of the land reform irked a strong reaction from the United Kingdom (UK) government supported by its Western allies in particular the United States of America (USA) and European Union (EU). This set a stage for a battle, at the domestic level between Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) which adopted all the imagined and unimagined strategies and tactics to defend its hold on power on the other hand, and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The MDC since its inception positioned itself as an alternative for hope given the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation. Consequently, the MDC was backed by the West primarily as an alternative to the “anyone but Mugabe” syndrome. At the international level, there were serious clashes of interest between SADC (in the person of the Facilitator and former President Thabo Mbeki) and the Western countries. It is these crude and competing interests and power dynamics that make Zimbabwe a necessary case study for international relations scholars. In that vein the Zimbabwe trajectory to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) offers an insight on how interests and power games evolved, as demonstrated by the extreme positions of the West, in particular their regime change agenda which primarily targeted the Zimbabwean economy to overthrow the Mugabe regime, and SADC and Mbeki’s resolve not to give an inch to these Western demands. These intricacies in the international arena are also supported at the domestic level by the specific interests and quest for state power by the three protagonists in the Zimbabwe conflict - and these consequently result in the Zimbabwe dialogue mainly driven by aspiring and incumbent statesmen. It is the nature of power games and interests that depicts strong realism features in the Zimbabwe crisis and dialogue albeit not exclusively. This is so because Mbeki’s pragmatism including his consensus approach premised on South Africa’s multilateralism to conflict management and resolution has features of idealism. In any case and supporting the idealism angle, Mbeki’s mediation role was in the first place sanctioned by SADC and the African Union (AU). As a result, SADC and AU deserve huge credit in the positive and successful outcome of Mbeki’s mediation role. The GPA as an outcome of a political process driven mainly by Statesmen has both ideological and practical features. Mbeki was firstly driven by his own personal ambitions to advance his vision of the African renaissance project in line with the Pan African ideology. Secondly, Mbeki had to incorporate practical political considerations such as the stature of Mugabe on the African continent, the sensitivity of the land issue in the continent and regional politics in his mediation matrix. Thus a conclusion may be reached that Mbeki, SADC and the AU, emerged triumphant over the West’s regime change agenda albeit at a huge humanitarian cost. It is this triumph and conclusion that locates the Zimbabwe conflict resolution framework within the broader Africa conflict resolution and management mechanism, particularly, the “African solutions to Africa’s problems” mantra.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In May 2007, during the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Extraordinary Head of State Summit convened in Tanzania, the body mandated former South African President Thabo Mbeki to negotiate a political agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, one led by Tsvangirai and the other led by Mutambara then and now led by Ncube. Whilst Mutambara and Ncube are involved in an intense and bitter wrangle over the control of the other MDC, however SADC which is the guarantor of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) endorsed Ncube as the legitimate President of the party at the Maputo summit in 2012. Despite the SADC resolution, Mugabe and Tsvangirai continues to circumvent decision by creating an alternative platform for Mutambara as a so called principal in government, albeit to mention that that forum exclude the Vice President and another Deputy Prime Minister, Thokozani Khupe.

While ZANU-PF’s rhetoric in explaining Zimbabwe’s political impasse dates back to the country’s colonial induced inequalities, what triggered the crises are a myriad of factors, beginning in the 1990’s. These ranged from the launch of the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP) in 1990, to the compensation demands of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the three public sector strikes that followed it, and eventually the formation of the MDC, (Chan 2010).

Mbeki’s mediation goals as highlighted by Dzinesa and Zambara (2010) were three. Firstly, the three parties had to endorse the decision to hold the harmonised presidential, parliamentary and local government elections in 2008. Secondly, they had to agree on the conditions that will result in an environment that will produce free and credible elections. Thirdly, to agree on measures that will facilitate for the acceptance of the outcome of the elections.

However, it was clear from the onset that Mbeki’s mediation was going to face enormous challenges mainly owing to the interplay of the interests of the foreign role players, mainly the European Union (EU) member states and the United States of America (USA). The mediation challenges facing Mbeki as highlighted by Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008:7) are as follows:
Both the EU and the USA stance that they will not accept any agreement on Zimbabwe that does not result in a significant shift of power away from Mugabe. This is mainly as a result of the unhappiness resulting from the land reform process; The MDC’s distrust of Mbeki, in particular the view that he was too close to ZANU-PF and Mugabe; The challenge of constructing an approach to convince ZANU-PF to make certain concessions particularly given the party’s struggle credentials and its strong view that the MDC was nothing but a proxy of the ‘West’s ‘regime change’ agenda crusade in Zimbabwe; The development of an approach and strategy that will convince SADC and the AU to rally behind his mediation process.

This was informed by a growing discontent within the continent and the SADC region with countries such as Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia getting impatient with what was perceived as Mbeki’s leniency towards Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
The period leading to the signing of the GPA and ultimately the formation of the Inclusive Government (IG) was characterised by a complex interplay of activities and policy positions of various national and foreign member states, players and stakeholders. At the domestic level “battle lines” were drawn by ZANU-PF, between itself and the opposition political parties.

Raftopoulos (2008) explained the “battle lines” thus:
...ruling party drew on a combination of revived nationalism that privileged its role in the liberation of the country prioritised the centrality of the fight for land, and demonised all those outside the elective “patriotic history” it espoused… for their part the emergent trade union, civic and political opposition forces called on the anti-colonial struggle for labour, human rights, local governments and gender struggles, and the post-1989 global discourse on democratisation, driven by the fall of socialist regime in Eastern Europe.

In the main, ZANU- PF orchestrated a strategy that depicted the MDC formations as “agents” and “puppets” of the ‘Western’ governments whose primary existence is to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle. On the other hand, the MDC formations and its partners, mainly the
civil society movement, developed a strategy that projected ZANU-PF as an unparalleled quintessence of ruthless human rights violators with Mugabe at the helm.

Murithi and Ndinga-Muvumba (2008) as highlighted in the ACCORD report (2009:9) posit that “achieving peace, security and sustainable development in Africa” is a complex process that is not immune from the totality of the global activities and events. With the Zimbabwe problem highly internationalised at the time, these different positions adopted by all the role players, both in and outside Zimbabwe, deserves some scholarly attention to determine primarily how they shaped firstly, Mbeki’s approach to his SADC mandated mediation role, and secondly and equally important, the formulation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) as a premier blueprint that led to IG in February 2009, and relative stability in Zimbabwe, albeit all these competing interests.

1.3 Objectives of the Study
The primary objective of the study is to understand the role and the power dynamics among the key actors both in and outside Zimbabwe that punctuated the process that led to the GPA. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Locate the Zimbabwean negotiation process within the existing theories of international relations and conflict management and resolution.

- Examine the role SADC and its mediation role in the Zimbabwe crisis;

- Probe the role played by the main Zimbabwean protagonists in both the crisis and the formulation of the GPA;

- Examine the extent to which political power wielded by each party to the negotiations determined the outcome as epitomised in the GPA;

- To proffer possible recommendations on conflict resolution strategies in African conflicts or crises.
1.4 Hypothesis

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- SADC, through Mbeki’s mediation role including his much criticised “quite diplomacy” was mainly influenced by the material conditions on the ground rather than his own personal preferences.

- ZANU-PF, because of its years of experience, mainly resulting from both the years of the liberation struggle (including its participation at the Lancaster House negotiations) and its grip on the state machinery, held an upper hand in advancing its interests in the shaping of the GPA as compared to the two somewhat inexperienced MDC formations.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study is essential in that it captures the contemporary international political realities particularly in pursuit of conflict resolution and management in the SADC region and African continent. Various factors, tactics and strategies employed in the negotiation processes and conflict management mechanisms therefore deserve a space in the global political lexicon.

With Africa being on the ascendency from a continent which for many years has been defined by words such as “hopeless” and “dark” into a promising amphitheatre with vast opportunities primarily depicted by its vast natural resources, it is therefore important that African Scholars and policymakers play a critical role in properly capturing this phenomenon. This will in the process contribute to the broader scope of not only capturing and defining these African problems, but also and most importantly, in developing solutions to these problems in a much more tailor made way.
1.6 Delimitations

The study mainly focuses on the period between 2007 and 2009. This period is a critical period- firstly; this period saw the intense resolve by SADC, AU and Mbeki to find a solution to the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. Secondly, this is the period that led to the formalisation of the GPA that ultimately gave birth to the IG in February 2009.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Due to sensitivities of some of the issues relating to the topic, particularly given that the implementation of the GPA is still a contested issue amongst the three main protagonists, the scope of the analysis may be limited in covering all the details that transpired during that period and in that regard a broader, comprehensive and longer period of study particularly post the GPA period, will go a long way in improving the depth and quality of this work. The study mainly relies on secondary data and or documentation during the period that led to the formation of the GPA. Accessing primary data from key informants, proved a challenge given their high profile nature. In such instances the researcher will make use of documentary research in order to access some of the information.

1.8 Theoretical Framework and Literature review

The theory of International Relations, as part of the broader global political spectrum, is primarily concerned with the relations between different actors in the global stage including but not limited to the characteristics or features of these relations, and the outcome or results of those relations amongst others, (Kaarbo and Ray, 2011:3). In order to reasonably underscore the role and actions of various actors that will play a central role in the study, the theory of Realism is employed as a guiding foundation in giving character to the actions of those actors. Other concepts such as Diplomacy, Conflict Management and Resolution and Negotiation are also employed to fully appreciate “The Trajectory of the Negotiation Process to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) 2008” in line with the objectives of the study.

The theory of Realism, which is also known as Realpolitik, is mainly distinguished by its believe on the central role of the state in global politics- and this include understanding in depth the decision making process of the specific states (Kaarbo and Ray: 2011:4; Art and
Jervis 2005: 10). However more relevant in contextualising Realism in line with this study, is how to juxtapose the issue of power and interests in the understanding of the actions of international actors. Hans Morgenthau as outlined by Art and Jervis (2005:8) in trying to highlight the concept of interest in terms of power posit that the “concept...sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics (understood in terms of interest defined as wealth), ethics, aesthetics, or religion. In essence this view may be understood in the line with the view that at the heart of Realpolik, material conditions on the ground informs the decisions of the statesmen in the execution of their policies and mandates. So in line with the argument moral, religious or other social issues are not the premier architects of the decisions of the statesmen.

Max Weber’s observation as specifically recaptured by Art and Jervis (2005: 10) highlights that “Interests (material and ideal), not ideas, dominate directly the actions of men. Yet the images of the World created by these ideas have very often served as switches determining the tracks on which the dynamism on interests kept moving actions” also resonates with the view that the character of international relations in particular interests is not static in nature. The interest in particular for this paper is to see how the collusion, conflict, intersection, compromises of various national (Zimbabwean), regional (SADC), foreign (Western Europe) came to bear, and how Mbeki managed to achieve the outcome in the form of the GPA.

Mediation as an instrument in the pursuit of peace in the International stage as Herrberg, Gunduz and Davis (2009) (cited in the Accord report, 2009:13) highlight - “describes engagement both in the inter-state and intra-state conflict by an external actor” be it the AU, SADC or any other international actor or body. In addition, Nathan (2009: 2) characterise mediation as “a process of dialogue and negotiation in which a third party assist two or disputant parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve conflict without resort to force”. SADC approach to finding a solution to the Zimbabwean crisis was from the onset premised on the employment of diplomacy as the only option of bringing all the protagonists together. Mbeki is therefore SADC vehicle in arriving at SADC envisaged result of peace and stability in Zimbabwe.

According to Ikle (1996: 5) in reality history teaches us that “international diplomacy is usually motivated by a mixture of philosophies that could be viewed as a combination of the theory of ‘realism’ and the theory of institutionalism (or of a liberal order based on consensus). This view as Ikle (ibid) further highlights was best captured by the former US
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that “balance –of- power” systems have existed only rarely in human history” as such for American diplomacy the combination of the “moral” and the “strategic” element “cannot be prescribed in the abstract”. From a Realist view “moral aspirations” of a specific nation cannot be summed up as a “the moral laws that governs the universe” Morgenthau and Thompson, (1985:13). What is consistently distinct with the Realist approach is therefore not a reject of moral consideration in policy considerations, but rather a focus on objectivity and material considerations that define a particular situation. These are the factors that need to be captured and outlined by the study when examining Mbeki’s conduct in his mediation role.

Diplomacy itself is not just about the absence of the use of force but it also espouses the practical and material issues of concern to the disputants in a conflict. Diplomacy as highlighted by Schelling (1996) cited by Art and Jervis, (2005:149) “...seeks outcomes that though not ideal for either party, are better for both than some of the alternatives”. So in essence the outcome of a mediation process is not just merely informed by the “ideal” or “wishes” of the disputants, but rather it is a give and take conundrum based on material conditions at hand. As Schelling (ibid) continues “ in diplomacy each party somewhat controls what the other wants, and can get more by compromise, exchange or collaboration than by taking things in his own hands and ignoring the other’s wishes”.

All these theories, concepts and views will be explored in detail with a purpose of narrowing down to Zimbabwe situation in the Literature chapter of the study.

1.9 Methodology
The paper is primarily premised on the qualitative paradigm of research. This paradigm is concerned with investigating the aspect of social life with the primary aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and reasons behind such behavioural patterns. According to Denzin and Lincoln as cited by Babbie (2010), “qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter.” Meaning that qualitative researcher study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In this study, and in line with giving a conceptual meaning to the GPA, secondary data forms a critical part of data collection mechanism. Boslaugh (2007:3) notes that secondary data is
economic as it has already been collected so the researcher does not have to devote money, time and energy given the breadth of data available. According to Oppenheim (1992:2) documentary research should be viewed in the realm of systematic construction of written records that enables the researcher to be familiar with both the historical and current information. Various publications such as the state, books, speeches, magazines, newspapers, international bodies and their subsidiary organisation constitute the major sources of secondary data (Kothari 2004: 111). In this study the researcher uses secondary data that possess the following characteristics: reliability, suitability and adequacy of data so as to ensure their suitability to the trajectory that led to the GPA.

For this study, the key targets are mainly identified based on the assumption of their proximity to the trajectory or process that led to the GPA. The key actors have a unique advantage of being well versed with both the process itself and the outcome. Mbeki or any key member of his SADC backed mediation team, leaders of Zimbabwe’s three main political parties, namely ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations, especially those who were part of the negotiation teams are therefore the main targets of the study. So for this study the underlying motives of the key stakeholders and participants forms a critical part in conceptualising the GPA.

10.0 Data Analysis

This study is premised on qualitative methodology and as such the researcher employs qualitative data analysis techniques which include content analysis and thematic analysis. Mora and Rist (2009:378) assert that content analysis is “a type of qualitative data analysis that identifies and notes through codes the presence of certain words, phrases or concepts within text, speech or other media.” In this study, the researcher analyses the data gathered through the documentary search. The recurring themes throughout the data gathering process will also be analysed using thematic analysis.

10.1 Dissertation Outline

The next chapter proceeds with an expansion of the theoretical framework and literature review primarily based on the Realism theory. In addition concepts such as mediation
diplomacy and negotiation are captured so as to contextualise the GPA within the existing framework of conflict management and resolution with a specific focus on the African continent.

Chapter Three
In this chapter, the researcher highlights the chronology of events leading to the 2008 crisis in Zimbabwe by primarily highlighting some of the underlying factors that led to the SADC involvement in Zimbabwe and ultimately the GPA.

Chapter Four
Chapter four critically analyses the roles, interests and motives of the key actors during the trajectory towards the signing of the GPA.

Chapter Five
Chapter five concludes on research findings and recommendations to the study.
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction
This chapter gives an analysis of the literature and the surrounding theories on conflict mediation and resolution in general and in the African context in particular. Various scholars give varied definitions of different conflict resolutions which shall be applied in this study. The researcher pays attention to historical evolution of the regional organisations such as the SADC in conflict management in Africa. This study is mainly premised on the realism theory which is central in the power politics of conflict mediation and practices. In addition, concepts such as diplomacy and how ideology shapes the negotiation processes and the outcomes such as the Zimbabwe’s GPA are tackled.

2.2 Conflict, Conflict Management and Resolution
A conflict can be defined as perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment in time. According Onuoha (2011:12), “conflict may be viewed as a form of tension arising from mutually exclusive or opposing actions, thoughts, opinions or feelings” Cawthra (2010:270) captures the root of the recent Zimbabwe conflict as follows: “At the centre of the struggle is the conflict over control of the state and its resources, given the decline of the private sector, patronage through the state remains the principal leverage for wealth” Zimbabwe’s 2008 conflict which led to mediation role and ultimately the GPA was as a result of power struggle after the inconclusive March elections and the violent Presidential runoff that led to Tsvangirai dropping out of the election race against Mugabe.

Nathan (2009:2) defines mediation as “a process of dialogue and negotiation in which a third party assist two or more disputant parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict without resort to force”. According to Bercovitch, Anagnoson, and Wille (1991, 8) mediation is “a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state, or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law.” The Zimbabwe context projects a consistency of the AU’s stance in prioritising dialogue as a preferred choice of settling disputes on the African continent. Article 3 of the AU states that one of the principles of the OAU is the peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, arbitration or reconciliation.
In a deep rooted conflict, international peace mediation efforts are often faced with a myriad of strategic challenges and considerations. According to the ACCORD report (2009: 4) the uniqueness of individual situations makes it difficult for international bodies such as the AU to come up with some form of a one size fits all approach or “generic mediation strategy”. This consideration and acknowledgement requires that those in charge of the mediation process to be highly flexible and considerate of practical circumstances so as to development tailor made solutions for specific circumstances.

Erbe et al (2012:13) posit that “effective conflict resolution is not spontaneous and sporadic”. Nathan (2009) highlights certain unavoidable steps in a mediation process in civil conflicts which may be captured as follows: The deep analysis and diagnosis of the conflict. This should include an understanding of the positions and interests of the parties; Consideration for shuttle diplomacy in cases where the rival parties refuse to engage in direct talks; Design mechanisms that will build confidence in the negotiation process; Defining clear processes, procedures and guidelines in consultation with the parties; Facilitate a process that encourages parties to develop their own solutions to the problems; Identifying common ground whilst simultaneously coming up with options to break deadlocks; Assisting the parties to forge agreements; Creating a platform for the civil society to make contributions to the peace talks; Consult and engage with the external actors who have an interest in the conflict but are not directly participating in the negotiations- this may include bodies such SADC, the AU, the EU etc); and informing and updating the public about the peace process Nathan (2009:25-26).

2.3 Africa conflict and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution
The end of the cold war did not necessarily result in a stable and peaceful African continent, according to Dersso (2012; 17), unlike the cold war era where the threats in the international relations stage mainly emanated from the state actions, the post cold war era witnessed a new phenomenon characterised by new actors and insecurities. The Commission on Global Governance (1995:79) highlights some of these threats as follows; “extreme economic deprivation, proliferation of conventional small arms, the terrorising of civilian populations by domestic factions, and gross violations of human rights”. Dersso (ibid) submit that in the
African context other factors to be taken note of include “ethnic strife, civil wars, and the collapse or failure of African state”.

The Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) as highlighted by Dersso (2012:31) highlights the following as some of the threats to peace and security on the continent, “Lack of respect for sanctity of human life, impunity, political assassinations, acts of terrorism and subversion; Coups d’ etat and unconstitutional changes of government as well as situations which prevent and undermine the promotion of democratic institutions and structures, including the absence of rule of law, equitable social order, population participation and electoral processes; Improper conduct of electoral processes; Absence of promotion of human and people’s rights, individual and collective freedoms, equitable opportunity for all, including women, children and ethnic minorities; Poverty and inequitable distribution of natural resources; and corruption” (Dersso:2012:31). The electoral process, absence of the rule of law, corruption and human rights are issues often cited by the MDC as some of the root causes of the Zimbabwean crises. On the other hand what is clearly missing from these points is the threat posed by the negative role of the major powers on the African continent particularly given that some of the roles of these powers in cases such the support for the apartheid South Africa is still fresh in the memories of many Africans.

The character of conflict is such that it robs Africa to focus on the developmental agenda to emancipate its people from the decades of slavery and colonisation. The last Secretary General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, admitted this much in 1996: “Conflicts and domestic tension have had devastating effects on the lives of people in Africa, as well as on their efforts towards meaningful socioeconomic transformation, integration, and development”. It follows that the conflict in Zimbabwe affected negatively the ordinary citizens due to violence which resulted on SADC appointing a mediator (President Mbeki) as a third party to resolve the crisis.

Erbe et al (2011:7) postulate that in Africa most of the conflict is as a result of “ power games” and central to the power games are the political leaders who will do everything to hold on to power for as long as it is possible to do so. Thus, Erbe et al (ibid: 7), defines power games as:
“...a political manipulation game engaged in by political leaders who seek to dominate their opponents, and in turn, the opponents feel that they have no choice, but to join in the confrontation. The game of dominance progresses to the detriment of the populace, who become the pawns in the power games”. In Zimbabwe, the power games took shape both at the domestic level mainly the contest between the MDC and ZANU-PF and at the international level as portrayed by the interests of the powerful nations such as the UK and the USA.

The “African solutions to Africa’s problems” mantra falls within the context of the broader Africa Renaissance project which gained momentum in the 1990 led by amongst others Mbeki and former President of Nigeria Olesegun Obasanjo. This issue mainly characterised by Africa’s quest for self determination and leadership in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict on the continent, according to Dersso takes shape in two dimensions. First is the issue of control of the entire analysis including the definition and understanding of the security challenges facing the continent. This dimension inherently recognises the space for indigenous framework and approaches Africa’s conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. Second is the dimension that the African leadership is better positioned to formulate and implement solutions to the specific affected areas, Dersso (2012: 22). In summary “the Africa solutions to Africa’s problems is a pan-African ideal that seeks to accord Africa both ownership of and a high stake over the process for resolving the problems facing the continent” (ibid).

The appeal made by Alpha Oumar Konare, the first chairperson of the AU Commission, at the UN Security Council meeting in 2007 to the international community to give Africa space to determine its destiny resonates with the mantra of “African solutions to Africa problems”. Dersso (2012) summarises the appeal by Konare as follows:

...the primary responsibility for ensuring peace in Africa belongs to Africans themselves. They must shoulder that responsibility. Our partners must let the Africans run their own business... Africa is no longer a private hunting ground; it is no longer anyone’s backyard; it is no longer part of the Great Game; and it is no longer anyone’s sphere of influence. Those are the simple rules that will allow the continent to shoulder its responsibility and to demonstrate inter African solidarity.
In line with the “African solution to Africa problems” mantra, is the formulation of indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution and management. Lanek (1999), attempts to distinguish between the indigenous conflict resolutions approaches with the Western legal mechanism. Lanek’s (ibid) determination is that the Western system emphasis on the establishment of guilt, retribution and punishment with no reference to the victim and the future incorporation of the victim into the broader community, contrast with the indigenous Acholi method of conflict resolution and reconciliation. This is so because the Acholi method is more cooperative and emphasises more on leadership through consensus. This may tally with the view that short term and quick fix solutions to complex situations are not a sustainable route to follow. Whilst the AU has often been accused of being slow to respond to conflict areas such as the Libya case, however what is often prescribed as solutions by the Western power often foregoes certain basic tenets required for the long term social cohesion of the nation in question. The Ivory Coast situation may be cited as another example.

Focusing on Africa, Bob-Manuel, as captured and further explained by Utne (2001:8) there is a need for theorists “towards real life in all practicality”. Utne captures this real life practicality as follows- “Social realities should be taken seriously. Conflict should be viewed as non-isolated events in their social contexts. When Africans sit down to discuss conflict, the talking usually covers all kinds of relevant background and goes into thoughts and intentions of others. The elders from a family, clan or state see their traditional objectives in conflict resolutions as moving away from accusations and counter accusations, to soothe hurt feelings and to reach a compromise that may help to improve future relations. They also dwell on values, aspirations, perceptions and visions. All over Africa people have deeply rooted cultural commitments, and many of the conflicts in Africa this cultural heritage play a decisive role.” The point highlighted is consistent with a view that favours a detailed approach to mediation approach as opposed to a sporadic intervention mainly guided by self and narrow interests.

William Makgoba’s definition of “ubuntu” as “humanism” as often captured in the African context supports Bob Manuel’s view as “…in general African tend to look at things holistically and meaning and symbolism into the phenomenon… Consensus or group identity is another feature of African identity” Makgoba further highlights “… in both manner of
communication, numeracy, through, interpretation and aesthetic appreciation there is a way in which Africans approach these matters in a specific way that is uniquely different say from the European, Japanese or Chinese” and “… his (African) is not based on wars. The African is not a conqueror but good at defence. The Western nation’s approach of megaphone diplomacy which only resulted in hardening Mugabe and ZANU-PF position is one such example of how the major powers failed to deeply capture the sentiment and emotions of the key role players in the SADC region as contrasted with Mbeki’s so called quite diplomacy which was largely endorsed by the regional leadership.

Ineba Bob Manuel as cited by Utne (2001: 6) advocates for African value systems as a better workable option to solve African conflicts. The argument being advanced as cited in (Utne:ibid) is that the solution to African conflict cannot be determined outside the realm of social characteristics such as “values and beliefs, fears and suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions, relationships and networks”. This view also talks to proximity and practicality in arriving at the solutions. This may explain why the AU prefers regional bodies such as SADC to take leadership in resolving conflict within their regions. This is because it is more likely that as neighbours these countries are likely to share certain similar traits or values as opposed to the countries outside the region.

At the international level mediation is described by the engagement of external actors or bodies such as the AU, SADC, the UN and other regional bodies such as the EU to assist in resolving what may either be an inter-state or intra state conflict. With regard to Africa the conflict resolution and peace building missions are guided by the Consultative Act of the AU adopted in July 2000. Unlike the OAU, which emphasised the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference, the AU embraces international co-operation and recognises the primacy of the UN Charter in peace and security, has also adopted a wider field of engagement options, from mediation, to using force to intervene in specific circumstances as outlined in Article 4 of the Constitutive Act which specifies:

“The right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect to grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity… the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security” (www.au.int and www.dfa.gov.za). With this decision the African
leadership did not only recognise the mistakes made by the OAU but also there was a
determination for the AU to take charge in resolving the problems facing the continent. By
doing this the AU became the first world's regional or international organization to explicitly
recognize the right to intervene in a member state on humanitarian and human rights grounds.

This Consultative Act was one of the critical shifts from the Organisation for African Unity
(OAU), which had previously put more emphasis on state sovereignty to a more active and
involved Pan African body ready to conform to what Kambudzi (2009: 14) highlights as the ,
“AU promise” which was mainly a mantra aimed at capturing the debate as Kambudzi (ibid)
further highlight of “ how to pave the way to build an Africa that will be at peace with itself
and others and one that will bring the higher standard of living for African peoples” . In
doing so the AU was conforming itself to the view expressed by most writers and scholars
including Coauthor Ezeth that for Africa to solve its problems it had to look inwards by
developing its own conflict resolution mechanisms that are peculiar to its problems.

The AU heavily relies on regional bodies to take leadership in matters within their regions.
This approach is traced back to the 1976 decision where as a way of giving impetus to the
African integration agenda, the OAU decided to divide the continent into five Regional
Economic Communities (RECs). SADC which was then known as the Southern African
Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC), was one of the African regional bodies
born out of that decision. This was together with other regional bodies such as the Economic
Community of Western African States (ECOWAS); the East African Community (EAC); the
Economic Community of Central African Sates (ECCAS) and the Arab Mahreb Union
(UMA) (Ajulu, 2005: 19). Boulden (2003:85) quotes the then secretary general of the OAU
Salim Ahmed Salim capturing the importance of the 1976 OAU decision as follows:

...regional organizations are the first line of defense in the search for solutions to
conflicts. For one thing, the proximity of these organizations to the theatre of conflicts
gives them incisive knowledge into the genesis of those conflicts and of the key
players involved. This proximity and knowledge are important if we are to have a head
start in trying to forge a consensus for the resolution of a given conflict.
So the leadership role of SADC in an attempt to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis and its leading role in other SADC member state such as Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) should also be understood within the context of the 1976 OAU decision. It therefore follows our understanding of how SADC had to intervene and manage the Zimbabwe crisis. In addition it also explains the involvement of South Africa as a SADC appointed mediator in Zimbabwe. It also goes far deeper than the often cited economic interests and is also informed by aspects such as colonialism and policies of racial segregation as experienced under Apartheid South Africa and the Smith regime in Zimbabwe, and the sharing of ethnic groups such as Ndebeles, Sothos and the Tswanas.

SADC mediation efforts for many years have been on ad hoc basis, with eminent leaders from the region in the form of either sitting or former Presidents appointed as mediators. Beardsley (2006:63) asserts that “facilitation can range from providing good offices to more complex roles, such as helping to communicate messages...mediators, can reveal information that they have gathered independently and thereby clarify misconceptions.” In addition to Mbeki, who was initially tasked with mediating in the Zimbabwean crises, there are other leaders such as former President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano who is tasked by SADC to mediate in the Madagascar conflict Dzinesa and Zambara, (2011:66). However, as Dzinesa and Zambara (ibid), highlight, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation is in the process to set up the Mediation Unit which will be tasked with dealing with both inter and intra conflicts amongst SADC member states.

2.3 Negotiation and Bargaining Approach
The analysis in negotiation approach as Pfetsch (1996:91) highlights mostly focuses “on the face to face constellations between two or more negotiators whose emotions, competencies, visions, leadership, skills, personal styles, strategies etc. determine the outcome of the negotiation process”. In line with this observation, the trajectory towards Zimbabwe Global Political Agreement and the outcome thereof, is primarily a reflection of the role of the main actors at the helm of the negotiation process including but not limited to their strength and weaknesses.
In the post World War II era, multilateral negotiation forums are preferred as the core instruments to building sustainable regimes able to contribute to the stability of international systems Sjostedt, (1996: 121). The end of the apartheid regime in South Africa gave birth to a new policy approach based on the respect for multilateralism and respect for the sovereignty and rights of its neighbours and Kagwanja, (2006: 56), emphasises this point as follows, “Multilateralism has become a central pillar of South Africa’s pan African strategy, guiding its intervention in African conflicts.” So unlike the previous destabilising actions of the apartheid regime in Zimbabwe and the region as a whole, democratic South Africa’s facilitation of dialogue in Zimbabwe, drawn from the AU and SADC mandate, demonstrates a positive development in the geo-politics of the Southern African region consistent with the post World War II global order.

The principle of “No Negotiation” does in certain instances take centre stage in international conflicts. As Spector (1999:65), highlights, this principle is often realised when in a conflict situation, one of the actors is elevated to “a villain, demon, rogue, or pariah” and in the process depicting negotiation as an unviable mechanism of conflict resolution. Whilst these might give an impression that all the bridges to a conflict might have been burned however, the World is amass with evidence of scenarios where this notion has been repackaged and in turn a pragmatic and mutually beneficial agreements reached amongst the parties such as the South Africa case between the African National Congress (ANC) negotiations with the Apartheid regime, and the Israeli negotiations with the Arafat’s PLO.

In 1994 former Israeli Foreign Minister, Ebba Eban, strongly argued against the no negotiation principle when he vigorously submitted in the opinion piece in the Washington Post, that leaders owe it to their own constituencies to negotiate, be it directly or indirectly, with their most detested villains in order to achieve workable and practical compromises (Spector: ibid).This paper posits that the proposition by Eban that emotions and ideologies should not be allowed to take precedence over material conditions needed to achieve peace, falls within the realm of “visionary pragmatism” needed in conflict situations.

According to Berton (1996:177) there are six important variables that should be critically factored in the negotiation process and this may be summarised as follows:
The distribution of power, this is essential to understand the variance in power relations amongst the parties;

a. Issues to be negotiated, this point highlights the importance of classifying issues in terms of their importance;

b. Type of relationship between the negotiating parties;

c. Past records of negotiations;

d. The venue of negotiations, and

e. Personalities of the negotiators, this is a critical basis to understand the strength and the weaknesses of the key figures in the negotiation process including their experience, status and knowledge.

In the Zimbabwe context, given Mbeki’s previous experience in negotiations such as the role during the talks between the African National Congress and the apartheid government, it may be argued that he was well conversant with some of these elements.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The major theory for this study is realism. Realism rose as a reaction to idealistic understandings and interpretations of international behaviour. Leading proponents on realism include H Morgenthau, EH Carr, T Hobbes and N Machiavelli. Realists argue that interests shape the behaviour of states and politics. According to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1981:84) “Unlike utopians, realists assume that there is no essential harmony of interests among nations. Instead they posit that nation-states often have conflicting national objectives some of which lead to war.” In the Zimbabwean GPA negotiations, divergent interests of states and individuals had an impact in the negotiation process. The international players in the case of the Western countries wanted an outcome that will result in Mugabe removed from power, whilst this position was shared by the MDC, however SADC and Mbeki were consistent that the people of Zimbabwe must be the ones determining their destiny without external dictates.

The realist theory puts statesmen at the centre of the nation’s policy approach and direction. The statesmen in this regard have the primary responsibility of ensuring the survival of the nation-state which includes safeguarding interests of the people by considering all the
material factors relevant to these interests. Accordingly as Morgenthau and Thompson (1985:19) highlights that:

International politics embraces more than recent history and current events. The observer is surrounded by the contemporary scene with its ever shifting emphasis and changing perspectives. He cannot find solid ground on which to stand, or objective standards of evaluation, without getting down to fundamentals that are revealed only by the correlation of recent events with the more distant past and the perennial qualities of human nature underlying both.

The above view expressed highlights the necessity for practical considerations for the ever changing global context whilst at the same time grasping some of the historical context that had an influence on the current status quo.

Carr in his book “The twenty years of crisis: 1919-1939” emphasises three tenets implicit in Machiavelli’s doctrine that are at the foundation of realist philosophy. “First, history is a sequence of cause and effect, whose cause can be analysed and understood by intellectual effort, but not (as idealist or utopians believe) directed by imaginations. Second, theory does not (as utopians believe) create practice, but practice theory. Third, politics are not (as utopians pretend) a function of ethics, but ethics of politics. The suggestions being forwarded by Carr place theory at the centre of material, practical and objective conditions and realities from which the society may draw inferences and informed suggestions rather than relying purely on emotions and imaginations. This resonates with Morgenthau’s view as put forward by Youla (2011: 20) that theory “must be judged, not by some preconceived abstract principle or concept unrelated to reality, but by its purpose, which is to bring order and meaning to the plethora of phenomenon that exist in the real world”. So a realist statesman when given a responsibility to engage in an assignment such as a mediation process is likely to adopt a sophisticated approach that will balance his country’s interest with the realities confronting the mediation process.

In summary, Morgenthau mentions six principles that are at the centre of Realist theory as follows [http://mirfana.wordpress.com]:

20
a. “Politics, like society in general, governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature, which is unchanging; therefore it is possible to develop a rational theory that reflects these objective laws.

b. The main signposts of political realism is the concept of interest defined in terms of power which infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible. Political realism stresses the rational, objective and unemotional.

c. Realism assumes that interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid but not with a meaning that is fixed once and for all. Power is the control of man over man.

d. Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. It is also aware of the tension of between moral command and the requirements of successful political action.

e. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of particular nations with the moral laws that govern the universe. It is the concept of interest defined in terms of power that saves us from moral excesses and political folly.

f. The political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere: he asks “How does this policy affect the power of the nation? Political realism is based on pluralistic conception of human nature.

A man who was nothing but “political man” would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints. But, in order to develop an autonomous theory of political behaviour, “political man” must be abstracted from the other aspects of human nature” Art and Jervis 2005:17). These points capture the crux of a likely approach by a Realist in a conflict situation. The dynamism and flexibility in line with material conditions in particular by the mediator; the motives, the centrality of power and interests by the Statesmen; involved the resistance to universalise moral issues in pursuit of these interests, these are some of the critical features of both the Zimbabwe crisis and mediation process.

The empire of politics is mainly characterised by the desire to either capture or sustain political power, and as Morgenthau and Thompson (1985:31) highlights-International politics like all politics is a struggle for power. Onuoha (2011:18) further captures the centrality of
power in politics as follows, “political power is the ultimate state craft and its capture is the most consuming preoccupation of political actors. Weber as depicted by Gerth and Mills (1978:80) view power as “the possibility of imposing one’s will upon the behaviour of other persons”. So in politics it should be expected that power is not something that is voluntarily given away or donated, particularly to your opponents. The understanding of power in all its facets is central to the strategies, tactics and actions of the political interlocutors, and this understanding this paper posits, is neither exclusive to a specific political ideology nor entity. So for the Zimbabwe situation the focus for the political parties during the negotiation process was to push issues that were in favour of their quest for state power. For the mediator and SADC the likely objective was to ensure that SADC does not become a playground for what is generally referred to as “imperialist” or “Western interests”. The theatre of mediation, as it relates to political actors, can therefore not obliterate itself from the centrality of power by the protagonists in a conflict situation.

Morgenthau and Thompson (1985: 104) posit that nations, in their foreign policy architecture, adopt various schemas of ideologies. Friedrich and Brzezinski (1964:71-96) defines ideology as “the general system of beliefs held in common be the members of a collective; ...it is a system of ideas and values which are oriented towards the evaluative integration of the collectivity and of the situation in which they are placed, the process by which they have developed to their given state, the goals towards which the members are collectively oriented and the relation to the future course of the events”. This view goes beyond defining ideology as an abstract political principle but critically important it accommodates a reasonable sense of measurement that provides a scope not only to incorporate both the historic and present phenomena but also the futuristic path for the collective. The issue of ideology and how it shapes the discourses in the African political agenda, as Onuoha (2011: 26) highlights, “is a tested and canvassed subject.”

Morgenthau and Thompson (1985: 104-110) cites that amongst these myriad forms of ideologies are what they refer to as the “ideologies of the status quo” which mainly attaches “moral legitimacy” to the existing material conditions. This is pursued by nations or those who seek to preserve or protect the power they already possess. On the other hand there is also the “ideologies of imperialism” and according to Morgenthau and Thompson (ibid)
imperialism policies always need ideologies to pursue its agendas, however unlike the status quo policy, the imperialism policy “always has the burden to prove...that the status quo it seeks to overthrow deserves to be overthrown and that the moral legitimacy which in the minds of many attaches to things as they are ought to yield to a higher principle of morality calling for a new distribution of power. These ideologies resonates with the Zimbabwe context as often depicted by the ZANU-PF’s preservation of the status quo mentality which is directly in conflict with the super powers’ regime change agenda aimed at removing ZANU-PF and Mugabe from power.

Bernard (1983: 178) as cited by Onuoha (2011:16) indicate that when looking at the issue of power in the realm of the consensus model debate there are certain questions that cannot be ignored. Key amongst these should be the understanding of locating where power resides or in other words a performance of some sort of “centre of power analysis” exercise. This is important according to Bernard in providing a detailed understanding not only the actors supposed to be part of the consensus building mechanism but also in formulating the content and character of such a consensus. Community power theorists such as (Dahl 1961; Hunter1963; Polsby 1966) as highlighted by Onuoha (ibid) agree with this assertion in that according to their view it is futile to be involved in a consensus exercise or process unless it incorporates those “who make things move” in that specific community or broader society. The understanding of both the environment and actors in a conflict is a critical puzzle for those entrusted with a mediation function. As Nathan (2009:13) further highlights “Even the most accomplished is unlikely to achieve anything if the disputant parties reject negotiations, are unwilling to forge a settlement or sign agreement that they later breach”.

An understanding of the GPA can also be understood from idealistic underpinning which is in contrast with realism. Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero were all political idealists who believed that there were some universal moral values on which political life could be based. Idealism put emphasis on international norms, interdependence among states, and international cooperation, (http://plato.stanford.edu, 2013). Thus idealism also helps in conflict management and resolution.

Furthermore, according to http://plato.stanford.edu, (2013):
...the idealists of the 1920s and 1930s (also called liberal internationalists or utopians) had the goal of building peace in order to prevent another world conflict. They saw the solution to inter-state problems as being the creation of a respected system of international law, backed by international organizations. This interwar idealism resulted in the founding of the League of Nations in 1920 and in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 outlawing war and providing for the peaceful settlements of disputes. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, scholars such as Norman Angell, Alfred Zimmern, and Reymond D. Fosdick, and other prominent idealists of the era, gave their intellectual support to the League of Nations.

It is from the above that one can note that the creation of international law and the formation of regional organisations in international relations such as the SADC can be traced from idealists thought. Drawing their mandate from the United Nations Charter (UNC), these sub-regional, regional and continental organisations have been tasked with the primary role of preserving international peace and security.

2.5 Conclusion
To conclude, the process of conflict management and resolution has been interpreted in various ways by different authors and scholars. The Zimbabwe conflict resolution mechanism which was mainly based on the AU and SADC intervention has got strong features of indigenous conflict management approach. The AU and SADC intervention in Zimbabwe, both in process and outcome consistently captures some of the basic tenets of the “African solutions to Africa’s problems” mantra. The characteristics of the process to the GPA given the power games and interest of various actors depict strong characteristics of the realism theory albeit not to the exclusion of other theories such as idealism.
Chapter Three: The Zimbabwe Crisis: A Post 1980 Chronological Overview

3.1 Introduction
The primary aim of this chapter is to highlight some of the basic tenants of the post liberation Zimbabwe challenges. This is done with an ultimate objective of providing a critical background to the reasons that led to the SADC intervention in Zimbabwe. This will hopefully assist in projecting the actions, conduct and the perspectives of the key protagonists in the post liberation Zimbabwean body politic. It is further envisaged that some of the points to be extrapolated from this chapter will assist in the provision of some form of basic understanding of the variance of the internal political interlocutors, particularly in relation to the motives and actions of external bodies and role players such as, China, the EU, SADC, the UK and USA amongst others.

This chapter is based on the premise that a fairly deep understanding of the Zimbabwe crisis requires going beyond the general consensus. The approach in this chapter is to examine the different stages of the post independent Zimbabwe, in particular from 1980 to 2009. This is done with a view to highlight some of the trigger points that not only led to the crisis in the today’s format but also to demonstrate some of the complexities surrounding the Zimbabwean crisis.

3.2 Background to the Genesis of the Zimbabwean Crisis
There is in general, a consensus of opinion, that the long term origins of the Zimbabwe crisis, as it is the case with the challenges experienced by most African states, is in the main, a product of colonial inequalities that characterised Africa for many decades. In Zimbabwe’s case the tension has since the 90 years of colonial rule had been centred on the land question, or in precise terms, the unequal distribution of land between the black majority and white minority. This as Mlambo and Raftopolous (2010:2) highlight, the land question contextualises the gestation for the formation of the liberation movement and the armed struggle in Zimbabwe – so for the liberation movement, the land question in Zimbabwe has always been the motive force behind which the populace was mobilised.

Another key limitation from the Lancaster house that continues to create challenges for the modern Zimbabwe is in the area of the country’s electoral system. This is so because the electoral system of the post independence Zimbabwe as exploited in various studies (Moyo,
1992; Makumbe and Compagnon; Sachikonye, 2000, 2004) from the onset captured a favourable orientation towards a one party state. According to Sachikonye (2011: 46), some of the elements of the one party state orientation are the constitutional powers given to the president which are often cited as a source of the culture of patronage. The Lancaster house constitutional powers allowing the President to appoint 20 per cent of the members of parliament, is one such example of what may be categorised as a source of institutionalised patronage system. According to Sachikonye (ibid), the framework for a one party state was not a simple constitutional or electoral mishap but in reference to ZANU-PF as the then ruling party, was “a conscious strategy to construct a one party state in which there was a fusion of the ruling party and its ideology with the state”. This argument set the basis for understanding the likely reaction of the ruling elite to what they may perceive as a political threat to achieve such an ideology.

The issue of the securitisation of the state and violence appears to be a perennial feature of the Zimbabwe pre and post liberation history. Sachikonye (2011) captures in detail the Zimbabwean history of violence including the 1963-64 interparty violence between ZANU and ZAPU, the two main actors that led to the successful revolution against the Smith regime, as well as the violent and brutal nature of the Smith regime against the liberation movement.

3.2 Zimbabwe’s Self Discovery Period: 1980-1989
The post colonial Zimbabwe according to Ndlovu-Gatshepi was fundamentally shaped by two legacies which continue to define the character of the modern Zimbabwe state. These are, first, the legacies of the brutal and authoritarian settler colonial state. Second, the independent Zimbabwe was in the main a product of a protracted armed struggle (Ndlovu-Gatshepi, 2002:110). The two points form an essential historical contest in understanding the actions, emotions and the role of the various actors in Zimbabwe. The other major consideration for the post colonial Zimbabwe according to Ndlovu-Gatshepi, (ibid) was the approach to deal with the practical peace and security perspectives arising out of the geo-political realities of the Southern African region particularly the sharing of the border with the apartheid South Africa. Bhebe and Ranger (2003:18) highlight that the Zimbabwe of 1980 was complex and plural and as a result necessitated complex and multiple approaches to get it right. (cited in Ndlovu-Gatshepi).
The character of a post-colonial state is captured by Mandaza (1996: viii-xxi) as further highlighted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002:110) as follows:

...a post colonial state is a nation-state-in-the making, which in character is weak, lacks essence and is suffering from being a hostage and dependent state. As such, it is increasingly vulnerable and is unable to mediate competing forces in society, which makes it incapable of satisfying growing social demands. The post-colonial state has poor political and economic foundations. It is fragile and is given to conflict.

The early stages of the Zimbabwe post independence era are not immune from some of the characterisation postulated by Mandaza. Zimbabwe as a nation-state in the making had to grapple with real transformation issues and internal ideological battles of transforming the liberation movements into a ruling party in charge of the state machinery.

For Moore and Raftopoulos (2010) the current state of the Zimbabwean crisis should be best captured as a being the one “rooted in the long term structural political-economic legacies of colonial rule combined with the legacies of African nationalist politics” and that the explosion of the crisis must be understood in the context of a “major threat to the political future of the ruling party”. Whilst the legacy of the colonial patterns of land ownership as a major source of the crisis is often uncontested mainly because it is backed by statistics, what lies at the centre of contestation and controversy in Zimbabwe is the simple narrative that Zimbabwe mainly finds herself in this current state because the nationalist movement simply refuses to hand over power against the aspirations of the popular view. In relation to the main two internal actors, Cawthra (2010: 27) notes that, the perspectives on the nature of the crisis differ dramatically between the two sides, with the MDC focusing on governance issues whilst ZANU-PF blames ‘Western sanctions’.

The early stages of the post independence were not all gloomy and to the contrary there were promising signs that Zimbabwe would take a different cause as compared to many post colonial African states. In the book ‘Mugabe’, Martin Meredith (2008), describes the early stages of the post independence Zimbabwe as a period characterised by the brief but memorable honeymoon. Mugabe himself told a meeting of white farmers to enjoy and take advantage of the honeymoon period and the attention Zimbabwe was receiving from the
World, particularly given that “… honeymoons don’t always last too long” (Meredith 2008:46).

As early as 1981 the honeymoon was declared over following a bomb blast at the ZANU-PF headquarters where Mugabe and ZANU-PF central committee members were scheduled to attend a meeting. Mugabe felt betrayed that despite efforts to unite and move the country there were “reactionary” and “counter revolutionary elements” working against the national reconciliation project in cahoots with apartheid South Africa (Meredith: ibid). The geopolitical considerations, in particular the destabilising role of the apartheid South Africa, is something that cannot be overlooked nor ignored when trying to deeply unearth the complexities of the Zimbabwe situation. The apartheid South Africa legacy has a huge influence on how the democratic South African state will likely shape its policy approach towards the Zimbabwean dialogue and the international system as a whole.

On the other hand the “honeymoon” phase as declared by Mugabe witnessed a period of warm relations between Zimbabwe and the international community especially the donor community. The USA provided a three-year aid package of 225 million United States Dollars (USD), and as highlighted by Meredith the USA described its relationship with Zimbabwe as a “warm embrace”. The International donors’ conference in March 1981 promised 636 million pounds bringing the total of aid pledged just in one year to 900 million British pounds (Meredith: ibid). During this period, Zimbabwe also re-entered the international trade community joining bodies such as the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) the precursor to SADC, the Lome Convention which enabled Zimbabwe’s agro-exports to receive entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) markets and the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), the precursor to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (ANSA et al 2012:192). In relation to the international community the honeymoon phase certainly was not as brief as the domestic challenges that surfaced immediately after independence.

For the Western nations Zimbabwe was a success story for negotiated settlements that should serve particularly as an example to apartheid South Africa. Senior USA official for African
Affairs, Frank Wisner explained the Western Governments enthusiasm with the post liberation Zimbabwe as follows: “The success of Zimbabwe’s experience with nationhood sends a clear message to the region and the world about the prospects of lasting negotiated settlements in Southern Africa and of reconciliation among the region’s strife-torn peoples” Meredith, (2002:47). From the onset since Independence, when assessing the geo political dynamics, in particular the sharing of the borders with the apartheid South Africa, the role of the international community as demonstrated by the contributions of the donor nations, it is clear that Zimbabwe has always been a source of interest for the international community albeit for different reasons and interests. This background is essential in underscoring why in the later part of Zimbabwe’s life, especially for a nation Zimbabwe’s size, the country continues to grasp the attention of the international community.

In terms of the overall economic architecture, the post liberation Zimbabwe government as highlighted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report (2008:3) inherited a dual economy characterised by a well and diversified economy existing side by side with an underdeveloped economy. As an intervention, the first decade of independence was characterised by government’s unwavering commitment to social welfare policies. This saw a major transformation in health care and education with many Zimbabweans as beneficiaries. According to (ANSA report, 2012:14) the social welfare policies were inherently in line with the pre-independence regime whose orientation was based on building internal capacity and capabilities in line with the regime’s inward orientation. Mugabe’s regime adopted a pragmatic approach to the country’s socialist transformation agenda and as highlighted by Meredith (2002:48) he pronounced a clear message that, “We shall proceed to bring about changes but changes in a realistic manner… we recognise that the economic structure of this country is based on capitalism, and that whatever ideas we have, we must build on that. Modifications can only take place in a gradual way”. It is this kind of perspective that did not only make the Western government feel at ease but this was at the core of their fondness and newly found love for the Zimbabwe’s liberators. It appears that nothing else mattered, for as long as their interests were not threatened.

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002:114) the 1980s were characterised by an “ambiguous” and “contradictory situation whereby the powerful aspirations of the ordinary citizens for rights,
democracy and human security co-existed with the strong and resilient practices of authoritarianism and violence”. One of the major incidences of violence during the first decade of the Zimbabwe post colonial era was what is known as the “Gukurahundi” violence in the Matebeleland regions and some part of Midlands. During that violence thousands of people mainly of the Ndelebele origin were killed following accusations mainly by ZANU-PF that they were ZAPU-PF dissidents motivated by a drive to undermine and overthrow the post independent democratic government. The conflict ended with a unity accord between ZANU-PF and ZANU-PF and in the process creating a de factor one party state.

In 1989 former ZANU Secretary General Edgar Tekere formed the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002: 120) highlights that at the core of Tekere’s party was a vehement opposition towards a one party state and the consequences of this agenda was a violent retaliation by ZANU-PF. The reaction of ZANU-PF to potential competition demonstrates a consistent and entrenched ideology of a party hell-bent to create a one party state at all cost. The brutal assessment of the character of ZANU-PF is captured by former President of South Africa and member of the ANC which is an ally of ZANU-PF as follows: “ZANU-PF has had absolutely no experience in working in a multiparty democracy. They have had a virtual one-party state, if truth be told. Their history tends towards a militaristic mindset when they are confused with serious challenges, like how they dealt with the MDC through brutal repression. ZANU-PF is actually a militaristic organisation. The brutality of ZANU-PF has always been there. They massacred 20 000 people in Matabeleland”.

3.3 1990-1999: Liberalisation Phase
This is often known as the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP) period. This is so because ESAP was adopted and launched in 1990 in Zimbabwe. The ESAP elicited a domino effect in the political discourse and consequently contributed to the crisis as it unfolded in the recent times. The policy framework which was similar to the other programmes introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Africa, Asia and South Africa was according to the architects of this policy aimed at modernising the Zimbabwean economy. ESAP represented change from the state-led economic development of the 1980s to a more market driven economy and its key targets were: To achieve an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 5 percent between the period of 1991-95; Raising savings

30
to 25 percent of the GDP; Raise investment levels to 25 percent of the GDP; Achieve export growth of 9 percent per annum; Reducing the budget deficit over 10 percent of GDP to 5 percent by 1995; Reducing inflation from 17.7 percent to 10 percent by 1995 (ANSA et al 2012:21).

However, contrary to the set objectives ESAP resulted in a gloomy situation for Zimbabwe. During the ESAP period some of the key negative effect includes the rate of inflation that rose to 26.6 percent and employment growth that declined to 0.12 percent. The hardships as a result of the ESAP programme led to major discontent and protests by the civil society and what followed was a chain of events that left a permanent scar on the Zimbabwe’s political and socio-economic life.

In October 1997, Mugabe compounded the situation when he authorised the unbudgeted payouts of 50,000 Zimbabwe Dollars gratuities and 2000 Zimbabwe Dollars monthly pensions to each War Veteran for recognition of their role in the liberation struggle Mlambo and Raftopopoulos, (2010: 2). Mugabe’s action prompted the December 1997 demonstrations by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) protesting against a proposed levy on workers’ wages to fund the war veterans’ demands.

As early as January 1998 it was clear that the situation was far from improving. This is so because as early as January 1998 there were spontaneous riots in protest against high prices of bread and mealie meal and as a response the government set control measures for all the basic commodities and fixed the exchange rate at 38 Zimbabwean Dollar to one USD. In August 1998 the government sent troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to protect the Laurent Kabila regime in a war that cost Zimbabwe an estimated 33 million USD needless to say the money was not budgeted for (ANSA et al 2012:24).

The 1998 International Donor Conference, to resolve the land question, was one of the critical features of Zimbabwe’s relations with the international community, in particular the UK. At the conference the UK reaffirmed its Lancaster House commitment to fund the land reform.
However, as Chikane (2013:75) highlights the UK reneged on the commitment citing government corruption thus lack of the government capability to manage the funds. Chikane (ibid) notes that the UK’s failure to honour its commitment coupled with a failure to use the UN as an alternative platform to address the land issue led to land occupations by the war veterans.

The end of the decade as it was the case in 1989 with the formation of Tekere’s ZUM ended with the formation of a new political formation in the form of the MDC in 1999. The MDC relevance to Zimbabwe’s body politic was boosted by the deteriorating economic situation. In the main the MDC was born out of the coalition between the labour movement and the civil society. Since the post independence era no political party has ever threatened the dominance of ZANU-PF than the emergence of the MDC. From the onset, to ZANU-PF, the MDC was nothing but a front of the white interests in particular the farmers who were hell-bent to prevent or reverse the land reform programme. So from the onset ZANU-PF was quick to draw the battle lines with the MDC formation. Raftopoulos (2002) captures these battle lines as follows:

The ruling party drew on a combination of a reviewed nationalism that privileged its role in the liberation of the country, prioritised the centrality of the fight for the land, and demonised all those outside the elective “patriotic history” it espoused … For their part the emergent trade union, civic and political opposition forces called on the struggles for labour, human rights, local government and gender struggles, and the post-1989 global discourse on democratisation, driven by fall of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002:102), the issue of political culture in Zimbabwe as witnessed by the ZANU-PF drawing of the battle line is more intense and may be traced back to the pre-colonial societies. This is so because these societies were “characterised by non-competitive politics”, where “competition for power was not only illegitimate but fatal”. The other phenomenon transfused into the modern Zimbabwe political culture from pre colonial era was as further highlighted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ibid) “the idea of life kingship or chieftaincy, an idea and practice that easily translates itself into the notion of life presidency”.

32
So the end of 1999 set a stage for a new highly intensified competitive political environment informed by a new notion from the opposition politicians that it was perhaps time to challenge the monarchy.

3.4 2000-2007 Crisis period: Boiling Pot
In 2000, the MDC-led campaign defeated the Government led constitutional referendum. This according to Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2010:3) set a centre for the government to unleash violence against the MDC supporters and white commercial farmers whom the ZANU-PF government blamed for sponsoring the new opposition movement. The result of the referendum meant that the country was back to the Lancaster House and any little window of opportunity to have an incremental gain to Zimbabwe political and socio transformation in line with the proposed constitution were rejected. For the proponents of the no vote as highlighted by Kochan and Joffe (2011:3) the campaign was argued on the premise that the constitution making process was not people driven.

The referendum outcome sent a deep message of panic to ZANU-PF and this is mainly because it reflected a first electoral loss for the party. This set a new stage, not only between ZANU-PF and the MDC but ZANU-PF was quick to identify the white Zimbabwean community as the main culprits behind the success of the no vote. Chan (2010:15) highlight as expressed by Jonathan Moyo as follows:

Preliminary figures show there were 100,000 white people voting. We have never seen anything like that in this country. They were all over town. Everyone who observed will tell you there were long queues of whites. The difference between the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ votes would not have been what it was had it not been for this vote.

So the referendum results set a new phase of the racial politics in Zimbabwe that as later observed cascaded to other sectors, such as the new trajectory defined by the state’s economic goals in particular the empowerment of what is called the indigenised Zimbabweans. The referendum as it is the case with the elections that followed it hardened the ZANU-PF stance on the land reform opting for a “revolutionary approach” often accompanied by violence against the white populace.
The MDC led campaign to reject the constitution at that time tends to show that no effort was made to analyse some of the positives and gains that would have accrued from the new constitution. The stance also entrenched a worrying culture of suspicion that continue to engulf the Zimbabwean body politic where for example, ZANU-PF stances will often be rejected by the MDC on the basis that they cannot be pro people. On the other hand for ZANU-PF the MDC is a bunch of puppets that are incapable of coming up with original ideas, so whatever they say it must be treated with caution as it mainly reflects the views of their Western masters. This robs the Zimbabwean people the opportunity to enjoy rich debates should the focus be on the core issues and challenges facing the society. At the same time these stances entrench the level of polarisation in the society.

The relations between Zimbabwe and the Western government took a turn for the worst in 2000. The USA and the EU targeted the Zimbabwean economy as a punitive measure for what they perceived as an abusive and brutal regime. In December 2001, the USA promulgated the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) with the aim of weakening the Zimbabwean economy by 2005 Zimbabwe was labelled as “one of the world six outposts of tyranny” Kochan and Joffe, (2011:26). In 2003 Zimbabwe withdrew from the Commonwealth following a major tension with the body as a result of the 2002 elections.

In 2002 the EU followed on the USA footsteps by imposing what it labelled “restrictive measures” on Zimbabwe. According to the EU the measures were informed by the violence that accompanied the March 2002 Presidential elections and involved targeting key leaders from ZANU-PF and government by imposing travel ban and asset freeze on listed individuals and entities. Also included in the measures was an arms embargo ((ANSA et al 2012:21); EU, 2002:3). As of 2013 the EU and the USA continues to enforce the targeted sanctions and this is despite the calls to lift such sanctions by SADC and the Zimbabwean political leadership. Mugabe in October 2009 made a call for a new chapter with the West, whilst Tsvangirai made a call in 2010 for such restrictions to be eased Kochan and Joffe, (2011: 26). It is this kind of
stance that backs the notion that the West’s position in Zimbabwe is mainly driven by its own national interests and has little to do with the interests of the Zimbabwean people.

The Zimbabwean government responded to the Western governments by adopting what it coined as “Look East” policy. Kochan and Joffe (2011:26) highlight that China stepped in around 2000 to fill the gap that was previously occupied by the Western governments with unconditional aid replacing the previously rigorous aid of the IMF and the World Bank. Kochan and Joffe (2011: 27). China’s interest in Zimbabwe is consistent with its broader and well organised Africa strategy of pursuing the natural resources needed to drive its economy as well as its search for export market for its cheap finished product (ibid).

Mugabe’s regime embraced China’s intervention to the core as demonstrated by the statement captured in the Daily Mirror, Zimbabwe 18 May 2005 as follows : “In most recent times, as the West started being hostile to us we deliberately declared the Look East Policy (LEP). We have turned east where the sun rises, and given our backs to the west, where it sets”. China has proven to be a reliable partner to the Mugabe regime. This was demonstrated by its stance together with the other UN permanent Security Council member, Russia, when the two nations refused to condemn Zimbabwe over what they viewed as a domestic matter and instead calling for the respect for the principle of sovereignty - for Kochan and Joffe (2011: 28) the Chinese relations with Africa should perhaps be contextualised as “firmly steered by business interests and a pragmatic realism”.

It was during the period that the security structures started to assert their strong arm and support for the Mugabe regime primarily under the pretext of protecting Zimbabwe’s sovereignty. In 2002 the military, police, intelligence and prison heads gave a joint statement making it clear that a simple transfer of power from ZANU-PF through the electoral process was not sufficient enough for their aspirations. In particular the joint statement made it clear that in Zimbabwe:

The highest office of the land is a straight jacket whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. We will therefore not accept, let alone
support or salute, anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty, our country, our people… (Sachikonye 2011:47 quoting from the Zimbabwe Human Rights (ZHR) Non-Government Organisation (NGO) forum in 2007)

The message whilst at best is a clear sign of loyalty to the Mugabe regime; however at worst it depicted a worrying trend and contempt of the democratic electoral principle. From that period onwards it was clear that the security establishments in Zimbabwe would not be overlooked as serious actors if at any stage the impasse in Zimbabwe was to be comprehensively resolved. Since then a variant position of the military has been that they would not salute any president other than Mugabe (Sachikonye: ibid).

The politics of factionalism or factional politics is a strong feature in the Zimbabwe body politic, and this runs across the political divide. In the MDC this issue strongly surfaced in 2005 leading to an open split between a faction supporting the party President, Morgan Tsvangirai, and on the other hand the faction supporting Welshman Ncube, the party’s Secretary General. The immediate context for the split in October 2005 as highlighted by Sachikonye (2011: 32) was disagreement of whether the MDC should participate in the Senate elections scheduled for the same year. However it later transpired that the creation of parallel structures and violence was a source of the struggle between the two leaders.

Raftopoulos (2006) as cited by Sachikonye (2011:32) capture the divide as follows:

The first major sign of problems that were being caused by this parallel structure was the violence that occurred at the Party headquarters in 2004… This structure was formed by two of the Party Presidents’ aides as part of mass action, and over time this structure became a reliable source of force or militia in party struggles by unscrupulous politicians.

The split was followed by skirmishes of violence between the Ncube group or the pro Senate group and the Tsvangirai anti-senate group Sachikonye, (ibid). So the MDC-Ncube as it is called in recent times is a product of the divisions caused not only by the pro and anti senate stances but also violent parallel structures of the pre October 2005 united MDC.
In summary as Cawthra (2010) highlights, the trajectory of this period followed a “common pattern, economic collapse with hyper inflation; political stalemate; increasing divisions with MDC and ZANU-PF; and increasing, and although variable international isolation”

3.5 Conclusion
The chapter managed to highlight the basic tenets that led to the Zimbabwe crisis as it unfolds in recent times. What is clear is that the post Independent Zimbabwe was from the onset a fragile state not unusual from the other nation-states in the making. The pursuit of an ideology based on the creation of a one party by ZANU-PF as times blindfolded the party from embracing a long term sustainable vision in line with the modern world. This explains why the issue of violence continues to be an albatross hanging over the Zimbabwe post liberation life. Other issues of importance such as the electoral framework, the relations between Zimbabwe and the international community, the economic crisis, and the actions of key actors such as the MDC formations and the white community in Zimbabwe, were also highlighted to a set basis for the analyses of the trajectory to the GPA.
Chapter Four: Critical Analysis of the Trajectory to the GPA

4.1 Introduction
The World of international diplomacy, as Chan (2010:44) highlights “although committed to gentle-manly manners, is a viper’s nest of ungentle-manly conduct”. The process to the signing of the GPA, in particular the actions of key actors, both at the domestic, and international level, was certainly not a process reserved for the “holly cows” nor will it be possible to isolate this trajectory from the “viper nest of ungentle-manly” conduct. This chapter assess the conduct, interests, motives and the role played by multiple actors towards the formulation of the GPA as a blue print for the post independent democratic transition in Zimbabwe. This is done with the overall objective of locating the GPA within the existing theories of international relations and the conflict management and resolution architecture on the African continent.

4.2 Domestic Actors: The expedition for state power
The basic method of capturing or defending the hold on state power in a democratic state is through the regular elections. The elections and the outcome thereof serve as a yardstick to measure the popularity of those aspiring to hold public office. This principle was fundamental in the pursuit of the struggle against the oppressive apartheid and colonial regimes which were uncomfortable with the concept of the majority rule. In the post independence Zimbabwe, particularly since 2000, the elections have turned into a pernicious feature of the country’s body politic. Whilst, SADC has been ceased with the Zimbabwe situation as far back as in 2000 including the 2002 controversial elections, the constant instigator for international attention in addition to the land reform and the deteriorating economic situation has been the controversy that often accompanies the Zimbabwe elections. The GPA itself gained prominence because of the controversy relating to the 2008 harmonised elections.

The public discourse on the Zimbabwe crisis in particular the analysis and reporting are often over simplified and monotonous. For most in the private and international media, Mugabe is a demagogue who has long past his sell by date, whose survival is mainly based on violent tactics and the support of the elitist African leadership. On the other hand, and with little scrutiny, Tsvangirai is presented as infallible champion of human rights, with others even
going as far as comparing him to Nelson Mandela. In essence Tsvangirai become the key beneficiary of what Chan (2010:44) captures as the ‘Anyone but Mugabe’ syndrome. It was only in 2013 that the private and international started to provide an alternative and often embarrassing picture about Tsvangirai leadership qualities. The point is that this scrutiny would have assisted in deeply contextualising the GPA process and by so doing assist even Tsvangirai and his team in fully appreciating the acumen of his opponents. From the start ZANU-PF had an advantage not only of incumbency as the ruling party since 1980, but equally important, most of its key leaders had the advantage of both the Lancaster House negotiations and the 1987 unity accord with ZAPU. Additionally the experience of ZANU-PF is not only isolated to the way the party is fused into the state machinery. At the diplomatic and international front, as Chan (2010:3) highlights, ZANU-PF could draw on its experience to craft a strategy that centred on building a strong pan-African base. This strategy was so successful that according to Chan (ibid) “neither Britain nor the US, and not even France with its closes ties to a large part of Africa, could fully isolate Zimbabwe from its wide support”. Porteous (2008:12) also highlights how the UK approach fell into Mugabe’s trap in particular it’s so called megaphone diplomacy which might have irritated the African leadership.

In contrast to ZANU-PF, the MDC inexperience particularly in how they handled the international community and the negotiations has been noted by various leaders and scholars. Motlanthe, who also had a short stint as the Facilitator in Zimbabwe, captures the negotiations inexperience of the MDC as follows “They are not strategic in how they have handled negotiations. I told them that you cannot throw out countless demands and conditions all the time when you negotiate. You have to identify, isolate and target the key issues to take the process forward” Harvey, (2012: 155). Similarly Chan (2010: 3) highlights some of the deficiencies in the MDC-T in particular the lack of diplomatic skills displayed at the Commonwealth in March 2002. Tsvangirai himself acknowledges this shortcoming as follows: “… As for the MDC approach, there has been criticism that we were ready to run to the EU, run to the Americans, to take action on Zimbabwe... I think it’s a criticism well taken. We have been working and trying to make sure that the African agenda becomes the defining thrust in confronting Mugabe – not an EU and American agenda- and we have been starting with our diplomatic initiative with Mbeki, with the leaders of the region, and with the African union” (Tsvangirai as cited by Chan, 2010:46). Since this turnaround strategy Tsvangirai has been on an offensive in SADC and the AU as demonstrated by his regional and continental
tours in April 2013, primarily to gain some ground which traditionally used to be occupied by ZANU-PF.

The process to the GPA may be captured to into two phases, the pre election 2008 harmonised election phase and the post harmonised election phase. In 2007 when Mbeki was mandated by SADC to facilitate on its behalf following an AU mandate it was clear that from the onset that he was interested in a long term solution for Zimbabwe. Mbeki as cited by Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2010:8) made it known after receiving the SADC mandate that it was essential to speedily “... begin the process leading to the normalisation of the situation in Zimbabwe and the resumption of its development and reconstruction process intended to achieve a better life for all Zimbabweans on a sustained and sustainable basis” – as such critical in the first phase was the creation of an election environment that was meant to produce uncontested 2008 harmonised elections. The electoral reforms that ZANU-PF and the MDC formations agreed on partially succeeded as demonstrated by the generally accepted conditions of the March 2008 elections albeit that the elections were not conclusive. With regard to the second phase primarily as a result of the inconclusive result and the violent Presidential runoff in June 2008, it was clear that the best approach in a highly polarised environment such as the one in Zimbabwe was to create a bridge in the form of the Inclusive Government or Government of National Unity. Consequently the GNU as an inevitable solution for Zimbabwe at that time was consistent with Mbeki’s view for a sustainable solution that will curtail the deepening socio-economic crisis. The GNU concept is a tested concept and Mbeki’s experience in the South Africa’s transition talks which resulted in the GNU between the ANC and the National Party came in handy. Other cases of the GNU include the Kenyan situation following the 2007 violent elections in that country.

For the MDC-T and ZANU-PF, the GNU was not necessarily a popular concept amid for varying reasons. In the MDC-T there was a hardliner faction that was strongly opposed to any possible idea of a Government of National Unity, and amongst those was the influential party Treasurer Roy Bennett. Godwin in the book The Fear: the last days of Robert Mugabe, captures the hardliner position as expressed by Bennett as follows “We won’t touch a Government of Unity-over my dead body, under no circumstances. The people will never accept a GNU. They saw what happened to ZAPU” Godwin, (2010:179). The hardliner
position depicted by Bennett who himself is an influential figure in the MDC-T, is not only peculiar to the MDC-T, all the parties have their own share of hardliners, this clearly demonstrate the insurmountable amount of challenges that Mbeki and his team faced in the process towards the GPA destiny. On the other hand Bennett observation about what happen to ZAPU may be interpreted as an acknowledgement by the MDC-T leadership of ZANU-PF’s experience in coalition politics. For ZANU-PF, the concept of sharing power following years of unlimited access and grip on the state machinery and most levers power in the country was highly unattractive. The smaller MDC positioned itself as a king maker and voice of reason during the dialogue but its position then was mainly tilted towards ZANU-PF favour primarily because it did not enjoy much support from the Western nations.

The involvement of the civil society movement in the Zimbabwe dialogue was very limited, this is because the attempt to involve the civil society in the dialogue was short lived. According to Chikane (2013:101) Mbeki’s facilitation team created at least two opportunities for the civil society groups to make formal presentations. What came out from these presentations were the identical positions both in terms of concerns and solutions between the MDC formations and these civil society groups. This is further substantiated by the general consensus between the facilitators and the three political protagonists in the Zimbabwe dialogue who felt the involvement of the civil society would cause enormous delays in the negotiations Mlambo and Raftopoulos, (2010:8). This in itself limited the role and the scope of the civil society in the negotiations and by so doing making the process mainly political.

The MDC-T as highlighted by Eppel and Ratopolous (2008: 6) amongst its key strategies was to frustrate Mbeki’s mediation and this was primarily owing to the party’s discomfort with what was perceived as Mbeki’s closeness to ZANU-PF. This was done with a view of pushing for the mediation process to be shifted from SADC to the AU and the UN. This position was not only consistent with the party’s distrust of Mbeki and his so called ‘quiet diplomacy’ approach but it also resonated very strongly with the EU and US position. This is because Mbeki and SADC frustrated both the EU and US attempts to have the UN Security Council imposing sanctions on Mugabe’s regime. By adopting the approach to isolate SADC from the mediation process, the MDC-T did not only demonstrate lack of experience in the dynamics within the AU and the region, but heavily pushed Mbeki’s sympathy more towards ZANU-
PF. Tsvangirai’s frustrations and an offensive tirade against Mbeki continued until the end as demonstrated by his statement calling for Mbeki’s removal as the facilitator as follows:

...Sadly, the negotiations have also been hampered by the attitude and position of the facilitator, Mr Thabo Mbeki. He does not appear to understand how desperate the problem in Zimbabwe is, and the solutions he proposes are too small. He is not serving to bring the parties together because he does not understand what needs to be done. In addition, his partisan support for ZANU-PF, to the detriment of genuine dialogue, has made it impossible for the MDC to continue negotiating under his facilitation (Tsvangirai, 2008).

It is also worth noting that the same view expressed by Tsvangirai at that time resonated with the stance of the USA, as expressed by the US Assistant Secretary Jendayi Fraser three months after the GPA was signed that “We think the facilitation is over, it let to (a) power sharing agreement that is flawed” Chikane, (2012:137)

Despite all these varying positions, there were certain material and practical considerations that could not be altered. As such for the three parties there were clear signs of pressure points that provided the parties will little space to manoeuvre in particular the limited economic and political space. According to Masunungure as highlighted by Muzondidya (2013) ZANU-PF was caught in a quandary that can be best described as a “crisis of legitimacy” which primarily describes the party’s loss of popular support, and the “crisis of efficacy” which basically describes ZANU-PF’s failure to provide goods and services in line with the deteriorating state of the economy. In addition to this internal dynamics there was also a lot of pressure from the SADC and AU following the violence that accompanied the 2008 Presidential run-off elections. The GPA therefore became a necessary tool for the party to regroup and consolidate its position both in the country and on the continent.

The MDC-T was also faced with real and practical limitations that made the possibility of the GPA and GNU unavoidable. Raftopoulos captures some of these considerations that influenced the MDC-T position to accede to the GPA as follows:
The realisation of their inability to translate their victory in the 2008 and the 2000 elections into state power in the face of ZANU-PF’s control of the coercive arms of the state; the rising human cost of state repression and violence against the parties’ structures in the countryside; the structural erosion and political exhaustion of its support base, particularly in urban areas; and the growing anxiety about the success of Western pressure in resolving the Crisis.

In this regard the MDC-T embraced the GPA as a transitional mechanism in its quest for the full control of the state apparatus. For the MDC-N it was clear from the onset that that with 10 out of 210 parliamentary seats, as compared to MDC-T’s 100 and ZANU-PF’s 99, the GPA therefore provided an opportunity for the party and its leadership to play a more meaningful role in the pulling Zimbabwe out of the crisis. The MDC-N also had to fight for its own space given the MDC-T’s attempt to sideline it from the GPA negotiations Muzondidya (2013). Looking at all these pressure points or considerations, by the political parties, what comes out clear in both cases is the considerably high level of fatigue that begged for a form of realistic and practical approach to what at the time was a make or break moment for the three political formations. So the material conditions prevailing were such that the possibilities of the winner take all approach was minimal if not nonexistent primarily given that the elections outcome failed to produce outright victors.

4.3 International Actors: Self Determination versus Regime Change Agenda

SADC attempts to find a solution to the crisis in Zimbabwe may be traced back to 2000 amid worries by the regional leadership that the deteriorating economy and governance situation was a direct threat to the stability of the region. In 2000 SADC despatched Mbeki, then Presidents Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, and Sam Nujoma of Namibia to engage with Mugabe on the land reform process in Zimbabwe following the occupation of white owned farms by war veterans. Mbeki explains the 2000 SADC mission as follows:

To get a common commitment to solve the Zimbabwe land question, according to the framework and programme agreed at the 1998 Conference and thus, simultaneously, to speak to such questions as the rule of law; To end the violence that has attended the effort to find this solution; To create the conditions for the withdrawal from the farms they have occupied of demonstrating war veterans; and To pursue these issues in a
manner that would be beneficial for all the people of Zimbabwe and the rest of Southern Africa. (Mbeki 2012: 3).

From the above, according to Mbeki, Mugabe was fully supportive of these objectives. Mbeki (ibid) acknowledges that this SADC initiative failed and blames the “world powers” for failing to honour the commitment they made at the 1998 conference on the Zimbabwe Land Question.

The objectives set by Mbeki and SADC highlight a genuine consideration of both the domestic situation, as represented by the discontent and frustrations of the war veterans that led to the occupation of the white owned farms, and in addition the recognition that these occupations were wrong as they made a mockery of the rule of law. At the international level Mbeki had to engage with the “world powers” in particular the UK government to try and convince them to adopt a different stance that will result in a win–win situation for both Mugabe and the white farmers whose interests were intrinsically linked with those of the UK as the former colonial master of Zimbabwe. The historical records show that the Western countries were not interested in any other outcome except to change the Mugabe regime. This non cooperation of the Western countries with the SADC initiative appears to have a direct impact on how Mbeki and the region approached the Zimbabwe crisis. The attitude of the Western nations may have sent a message of arrogance to SADC and AU leadership and in the process benefited Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Former South Africa’s President, Kgalema Motlanthe’s view as cited by (Harvey 2012:153) that “Gordon Brown and George Bush and many of our people here at home don’t familiarise themselves with facts and can only come at Zimbabwe only on the basis that Mugabe is a rogue” is consistent with the stalemate that existed between South Africa, SADC and the AU on the one hand and the West on the other, albeit to mention that this was not entirely a homogenous view.

It may be argued that the worst moment for the UK and Zimbabwe relations, particularly relating to the issue of land came when Tony Blair’s Labour party took power. Secretary of State for International Development, Clair Short, letter on the land reform that “I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government from diverse backgrounds without links to
former colonial interests” represented significant turnaround on the UK-Zimbabwe land politics. (afropolitan, 2013:9). The public spats that took shape between Mugabe and his government and the UK government under Tony Blair maybe traced to this position of the UK government. This explains Mugabe and ZANU-PF’s position that the sanctions and international hostility particularly the conduct of the USA were unwarranted given that in their own view Zimbabwe was mainly in quarrel with the UK over the land issue and not any other nation. For ZANU-PF and SADC the UK and USA attempts to use the UNSC to punish Zimbabwe was clearly an abuse of UN structures and violation of international law.

It therefore follows that West refusal to appreciate the deep emotions and sensitivities of the land issue set a stage for the hostilities with SADC on the Zimbabwe crisis. Instead the UK and the USA rather than engaging in a constructive dialogue with the region opted for a regime change agenda and key to this was to categorise Zimbabwe as a rogue state with a clear objective of targeting the Zimbabwe economy with a hope that the deteriorating economic and humanitarian crisis will cause a popular revolt. For Mbeki, the West position and its regime change agenda in Zimbabwe “had to do with fundamentally undermining and weakening the historical and strategically important right of the people of Africa to self determination”. The post 9/11 world order and the regime change agenda as advocated by the George Bush Jnr administration as Mlambo and Raftopolous (2010:7) highlight “heightened sensitivities of many African states to opposition movements viewed as agents of such a strategy. Former South African President, Kgalema Motlanthe, as captured by his biographer Ebrahim Harvey (2012:154) resonates with this view “Kgalema is abundantly aware that many Western countries particularly Britain and the US, and businesses in South Africa too, have been supporting the MDC in their quest to get rid of Mugabe in their own interests and not because they really care about the Zimbabwe people. He knows these forces have conveniently equated Mugabe with the crisis in Zimbabwe, ignoring other major factors, especially the roles of Britain and the US, and at the economic level the enormous damage the World Bank and the IMF have inflicted on Zimbabwe”. The view is consistent with SADC’s view as expressed through Mbeki that the long-term solution in Zimbabwe cannot be birthed out of “half truths” and short term intervention primarily based on a simplistic analysis that Mugabe’s removal was the panacea to solving all the Zimbabwe ills. It appears that for the leadership in SADC viewed Mugabe as an important part of the trajectory towards a stable
and peaceful Zimbabwe rather than a mere obstacle that may be substituted by a candidate of their choice.

SADC decision making process is mainly based on consensus and this is often misinterpreted as if the body is constituted by think-alike statesmen who agree about almost everything. What it is key for the SADC leadership is cohesion and a united region able to safeguard the national interests of member states. This however, does not mean that there is no competition or competing ideas in the regional body, what is critical is to understand as a Statesman in the region is to conform to the consensus model in advancement of your position. The SADC summit in Mauritius 2004, demonstrate the commitment of SADC to balancing regional solidarity and governance and human rights issues as demonstrated by its communiqué on the regions position on the elections that reads : “Really free and fair elections mean not only an independent electoral commission, but also freedom of assembly and absence of physical harassment by the police or any other entity, freedom of the press and access to national and television, and external and credible observation of the whole electoral process” (Chan 2010: 92). Mbeki who attended the summit is credited with playing a significant role in the SADC decision and position and as such many applauded him for his pragmatic approach to handling Zimbabwe and the regional issues.

The point that SADC was not always united on Zimbabwe is demonstrated by President Khama of Botswana’s open criticism of the 2008 Presidential elections, labelling Mugabe repressive and calling for internationally supervised elections. Other countries notably, Tanzania and Zambia with some minor variance supported the Botswana position (Cawthra 2010:30). However without necessarily responding to Khama’s public rebuke Mugabe publicly reminded Khama during the GPA signing ceremony in 2008 that in SADC there was a protocol on how statesmen communicate when he said “...yes lots of things have been said, criticism has been written about him but the whole way I said nothing... I said I will never ever attack an African leader in public, never ever! In our forum of SADC we will tell each other about what we think about each other. I will get my day!” (Mugabe: 2008) Mugabe’s statement about the relations with fellow statesmen on the continent is something that Tsvangirai failed to grasp and his consistent public jibe aimed at Mbeki did him little favours with the regional leadership, and once again tilting the scales in ZANU-PF’s favour.
Mugabe’s position, and in particular the view that he will get his day against Khama during official SADC gives an insight of the tough nature of the behind the scene deliberations at SADC meetings, this point is often omitted in the public domain.

The historical context supports the view that the leadership in the region now and then are confronted with tense situations as demonstrated by the trajectory to the Lancaster house settlement. During that process Mugabe and the African leaders in particular the leaders of the members of the frontline States, a precursor to SADC, tension ruined because they wanted a negotiated settlement as opposed to ZANU-PF’s position of a military onslaught. Mugabe as captured by Meredith (2008:7) highlight this contrasting views between his party and the Frontline states members as follows: “We thought they were selling out…the frontline states said we had to negotiate, we had to go to this conference. There we were, we thought we were on top of the situation back home, we were moving forward all the time, and why should we be denied the ultimate joy of having military overthrown the regime here? We felt that would give us a better position. We could dictate the terms”. The dictating of terms as it later transpired was mainly based on the economic reconfiguration of Zimbabwe, particularly starting with the land question. So for ZANU-PF the compromise reached at the Lancaster House in particular relating to the issue of most two land and the understanding that a one party state would not be achievable under such conditions and compromises, represented a sort of a “dream deferred” that will have to be revisited at the best opportune moment.

In 2013, in what appears as a concession from the Western countries that the regime change agenda at least in its original form, has failed, Zimbabwe has experienced an influx of re-engagement gestures from the countries which were at the forefront of the regime change agenda. The USA State Department sent Ambassador Andrew Young to deliver a message of conciliation to Mugabe and the EU sent a parliamentary delegation to Harare—the first in 10 years. In addition the US government removed two banks, the Agricultural Development Bank of Zimbabwe and the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe from the sanctions list (Herald 30 April 2013:1). This was a major triumph for the region and the African continent and is highly consistent with the African leadership rebirth vision of being at the forefront of determining the continent’s destiny. In addition there seems to be a convergence of ideas between the USA and the farmers union in Zimbabwe with the Mugabe government that the starting point in finding a long-term solution to the tension between the
West and Zimbabwe was to fully address the land issue, a position long expressed by Mbeki and SADC. In addition the MDC has long made it public that the land reform in Zimbabwe is irreversible and all that can be done was an audit to make the reform more inclusive.

4.3 Mbeki the Facilitator and the South African Foreign Policy on Zimbabwe

In 1996 Mbeki, who was then the Deputy President of South Africa, delivered a speech titled “I am an African” in the South African parliament, and as Chikane (2013:54) highlights the speech laid a foundation for the ANC led government to develop and implement its African Renaissance vision whilst simultaneously putting Mbeki as a central figure in this vision. According to Kagwanja (2006:39) “By and large “African Renaissance” was Mbeki’s means of identifying with the history and aspirations of the African peoples, which became urgent after the foreign policy glitches of the 1990s” in South Africa.

From his inception as the President of South Africa in 1999 Mbeki was confronted with the responsibility to correct some of the pitfalls of unilateralism that had occurred under Mandela as it was the case with South Africa military intervention in Lesotho. As Mlambo and Raftopolous (2010:7) highlight, the South African government under Mbeki was sensitive to being viewed as a regional bully pushing its own agenda in conflict situations. For the democratic South Africa it was therefore necessary to distinguish itself from the destabilising practices of the apartheid regime. Mbeki seized the Zimbabwean situation as an opportunity to relocate South Africa’s policy within the context of the regional multilateral framework. Lipton (2010:332) puts it that South Africa’s stance on Zimbabwe needs to be understood in the context of its wider foreign policy as spelt out by the ruling ANC which prioritises anti-racism, playing a leading role in African Renaissance, state sovereignty and multilateralism, non violence and diplomacy to solve interstate disputes, democracy, human rights and good governance. This is reinforced by Mbeki as quoted in McKinley (2006: 96) when he said “as patriots who occupied the same trench of struggle with the people of Zimbabwe…when together, battled to end white minority rule in the region and continent”. So for Mbeki his stance on Zimbabwe for South Africa, SADC and AU the defence of Zimbabwe’s sovereignty was a patriotic duty.

The South African government view the African renaissance in much broader holistic terms. South Africa’s Department of International Cooperation and Relations, as captured by Kagwanja (2006:40) explains African Renaissance project as “a holistic vision...aimed at promoting peace, prosperity, democracy, sustainable development, progressive leadership and
good governance (2006:40). For the post apartheid South Africa the project to promote the African agenda and its consolidation, is not something that may be reduced to personal preferences of a leader in question, the vision for a renewed Africa is highly institutionalised in the state apparatus, and what may vary may from time is therefore the approach adopted by different statesmen. Mbeki’s approach to the Zimbabwe question therefore did not enjoy the luxury of a knee jack reaction, all the material conditions, including the impact and implications of the deteriorating economic situation both on South Africa and the region were necessarily the basic variables of his analyses model. This view is supported by former Minister of International Cooperation and Relations Dr Nkosazana Zuma as follows “... South Africa must continue to act in a way that maintains that flickering hope of transforming dreams into reality than get short term praise that does not solve the problem. In the same way that Lockerbie impasse was unlocked by engaging the Libyans and condemning them. We were condemned at the time but were persevered until a solution was found (van Wyk, 2002:11).

Former Director General during Mbeki’s Presidency, Chikane (2013: 56) notes that, from assumption of his Presidency in 1999 Mbeki and his team of advisors assumed that the practical approach to the African Renaissance vision was for “Africa to reassert its sovereignty and capacity to make its own decisions about its future without the dictates of superpowers. African countries had to stop being “client states” or “proxy” that governed in the interests of powerful groups and interest groups and not in the interest of the people of Africa or their countries”. This augured with Mugabe’s assertive foreign policy based on Pan Africanism hence were more likely to appeal to each other based on the common ground they already shared as compared to the MDC which had a baggage of being perceived as a surrogate of the West interests. Tsvangirai’s frustrations and his labelling of Mbeki a “dishonest broker” and South Africa of becoming part of the Zimbabwe problem because its actions are worsening the crisis” may be seen in the same vein (Tsvangirai as cited by McKinely 2006: 95).

The quest for the African Renaissance vision is more about Africa’s determination for its own destiny than it is about anti-West or North agenda. For Mbeki and his team this broader vision of the African renaissance project was more about a clear definition and understanding of roles to be played by different actors on the international arena. Chikane (2013:56) highlights this point as follows in relation to Mbeki and his team’s approach to the African renaissance vision and how it interplays with major powers, “We understood that we still needed the
support of the US and other political and economic powers to achieve our continental strategic objectives. We recognised that the positive relationship with the US was also important for our African Renaissance.” This is a recognition of Mbeki that for as much as the major powers saw South Africa as an anchor state on the African continent mainly owing to its economic stature, South Africa also had its own categorisation of key states to anchor its vision on the much broader global space characterised by competing interests. The view also demonstrates the high level of sophistication and pragmatism in Mbeki’s foreign policy approach.

Mbeki’s quite diplomacy to Zimbabwe which is also consistent with his African Renaissance project was also informed by material and practical considerations such as, Mugabe’s support on the African continent, fear of isolation owing to the big brother label, that the outcome of having a peaceful and stable Zimbabwe was more strategic than the alternative of having to deal with a failed state, and the history of the liberation in particular the relations between Mbeki’s ANC, and Mugabe’s ZANU-PF (Kagwanja, 2006:36). In this regard it was therefore strategic for Mbeki to use SADC as leverage to mitigate some of South Africa’s limitations. Kwaganja (2006: 29) posit that Mbeki’s multilateral approach to the Zimbabwe dialogue falls within the realm of “soft power” necessary to put the society back on track through “the instruments of persuasion, mediation, negotiation, and peer pressure, compared with “hard power” represented by the military might”. This resonates with the view by the ISS (2004) as cited by Kwaganja (ibid) that South Africa’s multilateral approach is informed by its quest to project an image of a “gentle giant” rather than a “big brother”.

In the post apartheid South Africa era, arguably there is no country in the SADC region that has caught a sustained international media attention than Zimbabwe. The polarised views of the Zimbabwe crisis which was often loaded with racial undertones were not only reserved for domestic landscape - in most cases South Africa was not only a springboard but more often a target of this media onslaught. This is primary because of the South African government refusal to publicly denounce Mugabe, a position unacceptable to the private media. Motlanthe captures the conduct of the media as follows “They go on as if we have the authority and right to tell Zimbabweans what we want them to do in their own country. After all is said and done, it is only the Zimbabweans themselves who can resolve the crisis there. All we can do at the best of times is to play a facilitative role and try and share out views problems in their country.” This kind of views is often championed in the public domain by the private media as South Africa’s blind endorsement for ZANU-PF. This may also capture how intrinsically
the views of the private media are in sync with the West interests of regime change agenda in Zimbabwe.

Mbeki located the root of the crisis in Zimbabwe to the unfinished land reform programme—more specifically, to Mbeki, the issue of land reform was heavily intertwined with the transition of South Africa from apartheid to the democratic project. Mbeki explained the sacrifices Mugabe and Zimbabwe had to make to allow for a smooth transition in South Africa as follows: “As an outstanding act of African solidarity, the Government of Zimbabwe decided on this delay expressly to facilitate the then on-going negotiations in South Africa, from 1990 onwards, concerned that nothing should be done in Zimbabwe which would so frighten the white South African population that it will oppose our own country’s transformation.” The West’s failure to capture the depth of emotions ruining in countries such as Namibia and South Africa regarding the land issue, only entrenched the isolation of the MDC from the region particularly given that at the time the MDC lacked a coherent strategy to diffuse the “Western puppet stigma” on the African continent. In addition, given fresh memories of how the USA and the UK sided with apartheid government, the support for the MDC against another liberation movement, and the contempt against SADC initiatives demonstrate serious deficiencies in the West’s policies in capturing the dynamics in the politics of SADC. For the UK the loss of influence in the region should have taken more precedence than a narrow policy narrative focused on removing one individual from power.

Mbeki’s consolidation of his position against the West may be traced to the meeting held in Pretoria with US President George Bush. After that meeting Bush in relation to the Zimbabwe situation remarked that “It is a very sad situation that has taken place in that country. President Mbeki is working with the issue. We share the same outcome... President Mbeki is the point man. He is in touch with the issues” (Mail and Guardian). For Bush to call Mbeki the point man on Zimbabwe given the tense atmospherics that existed before the meeting was not only unexpected but it is a clear example on how Mbeki as the SADC facilitator managed to close ranks on the Zimbabwe issue. Mbeki stood firm and perhaps Zuma’s description of Mbeki as cited by Harvey (2012: 137) that “Mbeki had a style which almost hypnotised people” gives an insight of what really transpired in that meeting. Henceforth it was clear that Mbeki and SADC agenda will define and determine the course, in that vein any attempt to frustrate Mbeki’s objectives including later on, the crafting of the GPA and the IG in Zimbabwe were likely to fail.
Mugabe’s speech at the 63rd session of the UN Mugabe used the platform to let the World know that the GPA was an achievement for Africa’s conflict resolution mechanism when he said”... This was achieved entirely by African mediation, which is clear testimony that Africa is capable of solving her challenges and problems which are often the remnants of colonialism. African leaders, working together, were able to find an African solution to an African problem.” Here Mugabe is giving a thumb up not just to the solution or the GPA but the celebration of the process. This is an acknowledgment that the often criticised solidarity of African leaders can in a more pragmatic and practical way be used positively to resolve conflict on the continent. The same approach by the African leadership used for the Lockerbie situation against Libya once again produced result.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion the chapter managed to capture the role played by the key actors in the Zimbabwe crisis including that of Mbeki as the mediator in the crisis. The strength and weaknesses of the parties in Zimbabwe were highlighted so as to assess the balance of power dynamics that might have influenced the outcome of the negotiations. In that both at the domestic and international level ZANU-PF had an upper hand over the MDC formations and this explains why in the Inclusive Government ZANU-PF continues to dominate the two MDC formations. The MDC formations in particular the MDC-T’s lack of coherent strategy when dealing with SADC and the AU also worked in ZANU-PF’s favour. The West, in particular the USA and UK’s approach, mainly based on targeting Mugabe through the regime change agenda at the end did not only prove to be futile but also lacked vision given that the UK might have lost some ground to the countries such as China. The proponents of the regime change agenda failed dismally to capture the mood at that particular time both in SADC and the continent as a whole. The money and resources used on the regime change project, this paper argues could have been better used to support the SADC effort particularly on addressing the land issue. This would have gone a long way not only in assisting the white farmers but also in safeguarding the influence of these nations in Zimbabwe and the SADC region.
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

The GPA is essentially a product of a political process. The trajectory to the GPA has strong features of realism theory as highlighted by the power politics of various nations and the actions of the three main political parties in Zimbabwe. Internally it was clear from the onset that the three political parties were not keen to involve the civil society groups in their quest to entrenched their imprint in the levers of the state machinery. For ZANU-PF, the civil society movement and other non state actors were viewed broadly as part of the regime change machinery driven by the Western countries, particularly the UK and the USA. On the other hand the MDC formations appear to have been so fervent to move closer to the corridors of power and for that reason the broadening of the mediation process were not consistent with their political ambitions. The MDC-T further viewed itself as an activist organisation, the umbrella body of the civil society movement in Zimbabwe, and as such the party appears to have taken it for granted that its participation in the mediation was sufficient enough to cover the aspirations and interests of the broader civil society movement. For the smaller MDC the GPA provided a window of opportunity for the leadership to have a meaningful role over the state apparatus.

For Mbeki and his team, there was recognition after several meetings with the civil society groups that the civil society movement’s capturing of the dynamics in Zimbabwe as highlighted by their analyses, positions and proposals, were intrinsically inseparable from the MDC positions. The involvement of the civil society in a polarised environment such as the Zimbabwe case, where the lines between the civil society groups and the parties of their choice are blurred, necessitated a deep consideration as to extent necessary to involve these groups. The practical reality was that there was urgency both at the domestic and regional level to speedily normalise the situation in Zimbabwe, and as such the political parties, driven by their own power ambitions, ceased the opportunity to take advantage of the situation. So in essence the GPA is an outcome of the negotiations between SADC member states as represented by Mbeki and the Zimbabwe government as represented by the three parties in the Inclusive Government. Despite all the media frenzy in and outside Zimbabwe, it was gradually becoming clear as the talks progressed, that the national interests of both Zimbabwe and South Africa were going to take precedence over any other form of agenda and interests being it locally packaged or imported from outside the borders of the two countries.
For South Africa it was essentially in the national interests of that country to speedily resolve the crisis primarily to curb the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian conditions. In addition South Africa was under pressure from a sustained domestic and international media campaign against its foreign policy approach. Despite varying motives and the constant quest for state power by the three parties, as the parties in the negotiations started understating and warming to each other, the prospects of the GPA took a centre as a defining blue print to move Zimbabwe out of the crisis. None of the parties wanted to assume a tag of being insensitive to sufferings of the Zimbabwe people, who were at the receiving end of the economic crisis. This contextualisation gives a hint of how SADC and the AU through Mbeki, and the Zimbabwe government through the three parties’ signatory to the GPA were able whether consciously or otherwise, close ranks against the negative forces opposed to the GPA.

At the broader international level the battle lines were drawn. The powerful nations heavily and publicly invested in their regime change agenda aimed at overthrowing the Mugabe regime. On the other hand Mbeki, SADC and the AU were at their prime in relation to the African Renaissance project. In that context Zimbabwe became an arena and an incubator to showcase the continent’s capability and capacity to determine its own destiny. Other non state actors such as the media and NGOs became active participants rather than impartial voices of reason. The reporting by the private media both in and outside Zimbabwe took in the main an identical stance as the position of the MDC formations and Western countries mainly demonising Mugabe and those perceived as his supporters such Mbeki. At the domestic front, ZANU-PF had an appetite for a fight, as demonstrated by its use of the state media apparatus to mount a counter and an offensive propaganda war against the proponents of the regime change agenda, with the MDC, the UK and the USA becoming key targets. In that sense, the Zimbabwe crisis has exposed serious limitations in the professionalism and conduct of the media in general. To counter the USA and UK, Africa relied on China and Russia as strategic and anchor states particularly at UN Security Council. This mitigated the possibility of the full blown sanctions in line with the UK and the USA wishes.

Although often heavily criticised SADC with all its shortcomings is still by far the most stable region on the African continent. Its role in Zimbabwe has often been oversimplified by the media, arguably in line with the posture adopted by the Western nations. The historical records, show that the region as far back as 2000 has been actively involved in trying to assist Zimbabwe find its feet. The ad hoc nature of the mediation architecture of SADC is not a per
se limitation with devastating implication for the region’s conflict management and resolution efforts. The choice of countries or sitting Presidents whilst might have limitations such as the time allocated by these leaders to the mediation role, however it has other positives such as the mitigating factor for the insufficient resources required in the mediation processes. Countries such as South Africa therefore fill the gap by providing the funds and resources needed to resolve conflicts in the region. In a sense, the commitment of the region to finding a sustainable solution to Zimbabwe cannot be questioned. What is often criticised is the approach, or perhaps the failure of SADC to be relevant to certain views or aspirations. This paper argues that the often criticised quite diplomacy by Mbeki was not that quite per se, but rather the fundamental problem was that Mbeki and the South Africa African government views were not in sync with what the media and the West wanted to hear such as the public condemnation of Mugabe’s regime. It is however not in the interests of the region to fall into a trap of being “relevant”, Mbeki in particular as the mediator did not have that luxury of playing to the gallery, as it will be a case with any other mediator in a conflict situation.

In general even though heavily criticised, the AU and SADC in particular, has managed to use the Zimbabwe situation as a case study to demonstrate how Africa can manage its own problems. SADC owned the entire process, it’s capturing and analysis of the root problem in Zimbabwe that placed the land issue as the core problem has since been confirmed by initially hostile bodies such as the commercial farmers union in Zimbabwe. It is therefore critical that instead of pushing narrow interests and narratives the white minority communities in the region in particular in countries such as South Africa and Namibia must therefore learn the importance taking advantage of the existing conditions in their respective countries to foster a better cooperation and positive commitment to the land reform programmes. Zimbabwe should not just be a case study for the role played by the politicians but it provide a basis for re-introspection by all the citizens in the region, particularly the previously privileged white community because de-focusing the populace by only vilifying Mugabe and other liberation movements is not in the long-term interests of the continent and the region and certainly does not substitute the deficiencies in the land and wealth ownership patterns.

Political mediation processes just like any other arena for political display is inherently driven by the interest to capture state power and influence. Power is to politicians what profit represents to entrepreneurs. All the parties in the Zimbabwe conflict are well conversant with this observation otherwise there will be no conflict in the first place. ZANU-PF’s experience came in handy in the shaping of the GPA to suits its needs to leverage state power. Despite
losing the SADC and AU recognised elections, it still managed to use the advantage of incumbency to hold on to the Presidency and the influential state organs such as the media and the security apparatus. It also outclassed the MDC formations on the diplomatic front in particular within the SADC region and the African continent in general. Their experience also assisted in shaping Mbeki’s approach to the party’s favour particularly the sustained strategy of locating the Zimbabwe crisis within the whole framework of pan-African ideology which was in sync with Mbeki’s African renaissance project. Tsvangirai’s public attacks on Mbeki did not assist the MDC-T cause, the best approach was to use proxies, a strategy mastered by ZANU-PF which often uses influential figures and leaders to voice issues that are undiplomatic for Mugabe to raise in public. In that it can therefore be concluded that the weaknesses in the MDC formations further contributed to the overall strength of ZANU-PF. So it should not come as a surprise that in the IG period ZANU-PF continues dictate the terms, and this confirms some of the earlier fears of the MDC-T leadership that the party might suffer the same fate as ZAPU.

By the 2013, five years after the GPA was signed, it was now becoming clear that the West regime change agenda at least in its original format has failed as demonstrated by the zest of the Western government to reengage with Mugabe. In that sense the Zimbabwe case provide some window of opportunity to capture some of the tools to survive regime change agenda which amongst them may be highlighted as follows: Strong and sophisticated leader able to grasp both the domestic and international dynamics; Strong and effective bureaucracy loaded with the supporters and sympathisers of the party in charge; A clear but sophisticated strategy that isolate key issues and entities that are critical targets of the regime change agenda- in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF isolated the media, the security structures and the economic related issues; A coherent and effective international strategy, as part of its defence ZANU-PF identified, China and Russia as anchor states for their defence at the UN permanent Security level, whilst simultaneously and successfully placing the Zimbabwe solution seeking mechanisms within the power of the AU and SADC, consistent with their pan African strategy. ZANU-PF by so doing was fully aware and appreciative of the strategic importance of their neighbours in thwarting the regime change agenda and consequently a conclusion may be reached that SADC position and the role played by Mbeki was key in thwarting the regime change agenda.
In summary, there is little doubt that the mediation process in Zimbabwe given Mbeki’s strong personality would be isolated from the man’s own ambitions and vision. Equally important would be historical context that shaped the man and his ideology. The realities points that Mbeki’s vision for Africa, his ambitions to play a key role in the African renaissance project, and the historical role he played in the South African struggle, all these points indicate that at emotional level from the onset, Mbeki was likely going to be more sympathetic to ZANU-PF’s course. However there are also hard issues that Mbeki would not avoid in his analyses and capturing of the problem in Zimbabwe such as the stature of Mugabe in SADC and the AU; the sensitive nature of the land issue both in SADC and his own country, this critically required that Mbeki avoided taking stances that could compromise his African agenda programme such as supporting the West position that did not put more emphasis on the land issue, Mbeki knew that it was also in the interest of South Africa and his vision to have more consensus with the region rather than a unilateral and bullish approach. Thus a hybrid approach, captured by Mbeki’s personal preferences on one hand, and the political considerations necessary for a successful mediation process on the other hand, informed Mbeki’s mediation approach.

It is therefore in the interest of SADC to speedily establish conflict prevention, resolution and management structures so as to institutionalise the successes and failures of the body when dealing with issues confronting the region. The capturing of the successes will go a long way in instilling pride in the citizens of the region whilst the failures will assist in improving previous mistakes- otherwise
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