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Aims and Scope

The Strategic Review for Southern Africa is an accredited on-access journal listed in the IBSS index. It has since 1978 been a platform for strategic and political analyses of themes and socio-political developments that impact on or provide lessons for Southern Africa. As a multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary journal, the Strategic Review facilitates vigorous and enlightened debate among scholars, policy makers, practitioners, students and activists in order to contribute to the wider global discourse on changing strategic and political dynamics within and beyond nation states.

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Editorial

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Former national liberation movements (NLMs) in government deserve to be studied on their own and not simply treated as a component of a country's democracy. Wherever they have managed to seize political power and control over the state, they end up aptly documenting the "limits to liberation" (Melber 2002, Southall 2007, Blaauw and Zaire 2023). Once noted for their opposition to unfairness and oppression, they tend to mutate into authoritarian organisations that are obsessed with control and motivated by material privilege which together culminate in a predatory preoccupation with greed for the benefit of new elites. The newly established 'democratic' power structures, touted as a contrast to the settler-colonial structures of institutionalised racism, tend to do the opposite and benefit some at the expense of too many.

The realities of such emancipation have much in common with the structural violence and inequalities under the former white minority rule, believed—or at least claimed—to have been left behind. The right to self-determination in a sovereign state under majority rule and the formal, constitutionally enshrined equality of its population before the law is an indisputable achievement. It has decisively shifted the social struggles. But old attitudes and internalised concepts of power have not been eradicated. Anti-colonial slogans such as *A Luta Continua* (the struggle continues) have degenerated into "the looting continues". The "struggle narrative" occupies a particularly prominent place in the official patriotic history. It carries the claim that the sacrifices of the "liberators" entitle them to rewards. But such claims by former NLMs as governments overlook or ignore a serious flaw: War is no fertile ground for democracy, human rights, and a vibrant civil society. Liberation struggles liberate individuals and their mindsets only partly, at best. They often remain infected by toxic and predominantly violent elements that fuelled the struggle in the first place. Once in power, victims of such oppression are not immune to turning into perpetrators—violence does not build anything new. It takes one under its control and reproduces itself in those who were victimised (Xaso 2023).

The remaining active war veterans in Zimbabwe are a classic case of this vicious circle. For them politics is violence and it is a useful weapon for responding to civil

opposition politics. They define themselves as the guardians of the state with those who were not part of the chimurenga and who do not support them labelled as traitors (Maringira, Gukurume and Chitukutuku 2023). In the case of Zimbabwe, the role of the armed wing of ZANU, which took over firm control of the military, is a strong reminder of who controls this authoritarian democracy, as the forced exit from office by Robert Mugabe underlined (Tarugarira 2023, Dzimiri and Iroanya 2023).

The anti-colonial struggle ended when a new parasitic oligarchy occupying the commanding heights in party and state seized power with an authoritarian concept of political control, not that different from those they replaced. Beneficiaries of such state oligarchy reproduce essential elements of the erstwhile minority rule for their own gains. The socio-economic and political realities in Zimbabwe testify to this deplorable state of affairs with the average citizen dubbing their daily life as an "everyday crisis" (Helliker, Bhatasara and Chiwese 2022, Mangena, Nyambi and Ncube 2022). "Mugabeism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015) as a system persists despite the autocrat's departure (Mazorodze 2023). His disciples remain in control and reproduce what has been an integral part of policy in their ranks since independence (Moyo and Helliker 2023)—the deeply embedded corruption and self-enrichment has been disclosed in impressive detail in a documentary on the gold mafia (Al Jazeera 2023 and Muronzi 2023).

In light of such realities, the results of an Afrobarometer survey of April/May 2023 do not come as a surprise. According to their sample, 65 per cent of respondents perceive that the country is moving in the wrong direction, 69 per cent classified the economic situation as bad or very bad, and 62 per cent cite their own living conditions in this category (Mpako and Moyo-Nyede 2023). The catastrophic socioeconomic situation manifested yet again in an extreme inflation rate which, due to the dramatic decline in the currency exchange rate of the Zimbabwe Dollar, catapulted in June 2023 to 175 per cent (Munemo 2023).

Despite this persistent crisis, it was predicted that not much would change with the elections for Parliament, the Senate, and the President on 23 August 2023. Previous results proved that the repressive political culture would not allow for free and fair elections and violence and voter intimidation would secure the continued pseudo-legitimation of ZANU-PF (Kwashirai 2023). It, therefore, required no prophetic gift to predict the perpetuation of a status quo. The conduct and procedures did not conform with the electoral guidelines for SADC Member States and citizens based abroad were denied participation—the number of Zimbabweans in the diaspora (in most cases a euphemism for exile) is much higher than at any time during the liberation struggle.

An integral part of the reproduction of established political power structures is anything but an independent electoral commission and its chaotic voter registry, characterised by massive irregularities. Over the years the judicial system has been trimmed to conform with the government and there is a long history of dismissing all claims of electoral manipulation. Similarly, opposition by civil society is intimidated by harsh judgements casting doubt on the independence of courts (Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva 2023, Verheul 2021). The rule of law has been perverted into the law of the rulers with the *Maintenance of Peace and Order Act* of 2019 making it impossible for all parties but ZANU-PF to conduct a proper election campaign. The law was turned into a weapon against the opposition (Human Rights Watch 2023). If that were not enough, at the end of May 2023 Parliament adopted a so-called *Patriotic Bill* (officially: *Criminal Law Codification and Reform Amendment Act*). Signed into law in July 2023 by President Mnangagwa, it criminalises the deliberate violation of the sovereignty and the national interest of Zimbabwe. Its provisions are deliberately vague according to Amnesty International (2023), to allow perpetrators to be imprisoned for long sentences or in special cases even the death penalty. These severe repercussions fuelled greater fears of more repression (Sithole 2023), especially for those who, since the early 2000s, have been championing free speech and opinion—both of which have been systematically infringed and restricted (Melber 2004).

Despite increasing repression under an authoritarian regime, civil society forces have resisted being silenced (Chipato, Ncube and Dorman 2020, Matshaka 2022). Local voices continue to resist intimidation and express their disgust over the disrespect of ordinary people and their suffering. Novels and other fiction are prominent ways to voice anger and frustration and to illustrate the daily ordeal (Ncube 2023). This includes as another form of protest the recent publication of George Orwell's Animal Farm in Shona (Orwell 2023), translated in a collective effort by a dozen of local writers (Mushakavanhu 2023). But further restrictions are under way with the *Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Bill*, seeking to further gag local NGOs through total, arbitrary state control (Jeremani 2023).

Given this setting, reducing the operational strength an already weak opposition even further, the election results of 23 August 2023 was hardly a surprise. As observed drily by Onslow (2023): "the outcome of the latest round of Zimbabwe's 'electoral autocracy' was never in doubt". Expected by all but die-hard optimists, it confirmed the ZANU-PF parliamentary majority and re-elected President Mnangagwa in the first round (Mavengano and Chirongoma 2023), benefitting from the support of a litany

of electoral manipulations (Fabricius 2023). The fact that once again the strongest opposition party did not seek justice through legal claims was also no real surprise. Aligning the judicial system with the ZANU-PF party state prevented any chance of success. By passing on a hopeless legal battle, the opposition party seemingly prevented more bloodshed on the streets.

Moreover, critical comments by election observer missions was notable and uncharacteristically uniform. For the first time the SADC mission declared that the elections did not comply with the Zimbabwean Constitution, the country's electoral laws, and the SADC guidelines (Chikowore and Ncube 2023). And remarkably, only a few of the SADC Heads of State (among them South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia) dashed ahead with congratulations immediately after the announcement of the election results. More striking was the fact that some of these leaders did not attend the official swearing in ceremony of Mnangagwa—significant no shows were all three members of the SADC Troika. President Cyril Ramaphosa's attendance was downplayed as the ANC Secretary Fikile Mbalula explained, the party was in "delicate engagements" in Zimbabwe (Chikowore 2023).

These signs suggest a constellation, in which even the "inner circle" of the former NLMs as governments in the region move to a more careful distance from the previous inviolable friendship and alliance obligation with the ZANU-PF regime. Furthermore, the economic decline of the erstwhile "pearl of Africa" (to quote Julius Nyerere to Robert Mugabe at Zimbabwe's Independence ceremony in 1980) also burdens the country's neighbouring states: beyond the brain drain, hundreds of thousands of desperate people seek a meagre income elsewhere in the hope of securing a lifeline for themselves and for those left behind. This fuels conflicts amounting to xenophobia in the adjacent societies, adding to their own internal challenges. The criticism articulated by the SADC election observer mission seems to be indicative: without credible reforms ZANU-PF risks to out-manoeuvre itself (Moakes, Chichester and Osborne 2023, Matthiashe 2023). It seems to be a matter of time before the SADC States refuse to bear the consequences of subsidising an ailing regime in Harare, amounting to a permanent crisis.

As this seems to suggest, the 2023 elections in Zimbabwe had even more relevance for the wider sub-region. In 2024 South Africa and Namibia, both ruled by former NLMs in government—the ANC and SWAPO respectively—will face another test. In both cases, their dominance has been in decline, while their democracy—in contrast to Zimbabwe—seems to have remained largely intact. These elections will be a litmus test to the extent to which their democracies remain respected. This journal will continue as

an open forum for critical examinations, analyses, and debates related to policy shifts, and will also keep an eye on further developments in Zimbabwe. We therefore invite and welcome submissions on matters related to this issue and its wider context.

In This Issue

We take great satisfaction in presenting a series of articles by Zimbabwean scholars, each analysing a different aspect of their home country. Their contributions show the country's rich history of local knowledge creation and highlight that critical engagement is most certainly a matter of democracy, academic freedom, and a value-based analysis.

The integrity of Zimbabwe's 2023 election results was again questioned—but this time most notably among countries within the SADC who previously supported ZANU-PF. This indicates a clear shift from earlier positions where allegations of electoral manipulation were largely ignored. To appreciate this impact of this shift, the research articles in this issue provide a pertinent contextual analysis of past mediations that kept ZANU-PF in power, the roles that free movement within the region and foreign interests play in Zimbabwe's domestic politics, and the evolving composition of electorate and its—potential—impact.

As *Alexander Madanha Rusero* recalls, the regional mediation of 2008 perpetuated ZANU-PF's dominance, effectively rescuing the regime and granting it a four-year compromise under a Government of National Unity. The mediation effort also provided the operational space for ZANU-PF to reconsolidate its power and side-line the country's burgeoning opposition parties. The SADC was therefore complicit in the perpetuation of rule by undemocratic means.

Increased migration and its effect on Zimbabwe's politics and economy is another prominent example of shifting regional dynamics. Here *Clayton Hazwinei Vhumbunu's* article discusses the dimensions and implications of increased free movement within SADC. Vhumbunu highlights the absence of a genuine political will to promote the free movement of capital, labour, goods, and services. He concludes that the barriers and obstacles that hinder full implementation make such mobility wishful thinking.

There is also domestic contestation when it comes to the presence of companies representing foreign economic interests, not least in the extractive sector, who operate locally under the ZANU-PF government. Chinese mining investment in the Hwange District serves as a case study by *Sylvester Marumahoko, Trust Shayawabaya, Obey Ngorima and Norman Tafirenyika Nhede*. They assess the opportunities and risks of such

investments and the necessary compromise with local communities before presenting a model seeking to reconcile different interests in favour of sustainability.

As is the case with many African countries, the number of young people—born since the turn of the century—in Zimbabwe's electorate is growing. Dubbed "Ama 2000", *Octavious Chido Masunda* offers a closer look at their level of political participation and their voting behaviour in the 2023 elections. His empirical findings, based on local interviews, display a considerable degree of disillusionment and apathy, which he notes are signs of frustration with the country's policy and politicians. But this does not mean that the "Ama 2000" have turned their back on political matters. Rather, it signifies the dismissal of the kind of politics that dominates the country. It also prompts the need for further investigations into the replicability of this trend in the forthcoming elections in the neighbouring countries.

In his *Report, Gwinyai Taruvinga* explores another discrepancy between declared goals, commitments, and realities. His report takes stock of the trends in politicisation of local governance in Zimbabwe since the turn of the century. His analysis returns to the country focus of this issue and argues that meaningful devolution of powers by the central state and democracy are intrinsically intertwined.

Tariro Chivige and *Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp* present the results of their survey among a select group of Zimbabweans seeking to make a living in the Cape Town metropolitan area. The responses offer insights into the daily reality of many migrants, whose survival strategies rely on finding work in the neighbouring country as an integral part of regional realities. As their article shows, despite xenophobic sentiments based on the misconception that they are a liability, these migrants play a significant role in strengthening the South African economy.

The Policy Note by *Shingirai Mtero, Mandiedza Parichi and Diana Højlund Madsen* pays attention to the marginalisation of women in Zimbabwean politics. It is a necessary reminder that struggle for gender-based equality are not over and that the inroads made should never be taken for granted. We are grateful to the authors and the Nordic Africa Institute for granting permission to include this recent policy paper in our issue.

Nathan Mukoma adds a comment in our debate section, responding to the article on peace enforcement in the DRC published in issue no. 1/23. We are encouraged to see such debates and hope that more authors contribute to this section in future issues. *Mellissa Simbisai Mlambo*'s review of a recent publication dealing with transitional justice in Zimbabwe ties into the article by *Marumahoko* and his colleagues and *Taruvinga's* report completes this issue.

We hope that the variety of contributions and their different formats encourage more submissions like them and on subjects related to the thematic framework of our journal!

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SADC'S ZIMBABWE MEDIATION IN 2008 AS PRESERVATION OF ZANU PF POWER

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Abstract

The historic defeat of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in the March 2008 harmonised elections was followed by the unleashing of a violent campaign against the opposition in the 27 June 2008 presidential run-off. This triggered the mediation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The negotiated outcome was a Government of National Unity (GNU) comprising ZANU PF and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations between 2009 and 2013. As this paper argues, SADC was thereby largely complicit in the advancement of authoritarian consolidation of ZANU PF. Its deployment of foreign policy within SADC was mainly designed to secure the region's solidarity whilst advancing domestic interests aimed at cementing political survival. The region became a crucial focus of attention by the government, but how this was used to consolidate ZANU PF's hold on power is yet to be unpacked in full.

Key Words: SADC mediation; ZANU PF; MDC; authoritarianism; GNU; regime preservation

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1. Introduction

This article contends that the primary objective of the ruling elite is devoted to the pursuit of political survival, and in doing so, several tools are used both at the domestic and international levels. In Zimbabwe, the ruling elite systematically perceived the SADC as its survival shield of last resort. Therefore, there are two sides to be expanded upon, namely Zimbabwe's attitude towards the regional organisation and the SADC's approach to Zimbabwe.

Between 2000 and 2013, the SADC found itself increasingly tangled in the internal affairs of the Zimbabwean state, with direct involvement manifesting in March 2007 following the brutal police attack on opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai and a state-sanctioned crackdown on opposition leaders and civil society organisations (Tendi 2010). The SADC responded through an Extraordinary Summit in Dar es Salaam upon which South African President Thabo Mbeki was appointed the mediator of the Zimbabwean crisis (Ankomah 2007). Although the mediation was underpinned on several regional dynamics, the SADC became complicit in the preservation of the beleaguered ZANU PF regime that had electorally been defeated by the opposition.

Three aspects advance the argument of SADC complicity in entrenching ZANU PF authoritarianism and consolidation of its power. First, the SADC's attitude to external intervention did not correspond with the regional bloc's conspicuous silence on the state's human rights abuses and economic mismanagement in Zimbabwe. Second, the SADC demonstrated an unwillingness or inability to reprimand ZANU PF throughout the crises period in a genuine manner and several instances of flouting the GPA agreement by the ruling party. Third, the SADC exhibited unconditional support of ZANU PF on every matter, and this partisanship was to a greater extent amplified by the case of the SADC Tribunal.

2. SADC Complicity in advancing ZANU PF preservation

Between 2000 when the ruling ZANU PF rolled out the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and 2008 when the SADC brokered a GNU following the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008, the SADC maintained ZANU PF legitimacy by glossing over the flawed electoral process and brokering a power-sharing pact (Aeby 2018). After the military orchestrated a massive campaign of electoral violence in the post-March 2008 elections where Mugabe suffered defeat in the

first round, the SADC offered ZANU PF and Mugabe a lifeline even when the regional bloc could no longer accept the farcical electoral process and its outcome (Tendi 2010). The SADC gave credence to ZANU PF's anti-imperialist narrative, which was simply a cover for authoritarian tendencies.

The SADC chose to remain silent on the abuse of democratic and human rights, corruption, and mismanagement of the Zimbabwean economy and state in the interest of the Zimbabwean government rather than the population (Aeby 2019). The SADC did not try to balance their concerns about Western attempts to orchestrate regime change in African countries and reprimand ZANU PF for violating SADC principles on human rights and freedom. By glossing over the massive abuses by the Zimbabwean government, rather than upholding its founding principles, the SADC was complicit in sustaining and consolidating ZANU PF authoritarianism. The SADC chose to ignore irregularities in elections and then declare them "free and peaceful" but not free and fair (Aeby 2018). In so doing, the SADC subjugated human rights issues and democratisation in their whole framing of the Zimbabwean question to concerns about stability and external interventions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015).

The SADC was unable and unwilling to reprimand ZANU PF genuinely and openly throughout the crisis period. There were only a few incidents where the SADC stood its ground in calling ZANU PF to order, as was the case during the Livingstone Summit of 2011 where Mugabe and ZANU PF were reprimanded for flouting the GPA behind closed doors (Muleya 2011). There were several instances of letting ZANU PF float the GPA principles during the whole course of the GNU up until Mugabe frog-marched the country in another election in 2013, even without an electoral roadmap that the SADC had insisted to be put in place. The first round of elections had some semblance of being free and fair leading to the defeat of Mugabe and ZANU PF in 2008. However, the regional bloc could not stop Mugabe from conducting the botched one-person presidential run-off of 27 June, nor persuade him to step down to pave the way for a transitional government (Coltart 2016; Alao 2012; Bourne 2011).

The regional bloc's handling and reaction to the SADC Tribunal case broadly reflected the SADC's unconditional support to ZANU PF. The Tribunal was established in Article 16 of the Declaration and Treaty (1992, 14) and constituted the supreme judicial body of the SADC with the power to deal with all legal issues. The Tribunal was tasked to ensure adherence to policies and proper interpretations of the provisions of the SADC Treaty and its subsidiary instruments and adjudicated its disputes (Zenda 2010). In October 2007, a petition by a group of former white commercial farmers represented

by Michael Campbell contested the government's compulsory acquisition of their farms (Nathan 2011). The Tribunal found the Zimbabwean government guilty of breaching the SADC Treaty obligations.

In September 2009, the then Justice Minister, Patrick Chinamasa, announced Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Tribunal, alleging the Tribunal was improperly constituted as two-thirds of member states had not ratified its Protocol (Aeby 2018). This led to the shelving of the Tribunal in 2009, only to resurface with weaker powers in 2015 following a revised interpretation of the SADC Treaty and Protocols relating to the disputes between member states (SADC Summit 2012). The SADC's level of partisanship with ZANU PF was extreme, letting the party get away with violations of the regional bloc's protocols (Aeby 2018). Moreover, the Tribunal's demise exposed SADC member states' unwillingness to cede sovereign power to supranational structures, fearing that these supranational bodies might not follow the dictates of national governments (Nathan 2011). The repugnancy of the nationalist conception of sovereignty, regional governance norms, and conflict management allowed ZANU PF to fend off the regional bloc's demands to implement the GPA and SADC Summit resolutions during the mediation and facilitation phase (Nathan 2011).

The SADC's position on Zimbabwe was a deliberate stance to protect the ruling elite. Several leaders in the region strongly felt the need to render Mugabe and ZANU PF support with the firm belief that their removal would set a precedence applicable notably to other former liberation movements as governing parties (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). The SADC's sympathy to Mugabe was further accelerated by the lack of a moral claim to rein in ZANU PF and Mugabe (Tendi 2010). After all, other leaders and ruling parties have had similar undemocratic approaches and tendencies to those of ZANU PF and Mugabe in respect of rigging elections, repression, violence, as well as resource plunder, economic mismanagement, and corruption (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). Some other SADC member states could not accuse Mugabe of human rights abuses, the violation of the rule of law, and persecution of opposition leaders without risking being exposed to the same (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). Only Botswana under Khama and Zambia under Mwanawasa openly criticised ZANU PF and Mugabe; they knew they would not be accused of the same (Tendi 2010). Former liberation movements are characterised by paradoxical qualities, both emancipatory and authoritarian, such that it was difficult for any of them to call ZANU PF to order (Southall 2013). Their governance shares similar traits in intolerance, corruption, patronage, human rights abuses and forms of discrimination such that they have become postcolonial pathologies to democracy (Southall 2013; Melber 2003; Ranger

2004). Due to this lack of moral claim, several SADC states became convenient enablers of the ZANU PF regime.

ZANU PF's hard-line approach was well known throughout the SADC region. Without some degree of the complacency of a process acceptable to ZANU PF, the SADC mediation and facilitation of the Zimbabwean crises could not have succeeded. SADC states could particularly read the party's stances and several bold speeches proclaimed by Mugabe at international fora, causing them to handle Mugabe and ZANU PF with extreme caution (Southall 2013). Furthermore, Mbeki was quite alert to the military-party complex in Zimbabwe (Melber 2003).

> "Any dealings with Mugabe and ZANU PF had to be done gradually, delicately and cautiously, knowing that there were certain forces behind the scenes outside the presence of either Mugabe or his party" (Masunungure 2019).

The complicated role of the securocrats in the political affairs is well known, such that any form of mediation had to have privy information of such, notably the intricate relationship of ZANU PF and the military (Southall 2013). It can be argued that a firmer stance on Mugabe and ZANU PF could have provided a better mediation outcome in terms of the much-needed reforms the state required to address not only an anachronism to Zimbabwe's progress but the rest of the region. There is validity in asserting that the SADC deliberately suppressed all these pertinent issues in preference of a sustained authoritarian consolidation of ZANU PF power and ensured the party remained in control throughout the GNU period.

3. SADC mediation priorities and negotiating the crisis

Various approaches of the SADC in handling the Zimbabwean situation were pursuing similar underlying priorities of the regional bloc, namely: peace and stability, quiet diplomacy, and support for former liberation movements. The SADC saw Zimbabwe as playing a pivotal role in preserving the peace and stability of the region. Mbeki's idea of the African Renaissance was a firm conviction that Africa could do things for itself, hence the mantra of "African solutions to African problems" and therefore saw the Western interventions as inimical to African self-determination (Chan 2019). With the increased pressures for regime change in Zimbabwe, including the UK's contemplation of a military invasion as well as the imposition of sanctions, Mbeki and the SADC saw

the Western international community's move as a threat to the stability of the region as a whole, beginning with Zimbabwe (Tendi 2020). The view that the instability in Zimbabwe would translate to instability throughout the SADC region was prevalent during the crises period.

3.1 Peace and Stability Priorities

From its inception, the SADC developed a common developmental and political policy agenda: the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO). The SIPO was designed to create a peaceful environment to achieve its development agenda (Zondi 2017). The SIPO was to be achieved by protecting the region's people from threats arising from a breakdown of law and order, conflict, and aggression, as its first objective declares (Zondi 2017).

Four factors were influencing the choice of peace and stability priorities: avoiding a winner takes all scenario; preference of a strong statesman presiding over the Zimbabwean state; Mbeki's firm belief in the African Renaissance, which was opposed to Western pressure; and the SADC bloc's ideological desires to retain within its fold a leader with liberation credentials. These motives always took precedence over the pursuit of effective democracy and protection of human rights. From the onset, the main preoccupation was directed at stabilising the security situation in Zimbabwe and creating conditions for better future elections (Mutambudzi 2015). In his autobiography, Tsvangirai (2011) states that the SADC's preoccupation was in formulating a strategy to bring stability to Zimbabwe and the whole of the region, given the early signs of a potential spill-over of the crises to neighbouring states. It was peace and stability built on SADC principles of respect for national sovereignty and consensus approaches to problem-solving.

Mbeki's mediation before the signing of the GPA was motivated by the need to avoid a winner-takes-all scenario even if it meant that ZANU PF had lost the elections (Masunungure 2019). Mbeki believed that the feasibility of the MDC taking the reins of power was less likely. This idea was shared by most SADC states, who were convinced that it was not sustainable to do so, given the intricate relationship of the military and ZANU PF (Tendi 2010). The least-worst scenario was an arrangement where despite the MDC securing victory through an election, it would still have to concede to power-sharing demands with ZANU PF (Tendi 2010). This explains why ZANU PF became a dominant partner in the GNU, with Mugabe retaining executive powers as the head of state and government. A new post of prime minister was created

to accommodate Tsvangirai with limited executive power (Makumbe 2009). The GNU became a mechanism for accommodating the opposition within a political system that the ZANU PF dominated.

The peace and stability envisaged by SADC states required a strong person to ensure that Zimbabwe's internal problems did not spill over to the rest of the region. Mbeki and the SADC believed Mugabe could do that (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). This perception did not extend to the MDC and Tsvangirai. However, there is widespread literature attesting that Mbeki firmly believed in a post-Mugabe transition, of which ZANU PF would remain the most significant player in that political arrangement (Makumbe 2009). The Kariba House Boat Meeting convened between ZANU PF and Tsvangirai during the initial stages of the crisis reportedly agreed on Tsvangirai to become vice president, a move blocked by senior members of his party who felt the arrangement was only accommodating him (Chan 2010).

3.2 Liberation Movements Camaraderie

ZANU PF's liberation struggle credentials have had an indispensable role in shaping the mediation considerations of SADC in negotiating the Zimbabwean crisis. Despite the uneasy or non-existent relationships with ZANU PF during the liberation struggle, camaraderie among veteran nationalists and common liberation parties' ethos as vanguards of social justice and transformation translated into strong solidarity with ZANU PF (Boyd 1976; Bond 1998). This emanated mainly from the regional bloc preference and comfortability of a sister liberation movement remaining in power and the sharing of similar traits of mistrust and distrust prevalent during the liberation struggle making them cooperate at the party level more than they do at the government level (Adagombe 2003). SADC leaders genuinely believed removing a liberation movement from power would set an automatic precedent for the complete removal of all of them.

Amongst the liberation parties in power, there are complex histories of solidarities, camaraderie, and personal ties rooted in the tradition of an anti-colonial liberation struggle that continues to influence current approaches to security and conflict issues (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Enduring solidarity still dominates the SADC region among "sister liberation movements" and "brother presidents" at the helm of governments in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (Reed 1993; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011). It is on this basis that Adolfo (2009, 14) argues that

> The Liberation parties in the SADC region have … fought the bloody wars together as brothers/sisters and comrades for many years and even decades. It is essential to acknowledge that these SADC sister states are still very young, and the liberation wars they fought ended as recently as 20 years ago. Most people engaged in the liberation struggle – including the peasantry that felt the wrath of both colonial and liberation forces – are still alive. Therefore, this history still holds some significance for the people of the SADC region and cannot just be swept away. The liberation parties within SADC have continued to develop and strengthen their relationship.

Although the SADC region is not a homogeneous entity, it is crucial to note that liberation struggle credentials owe some states their status in the bloc (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). This explains why it has been difficult for the former liberation movements to welcome and embrace the MDC as a legitimate alternative to ZANU PF (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). The perceived or suspected Western regime change strategy heightened the sensitivities of these African actors. It led to their low opinion of opposition parties in their respective states, genuinely seeing them as agents of this grand strategy (Raftopolous 2010).

As an outgrowth of the liberation struggles and initiative of liberation movements in power, the SADC sought to lead a new struggle for economic justice and development, necessitating the relaunch of the nationalist ideology, emphasising the defense of national sovereignty and the resolution of the national question (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). ZANU PF's push for land reform, couched in its rhetoric of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and pan-Africanism, resonated with the fellow former liberation movements (Adagombe 2003). Zimbabwe became a site for contestations between decolonisation and the claims of good governance, human rights, and democracy (Ranger 2003). Hence, the liberal-democratic principles enshrined in the SADC's peace and security policies emerged as second fiddle to anti-imperialism, stability, and regime solidarity (Aeby 2018). It therefore suffices to state that the mindset of the political elites, hailing from the former liberation movements, operates like Leninist vanguard parties, a clique of elites who have developed a sense of entitlement to power and privilege such that a potential loss of power is equated to recolonisation (Alao 2012). Except for South Africa and Namibia, other liberation parties in power have a feeble commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and good governance (Matlosa 2004).

Liberation movements were thus complicit in allowing the erosion of democracy in Zimbabwe while prioritising support for the survival of the ruling elite. This "domestic imperative of political survival underpinned by political solidarity" from other parties with "a shared, fortunate experience of national liberation struggles against white settler colonialism" (Bratton and Penar 2018, 41) was pivotal in the perseveration of ZANU PF. Melber (2003) suggests the tag of being a liberation party within the SADC region has over the years constructed a sustained identity that is underpinned by the politics of resistance to perceived threats of regime change, the notions of "African solutions to African problems", as well as a vigorous defence of vanguard governments (Barner and Taylor 2005; Alao 2012). This perspective has generated a lasting cohesion among the dominant parties in power and a sort of insurance against losing power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). These parties are skilful in rallying ideological solidarity among sister parties to sustain and ensure regime survival (Levitsky and Way 2010). The same parties have paid lip service to the need to overcome the democracy deficit in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by their endorsement of flawed elections in Zimbabwe between 2002 and 2013.

The idea of mistrust and possibilities of neo-colonial and neo-imperial encroachment persists among liberation movements explaining why they rarely issue statements or make resolutions publicly in the aftermath of their summits or forums (Bischoff 2002; Bourne 2011). Any political party without liberation credentials risks being labelled stooges of Western imperialism. For this reason, throughout the entire GNU period, the MDC failed to penetrate the SADC liberation movements to garner support and rally sympathy ahead of ZANU PF (Barner and Taylor 2005). Discourses of anti-imperialism, the lack of liberation credentials, links to Western powers, and questionable governing fitness made it hard for the MDC to dispel the imperialist proxy image propagated by ZANU PF and the liberation parties in the region to accept the MDC as an alternative (Bourne 2011). The SADC region respects the vanguard parties, informed by history, historical friendship, and solidarity. It is an essential factor in a logical explanation of Mbeki's facilitation and reasons for morphing what became known as quiet diplomacy.

4. Quiet Diplomacy and Thabo Mbeki's mediation

Efforts by Mbeki in his mediation came to be known as quiet diplomacy. His adherence to quiet diplomacy effectively served the purposes of authoritarian consolidation of power by ZANU PF. Although quiet diplomacy received stern criticism for its

ineffectiveness in dealing with ZANU PF and Mugabe, it was workable in handling the mediation, especially in dealing with ZANU PF's hard line stance. Whereas ZANU PF and Mugabe successfully manipulated quiet diplomacy for their selfish gains, its intended outcomes were partially achieved by dragging it to the negotiating table and subsequently agreeing to share power during the GNU.

The concept of quiet diplomacy was initially seen as a form of African containment, representing methods used either to stop conflicts from spiralling out of control, reversing their effects, or halting them through peaceful settlement of disputes (Landsberg 2016). Quiet diplomacy was South Africa's approach since Mandela (Landsberg 2016). It was primarily premised on six pillars, namely: personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state with little or no media involvement; limited action or even inaction; calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere; constructive engagement aimed at solving problems as quiet as possible; and conduct of diplomacy in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts (Graham 2006). Although Mbeki was involved in the Zimbabwean crisis as early as 2002, he was formally appointed an SADC mediator in 2007 (Landsberg 2016). There was a genuine urge by the South African government to deploy a containment strategy in Zimbabwe, given the growing immigration of Zimbabweans fleeing an imploding economy (Chitiyo and Kibble 2014). Parastatals like Eskom and Sasol lost millions in unpaid fuel and electricity supply bills (Chitiyo and Kibble 2014). The deporting of illegal immigrants was costly, and social migration pressures sparked periodic outbreaks of xenophobic violence against foreign workers (McKinley 2004). South Africa and Mbeki's government came under intense internal and external pressure to address the Zimbabwean situation (Hugh 2009).

Mbeki's efforts sought to address the Zimbabwean situation by solving the legitimacy crisis of the ZANU PF-led government, which mainly evolved from disputed elections (Clemens and Moss 2005). This explains why Mbeki's mediation role focused on dialogue instead of confrontation to resolve the political stalemate, including the need to ensure a conducive environment that would deliver a credible poll in any future elections (Mutambudzi 2015).

Mbeki resisted pressure from Britain and the US that wanted the SADC and the AU to act powerfully on Zimbabwe (Coltart 2008). He aimed to ensure Africa took charge of her destiny. By the time of intense mediation of the Zimbabwean crises, Mbeki had assumed a leading role in the process of building African institutions anchored on his intellectual and ideological beliefs (Coltart 2016; Chan 2010). This manifested in

creating institutions such as the AU transformation from the OAU, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and its African Peer Review Mechanism—APRM (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). Mbeki became involved in the resurgence of the anti-imperialist posture, which Mugabe later perfected, adding his anti-Western rhetoric (Compagnon 2011).

Moreover, Mbeki was quite conscious of ZANU PF's hardliner stance and Mugabe's unilateral approach. He was, therefore, convinced that only an approach premised on the acknowledgement of Zimbabwe's unjustified colonial legacies would bring Mugabe and ZANU PF to the negotiation table. This strategy enabled Mbeki to facilitate a deal between Mugabe and Tsvangirai.

> Mbeki could read, particularly on Mugabe, because he was a unilateralist on issues of foreign policy. You look at Mugabe's bold speeches at the UN General Assembly and the standing ovations he received. Mbeki was thus very cautious in dealing and handling Mugabe so that Mugabe and ZANU PF were always comfortable having him as mediator. As a result, Mbeki moved very gradually and delicately, and frankly until he secured a deal between Mugabe and Tsvangirai (Masunungure 2019).

Mbeki's ideological sympathy had an appeal to ZANU PF. Imperialist designs targeted African states perceived as deviants to Western liberal norms (Scoones, et al. 2010). Zimbabwe was among these states. This conveniently credited ZANU PF's repeated attempts to project the Zimbabwean crises as a case of anti-imperialism and Pan-Africanism (Phimister and Raftopolous 2004). This rhetorical shield resulted in the unquestioned support of Mbeki, which became crucial for the survival of Mugabe's regime (Tendi 2010).

Moreover, the irreparable damage by the British government's denial of any responsibilities to the post-colonial historical injustices regarding Zimbabwe's land question genuinely cultivated Mbeki's active sympathy to ZANU PF's cause (Bowden 2001; Moore 2003). Blair made it no secret that Britain would play a leading role in reordering the global order to bring the values of democracy and freedom to people around the world (Williams 2001). Nothing could be envisaged by a British prime minister whose disingenuous pursuit of moral certainty would become a case of mounting concern (Cooper 2003; Phimister and Raftopolous 2004). The Mbeki

government's quiet diplomacy was a form of appeasement to ZANU PF and Mugabe but, more importantly, designed to wade off Western pressure to meddle in the affairs of an independent African state (Landsberg 2016).

In a discussion document, Mbeki revealed that his mediation in the Zimbabwean crises was to "ensure that Zimbabwe does not end up in a situation of isolation confronted by an array of international forces it cannot defeat" (Mbeki 2001, 56). He was very critical of any attempts and very alert of the EU, the UK, and the US attempts to influence the mediation process of the Zimbabwean crises, as was the case with the pressure exerted by diplomats in Pretoria and Harare (Malunga 2020). Mbeki also prevented the feasibility of neo-liberal interventionism in the region and Zimbabwe as was the template in use and implemented under disguised UN Resolutions and the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (Zhangazha 2019). As he diagnosed:

> Many of the Western countries have turned against Zimbabwe, including the Scandinavian countries. Support in Africa is lukewarm and hesitant, while countries in Southern Africa fear the consequences of a deeper crisis in Zimbabwe. Globally it is perceived a negative factor in the context of the development of Southern Africa and Africa (Mbeki 2001, 3).

Mbeki was convinced that ZANU PF as the party of the revolution was better placed in addressing the challenges confronting all sectors of the Zimbabwean society, given its status as a vanguard party. Several scholars assert that Mbeki's mediation was partisan in supporting and defending ZANU PF (Tsvangirai 2004; Mazarire 2013; Landsberg 2016; Raftopolous 2013; Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004). Whilst that could have been the case, evidence suggests that Mbeki was mainly interested in Zimbabwe's stability. An unstable Zimbabwe was bad for the whole region. In this reading, the SADC and Mbeki were not necessarily interested in preserving ZANU PF but in getting stability in Zimbabwe for the region's sake. Thus, Mbeki noted:

> The party must admit to itself that, in time, it has lost contact with the masses. It has failed to educate and mobilise the masses of the people to remain conscious actors of the national democratic revolution and the success of a process of social transformation that serves the interest of the people as a whole. As members of the party of revolution translated into access to positions of employment, resources, and authority, so did the

> party's structures begin to atrophy and wither away as representatives of the popular will (Mbeki 2001, 17-18).

The frankness demonstrated could not have emanated from a mediator whose underlying motives were only securing the preservation of a ZANU PF regime nor South African economic interests. The historical affinities help explain Mbeki's approach. More importantly, it is also critical to note that quiet diplomacy was regionally preferred and not confined to South Africa alone (Van Wyk 2002; Stremlau 2003).

5. SADC's Collective Diplomatic Approach

In the SADC region, states have pursued a foreign policy to fulfil their expectations of fulfilling the regional desires to attain socio-economic development (Schoeman and Alden 2003). SADC diplomacy can be defined as the set of protocols, declarations, charters, and memoranda of understanding that the regional bloc member states have adopted in their quest to address and manage relations beyond their collective borders (Notshulwana 2015). Article 4 of the SADC Treaty emphasises "sovereign equality of all member states; solidarity, peace and security; human rights democracy and the rule of law, equity, gender balance and cultural benefit and peaceful settlement of disputes" (SADC Treaty 1992). The SADC has also remained consistent with the spirit of pan-Africanism and many of the several principles developed under the OAU and the AU (Vale and Barrett 2009).

SADC states' strict adherence to the doctrine of multilateralism influenced Mbeki's mediation on the Zimbabwean crises, which made it easily predictable what the outcomes could be. The SADC prioritised the founding values of the Front Line States necessitating the whole regional bloc not to tolerate infiltration or decisive foreign forces (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). The sacrosanct values regarding political solidarity against foreign domination of any kind primarily determined the mediation process (Shai and Zondi 2020). Mbeki's mediation was quite alert to these values. He was empathetic in avoiding an image of South Africa as a state quickly submitting to Western interests. Moreover, there was already widespread criticism of the ANC's failure to rectify the legacies of apartheid in terms of the failure by blacks to own the economic means of production. Article 11:2 of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security restrains the bloc from military intervention activities upon member states. It emphasises sovereignty issues, including related principles of territorial integrity and

non-interference in domestic affairs of member states and advocates for the peaceful resolution of disputes through instruments such as "mediation, conciliation, negotiation and arbitration" (Adolfo 2009, 11). Informed by these protocols, Mbeki, under the auspices of the SADC bloc, took a stand that, as a region, they should not agree to the option of military invasions.

In addition to the concept of multilateralism, the SADC's diplomacy is premised on a notion of the region as some form of common and collective security platform (Barner and Taylor 2001). This means collective regime security rather than comprehensive collective security (Akokpari 2001; Chimanikire 2001). The SADC closes ranks on regional issues where there is a possibility of external intervention. There is no closing of ranks where citizens' livelihoods are threatened by hunger, poverty, despair, and natural disaster because the collectiveness is state-centric rather than holistic (Taylor and Williams 2004). The SADC viewed Zimbabwe's crisis as a regional and pan-African fight for stability and sovereignty. This enabled Mugabe to hold to his image as a fighter against neo-colonialism, for African Renaissance, and self-determination. Mugabe's rhetoric further buttressed this perception by strongly championing regional industrialisation, economic indigenisation, land reform, and economic integration (Alden and Alves 2008). Thus, the image of Mugabe at the SADC level was one of a champion of solid regioness (Badza 2008; Alden and Alves 2008).

Despite numerous reports of the worsening situation in Zimbabwe and the emigration of her people, Mbeki and the majority of SADC leaders consistently avoided outright rebuke of Mugabe and ZANU PF. Instead, regional leaders preferred that "criticism of each other be confined within the region and not made in forums or outside the region or in a public manner that could be seen as opposing a fellow Southern African State" (Schoeman 2006, 252). The SADC's collective diplomatic approach on Zimbabwe was shaped by Mugabe's regional leadership stature and role as Zimbabwe's chief foreign policy articulator. Throughout his career, Mugabe gained both admiration and criticism due to his strong stances on anti-colonial and pan-Africanist posture (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). This had a bearing on influencing what the SADC thought was appropriate in handling the Zimbabwean crises (Stremlau 2003). The SADC's diplomatic approach, especially of the first-generation leaders of independence, is informed mainly by the mutual respect of the region's elder statesmen, especially those hailing from the liberation tradition. It was perceived un-African to chastise an elder statesman in public (Nyakudya 2013).

Mugabe's tact proved helpful in muting all critiques at the regional summit level, even when he was criticised openly elsewhere (Nyakudya and Jakarasi 2015). Zambian

presidents Levy Mwanawasa and Rupiya Banda, Botswana's president Ian Sereste Khama, and Malawian president Joyce Banda, who were all critics of Mugabe, became muted at summits attended by Mugabe and, in some instances, even defended Zimbabwe's position, especially with regard to sanctions (Nyakudya and Jakarasi 2015). Mugabe's recognised authority was one of the most critical variables in influencing the SADC's adoption of Mbeki's quiet diplomacy as a desirable mediation approach (Taylor 2002). Leadership is critical in determining foreign policy outcomes (Preston 2010; Pyter 1963; Pye 1962). Leadership in the context of foreign policy is the ability to persuade others to comply voluntarily with one's wishes (Cartwright 1983). The central ideas of Mugabe and regional clout, collectively referred to as Mugabeism, remained crucial in shaping the SADC's response and handling of the Zimbabwean crisis. In addition, Mugabeism's central character deployed through a pan-African redemptive ideology made it difficult to criticise Mugabe at the SADC level (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009; Mpofu and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019).

Mugabe was thus strategically positioned as the leader of leaders at the regional level. No one could convince him, and each leader visiting Zimbabwe would leave replicating Mugabe's rhetoric (Chimanikire 2019). Mugabe successfully convinced the region that the MDC posed a threat to ZANU PF and Zimbabwe and the SADC region as Western powers' Trojan horse and entry point for efforts to dislodge the former liberation movements from power (Tendi 2010). This thinking was very present in South Africa, where reports of a third force working towards the dislodging of the ANC government from power made the round (Mahoso 2019). Moreover, Mugabe's erstwhile role in demanding the unconditional end to apartheid as well as an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia paid dividends among those states reciprocating the gesture of solidarity at a time when Mugabe and ZANU PF were facing the severe threat of removal from power (Tendi 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011). This conditioned the SADC region's collective consensus regarding the handling of the Zimbabwean crises. Mugabe's ideas, views, and personality, as well as experience as an African nationalist and being one of the core leaders of the liberation struggle coupled with his keen interest in foreign policy and diplomacy positioned him as the chief of Zimbabwe's foreign policy (Chan and Patel 2006). It is on this basis that the SADC's handling of the Zimbabwean crisis emanated as one based on consent and respect as opposed to confrontation and coercion.

6. Conclusion

SADC mediation priorities and its negotiation of the Zimbabwean crises enabled ZANU PF's consolidation of power. Its approach rendered the SADC complicit in enabling ZANU PF's authoritarian consolidation mainly due to the regional bloc's unwillingness or inability to reprimand Mugabe and ZANU PF during the whole course of the Zimbabwean crisis. Mugabe and ZANU PF's arrogance and utter contempt of the whole SADC mediation and facilitation processes was laid bare such that by the time of conducting harmonised elections in 2013, the SADC had not done much in compelling ZANU PF and Mugabe to comply with the dictates of the GPA. The manifestations of peace and stability considerations ahead of democratisation and institutional reforms capable of delivering a free and fair election became apparent following the military ousting of Mugabe in 2017. The SADC's conspicuous silence to condemn the coup and its quick move to accept Mnangagwa as the new president speaks volumes to a regional bloc that was willing to sustain ZANU PF authoritarian consolidation of power for the sake of the SADC's designs of peace and stability.

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THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IN THE SADC: REFLECTING ON THE EXPERIENCES, DILEMMAS, AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states committed under Article 5(2) (d) of the SADC Treaty to develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of the obstacles to the free movement of capital, labour, goods, and services. The 2005 SADC Protocol on the Movement of People was celebrated as a giant step towards the realisation of the regional integration objective of building the SADC into a regional community that is fully integrated where citizens enjoy freedom of movement across regional borders. Whilst substantial efforts have been invested in developing various legal and policy frameworks to open up borders for the free movement of people within the SADC, thirty (30) years since the formation of the SADC in April 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), the region is facing serious challenges relating to the free movement of people, migration, and labour movement. In reality, SADC member states' governments have been confronted with serious feasibility challenges, complexities, risks, and dilemmas as they attempt to implement commitments made towards the free movement of people in the region, with political, security, economic, strategic, and technical factors often cited as obstacles. This paper sought to critically reflect on the feasibility aspects, policy dilemmas at member state level, as well as strategic considerations that stand in the way of free movement of people in the SADC. The focus was on examining possibilities, capacities, and prospects

of SADC member states (in their collectivity and individuality) in addressing the underlying, structural, and operational obstacles that are impeding the free movement of people in the region. Secondary data sources are used for analysis, and the concept of *free movement of people/migration* provides a conceptual lens for analysis. Findings are key in providing perspectives on how SADC member states may need to collectively address the fundamental questions and issues that facilitate the free movement of people in the region.

Keywords: free movement of people, regional integration, SADC

1. Introduction

The SADC regional integration agenda is aligned to the African regional integration agenda and imperative. The SADC policy and legal framework on the free movement of people, mainly comprising of provisions of Article 5(2) of the SADC Treaty of 1992 (Article 5), the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons of 2005, the SADC Protocol on Trade of 1996, the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services of 2012, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020–2030), the SADC Vision 2050 are all constructively aligned to the African Union's legal and policy instruments that were adopted to guide member states towards facilitating the free movement of people on the continent and within their respective sub-regions. Whilst there is general policy consensus on the ideal need and desirability to allow the free movement of people in order to facilitate trade, labour circulation, and investments in the SADC, the empirical reality is that thirty (30) years since the formation of the SADC in April 1980, the region is facing serious challenges relating to the free movement of people, migration, and labour movement. SADC member states (especially those that are relatively stable economically, socially, and politically) have been confronted with serious feasibility challenges, complexities, risks, and dilemmas as they attempt to implement commitments made towards the free movement of people in the region, with political, security, social, economic, and strategic interests and considerations, as well as technical factors often cited as obstacles. This paper examines the efforts made by the SADC in opening its borders to facilitate the free movement of people in the region. It further reflects on the empirical feasibility of allowing the free movement of people in the SADC and analyses the possible dilemmas and strategic considerations that confront SADC member states in adopting

and implementing the free movement of people concept.

Organisationally, the second section is dedicated to conceptual framing, focusing mainly on the concept of 'free movement of people'. The third section presents a brief analysis of the existing policy and legal framework that governs the movement of people across borders within the region. An examination of the progress made in facilitating free movement of people and an analytical discussion of the complexities and dilemmas in free movement of people is presented in the third section. The last section presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. This paper makes use of a miscellany of secondary data sources in the form of SADC reports, SADC member states policies and laws, books, journal articles, publications from national and international organisations, newspapers, and other relevant material.

2. Conceptual Frames: The Concept of 'Free Movement of People' in Regional Integration

The African Union (AU) Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Rights of Establishment (2018, 5) defines free movement of people as follows:

> "Free movement of persons means the right of nationals of a Member State to enter, move freely, and reside in another Member State in accordance with the laws of the host Member State and to exit the host Member State in accordance with the laws and procedures for exiting that Member State".

Thus the concept of free movement of people has generally been used in reference to mobility rights or the human right that every individual possesses to travel from one place to the other within the territory of a country, as well as the right to leave a country and return to it. Article 13 (1) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 constitutes a solid foundation of free movement rights under international law. The provision confers people with the right to freedom of movement within their state borders whilst Article 13 (2) provides that "[e]veryone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (United Nations, 1948). In a similar fashion, Article 12 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that "[e]veryone shall be free to leave any country, including his own" (United Nations 1966, 176).

It has to be stated here, however, that the right to freedom of movement is not absolute or unfettered as countries have rights to limit the freedom of people to move into their territories. Exceptions under which the freedom of movement may be curtailed by states are provided for under Article 12 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that restrictions on the freedom of movement may be effected "to protect national security (ordre public), public health, or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others" (*see* United Nations 1966, 176). In international law, therefore, there is scope and latitude in statutes, protocols and treaties for states to prohibit people from entering into their territories on the basis of national laws designed to protect their national security, public order, or public health. This has oftentimes created and raised arguments of state sovereignty and territorial integrity (provided for under Article 2 of the United Nations Charter) as a political defence and justification whenever some governments are accused of restricting or controlling the entry of migrants into their territories or violating the rights of migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers (Dauvergne 2004; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000). However, states have to understand that when they make commitments to allow the free movement of people and labour within the framework of regional integration, they cede part of their sovereignty—through the process of sovereignty re-configuration—for the 'common good' of regional development, regionalism, regionalisation, and globalisation (Vhumbunu 2019). Nevertheless, in reality, it is difficult to escape the temptations and tendencies of populism, public opinion pressures, and the usual argument that 'governments are obligated to do the best for their own citizens' each time governments are reminded to open borders and facilitate the free movement of people.

Within the context of regional integration, the free movement of people is usually considered as one of the 'four freedoms' that facilitate deeper and wider integration. The 'four freedoms', that constitute the fundamental pillars in any linear model of economic integration as adopted by the European Union, are *free movement of people, free movement of goods, free movement of services, and free movement of capital.* It is these freedoms that are enablers of, and stepping stones towards, trade and market integration, macro-economic policy convergence, and harmonisation of sectoral policies as states progress through the linear model of economic integration stages of a preferential trade area (PTA), free trade area (FTA), customs union (CU), common market (CM), economic and monetary union (EMU), and political union (PU) (*see* Balassa, 1994; Vhumbunu, 2019). Moreover, the free movement of people is considered a critical component of the three factors of production in economics (natural resources, human resources, and capital).

Even within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade regulatory architecture, the free movement of people is essential for the realisation of the four modes of service supply provided by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of 1995, especially mode four (*presence of natural persons*) which entails the movement of labour to supply services in a foreign market. Through the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty of June 1991), the AU member states target is that by the end of 2023 there should be free movement of people and effective rights of residence and establishment across Africa so as to achieve the African Economic Community by 2028. Notwithstanding the desirability of this milestone to achieve greater continental integration, the consideration of economic, social, political, security and strategic factors, benefits, merits, and demerits makes African countries and RECs to adopt different approaches in regulating the movement of people within their regions. This has slowed the attainment of free movement of people and opening of borders in most regional integration schemes including the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Arab League (AL), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Central American Integration System (SICA) (*see* Sanchez-Alonzo 2019; De Haas et al. 2019; Kaur 2018).

There is always a heated debate in academic and policy circles with regard to the empirical socio-economic benefits of free movement of people in host states. Several empirical studies have mixed results and findings, which leaves the empirical question of whether the free movement of people benefits economies or not difficult to answer conclusively. While the benefits of free movement of people have often been argued to outweigh the real and potential benefits derived from it (*see* African Union 2017, 1), countries are often mindful of the reality that migrants may arrive and settle within their territories which may ultimately exert pressure on the host states' capacity to deliver social services, increase competition on scarce resources, worsen unemployment, widen inequalities, and also pose threats to peace and security.

Some empirical studies have found that countries and regions that allow for the free movement of people have often reaped vast socio-economic benefits in return through increasing the national workforce, addressing skills gaps and human capital development, labour market flexibility, taxes and other social contributions, and may bring innovative ideas and new ICT initiatives. In *Is Migration Good for the Economy?* the OECD (2014) reports that in countries such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, labour migration continue to play an important role in national development. In the EU, migrant labour has been credited for addressing imbalances on the labour market, contributing taxes and other

social contributions to host states, with migrants in Switzerland and Luxembourg providing a net benefit of around two percent of the GDP to the national fiscus (OECD 2014, 2). However, studies by Dustmann et al. (2008) have concluded that whilst migrant labour positively impact on public finances in general, it tends to decrease wages and the employment prospects for certain groups, particularly the low-skilled. With specific reference to the EU, Benton and Petrovic (2013), on the other hand, argue intra-EU mobility may have negative consequences because member states' governments have the inability to control the skill level of inflows into particular areas which increases the risk of influx of workers competing for available low-skilled jobs. This is the reality in most African RECs. For instance, even though South Africa has a Critical Skills List which guides the issuance of visas to migrant labour to address the skills gap needed to achieve the objectives of national strategic development programmes such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and Industrial Policy Action (IPAP) the government admittedly struggles to control the influx of migrants into low-skilled menial jobs. In terms of the common argument that free movement of people burden public service delivery in host states, Benton and Petrovic's (2013, 19) study on the EU has revealed that those EU migrants who have resided in the UK long enough to be eligible for public services such as healthcare benefits are net contributors to the national fiscus and low users of public services. Perhaps this is why the European Union (EU) countries usually experience problems in reconciling the right to free movement of people and the policy objectives of fighting poverty and social exclusion (Verschueren, 2015).

Even outside the EU in other regional integration schemes in North America, Latin America, Asia, Pacific, and the Middle East, there appears to be anti-free movement of people waves. When Donald John Trump was the president of the United States, he proposed policies such as the construction of the US-Mexico Border Wall, more border patrols, and stricter deportation policies, all to prevent migrants from "taking [US] jobs", including the enactment of the *Build the Wall, Enforce the Law Act* of 2018 which amended the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act* of 1996 (*see* United States Government, 2018). In ASEAN, the ASEAN Economic Community's (AEC) calls for free movement of people have continued to exclude the movement of low or lower-skilled workers despite the fact that 87 per cent of intra-ASEAN migrants are either low-skilled or unskilled workers (Olivier, 2018). This is because, whilst migrants address labour shortages and facilitate skills upgrading, the free movement of people in ASEAN is considered to exacerbate the challenges

posed by migrants who are mostly undocumented, with 60 per cent of intra-ASEAN migrants being informally employed (Olivier, 2018).

Within the context of African regional integration, the free movement of people (together with that of capital, goods, and services) is understood to be fundamental in promoting regional integration, intra-African trade and investment, tourism facilitation, pan-Africanism, free circulation of ideas, education and research, labour mobility, and increase remittances (*see* Vhumbunu and Rudigi 2020; Okunade and Ogunnubi 2021; Adepoju 2002; Kayizzi-Mugerwa et al. 2014). With regard to remittances, for instance, sub-Saharan African countries received US$42 billion in remittances in 2020, although this remains lower than other regions such as South Asia (US$147 billion), East Asia and Pacific (US$136 billion), Latin America and the Caribbean (US$103 billion), Middle East and North Africa (US$56 billion), and Europe and Central Asia (US$56 billion), for the same year (World Bank 2021). Some African countries receive huge remittances annually whose transformational impact cannot be underestimated. In 2019, for example, Nigeria received remittances amounting to US$23.8 billion, and Ghana received US$3.5 billion, Kenya US$2.8 billion, and Senegal US$2.5 billion (Knomad 2022).

Some benefits also accrue in other economic sectors through free movement of people. In Seychelles the abolition of visas for African nationals is reported to have resulted in a seven per cent annual growth in tourism between 2009 and 2014 (African Development Bank 2016). After the relaxation of its visa requirements, Rwanda also experienced a 22 per cent increase in African travelers into the country in 2013, with the country's cross-border trade with Kenya and Uganda surging by 50 percent (African Development Bank 2016). However, African countries—especially those that are relatively stable economically and politically—have tended to consistently approach the regional agenda of free movement of people with measured caution and reservations. They fear that acceding to free movement of people will be accompanied by the uncontrollable influx of citizens (especially undocumented or illegal migrants) from geographically contiguous states in search of economic opportunities and 'welfare tourism'/'benefit tourism' which would compromise their national economic, social, and political security whilst also pressuring their public service delivery capacities. In the end there is 'criminalisation of migrants' and xenophobic tendencies (Atak and Simeon 2018; Akinola and Klimowich 2018).

The issuance of entry visas, work permits, residence permits and other relevant permits, visas and passes for free intra-African travel is a nightmare in most countries

despite the implementation of the AfCFTA and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) initiative (*see* Hirsch 2022; Olasoji 2022). In addition to this, one of the Agenda 2063 flagship projects is *The African Passport and Free Movement of People* whose aim is to remove restrictions for Africans to travel, work, and reside across their own continent. Domestication of regional and continental commitments, however, remains a challenge. For instance, the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons has been signed by 33 member states, but up to now only four countries have ratified the Protocol—that is Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Sao Tome & Principe (African Union 2022). With intra-African migration accounting for 48 per cent of the total migration of Africans (African Centre for Strategic Studies 2022), consideration of free movement of people that advances regional integration, continental growth, and development is critical as it is urgent generally in Africa and particularly in SADC.

3. SADC Policy and Legal Framework on the Free Movement of People

Considering that RECs are building blocs for the creation of the African Economic Community (AEC), the SADC policy and legal frameworks that have been put in place to facilitate the free movement of people are constructively aligned to African Union policy and legal frameworks. At the continental level, the AU Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty of 1991); the African Common Position on Migration and Development (ACPMD) of 2006; the Migration Policy Framework for Africa of 2006 and Plan of Action (2018–2030); the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of Establishment of 2018; AU Agenda 2063; the African Passport Initiative; and objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) all have objectives that obligate African countries to gradually remove obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services, capital, and the right of residence and establishment in Member States.

The African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons provides the right of entry which includes the right for African citizens to travel across the continent without visas (Article 6), the right of establishment which includes the right to set up businesses or be employed in any African country (Article 16), and the right of residence which includes the right to become a resident in any African country (*see* African Union 2018). Consistent with the objectives of the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, the SADC adopted the SADC Common Position on the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in 2017. In the SADC Common Position,

SADC member states agreed that they will not sign the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons until a number of pre-conditions have been met, and these pre-conditions include the existence of peace, security, and stability on the continent; macro-economic convergence and reduction of economic imbalances in Africa; and compatibility of ICT systems at ports of entry to facilitate exchange of information amongst African states (*see* Department of Home Affairs of South Africa 2017, 4).

In the SADC, the following nine legal and policy instruments guide the REC and member states in implementing initiatives meant to facilitate the free movement of people in the region:

- The SADC Treaty of 1992
- The SADC Protocol on Trade of 1996
- The SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons of 2005
- The SADC Protocol on Trade in Services of 2012
- The SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour of 2014
- The SADC Common Position on the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (2017)
- SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (LMAP 2020–2025)
- The SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020–2030)
- The SADC Vision 2050

Article 5(2) (d) of the SADC Treaty of 1992 provides that the SADC shall "develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the Region generally, among member states". The SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons of 2005 (which replaced the draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons of 1996 and entered into force in 2001) has its main objective as that of developing "policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of persons of the Region generally into and within the territories of State Parties". The Protocol, under Article 3, obligates member states to allow other SADC citizens to enter into their territories without a visa (or non-chargeable visa) for a maximum of 90 days per year for "bona fine visit" and in accordance with the laws of their respective national laws. Member states are also obligated to facilitate temporary and permanent residency, establishment, and working. SADC member states also commit, through Article 7 of

the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons, to harmonise their national laws, statutory rules, regulations, and immigration practices that facilitate the free movement of people in the region. The conditions of entry of persons into SADC member states is governed by Article 14 (2) of the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons, and these include the possession of valid travel documents, presentation of evidence of sufficient funds to support oneself for the duration of the visit, entry through official ports of entry, and that entry is only granted to persons who are not prohibited immigrants. Relatedly, the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour of 2014 and the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (LMAP 2020–2025) both create a legal and policy framework for labour migration and labour mobility in the SADC.

The SADC Protocol on Trade of 1996 and the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services of 2012 are key legal pillars of the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA) that was achieved in August 2008. These two protocols recognise the advantage of allowing for the free movement of people as an essential component of trade in services in order to develop SADC economies. In particular, the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services provides general obligations for SADC member states with respect to the treatment of services and service suppliers whilst mandating them to progressively negotiate the removal of barriers to the free movement of services.

The SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020–2030) acknowledges the importance of free movement of people in advancing the regional integration agenda in SADC whilst the SADC Vision 2050 recognises that the free movement of people assists in creating an environment that fosters regional cooperation and integration. In particular, the RISDP (2020–2030) emphasises the vitality of free movement of people in the SADC regional integration matrix under three selected pillars of SADC regional integration, namely the Industrial Development and Market Integration pillar, the Infrastructure Development pillar, and the Social and Human Capital Development pillar (*see* RISDP 2020, 10).

4. Free Movement of People in SADC: Tracking Empirical Progress, Complexities and Dilemmas

It is now 30 years since the SADC was formed, when the SADC Heads of State and Governments agreed to transform the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) on 17 August 1992 so that the REC focuses on integration of

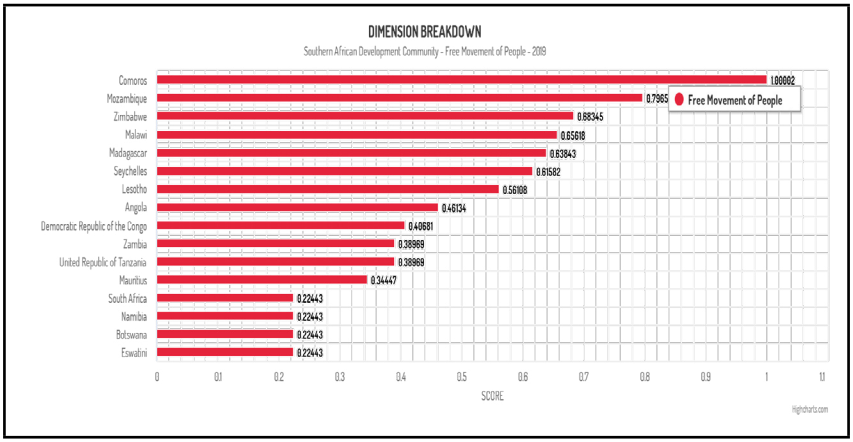
economic development. Whilst notable milestones have been achieved in ensuring the free movement of people within the region through the SADC Treaty of 1992, and the other instruments discussed above, the overall movement of people within the REC is still lagging on four fronts and indicators. First, the state of free movement of people in the SADC is not consistent with the SADC visions and aspirations as reflected in the REC's legal and policy instruments. Second, the SADC is way behind the targets set in the Abuja Treaty of June 1991 in which AU member states agreed that by the end of 2023 there should be free movement of people and effective rights of residence and establishment across Africa so as to achieve the African Economic Community by 2028. Third, the SADC's performance in free movement of people dimension of regional integration is lagging behind when compared to that of other African RECs. Fourth, there are several concerning legitimate reports of existing barriers to the free movement of people in SADC as well as continued mistreatment and discrimination of SADC citizens in other SADC countries, including xenophobic violence.

4.1 Status of Free Movement of People in the SADC Region

A more objective assessment of free movement of people in African RECs has been attempted through the Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII)[1] developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) jointly with the AU and African Development Bank (AfDB). The ARII shows that SADC member states are making slow progress in facilitating the free movement of people as shown on Figure 1 below.

1 The Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) is a composite index comprising 16 indicators grouped into five dimensions, namely: trade integration, productive integration, macro-economic integration, infrastructure integration, and free movement of people. There are three indicators used by ARII for measuring the performance of countries in terms of the extent to which people can move in the region for tourism, social purposes, trade and business, that is: (a) *the number of countries that may obtain a visa on arrival;* (b) *the number of countries that require a visa*; and (c) *the number of countries that have ratified the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of People.*

Figure 1: The State of Free Movement of People in SADC Countries



Source: *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)/African Union (AU)/ African Development Bank (AfDB, 2022). Available at: https://www.integrate-africa.org/*

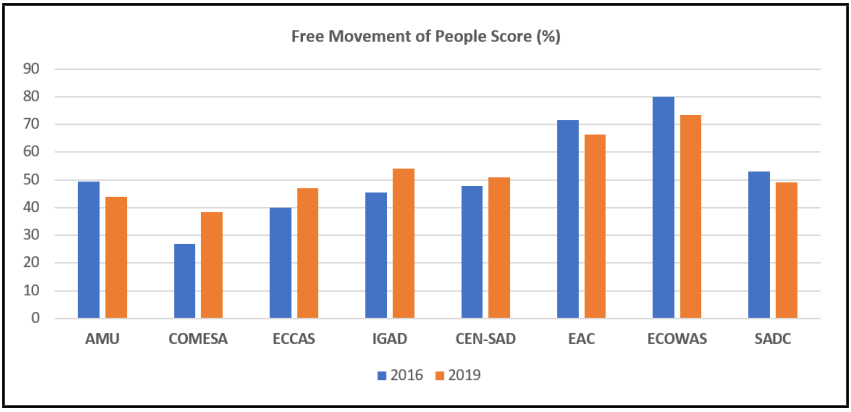
As shown on Figure 1, half of SADC member states (50 per cent), have scores below the African average score of 0.441 in terms of free movement of people. Overall, SADC member states, except the Comoros, still have stringent visa regimes and have not ratified the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of Establishment of 2018. In fact, a number of SADC member states are yet to sign the Protocol—namely, Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Eswatini, and Zambia (African Union, 2022).

In Africa, out of the 19 higher-performing countries with over 0.668 scores on the ARII Index, the SADC accounts for six (that is the Comoros, Mozambique, Madagascar, Seychelles, Malawi, and Zimbabwe). Out of the 19 worst performing countries in terms of free movement of people in Africa (with a below-average score which is less than 0.333), the SADC accounts for five (namely Zambia, Botswana, Eswatini, South Africa, and Namibia). The continued existence of stringent visa regimes and restrictions on free movement of people cripples regional integration in the SADC as it impedes intra-SADC investments, intra-SADC tourism, restrains labour mobility, and disrupts trade in services.

By inter-REC comparison, the SADC's performance is below a number of RECs

with respect to free movement of people as depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: The State of Free Movement of People in SADC compared to other RECs



Source: *Author's construction based on data from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)/African Union (AU)/African Development Bank (AfDB, 2022). Available at: https://www.integrate-africa.org/*

The RECs of ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD, and CEN-SAD are performing better than SADC in terms of free movement of people as exhibited on Figure 2 above. These high performing African RECs are making great progress in facilitating the free movement of people within their regional configurations, despite facing implementation challenges. The EAC, for instance, introduced the East African Passport (with diplomatic, service, and ordinary categories) since January 2018 as a travel document to ease intra-EAC border crossing for EAC citizens and the East African Passport has a six months' multiple entry validity and is valid for up to 10 years (East African Community 2017). In addition, some EAC member states (namely, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda) adopted the East African Tourist Visa (EATV) which is a single-entry electronic travel permit for tourists to travel across the three countries using once document (Ngoga et al. 2021). ECOWAS also introduced the ECOWAS passport in December 2000 to allow for visa-free movement by ECOWAS citizens (UNECA, 2022a). The SADC performs better than only three RECs (that is, ECCAS, AMU, and COMESA) out of the eight RECs recognised by the AU.

There has been slow pace in the domestication of legal instruments meant to facilitate the free movement of people in the SADC. Currently, the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons of 2005 is not yet in force because it has not been ratified by the requisite two-thirds of the REC's member states as prescribed under Article 36 of the Protocol. Some provisions of the Protocol makes it difficult to realise the intentions to facilitate the free movement of people. For instance, whilst member states are obligated to allow visa-free entry of SADC citizens into their country under Article 3 of the Protocol as well as permanent residence, temporary residence, and establishment, visa-free admission specified under Article 14 are too demanding and difficult to satisfy for several SADC citizens. An example of legal provisions and conditions that have resulted in illegal entry of migrants into other SADC member states is the provision that admission of entry is conditioned upon the presentation of evidence of sufficient funds to support oneself for the duration of the visit as well as the 90-day maximum visa-free entry per year provision. Most SADC migrants, especially labour migrants who are permanently or temporarily out of their countries in search of employment and business opportunities in SADC countries that are relatively stable and economically prosperous such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Mauritius. The majority of these SADC migrants are impoverished to the extent that they do not have sufficient funds to present to immigration officials upon entry as evidence that they will be able to support themselves in the countries of their destination. Even the majority of those who manage to present such monetary evidence, are unable to satisfy the visa extension requirements or application requirements for alternative visas/work permits for them to continue staying or working in the host countries. In the end, SADC migrants are forced to live in their host countries as undocumented immigrants which expose them to the vices of migrant labour exploitation, corruption by law enforcement agencies, and discrimination in accessing essential public services.

Due to the existence of strict conditions of entry and stringent visa requirements, there has been a surge in the use of illegal border crossing points in intra-SADC migration and cross-border trade. For example, at the Beitbridge Border Post, there are reports that several migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and cross-border traders from other SADC countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and, DRC use illegal and irregular border crossing points through paid 'escorts' who even use canoes and floaters during the rainy season to carry them across the Limpopo River and then connect to Musina town, in Limpopo Province, South Africa, using well-connected commuter omnibus drivers/'cross-border drivers' (popularly known as *'Omalayitsha*') (Tshivhashe

2020a; Ncube 2017; Evans 2015). In some instances, corrupt border control agents are complicit as they demand bribes to allow irregular migrants a safe passage (Tshivhashe 2020a; Evans 2015). This is a two-way process, as many travellers also use the same modus operandi crossing the border from South Africa into Zimbabwe, avoiding the official exit point at Beitbridge Border Post as they would have either entered into South Africa illegally or would have overstayed in South Africa well-after the expiry of their visas, itself a serious offense that would attract an exorbitant fine and banned from entering South Africa for a specified period depending on the duration of overstay, or even face imprisonment if one cannot afford to pay the stipulated fine.[2] However, it has to be stated here that this is not unique to South Africa alone; all SADC countries have more or less similar provisions and rules in their Immigration laws. This has given rise to the phenomenon of migrant smuggling in SADC, together with human trafficking (Vhumbunu 2020). For instance, the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons of* 2020 reveals that the SADC countries of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia reported trafficking of victims who are nationals of other SADC countries (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes 2021, 3–73).

Other than challenges relating to strict conditions of entry and stay imposed on travellers in some SADC countries, the emergence of anti-migrant sentiments in a number of SADC countries, also directed at other migrant SADC citizens, has been an obstacle to the free movement of people in the region. In some cases, this has manifested in collective xenophobic violence. For example, as of 11 July 2022 a total of 942 incidents of xenophobic violence have been reported in South Africa since 1994, and this has resulted in the death of 642 people and displacement of 123 760 people whilst 4 849 shops have been looted during the xenophobic skirmishes (Xenowatch, 2022). Cases of systematic discrimination and stereotyping of migrants as well as xenophobic attitudes—in some instances accompanied by violence and/or conflict—directed at other SADC citizens have also been widely reported in Botswana (Akinola 2018; Campbell and Crush 2015; The East African 2014).

2 According to the Immigration Act Number 13 of 2002, a South African visa overstay of less than 30 days attracts a ban of a period of 12 months during which one is given the status of an "undesirable person", and if a traveller overstays their visa for over 30 days, the effected ban will be for at least five years, and one is also given the status of an "undesirable person". In both cases, visa overstay attracts imprisonment if one is unable to pay a fine.

Several reports against intolerance, animosity, harassment, and inhuman treatment of both documented and undocumented SADC migrants at other SADC countries' ports of entry continue to be widely reported in the region. For instance, women traders continue to be subjected to harassment and violence at border crossings (Tizora 2021; Jacobson and Joekes 2019; Blumberg et al. 2016). In the SADC, where 70–80 per cent of informal cross border traders (ICBTs) are women, 34 percent of women ICBTs have reported sexual harassment by border officials with other cases of men reporting sexual exploitation, coercion, and harassment by border agents and police (Blumberg et al. 2016, 37; Tizora 2021). Facilitating free movement of trade will even be beneficial to intra-SADC trade, as ICBT is currently contributing about 30 percent of intra-regional trade in the SADC (Tizora, 2021). However, the strict interpretation of border control laws and measures by immigration, customs, and security personnel at ports of entry consequently forces travellers, cross-border traders, and migrants to utilise alternative routes and other illegal means used to evade the stringent rules and measures that regulate the cross-border movement of people, which then motivates migrant smuggling. For instance, South Africa deported 351 840 migrants between 2012 and 2016, with 343 774 of these (98 per cent) being nationals of SADC countries (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, 2022) whilst a total of 14 859 undocumented migrants were also deported between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, with four SADC countries (Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Lesotho) accounting for over 90 percent of these deportations (Chambers 2021). In January 2022, it was reported that South Africa arrested and deported over 89 000 undocumented migrants (eNCA 2022). In Botswana, a total of 22 000 undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe were deported in 2015, and another 29 000 were deported in 2018 (Dube 2019).

The construction of circumvallation structures and impenetrable border walls in SADC states may not be a positive sign and signal that member states have embraced the concept of free movement of people. This re-territorialisation of the region may serve to remind everyone about the pre-colonial fortresses that characterised the state formation struggles between and among kingdoms, fiefdoms, and empires that preceded the 19th century in Southern Africa. Whilst this may easily be normalised as a global trend and pattern of de-globalisation since a number of countries in the world such as the USA, Kenya, Tunisia, Estonia, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, and others have been reported to have announced and/or begun constructing barriers on their frontiers since 2015 (*see* Vallet 2022; Gianna-Grun 2021); the emergence of border fences in SADC may be argued to be against the letter and spirit of the SADC Protocol on Free Movement of Person and

SADC Common Vision for an integrated and prosperous society. Certainly, there may be other dignified, humane, and brotherly means and ways of controlling the irregular movement of people within the SADC than the reinforcement and fortification of borders. The situation is worsened when borders are over-militarised, with constant deployment of troops, military patrols, drones and/or digital surveillance, especially when these responses are not a reaction to, or preventive measures against, any serious security threats of transnational terrorism, insurgency, conflict, pandemics, epidemics, or any emergency situations. South Africa, for instance, announced the deployment of helicopters by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to patrol the Zimbabwe-South African border in Musina and boat patrols along the Limpopo River, with the Minister of the Department of Home Affairs arguing that "strict measures" will continue to be implemented "to stop people [from] entering the country illegally" as this undermined South Africa's sovereignty (eNCA 2021).

In 2003, Botswana started constructing a 500 metre-long and 2.4 metre-high electric fence at its border with Zimbabwe. Although the Government of Botswana insisted that the border fence was motivated by the desire to control cross-border livestock movement in light of deadly foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks that were affecting the country's lucrative beef exports into the European Union market together with the "problem with Zimbabwean illegal immigrants" (News24 2006), the then Zimbabwean Ambassador to Botswana argued that "Botswana [was] trying to create another Gaza Strip" through the barrier, and further observed that "people [would] continue to destroy the fence because it has divided families on either side of the border" (Carroll 2003). Likewise, South Africa erected a 40 metre-long and 1.8 metres high 'border security' fence at its border with Zimbabwe at the cost of R7 million (around US$2.5 million) although the border fence has now been damaged and vandalized, allowing easy crossing by irregular migrants from the region (Tshivhashe 2020b). Border fence projects, however, also appear to be motivated by anti-migration populism and therefore become populist public relations exercises where governments have to be seen to be taking action against nationalistic anti-immigrant sentiments and unregulated influx of undocumented migrants in affected SADC countries.

5. Complexities and Dilemmas in Facilitating the Free Movement of People in the SADC

Whilst there appears to be broad consensus amongst SADC member states in their

deliberations on the need for deepened and widened regional integration in the region, including the free movement of goods to facilitate intra-regional trade, investments, tourism, labour mobility, and skills circulation, the empirical reality on the ground suggests otherwise. Individual member states' positions on the free movement of people are guided by their realist intentions to protect their national economic and strategic political interests. Member states that are relatively stable and economically prosperous in SADC (such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Seychelles) have often exhibited presentiment and disquietude towards wholesale and wholesome embrace of the concept of free movement of people. There are legitimate fears that allowing the free movement of people will overwhelm their domestic public service delivery capacities whilst presenting socio-economic challenges relating to competition for shrinking jobs and other economic opportunities.

The SADC Common Position on the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons which was adopted in 2017 clarifies the complexities and dilemmas confronting most SADC member states. In the SADC Common Position, member states of the SADC agreed not to ratify the AU. The same preconditions are also relevant in explaining the reasons behind the stonewalling and feet-dragging that characterise SADC member states' negotiations on commitments relating to the free movement of people. The Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons was developed in 1996 but it went through extensive revisions and reviews before it was replaced by a more restrictive SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons adopted in 2005 (UNECA 2022b). The following three main issues therefore continue to present complexities and dilemmas to member states in the regional quest for free movement of people 30 years since the formation of SADC.

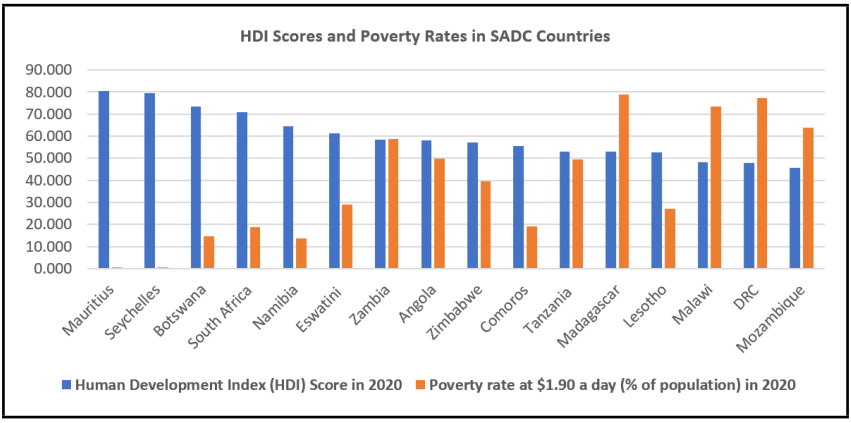
5.1 Existence of economic imbalances amongst SADC countries.

There are apparently wide disparities between and among SADC member states in terms of socio-economic development which define the pull and push factors behind intra-SADC movement of people. Economically advanced countries in the SADC currently host more economic migrants from fellow SADC countries as they search for better economic opportunities, especially employment. For instance, on the latest Human Development Index (HDI)[3] rankings, Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, and

3 The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistic composite index of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which is used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report Office to rank and measure a country's development.

South Africa are considered to be highly and very highly developed countries, with HDI indices of over a 0.7 index score whilst other SADC countries such as Malawi, DRC, and Mozambique are very under-developed and constitute the bottom 16 of the 189 countries ranked on the HDI Index, with less than 0.5 index scores (United Nations Development Programme 2020). Figure 3 shows the state of disparities in the SADC in terms of human development and prevalence of poverty.

Figure 3: State of Human Development and Poverty Rates in SADC countries as of 2020



Source: *Author's construction based on data from the UNDP Human Development Report (2020) and World Bank (2022)*

As depicted in Figure 3 above, it is Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia that have very low levels of poverty and corresponding high levels of human development in the SADC. It is therefore not surprising that these are the same countries that are experiencing an influx of intra-SADC migrants, mostly in search of economic opportunities. Although other SADC countries ranked low in economic development are hosting substantial populations of migrants, these are in the form of refugees and asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region. The DRC, for example, hosts a total of 529 000 refugees and asylum seekers whereas Tanzania hosts 246 000, Zambia 105 000, Angola 57 000, and Malawi (52 440) (*see* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2022). There have been arguments from migrants hosting states that the influx of migrants is burdening their public service delivery

capacities and increasing competition for scarce economic opportunities. In South Africa, there have been clamours for the removal of migrants with the proliferation of vigilant anti-migrants groups and movements such as *Operation Dudula, Put South Africa First,* and *All Truck Drivers Foundation (ATDF)* (*see* Landau and Misago 2022). These are also pilling political pressure of the South African government to seal off their national borders and strictly enforce the national migration regime. Perhaps, this may explain why South Africa opts for a 'phased approach' in implementing the regional instruments on the free movement of people (*see* Department of Home Affairs of South Africa 2017, 5).

5.2 Peace, security, and stability challenges in the SADC.

With widespread conflicts and wars in Africa as well as some SADC member states, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in SADC countries continues to increase. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED 2022) reports that between 1 January 2022 and 30 June 2022, the Southern African region experienced a total of 465 riots, 114 incidents of violence against civilians, 11 war battles, and a single incident of violent explosions or remote violence. Currently, there is the Ansar al-Sunna Islamist terrorist insurgency in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado since October 2017, whilst the DRC has been at war since the late 1990s, whereas other SADC countries such as Zimbabwe, Eswatini, and Lesotho have experienced protracted instability mainly triggered and perpetuated by contested elections and democratic transitional politics. There are legitimate fears that such conflicts pose security threats to other SADC countries, and that conflict-induced displacements in the form of refugees and asylum seekers may worsen in the event that there is free movement of people in the region.

5.3 Compatibility of ICT systems at Ports of Entry in the SADC to Facilitate the Exchange of Information.

The immigration systems in most SADC member states are not automated and interfaced to allow for digitalisation of immigration systems as well as exchange of information. South Africa, for instance, has an Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS), and an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) which feeds into the Department of Home Affairs' Enhanced Movement Control System

(EMCS). The EMCS also assists with digital database capture of information relating to fugitives or international terrorists such that they are prevented from entry at ports of entry. Although such ICT facilities are considered crucial in the *SADC Guidelines for Coordinated Border Management* as a number of SADC countries continue with their e-Government programmes which are also automating their respective immigration departments, most SADC countries do not have such advanced and compatible ICT systems at their ports of entry. The absence of a system comparable to the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), EU Entry/Exit System (EES), Eurodac (for collection, transmission and comparison of fingerprints), and use of machine readable travel documents (MRTDs) makes it difficult to facilitate efficient screening and security checks of travellers and migrants, whilst limiting information sharing that is fundamental in free movement of people. All this may be better implemented and coordinated when the relevant immigration laws in SADC member states are harmonised.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion from the analysis is that 30 years since the formation of the SADC in April 1980, the REC has been very slow in facilitating the free movement of people within the region based on the focused indicators. The status of free movement of people in the SADC has not been consistent with the SADC visions and aspirations as reflected in the REC's legal and policy instruments. The SADC is lagging behind in pursuit of the targets set in the Abuja Treaty of June 1991 in which AU member states agreed that by the end of 2023 there should be free movement of people and effective rights of residence and establishment across Africa. By regional comparison, the SADC's performance in the free movement of people dimension of regional integration is lagging behind most of the African RECs. There are several existing barriers to the free movement of people in SADC, as well as continued mistreatment and discrimination of SADC citizens in other SADC countries, including xenophobic violence. In recommendation, SADC countries are encouraged to effectively implement its RISDP (2020–2030) and the SADC Vision 2050 such that the conditions necessary for the free movement of people are achieved—namely, addressing economic disparities; ensuring peace and stability in the region; implementing pro-poor national policies that addresses the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality; and developing strategies that harness the potential of migrants into practical socio-economic opportunities.

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COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE OF CHINESE MINING INVESTMENT IN RURAL ZIMBABWE: THE SITUATION OF HWANGE DISTRICT

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Abstract

An empirical investigation on the acceptance of Chinese mining activities in rural Zimbabwe was done for this article. Its two main goals were to: (1) assess public opinion of Chinese mining operations; and (2) present a workable investment model that takes into account the main locals' complaints. Additionally, it touched on two related issues of concern: (1) what causes host community disputes with foreign mining companies in rural Zimbabwe; and (2) what investment model may be used to settle host community disputes between investors and host communities? It then assessed Chinese mining investments against the 3Ps of the Triple Bottom Line theory (TBL). Created by John Elkington in 1994, TBL recommends a balance between people, profitability, and the planet (environmental conservation) in business operations. Based on the study's

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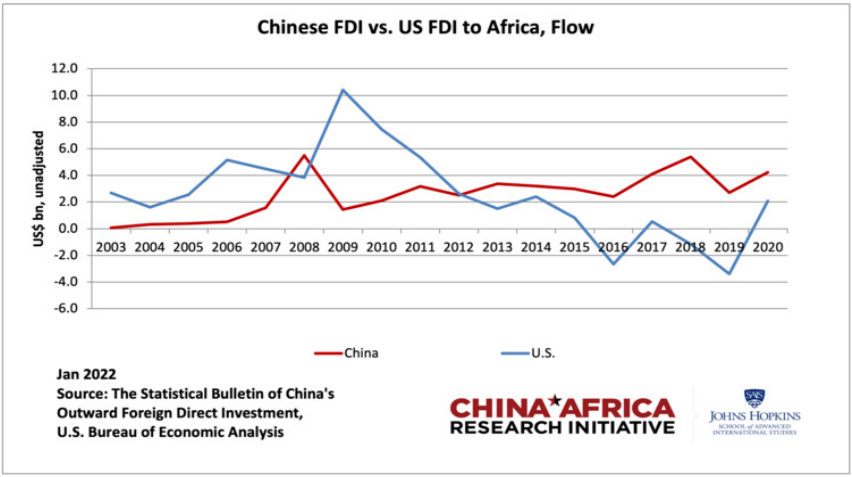
somewhat negative findings, the article created the PESE investment model (short-cut for people, environment, social, and economy) which it is presenting as an ideal framework that may have broader application for sustainable investment in Zimbabwe's mining industry.

1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of Chinese investments in Africa and in Zimbabwe continues to attract both interest and concern (Alao 2014, 1; Mapaure 2014, 1). According to the UNCTAD (2021, 1) study, statistics from China's Ministry of Commerce indicates an upward trend in China's investment in Africa. In 2012, it was projected that China's foreign direct investment in Africa was $217.3 billion and following the 2015 Sino-Africa Cooperation Forum, it increased from $399.3 billion in 2016 to $444.9 billion in 2018 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: China Foreign Direct Investment in Africa

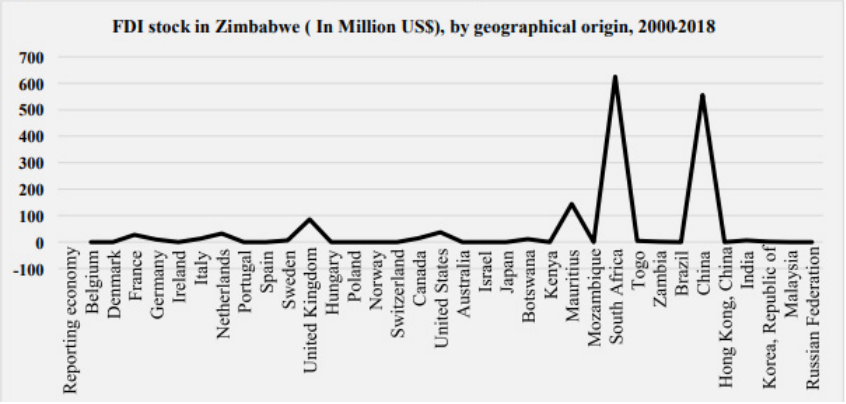


Source: *Calculations based on data compiled by the China-Africa Research Initiative based on the statistical bulleting of China's outward (FDI) (2021) (www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-Africa).*

Chinese investment in Zimbabwe rose by more than 5000% from 2009 to 2013, with

the country now among Africa's largest recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI) from China (Adisu 2013, 3; Chipaike and Bischoff 2019, 947; The Herald 2014, 1). Annual FDI from China increased from $11.2 million in 2009 to $602 million in 2013 as Chinese investors focused on mining, agriculture, and manufacturing (The Herald 2014, 1). In total, Chinese companies invested $1.3 billion over this period. Zimbabwe's portion of Chinese investment in Africa increased from just 0.8% of $1.43 billion in 2009 to 7.2% of $3.5 billion in 2013 (The Herald 2014, 1). This made Zimbabwe the top recipient of Chinese investment in 2013 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: FDI stock in Zimbabwe (In Million US$)



Source: *UNCTAD FDI Statistics (2019)*

Chinese investment in Zimbabwe straddles the manufacturing, construction, service, and mining industries, among others. Enhancing productivity, assisting host nations, accumulate foreign reserves, and facilitating for skills and technology transfer are some of the stated objectives of Chinese investment in Africa and Zimbabwe (Mugwara, Yuliang and Kai 2022, 1; Mapaure 2014, 1; Weng et al. 2018, 6). Even then, allegations of exploitative behaviours, disregard for environmental regulations, damage to local heritage and accusations of marginalisation of local labour fuel negative perceptions of Chinese investment in the mining sector in Zimbabwe (Shinn 2016, 26; ZELA 2022, 2).

Other issues of concern relate to accusations of failure to transmit knowledge and expertise, exploitative labour practices, human rights abuses, and driving of local small-

scale miners out of the market. These are some of the bad practices allegedly associated with Chinese mining investments in Africa (Mlevu 2022, 1; Alao 2014, 1; Okeowo 2019, 1). It is also said that there is inherent tension between local and national rights to mineral wealth, and the other benefits brought about by mining and people living near mines or adversely affected by them continue to raise questions about compensation for inconvenience, hardship, or loss of opportunity suffered as a result of the extractive activities of Zimbabwe's Chinese mining companies (Mugwara, Yuliang and Kai 2022, 1). Although China's President Xi Jinping stated that "China-Africa cooperation will never be pursued at the expense of Africa's eco-system and long-term interests," CRI (2015, 1) notes that given the already subpar environmental governance generally observed across African countries, it is unclear to what extent Chinese investors, traders, and consumers will demand high sustainability safeguards. The article has two main goals: (1) it analyses how well-received Chinese mining investment is in Hwange district; and (2) it develops a model for optimal mining investment that takes into account the major locals' concerns.

2. Structure and organisation of the study

After the introduction, the article engages Sino-Africa relations from three angles. First, it reflects on China's "win-win" messaging narratives in its engagements with African countries. Second, it reflects on "win-lose" debates surrounding Chinese investments in Africa. Third, it engages briefly on narratives of cooperation and opportunism in Sino-Zimbabwe relations. Thereafter, it introduces in brief Zimbabwe the country and Hwange, the district which is the area of study. The idea is to provide context. Following this, the article introduces Triple-Bottom Line (TBL). Importantly, it engages on the theory's 3Ps which are: (1) people; (2) profit; and (3) the planet.

The significance of the 3Ps is that they are the framework around which Chinese investment in rural Zimbabwe is evaluated. Next, the article engages on the research methodology, issues such as pilot testing of the research instruments, development and distribution of questionnaire, and the setting of the research sample. After this, the article presents and digests some of its research findings. In this regard, it focused on (1) the conflicts arising from Chinese mining investments in Hwange; (2) locals' perspective on Chinese mining companies' engagements with the community; and (3) local environmental concerns on Chinese mining investments. After this, the article presents its suggested model for facilitating foreign mining investment in rural Zimbabwe. Thereafter it presents its concluding remarks.

3. Debates and discussions

Two contrasting narratives characterise growing Sino-Africa relationship. There is the "win-win" and "win-lose" narratives. The primary forms of messaging China uses in its "win-win" engagement with African countries in which it is investing underscore the notions of common development, mutually beneficial cooperation, cultural co-existence, equality and sovereign equality, among others (Aidoo 2015, 3; Ousmane 2016, 135). It is also said that the investments benefit recipient countries by generating revenue, improving quality of life and facilitating technology transfer (Leung 2013, 1). These are the general arguments usually put forward by the Chinese government and recipient countries in Africa (Weng et al. 2018, 6).

The other side to China's outward foreign direct investment coin is that it is characterised by the "win-lose" narrative. International academics and the mainstream media outside of Africa are of the opinion that Sino-Africa economic contacts are one-sided, favouring China at the expense of African nations (Leung 2013, 1; Weng et al. 2018, 6; Aguilar and Goldstein 2009, 1543). It is also often said that Chinese investments in African countries are not intended to boost African exports but rather to give African consumers more access to cheaper Chinese-made goods (Pigato and Tang 2015, 10).

The narratives of cooperation and opportunity versus opportunism and destabilisation serve as a foundation for Sino-Zimbabwe cooperation. Even though China is frequently referred to as Zimbabwe's all-weather friend, the relationship is seemingly unbalanced, with China appearing to use the uneven power structure to benefit more (Marumahoko and Chigwata 2020). It is also often said that the investment made by Zimbabwe's Chinese companies do not necessarily result in meaningful employment opportunities for locals as Chinese corporations tend to bring their own staff from China to work in their companies (Chinyama 2015, 1).

4. Introducing Zimbabwe and Hwange District

Zimbabwe, a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, is bordered to the northwest by Zambia, to the east by Mozambique, to the south by South Africa, and to the southwest by Botswana. Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980 after the British South Africa Company had seized it as Southern Rhodesia in 1923 (Marumahoko 2016, 1; Marumahoko 2018, 16). Eight provinces and two cities with provincial status make up

the country. The major three official languages of Zimbabwe are English, Shona, and Ndebele. Harare is the country's capital.

With nearly 40 different minerals, Zimbabwe's mining industry is both wealthy and diverse. Gold, platinum, chrome, coal, diamonds, and lithium are a few of the minerals (Government of Zimbabwe 2020, 98). Hwange District is an administrative district in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland North Province. The Zambezi River defines its northern boundary with Zambia, while Botswana shares its western border with it (Hwange Rural District Council 2023, 1). Most Chinese companies in the Hwange region mine coal for export back to China and for domestic power production.

Figure 2: Hwange District Map

Source: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwange_District.*

5. Triple Bottom Line theory (TBL)

In discussing and analysing locals' acceptance to Chinese investors in the mining sector, the paper employs the 'Triple Bottom Line theory'. TBL, an accounting framework created by John Elkington in 1994, is a method of combining a company's social and environmental goals with its financial goals (see Figure 3). TBL underscores that profit, social, and environmental issues cannot be separated (Vaidya 2022, 1; Indeed 2022, 1).

It claims that rather than solely focusing on their financial performance, purpose-driven organisations consider the positive impact they can make regarding environmental sustainability and human rights (Indeed 2022, 1).

By adopting TBL, businesses take on added significance. When businesses adopt TBL ideology, they are essentially redistributing their yields to people and nature because they were the ones who made the yields possible. TBL encourages sustainable development, which is an added advantage. This increases profitability since it attracts new businesses, investors, and clients. After all, everyone wants to do business with organisations that value nature preservation (Vaidya 2022, 1). TBL theory comprises 3Ps which are: (1) the people; (2) profit; and (3) the planet (Indeed 2022, 1; Kenton 2023, 1).

5.1 The "people" in TBL theory

The first component of the TBL theory is "people". In the context of TBL, "people" refers to every individual that is in touch with a company. Customers, vendors, and employees are a few of the examples of people in TBL theory (Indeed 2022, 1; Miller 2020, 1; Kenton 2023, 1). In this regard it may mean that customers have fair access to products and their feedback regarding equity or safety are considered, that a company prioritises small businesses in its supply chain, and that its employees receive fair wages and salaries. Traditionally, a business would put its shareholders or investors first. The triple bottom line focuses attention to people who may not have a financial stake in the firm but are nonetheless tangentially involved in its operations.

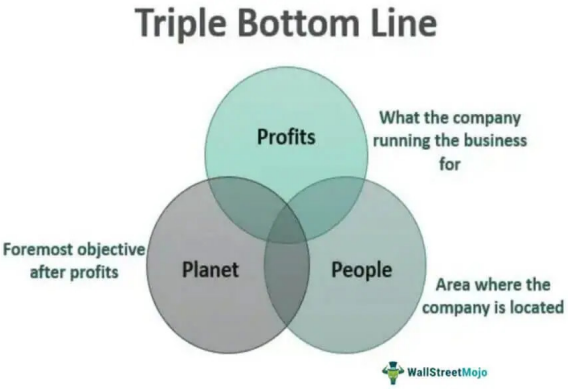
5.2 The "profit" in TBL theory

The second element of the TBL is profit. In this sense, it is said that a company's financial performance, or the profit it makes for shareholders, plays a major role in determining its success (Miller 2020, 1; Kenton 2023, 1). Key corporate decisions and strategic planning activities are typically carefully crafted to maximise earnings while minimising expenses and risk. There is now a realisation that profit-making organisations have the ability to change the world for the better by focusing on people and the environment without necessarily sacrificing financial performance. Companies may also enjoy financial benefits from growing their environmental and social awareness, lowering pollution, and making use of renewable energy instead of fossil fuels (Indeed 2022, 1).

5.3 The "planet" in TBL

Planet, the third component of the TBL, deals with concerns like environmental pollution, cutting one's carbon footprint, maintaining clean neighborhoods, and climate change, among others (Miller 2020, 1; Kenton 2023, 1). The theory is set against the enormous amount of environmental damage that big businesses have caused since the start of the Industrial Revolution. Even so, the theory contends that profit-making organisations can, through changes such as responsible supply-chain management, conserving energy, and optimising shipping procedures spur progress through their obligation to promote sustainability.

Figure 3: Triple Bottom Line (TBL)



Source: *Vaidya 2022*

6. Research Methodology

The researchers collected data through the use of primary and secondary data collection methods. Secondary data was collected by reviewing published sources of data such as books, government databases, UN agencies, election statistics, medical files, sales data, internet searches, yearly reports, journals, periodicals, annual reports, books, and articles. Open and closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The surveys were distributed and collected by hand. The questionnaire was pilot-tested for reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The response rate for the pilot study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pilot study response rate

Groups	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Received	Questionnaire Excluded	Questionnaire Analysed	Analysed Percentage
Hwange local community members	10	7	2	5	19
Mine employees (locals and Chinese)	10	6	2	4	15
Local mining investors	10	7	1	6	22
Chinese Investors	10	6	1	5	19
Wild life conservancy workers	10	7	-	7	25
Total	50	33	6	27	100%

Source: *Own data (2023)*

The study population consisted of 420 people from Hwange who had direct experience of Chinese mining activities in the area of study. It was broken down as follows: five traditional chiefs, 10 headmen, 10 wildlife conservation workers, 10 ministry of mines employees, five local government councilors, 10 local education institution heads, 50 local mining investors, 25 Chinese mining investors, 220 local community members, and 75 mine employees (50 locals and 25 Chinese). Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select the research subjects. The sample size was 201 respondents, calculated using a formula for sample size advanced by Krejcies and Morgan (1970, 608). It was calculated as follows:

s = $X^2NP\ (1\text{-}P) \div d^2\ (N\text{-}1) + X^2P\ (1\text{-}P)$

s= required sample size

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841)

N= the population size

P= the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample)

D= the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

Therefore

S= $3.841(420x\ 0.5)\ x\ (1\ -0.5) \div (0.05)^2\ x\ (420\text{-}1) + 3.841\ x0.5\ (1 - 0.5)$

=**201** respondents

Following pilot testing and setting of sample size, there was distribution of the questionnaire which mostly targeted Hwange local community members as the ones most impacted by Chinese mining activities. Table 2 presents a summary of the returned questionnaires from the survey. The researchers sought diverse information from all local members, thus endeavouring to considerably reduce the element of bias. The study sample size was 201 participants from which 200 completed and returned the questionnaire, making a response rate of 99.5% in Hwange. Thus, the response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions of the study as a response rate of 50% and above is regarded as excellent (Selvaraja 2020, 1).

Table 2: Response rate of the distributed questionnaires

Category	Questionnaires Distributed	Returned Questionnaires	Unusable Questionnaires	Response Rate Percent
Chief	2	2	0	100
Headman	5	5	0	100
Wildlife conservative workers	5	5	0	100
Ministry of mines employees	5	5	0	100
Councillors	2	2	0	100
Local education head	5	5	0	100
Local mining investors	24	24	0	100
Chinese mining investors	12	12	0	100
Mine employees (24 locals &12 Chinese)	36	35	1	97.2
Hwange local community members	105	105	0	100
Total	**201**	**200**	**1**	**99.5**

Source: *Own data (2023)*

7. Research findings and extrapolations

In this section, the article presents and digests research findings. The findings are the result of composite questions which were broken into smaller questions to address specific issues in the research. Three of the several questions posed are listed below and engaged in somewhat greater detail in the ensuing paragraphs. By and large the questions point the discussion to sustainability in foreign (and perhaps also local) mining investment.

- What are the areas of conflict faced by locals because of Chinese mining investments in Hwange?
- Is Chinese mining investment addressing social and environmental concerns raised by Hwange locals?
- Are Chinese mining operations addressing environmental risk concerns in Hwange?

The respondents answered the questionnaire using the "five-point Likert scales" which had five Likert response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The statements or questions posed to participants had a scale indicating the level of agreement or disagreement of the respondents. The levels and their ordinal values are: 1=Strongly Agree (SA), 2= Agree (A), 3=Neutral (N), 4= Disagree (D), 5=Strongly Disagree (SD). The indication of whether there is correlation between statement and responses of respondents, level of agreeing or disagreeing is decided by the mean (M). Statements mean interval ranging from 1.0-1.8 indicates (SA), 1.9-2.6 (A), 2.7-3.4 (N), 3.5-4.2 (D), and 4.3-5 (SD).

7.1 Conflicts arising from Chinese mining investments

According to Table 3, the community people who have been adversely affected by Chinese mining investment in the Hwange district are generally despondent. Of the 200 responders, 84% pointed to Chinese companies' contaminating water sources and aquifers that communities utilise for cultivation, drinking water, and cleaning. It was insinuated that this was a source of conflict. Fifty-five per cent (SA and A) of respondents said that Chinese mining investments led to the eviction of local residents to make room for the new projects. In a similar vein, according to 61% of the respondents, communities affected by proposed Chinese mining operations infrequently receive sufficient prior informed consent. The usage of large equipment in Chinese mining projects, according to 82.5% of the 200 respondents, destroys the environment and infrastructure.

Table 3: Conflicts arising from Chinese mining investment

Conflicts	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
Chinese-owned mining operations often pollute waters and aquifers used by local communities for drinking, cleaning, and irrigation	100	68	8	6	18	200	**1,9**
%	**50**	**34**	**4**	**3**	**9**	**100**	
Forced dislocation to make way for new projects	50	60	66	10	14	200	**2,4**
%	**25**	**30**	**33**	**5**	**7**	**100**	
Communities impacted by proposed Chinese mining projects rarely receive adequate prior informed consent.	56	50	30	40	24	200	**2,6**
%	**28**	**25**	**15**	**20**	**12**	**100**	
Chinese mining investments undermine livelihoods and income relied on by communities for years	60	28	60	40	12	200	**2,6**
%	**30**	**14**	**30**	**20**	**6**	**100**	
Chinese mining projects cause environment and infra-structure destruction due to use of heavy machines	105	60	11	8	16	200	**1,9**
%	**52,5**	**30**	**5,5**	**4**	**8**	**100**	
Use of violence on community members when they protest against Chinese miners	20	30	60	50	40	200	**3,3**
%	**10**	**15**	**30**	**25**	**20**	**100**	

Source: *Own data (2023)*

7.2 Locals' perspective on Chinese mining companies' engagements with the community

The respondents, as shown in Table 4, were generally against the Hwange Chinese mining corporations' business strategy. Their mining operations do not seem to be helping the local communities where their enterprises are situated. Of the 200 responders, 46.5% were not in agreement that Chinese investment was generating jobs for locals. Only 33.5% thought that Chinese investment would lead to job prospects. In a similar vein, 75% of respondents believed that Chinese investment in the mining industry did not empower regional populations. When asked if Chinese investors were fostering trust between the mining industry and communities, 63% of respondents voiced pessimism. On the issue of whether Chinese investment addressed intergenerational concerns, 70% replied in the negative. The perception of Chinese mining, according to 55% of respondents, was not improving.

Table 4: Local perspective on Chinese mining companies' engagement with the community

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
Chinese are creating local employment opportunities	40	27	40	13	80	200	**3,4**
%	**20**	**13,5**	**20**	**6.5**	**40**	**100**	
Chinese are empowering local communities	30	14	6	50	100	200	**3,9**
%	**15**	**7**	**3**	**25**	**50**	**100**	
Chinese are fostering trust between mining industry and local communities	22	31	21	40	86	200	**3,7**
%	**11**	**15,5**	**10,5**	**20**	**43**	**100**	
Chinese are addressing concerns about dangerous, destructive and dirty mining practices	22	40	5	60	73	200	**3,6**
%	**11**	**20**	**2,5**	**30**	**36,5**	**100**	
Chinese mining image is improving	35	24	31	50	60	200	**3,4**
%	**17,5**	**12**	**15,5**	**25**	**30**	**100**	
Chinese investment is addressing inter-generational concerns	20	36	4	41	99	200	**3,8**
%	**10**	**18**	**2**	**20,5**	**49,5**	**100**	

Source: *Own data (2023)*

7.3 Local environmental concerns on Chinese mining investments

The respondents were questioned about whether they believed Chinese mining operations took environmental concerns into account when conducting their activities (see Table 5). Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents, or SA and A combined, disagreed with the claim that Chinese corporations are regenerating the environment. Similar to this, 88% said there were no plans for garbage treatment and disposal. In addition, 85.5% of the respondents disagreed that Hwange was addressing neighbourhood environment problems. A combined (SA and A) or 85% of respondents rejected the idea that Chinese businesses are doing more to improve the health of their employees. Eighty-five per cent of the respondents disputed the idea that Chinese and local groups were collaborating on environmental restoration issues. According to 83% of the interviewees, environmental concerns were not a factor in Chinese corporations' decision-making.

Table 5: Local environmental concerns on Chinese mining investments

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
Chinese are following environmental impact assessment	18	6	10	76	90	200	**4,1**
%	**9**	**3**	**5**	**38**	**45**	**100**	
Community environmental concerns are being addressed (Pollution prevention- air, land and water)	24	0	5	76	95	200	**4,1**
	12	**0**	**2,5**	**38**	**47,5**	**100**	
There is waste treatment and disposal plan	10	6	8	76	100	200	**4,3**
%	**5**	**3**	**4**	**38**	**50**	**100**	
Chinese mining companies are improving workers health and safety	15	9	6	75	95	200	**4,1**
%	**7,5**	**4,5**	**3**	**37,5**	**47,5**	**100**	
Chinese mining companies are introducing technology innovation towards eco-efficiency	50	30	45	35	40	200	**2,9**
%	**25**	**15**	**22,5**	**17,5**	**20**	**100**	
Chinese mining companies are restoring the environment	8	12	4	76	100	200	**4,2**
%	**4**	**6**	**2**	**38**	**50**	**100**	
Chinese and the local communities are working together on the environment restoration	0	10	20	70	100	200	**4,3**
%	**0**	**5**	**10**	**35**	**50**	**100**	

Source: *Own data (2023)*

8. What does the research results tell us?

The research findings seemingly depict a story of mining investment projects characterized by imbalance between people, profits, and the planet. Yet Triple-Bottom-Line theory (TBL) reminds us that profit, corporate social responsibility, and environmental issues cannot be separated (Vaidya 2022). In this study, however, it can be said that profitability considerations were elevated over issues pertaining to the welfare of the people, their place in the ecosystem, and concern for environmental degradation emanating from dangerous mining practices. Even the nature and sources of conflict appear to paint a picture of mining ventures conveniently sidestepping concerns of communities under whose jurisdiction Chinese businesses are extracting natural resources.

Pollution of pristine environments, water and soil contamination, forced dislocation of locals to make way for mining investments, and destruction of livelihoods are some of the negatives associated with mining investment in Hwange that are not aligned to the

3Ps of the TBL. Drawing from the responses of despondent respondents in the survey and the shortcomings of the current mining investment practices, the article came up with the PESE investment model or the People, Environmental, Social, and Economy investment model in full. The PESE model integrates some of the elements from TBL to come up with a new model that may be used to balance elements of environmental protection, profitability, and communities around which mining activities are taking place.

In developing the PESE model, the researchers make a deliberate attempt to plug perceived gaps in the mining practices currently taking place in Zimbabwe involving foreign mining investors. The idea is not to apportion all blame to investors of Chinese origin. Rather, some of the objectives are: (1) to encourage mining policy review; (2) to encourage green mining; (4) to improve community acceptance of foreign mining investment; and (4) to facilitate a healthy balance between the well-being of communities, profitability, and sustainability.

9. The PESE Investment Model

The PESE investment model which is short-cut for People, Environment, Social, and Economy is associated with sustainable mining (see Figure 4). It is an investment model that may assist foreign investors reduce tensions with indigenous people or local communities. It is a framework balancing people, environmental, social, and economic considerations in mining projects. Each of these four dimensions of mining does not exist in isolation and they form the basis of sustainable development in mining projects. Prospecting (exploration), extraction (production), and decommissioning (ending mining) are the three main phases of PESE investment model for mining investment.

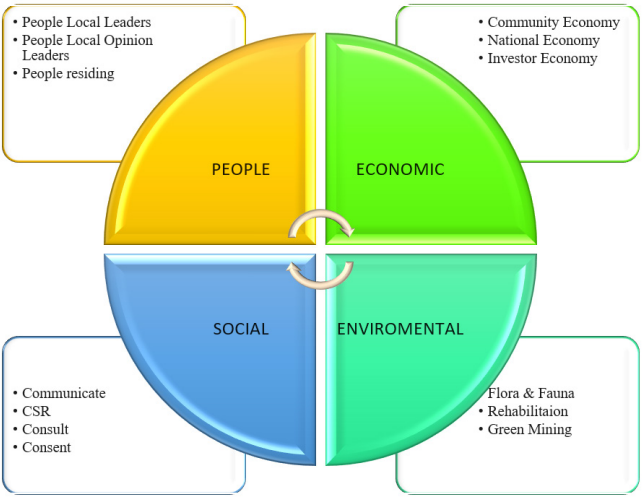
Prospecting and exploration are precursors to actual mining and seek to determine as accurately as possible the size and value of a mineral deposit. In the extraction stage, the work of opening the explored mineral deposit for exploitation is performed. The extraction stage is characterised by the actual recovery of minerals from the earth in quantity. The extraction/production stage is preceded by the construction of access roads, site preparation, and clearing. The decommissioning stage is about ending mining activities, possibly after exhausting extraction of minerals from the ground.

Minimisation of environmental risks is a key consideration of the proposed PESE mining investment model. The quality of surface and groundwater supplies, whether they will remain fit for human consumption, and adequate to support native aquatic life and terrestrial wildlife is a key focus of the model. Other issues of focus include the

erosion of soils and mine wastes into surface waters[4] and airborne emissions occurring during each phase of the mining project. All three stages of the mining investment model are prone to generate hazardous air pollutants such as heavy metals, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides.

Figure 4: The PESE Investment model

PLANNING-MINING	IMPLEMENTATION-EX-TRACTION	DECOMMISSIONING -CLOSING



Source: *Researchers' recommended conceptual framework, 2023*

9.1 The "People" in the PESE model

It is crucial that mining investment by Chinese or any other foreign entrepreneurs begin with the realisation that to receive greater community acceptance they may have to commence by connecting with people in whose areas they are mining or operating. This may entail donating money to local causes, addressing social justice issues, offering generous health care benefits, facilitating strategic partnerships with non-profit making organisations, and enriching decision-making processes through cultivating a culture of collaboration with community leaders. It is important that the focus on people is not lost during the planning, prospecting, implementation, and decommissioning stages of the mining investment project. By being proactive on issues to do with people, mining companies not only increase their acceptability, image, and brand in the community, they also lay a strong foundation for increasing production and maximising profits.

9.2 The "Economy" in the PESE model

By investing in rural communities the majority of which are characterised by deprivation, poverty, obsolete infrastructure, marginalisation, and exclusion, mining entrepreneurs contribute to the building of community economies. Indirectly, they facilitate for communities to participate in inclusive and resilient rural economies and integrate into the national economy. Rural areas may benefit from enterprises connected to Chinese mining interests. This way, it may be possible to use foreign mining investments in rural economies to promote inclusive and sustainable development. Communities may be able to lessen poverty and maybe improve the flow of money in rural areas as a result of these improvements. The PESE model envisages that small-to-medium sized rural enterprises' tendency to participate in the national economy may also experience a significant improvement.

9.3 The "Social" in the PESE model

Any successful mining activities in areas under the jurisdiction of indigenous communities may need to start by building earnest bridges that connect investors to communities regardless of national government authorisation for the projects. The PESE model advises that investors engage local communities in processes of consultation beginning with exploration to extraction and decommissioning phases of

mining projects. Consultation may focus on issues such as sensitivity to local cultures, the environment, ancestral graves, sacred places, traditional beliefs and customs, and possibly conflict resolution. All of the above facilitate for greater acceptance of foreign mining investments and assume that channels of communicating with community leaders are always kept wide open and that community consent is sought throughout project management.

9.4 The "Environment" in the PESE model

The PESE mining investment model makes environmental management sensitivity one of its declared goals throughout a mining project's three phases of exploration, production, and decommissioning. A company may boost its public acceptance by working toward sustainability with practices such as reducing its carbon footprint, recycling company waste, buying recycled products to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill, incorporating recycled materials into its products, reducing air and water pollution, and using renewable energy sources. It may also adopt "green mining" which is the use of technologies and mining practices that are intended to minimise any potential environmental effects that may arise after the extraction and processing of metals and minerals within a mine. The objectives are to (1) repair any damage caused by mining processes; and (2) to create a landscape that is safe for fauna, flora, and humans.

9.5 The "Decision-making" in the PESE model

Sustainable development of mining projects for local communities not only requires the balance of people, economic, social, and environmental considerations, but that decision-making processes of mining investors tap into community preferences. This is the question of how community's inclinations affect a mine owner's decisions. This may require that the mine's planning is reviewed and adjusted based on the analysis of the local community. Decision-making throughout the three stages of mining will continue to draw and be affected by community preferences. This way, mining investors and host communities may considerably reduce conflict over various aspects of the natural resource extraction.

10. What does all of the above tell us about the PESE model in brief?

From the foregoing, it can be said that the key features of PESE include (1) public participation and the opportunities local communities have to influence their surroundings, as well as communities' acceptance of projects (social sustainability) before and during operations; (2) the framework and functionality of environmental protection (environmental sustainability); (3) the protection of local cultural rights in mining projects (social and cultural sustainability); and (4) competitiveness of the mining industry in light of environmental guidelines and their enforcement (economic sustainability). Organisations that incorporate these business strategies into their functions are likely to enjoy greater community acceptance, increase their financial performances, and improve the impact they have on communities and the environment.

11. Concluding remarks

The article assessed local acceptance of Chinese mining investment in Hwange which is mostly a rural district in the Northern Matabeleland Province of Zimbabwe. It sought the views of 201 people on the acceptability of Chinese mining investment by local people. In doing so, stringent measures were taken to ensure that it did not align with either the "win-win" or "win-lose (neocolonialist)" narratives characterising Sino-Africa/Zimbabwe discourses. It increasingly sought to break away from the current dichotomy to offer more rigorous and nuanced analyses grounded in empirical research.

Based on the research findings, it seems to be the case that community acceptance of Chinese mining experience is currently experiencing difficulties. At the center of it all are accusations made against Chinese mining investors. With their fixation with profitability and extraction of natural resources at any cost, they are blamed by communities for fomenting, among others, environmental degradation, pollution of surface and underground water bodies, disfiguring of the landscape, forced evacuations of vulnerable community members, destruction of local livelihoods, and heavy-handedness in conflict resolution.

When assessed against the 3Ps of the TBL, it seems that the priorities of mining investors in the area are profoundly skewed towards profitability at the expense of the people and the fragile environment. This is an issue that senior Chinese government officials are beginning to accept as a major problem. In 2013, for example, Hu Tao who previously worked as a senior environmental economist with China's Ministry of

Environmental Protection (MEP) was asked the question: *What are the biggest challenges that China faces in addressing the environmental and social effects of its overseas investments?* Here's what he had to say:

In my view, there are 3 major challenges:

- Poor governance systems in host countries, for example in some Least Developed Countries in Africa. Weak governance systems fail to protect communities and the environment from potential harm.
- Some Chinese companies, especially some small- and medium-sized companies, who do not heed social and environmental responsibility within China, are now taking those negative practices abroad.
- Lack of coherence between international investment/trade treaties and environmental agreements. From an international legal perspective, this is a grey area (Tao quoted in Leung 2013, 1).

Against this background, the article came up with an Africa/Zimbabwe-centric model it called PESE in short. The model taps from the responses of the research participants, perceived short-comings of the profit-skewed model currently used by foreign investors in Hwange district, and integrates components of the TBL to come up with a model it recommends for use by Zimbabwe's foreign mining companies. Most importantly, it provides a model for Chinese and other foreign mining investors to review their practices so that community acceptance of their mining operations may possibly improve, thereby reducing unnecessary conflict and suspicion with communities. Given that Chinese investment is increasing in Zimbabwe, it may be worthwhile to conduct similar research in another industry and facilitate for comparative analysis.

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'New Dispensation, New Kids on the Block'. 'Ama 2000' and the 2023 Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Zimbabwe's political landscape has undergone significant changes since the 2017 coup, with the post-coup period being christened the 'New Dispensation'. The advent of the 'New Dispensation', characterised with promises of a new and revolving democracy, coincided with the coming of voting age of 'Ama 2000'. The paper investigated the electoral participation of 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe's 2023 elections. A theoretical framework that looked at factors that influence youth political participation was developed and used in explaining the electoral participation or their lack thereof. Hundred and fifteen focus group respondents between the ages of 18 to 23 were selected in Zimbabwe's cities of Harare and Bulawayo, wherein conversations on the motivations and barriers on youth political engagement were facilitated. Whilst 'Ama 2000' demonstrated political knowledge and interest, they are generally apathetic, with a few participating in voting whilst most did not associate with the other forms of electoral participation. Disillusionment with both politicians and political parties, politically motivated violence, and life cycle factors were the major reasons for their lack of interest in the country's 2023 elections. Arguably, there is no democratic and plural 'New Dispensation' after all, as these same factors have deterred older youth from participating in elections under the authoritarian Mugabe regime. However, the limited participation of 'Ama 2000' in voting demonstrates commitment to democratic principles and a desire to shape the country's future. To address the youth apathy gap, political parties must actively engage with them, reform, and promote inclusivity. At state level, structural reforms of an electoral nature are necessary to protect the security of the voter. Civil society has a role to play in strengthening civic education programs that instill a sense of civic duty and active

participation in democracy. By involving youth in the democratic process, Zimbabwe can build a foundation for inclusive political participation.

1. Introduction

Youth political participation is vital for the sustainable development and democratic governance of any nation. With 67.7% of Zimbabwe's population being under the age of 35 (UNICEF 2023), these youths represent a significant demographic group with immense potential to shape the political landscape. As the first generation to come of age in the post-Mugabe era, it is important to assess the level of political participation among 'Ama 2000' (those born after the turn of the millennium). 'Ama 2000' constitute the 2000 to 2010 cohort within Generation Z (Mahapatra et al. 2022). In the post-Mugabe era, most of the 'Ama 2000' were too young to have voted in the 2018 harmonised elections. 'Ama 2000' represent the youngest and most diverse demographic cohort in Zimbabwean society today, with two out of every three Zimbabweans being under the age of 25 (UNICEF 2023). 'Ama 2000' also represent the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age, where social media, instant messaging, and online activism are the norm, thus shaping their unique characteristics and values.

Understanding the political participation of 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe is crucial for promoting democratic participation and ensuring that their voices are heard in the country's political process. While there have been studies on youth political participation in Zimbabwe (see Hodzi 2014; YETT 2017; Musarurwa 2018; Masunda 2023), there is a lack of research specifically focused on 'Ama 2000'. The existing literature on political participation in Zimbabwe primarily focuses on older generations, leaving a significant knowledge gap with regard to the political engagement of 'Ama 2000'. This research aims to fill this knowledge gap by examining the attitudes and motivations of this generation, more so in relation to the 2023 harmonised elections. The 2023 harmonised election in Zimbabwe provide a unique opportunity to assess the political participation of 'Ama 2000', as it is the first major election in which the majority of this generation will be eligible to vote.

The political landscape of Zimbabwe has undergone significant changes post the 2017 coup, and the 2023 harmonised elections were a crucial test of the country's democratic progress. The departure of long-time leader Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in 2017, coupled with the death of the long-time leader of the then main opposition Movement for Democratic Change

(MDC) Morgan Tsvangirai in early 2018, dramatically shifted the political landscape of the country. Zimbabwe, once characterised by a predominantly older generation of political leaders, witnessed a remarkable shift as younger people increasingly took over the reign, especially in the then opposition MDC, which has largely morphed into the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). For once, and in a long time, there was general excitement among Zimbabwe's populace and the international community at large that the economic and political fortunes of the country would make a turn for the better, with president Emmerson Mnangagwa making bold promises in 2017 that Zimbabwe would witness a departure from the toxic politics of the past, and that the country was moving towards the trajectory of a new and revolving democracy. Mnangagwa popularised the terms "New Dispensation"; "Second Republic"; "Open for Business" in an attempt to convince Zimbabweans and the world at large that his governance style would be different from that of his predecessor Robert Mugabe (Rwodzi 2019, 193). It is in that context that this paper sought to examine the political participation of the youth, in this case 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe, post the Mugabe era.

2. Literature review

As highlighted in the introduction, the aim of this study is to establish the political participation of 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe and identify the factors that influenced their participation or lack thereof in the 2023 harmonised elections. There is no single theoretical framework that can provide a comprehensive explanation for political participation in all age groups. Moreover, it is crucial to consider that the youth are heteregeneous, and the reasons that drive their engagement in politics as well as the means through which they choose to participate, are equally varied. In this section, a framework has been constructed based on different scholarly contributions on political participation, serving as a guiding principle for the paper. The first part of this section briefly conceptualises electoral political participation with the latter focussing on elements that could affect youth political participation.

2.1 Understanding electoral participation

Electoral (conventional) participation is a subset of political participation, with the latter referring to the involvement of individuals in political activities, processes, and institutions. As Verba and Nie (1972, 2-3) have indicated, political participation

encompasses actions that are intended to have an impact on the determination of governmental policies or exert influence on the individuals responsible for formulating these policies. (also see Verba et al. 2002, 11). Electoral political participation thus includes activities that are formally recognised by the government or established institutions. Examples include voting in elections, joining political parties, membership in political parties, donating money and time to politicians, and attending political rallies. These forms of participation have long been considered fundamental to democracy as they allow citizens to express their preferences and hold elected representatives accountable. This paper sought to investigate whether indeed urban youth in Zimbabwe, the 'Ama 2000' cohort, do participate in the highlighted modes of electoral participation.

2.2 Factors affecting youth voter turnout

Previous research has demonstrated how various factors impact on the political participation of individuals. These factors can be classified into three levels—namely micro (age, gender, life cycle factors, education, political efficacy); meso (family socialisation, peer pressure, trade union pressure); and macro level (democratic culture, patron client politics, party structures). The relevance of micro, meso, and macro factors in explaining electoral participation is an issue that was discussed in the focus groups conducted with 'Ama 2000".

2.3 Micro level factors

Age

Several studies in advanced democracies have examined the relationship between age and voter turnout globally, with findings indicating that age is a good predictor of political participation (See Dalton 2008; Smets and Van Ham 2013, 348; Weiss 2020). A similar pattern has also been established in Africa, with survey data showing that the relationship between age and three forms of electoral participation (voting, contacting, and collective action) is curvilinear, with younger people less likely to participate (Mattes and Richmond 2015: 12; Resnick and Casale 2011, 15; Biney and Amoateng 2019, 12; Tambe and Kopacheva 2023). Turnout at the polls increases with age.

Life cycle factors

Literature also posits that life cycle factors can also be used to explain youth political

participation (Gray and Caul 2000, 1094; Tiley and Hobolt 2011; Erkulwater 2012, 202; Smets 2016, 226). Young people face various obstacles when it comes to securing employment, acquiring a house or property, and establishing a family. These challenges contribute to a diminished interest in political engagement in comparison to older individuals who have already settled into their lives (Smets and Van Ham 2013, 350; Smets 2016, 226). Research has shown that having a job and being married positively impact one's chances of participating in electoral activities.

Gender

Studies that have established a negative correlation between being a young woman and political participation (in all forms) are mostly in developing democracies (Amoateng et al. 2014, 5905; Ennaji 2016; Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi 2016; Zvobgo and Dziva 2017, 63). African women are less likely to vote, contact government officials, and attend rallies and community meetings (Bratton et al. 2005, 164-165). In a study on gender gaps and political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa, Coffe and Bolzendahl (2011, 253) note that in 10 of the 18 nations that were included in their study, women were less likely to register to vote.

Education

In developing democracies, scholarship asserts that education has a positive influence on the voter turnout of young people (Pellicer et al. 2022, 196). For example, a study conducted by Kuenzi and Lambright (2010, 784) aimed at identifying the determinants of voting behavior in 10 African nations revealed a positive correlation between education and voting. Similarly, another study encompassing eight countries in Africa in 2016, conducted by the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) (2016, 63), shed light on the fact that African youth with higher educational attainment were more inclined to participate in elections.

Low political efficacy

The decline in young people's involvement in electoral politics has also been ascribed to low political efficacy. In this particular context, political efficacy is defined as an individual's assessment of their government's receptiveness towards the needs and aspirations of its citizens (Lee 2006, 416). As such, political efficacy becomes contingent upon one's personal capability or incapability to elicit a reaction from the political system. Youth in Africa are increasingly dissatisfied with conventional politics, they have

no faith in politicians, they feel alienated and neglected (see Mattes 2012,140; Booysen 2015, 36; Tracey 2016, 31; Zvaita and Tshuma 2019, 28).

2.4 Meso level factors

Family socialisation

In studying political socialisation, the family unit has been a point of attention with some scholars putting it that behaviour and attitudes in adult life can be traced back to the process of family socialisation (Jennings et al. 2009, 786; Plutzer 2002, 54; Roman and Esau 2015; Esau 2018, 13). Households provide what Zuckerman et al. (2005, 93) refer to as "the primary locus of affection, trust, comradeship and political discussion" for their members. Parents and guardians serve as examples when they engage in the political sphere, exercising their right to vote, endorsing a petition, or contributing funds. Consequently, their children may imitate these activities as they come of voting age. Conversely, family socialisation can also deter political participation if children are socialised by their parents not to participate in politics—for example, the case of rural youth in Botswana (Ntau and Ntsabane 2006).

Peer pressure

Just like the family unit, peer pressure is another mobilising factor that can positively influence the political engagement of young people. In the context of emerging democracies, such as South Africa, Amoateng (2015, 114) conducted a study that examined the impact of peer pressure on the political socialisation of university students at the University of Johannesburg. The study involved 1,214 participants, and the findings demonstrated a positive association between engaging in political discussions with peers and a student's awareness of political issues, which can indirectly stimulate political participation.

Moreover, the influence of peer pressure on youth political participation has become more evident in relation to the increasing use of social media. In 2010, Vitak et al. (2011) conducted a study in the United States involving 4,000 undergraduate students at Midwestern University. The aim of the study was to explore how the use of Facebook influenced the political engagement of students during the 2008 United States presidential election. The findings indicated that exposure to the political activities of Facebook friends had a positive relationship with political participation (Vitak et al. 2011, 112). In another study conducted by Diehl et al. (2015, 1886) in the

United States between 2013 and 2014, it was found that the political content shared by esteemed peers on social media has the potential to influence the political opinions of young people.

Trade union pressure

There exists a longstanding association between trade unions and politics. Specifically, engaging in trade union activities increases the probability of voting in an election. According to Schur (2003, 766), participation in union activities raises one's chances of voting by one-third. Similarly, in Africa, research findings indicate a positive correlation between trade unionism and political participation. This correlation extends from the era of the resistance against colonial domination to the current struggles for democracy (Adman 2008, 130; Beckman et al. 2010; Karreth 2018, 159). For instance, survey data encompassing over 22,000 respondents from across Africa reveal that individuals who belong to trade unions display greater political engagement compared to non-members. They participate more frequently in elections and are more inclined to engage in protests and demonstrations (Karreth 2018, 159). Unfortunately, due to high unemployment rates prevalent in many African countries, particularly affecting the youth, the ability of trade unions to mobilise young people for political activities becomes restricted.

2.5 Macro-level factors affecting political participation

Democratic culture

The level of inclusivity in a political system, encompassing democratic, pluralistic, and open elements, is directly proportional to the degree of engagement from both the youth and the general public in both formal and non-formal political activities (Gabriel 2004, 367; Nilsson 2005, 1; Gundelach 1998, 436). The correlation between a democratic culture and political participation is positive. Should there be a lack of avenues for citizens to express their grievances and a denial of their right to voice dissenting opinions, the involvement of the youth in formal politics diminishes (Tracey 2016, 30-31). In a comprehensive examination of youth political participation across 19 African nations, Resnick and Casale (2011, 17) contend that dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy within their respective countries leads to decreased voting rates among the youth, particularly in urban areas. Similar findings have been observed in previous studies carried out on youth voter turnout in countries like Egypt and Morrocco (Sika 2012, 191; Desrues and Kirhlani 2013, 761).

Electoral systems

The electoral system used in a country tends to play a role in voter turnout. Findings from comparative survey studies posit that democracies with proportional representation (PR) systems tend to have a higher voter turnout as compared to those with majoritarian systems (Blais and Carty 1990, 178; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998, 251). Milner (2009, 14) made a specific observation that in Western European countries that employ a proportional representation system, the average rate of youth participation in voting was 12% higher compared to countries utilising majoritarian and mixed systems. In the remaining regions of Europe, not only does the youth populace exhibit a greater propensity to partake in voting, but the likelihood of their attainment of political office is also 15-20 times greater than that of plural systems and twice as much as that of nations with hybrid systems (Krook 2016, 14).

Whilst the majoritarian or First Past the Post (FPTP) has the potential to discourage specific identity groups, particularly minorities, research conducted by Lockwood and Kronke (2020, 2) revealed that FPTP can also stimulate an alternative form of traditional political engagement, namely, the act of recognising and reaching out to a councillor and legislator. Analysis of data gathered from 20 African nations in the years 2008 and 2009 demonstrates that nearly 60% of respondents within FPTP systems accurately identified with local leaders, in contrast to a mere 21% within PR systems.

Patron-client politics and corruption

Patron-client politics and corruption has a dual influence on the political participation of citizens. Patron-client relations are regularly underscored by the transaction of physical resources, services, and goods between a patron (politician in this case) and a client (voter) and these may be in the form of money, food, or clothing (Bratton 2008, 624). Bratton (2008, 621) puts it that at times elections in Africa are reduced to defining who gets access to the resources of the state, with politicians resorting to a number of means to attain office (fair or foul). The utilisation of a patron-client relationship is one of the unorthodox means. In one study conducted in Nigeria post the 2007 general elections, Bratton (2008, 623) revealed that one in five Nigerians were personally exposed to vote buying. The effect is more profound in rural settings. Survey data in Kenya drawn from the 2002 elections show that vote buying was a significant force that affected voter turnout and increased the probability of voting by 10% (Kramon 2009, 11).

In another study, Booysen (2015) conducted a survey which sought to establish South African youth interest in politics and participation. Part of the findings show

that young people in South Africa are generally cynical with electoral politics. Those who vote do so because "registering as voters and voting are two of the very few tools they have to try and secure jobs". Some youth vote because their perception is that by doing so they get connected to politicians who in turn can assist them in getting a job (Booysen 2015, 31). Thus, their motivation to vote is partly transactional.

Party structures

The manner in which political parties are structured also has an effect in the way that youth participate in party events and, eventually, how they participate in national politics (Dalton 2002, 28; Sloam and Henn 2019, 47). The decline in youth affiliation with political parties in advanced democracies is partly attributable to the decline in youth turnout at the polls (Van Biezen et al. 2012, 42). The exclusionary and elitist manner in which African political parties are structured is a challenge. Kanyadudi (2010, 1) observes that youth wings of some political parties in Africa are mostly redundant and not worthwhile at a time when there are several competing sources for the commitment of youth. Relatedly, Kabwato (2013, 19) notes that youth in Africa, especially young women, perceive conventional politics to be the realm of older people. Young Africans shy away from the ballot because they are excluded from positions of political authority in political parties and in government. "The social construction of maturity, that is, who is deemed responsible or capable, shapes eligibility for decision making offices, often to the exclusion of the youth, who are considered too young, irrational or irresponsible" (Biney and Amoateng 2019, 13).

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources entailed selecting respondents who provided their first-hand political experiences in focus groups. A total of 10 focus group discussions consisting of between 10 and 15 members were conducted, with five focus groups being conducted in Harare, and another five in Bulawayo. In total, 115 youth of voting age—that is, 18-23 years—were selected for this study (these fit within the Ama 2000 bracket). In the selection of participants, we ensured diversity in terms of gender, socioeconomic background, and level of political engagement. This helped to capture a range of perspectives and experiences that enriched the discussions. By engaging in a structured and facilitated conversation, the researcher gained insights into the perspectives, opinions, and experiences of youth regarding their

political engagement. On the other hand, secondary sources comprised of scholarship on youth political participation which largely consisted of books and journal articles.

4. Findings and Discussion

The primary objective of the focus groups was to determine the extent of youth involvement in the 2023 harmonised elections and identify the factors that either encourage or deter their participation. Based on the ensuing findings, it is evident that the youth in Harare and Bulawayo, referred to as 'Ama 2000', are not entirely active participants in electoral procedures, yet they are not completely disengaged either.

4.1 Voting

Findings from the study show mixed reactions with regards to turnout at the 2023 ballot. For those that decided to vote, their decision can be attributed to several factors—namely, their political awareness, desire for change, education, and inspiration from global political movements. Some of the 'Ama 2000' recognise the importance of voting as a means to address the challenges they face and create a better future for themselves and their communities. Their participation not only demonstrates their commitment to democratic principles but also reflects their determination to shape the destiny of Zimbabwe.

Political knowledge and interest

First, a notable number of the youth that participated in the discussions demonstrated they are politically conscious and engaged. 'Ama 2000' have grown up in an era of social media and instant information, which has allowed them to stay informed about political issues and developments in their country (Maringira and Gukurume 2021, 255). This increased awareness has empowered them to take an active role in shaping the future of Zimbabwe through their vote.

> I was always on social media and l was able to get information on the candidates that were contesting in my constituency (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).
> I follow Bobby Wine, Julius Malema, and Kalimbwe in Zambia on Twitter. These young guys inspire me and l felt as a young person in Zimbabwe the least l could do is to go and vote (respondent Harare focus groups).

Additionally, access to information and resources on social media allowed youth to critically analyse the political landscape and make informed decisions. This increased awareness made them realise the importance of participating in the democratic process and exercising their right to vote. They understood that their vote can make a difference, and that it is their responsibility as citizens to actively engage in the democratic process.

> I have gotten to understand that it is my democratic right to vote, and l had to exercise it even though it appeared the system did not want us to vote (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Exercise of constitutional rights

'Ama 2000' see voting as a way to express their discontent with the current state of affairs and demand accountability from their leaders. By actively participating in the 2023 electoral process, they were able to voice their concerns and contribute to shaping the future of Zimbabwe.

> As youth we had to go and vote because we are not happy with the present leaders who have failed to improve the economy and are corrupt. So we voted for change. The results were, however, disappointing (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). I have the right to vote just like everyone else. I should determine my own future through the vote. That is why l voted (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Socioeconomic factors as a motivating factor

Furthermore, the younger generation in Zimbabwe is facing a multitude of challenges and issues that directly affect their lives. High unemployment rates, lack of economic opportunities, and limited access to quality education are just a few of the problems they are confronted with on a daily basis (Moyo 2023). By participating in the electoral process, the younger youth saw an opportunity to elect leaders who they felt could address these issues and bring about positive change. They believe that, by voting, they can have a say in shaping policies that will improve their lives and create a better future for themselves and their communities.

> I have suffered enough, so I felt by voting I might be able to change things

> (respondent, Bulawayo focus group). I had to go and vote as I feel that's the only way we can get a government that can create jobs for us (respondent, Harare focus groups).

It is also important to highlight the several reasons highlighted that explained why some of the youth in Zimbabwe did not vote, and it is important to explore these factors in order to address the youth voter apathy trend that dates back to previous elections. The disillusionment with the political system, economic challenges, poor management of elections, and distrust towards political institutions all contributed to the reluctance of some of the participants to vote.

Disillusionment with politicians

One major reason highlighted is the youth's disillusionment with politicians and the political system. Some of the youth felt that their voices are not being heard and that their concerns are not being taken seriously by the politicians. As noted in the literature (See Alphonso, Conway and Damico 2000; Brady et al 2020), the feeling of disenfranchisement and exclusion significantly explains youth apathy at the polls. This feeling of powerlessness and apathy towards the political system led them to believe that voting will not make a difference in their lives. As a result, they chose not to participate in the 2023 elections which they perceived as ineffective and unresponsive.

> There is no point in participating in a process which serves to elect old people that do not care about our interests (respondent, Harare focus groups). You always hear these guys always saying 'nyika inotongwa nevene vayo' (the country is ruled by its owners); we are not 'vene' (owners) therefore there is nothing for us in this whole thing. So why waste my time (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Moreover, there is a deep-rooted distrust towards political institutions and leaders among some of the youth in Zimbabwe. The country has a history of political corruption and abuse of power which has eroded the trust of youth in the political system (Nyoni 2017, 289; Ndlovu and Santos 2022, 394). They view politicians as self-serving individuals who do not have their best interests at heart. This lack of trust further discouraged some of them from engaging in the 2023 electoral process, as they believe that their votes will not bring about any real change.

> We all saw the Gold Mafia scandal on YouTube, no one has been arrested to date and then you think voting will change these corrupt leaders. No (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). Politicians in this country are corrupt. They want to be elected so as not to serve anyone except to line their pockets. Elections are all about enriching politicians (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Socio-economic factors as a depressing factor

Another reason for the lack of youth voting in Zimbabwe is the economic challenges that they face. As already noted, unemployment rates among the youth are high, making it difficult for them to prioritise voting over their immediate economic needs. With limited job opportunities and a struggling economy, it would appear youth in Zimbabwe are more focused on survival rather than engaging in politics. This economic instability acts as a barrier for them to actively participate in the electoral process.

> I am busy with my nurse aide training. Once I am done I want to go to the UK like most people are doing where I can live a better life (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). I have no time for elections, they do not bring money on the table. I have to hustle (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Alleged vote rigging

In Zimbabwe, the belief that elections are rigged is a commonly held belief among the youth. There are several reasons why youth in Zimbabwe think this way. First, there is a general lack of confidence in the electoral process due to past experiences of election irregularities and manipulation (See Chigora and Nciizah 2008; Mwonzora and Mwandikwaza 2019, 1130; and Ncube 2022, 150). The country has a long history of disputed elections, with allegations of voter intimidation, ballot tampering, and biased media coverage.

> Look, whether we vote or not the results are always the same (respondent, Harare focus groups). I don't think that elections work in Zimbabwe. I don't have any evidence but I feel elections are somehow rigged (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). I will be honest to say elections are rigged. I was actually vindicated we all saw what happened in Harare, people failed to vote and some voted at night (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

The stated reasons have created a sense of scepticism and mistrust among some of the youth, who felt that their votes will not make a difference and that the outcome of the election had already been predetermined.

Patron-client politics

The influence of political elites and patronage networks in Zimbabwe further strengthens the perception that elections are rigged. 'Ama 2000' accused the ruling party of having a strong grip on power and also using state resources and institutions to maintain dominance. The youth have witnessed how political elites use their positions to accumulate wealth and benefits for themselves and their supporters, while ordinary citizens continue to struggle.

> It's all about creating networks where family and friends can 'eat' (respondent, Harare focus groups). 'Bayadla bodwa' (they are eating alone) (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

The aforementioned creates a sense of unfairness and inequality, leading youth to question the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Violence

Zimbabwe has a long history of political unrest and violence, particularly during election periods (Sachikonye 2011; Macheka 2022; Kwashirai 2023). From the discussions it is clear that they have seen the consequences of political violence first-hand, such as loss of life, destruction of property, and displacement of communities. As a result, they are acutely aware of the potential dangers associated with elections and are concerned about their own safety and the stability of their country.

> I saw what happened after the 2018 elections. People were killed in Harare. So I cannot associate myself with such activities. It's better to keep away from politics and preserve your life than try to be a hero and get killed (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). Elections in Zimbabwe are scary. There is always violence, so I am scared. I am a young mother and still want to fend for my young family (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Social media has also played a role in shaping the youth's thoughts on elections and political violence. Zimbabwe's youth are increasingly connected to the world through social media

platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. They have access to information, news, and opinions from various sources, both within Zimbabwe and internationally.

> I have seen cases of people being tortured on YouTube for taking part in politics. It's scary, I would rather keep away (respondent, Harare focus groups).

This exposure allows them to gain different perspectives on elections and political violence, enabling them to form their own opinions based on a broader understanding of these issues.

4.2 Youth Voter Registration in Zimbabwe

In order to participate as a voter in Zimbabwe, Section 23 of Zimbabwe's Electoral Act makes it mandatory that one must be registered (Electoral Amendment Act 2023). Respondents were asked whether they were registered as voters. Close to half of the respondents in all the focus groups indicated that they were not registered to vote. The unimpressive voter registration rates among 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe is attributed to several factors discussed below, some of which have already been discussed in the preceding section on voting. These include a lack of trust in the political system, apathy and disconnection from politics, practical barriers to registration, cultural and societal factors, and a lack of awareness and understanding about the importance of voting.

Logistical challenges

One important reason not discussed before which explains why some of the youth are not registered relates to practical barriers such as logistical challenges and limited access to voter registration centres. In Harare and Bulawayo, where a significant portion of the population resides, there was a lack of convenient and accessible registration centres in the pre-election period (registration was done at the headquarters of the electoral management body—Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC)). This made it difficult for youth living in these areas to register to vote, especially the challenge of not having reliable transportation and with some unaware of the nearest registration centre.

> For me to register I had to go to Famona. That means spending R40.00 on transport costs alone. Then when you get there, you are told you don't have this, or that. That's why I never bothered to go and vote (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Related to this matter, an additional difficulty that arose from the conversations, predominantly impacting youth who recently attained the age of 18, is not having national identification cards. It is a prerequisite that one must have a national identity document before they register as a voter. Identification cards are issued by the department of the Registrar General, who concurrently holds the duty of providing various other credentials such as passports, birth certificates, and death certificates.

> I failed to acquire a national identity card, therefore I could not register. When I attempted to get the ID, I was told that they did not have enough kits for producing the cards (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Studies show that there is a correlation between having friendly voter registration processes and higher voter turnout (See Ansolabehere and Konisky 2006; Neihesel and Burden 2012). It should be noted that efforts aimed at increasing youth voter registration rates were initiated by both government bodies and civil society organisations through various campaigns targeting communities. These initiatives aimed to educate youth about their civic rights and responsibilities while simplifying the registration process through mobile registration units or online platforms. However, the window period for mobile voter registration were rather short.

4.3 Attending political rallies

Although several of the participants were not registered to vote, it was crucial to ascertain whether they had participated in any political gatherings preceding the 2023 elections, or have intentions of doing so in the next elections. From the discussions it was clear that 'Ama 2000' are averse to attending political rallies. There are several factors that contribute to this phenomenon. These include fear of violence, a lack of trust in political leaders, a sense of disengagement from the political system, socioeconomic challenges, violence and intimidation, and a generation gap within politics.

Fear of violence

One prominent reason for not attending political rallies was the fear of violence and intimidation, and this was more pronounced with the female respondents. It was particularly evident that violence was a strong concern for those who are opposition sympathisers as shown in the observations below.

> We have heard stories about women being raped at 'bases', so it is not safe for me as a young woman to be attending rallies. I am scared I might get violated (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). I have seen on social media a number of rallies being disrupted by the police, getting arrested and so forth. Sadly, it is the ordinary people that get arrested, not the political leaders (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Socioeconomic factors

'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe face significant socioeconomic challenges that hinder their participation in political activities such as rallies. Unemployment rates among youth are high, and many struggle to make ends meet. Additionally, the cost of attending these rallies, such as transportation and accommodation expenses, can be prohibitive for many youth who are already financially constrained.

> Attending rallies consumes a lot more time, which can be productively used to look for money (respondent, Harare focus groups). These rallies do not help us in any way. Other than getting a T-shirt and a box of Chicken Inn there is nothing more to it. I would rather spend my time looking for clients to plait (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

As has been observed, lifecycle challenges can serve as an impending factor when it comes to youth political participation (Erkulwater 2012). The same can be said of 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe. As a result, they prioritise finding work or engaging in income-generating activities over attending political rallies.

Lack of inclusivity within political parties

Another factor that contributed to the low attendance of youth at political rallies is the lack of engagement and inclusivity from political parties. Many youth expressed the feeling that their voices and concerns are not adequately represented within the political sphere. In an earlier study on the role of youth leagues in political parties, Kanyadudi (2010, 10) made similar findings of exclusionary politics within political parties. 'Ama 2000' perceive political parties as being disconnected from their realities and unresponsive to their needs. This lack of meaningful engagement discourages youth from actively participating in political events and reinforces their perception that their attendance would be inconsequential.

> These parties only want us at their events so they can post pictures of crowds at stadia and then claim popularity, other than that they do not want us in their parties (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Gerontocracy

Relatedly, the dominance of older generations in politics was a factor that was strongly raised. This has been a challenge mostly within liberation movements in Africa (Adebayo 2018). In Zimbabwe, there is a significant generation gap between the older politicians who have been in power for decades and the younger generation.

> 'Chinhu chavo madhara aya', (its their thing these old people), they have even openly said 2030 'ndenge ndichipo' (I will be there) (respondent Harare focus groups). I though there would be renewal within the party ever since Mugabe left, but it looks like we have been sidelined again, so why should I attend functions of people that do not care about us (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

The lack of representation and inclusion of youth within political parties further exacerbates this gap. As a result, many youth feel alienated from the political processes and disengaged from attending rallies that are dominated by older politicians.

4.4 Party membership

Respondents were visibly averse to declare they were members of a party or a party's youth wing. Not one respondent confirmed party membership. In denying membership to political parties respondents raised numerous reasons for not being members. These include a lack of trust in the political establishment, a perception of disconnect between political parties and the concerns of youth, limited opportunities for meaningful engagement within parties, and a prevailing sense of apathy towards politics.

In Zimbabwe, there is a noticeable trend of youth not actively participating in political parties. 'Ama 2000' have grown up during a time of political turmoil and economic instability, which has eroded their faith in the ability of political parties to bring about positive change. They have witnessed years of corruption, nepotism, and failed promises from politicians, leading them to become disenchanted with the entire political system.

> Look, I do not trust politicians. When I was born, we did not have pipes water in Cowdray Park, now I am 19, we still do not have water. Why should I bother joining organisations that do not care about our welfare? (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Another reason for the lack of youth membership in political parties is the perception that these parties are disconnected from the concerns and aspirations of the youth. As previously noted, dominant political parties in Zimbabwe are seen as being dominated by older politicians who do not understand or prioritise the issues that affect the youth, such as unemployment, access to quality education, and affordable housing. Youth feel that their voices are not being heard within these parties and that their concerns are being overlooked.

Moreover, the limited opportunities for meaningful engagement within political parties also contribute to the low youth participation. In Zimbabwe, political parties often have a hierarchical structure that makes it difficult for youth to rise through the ranks and have a significant impact on decision-making processes (Hodzi 2014, 57). This lack of upward mobility within parties discourages youth from actively joining and engaging with these organisations. Additionally, there is a perception that political parties in Zimbabwe are more focused on gaining and maintaining power rather than addressing the needs of the people. This further dissuades 'Ama 2000' from getting involved in party politics.

> Just take a peep at the ZANU PF Politburo and Central Committee then you tell me how many youth you will find there (respondent, Harare focus groups). The ruling party is for old people who fought against whites, while the opposition died with Morgan Tsvangirai. So really there is nothing for us (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

4.5 Donating money and time

The participants were asked whether they had contributed resources (money and time) to politicians and political parties. In a nation where 74% of the young population is without employment, it was unsurprising that the participants not only emphasised their financial constraints, but also indicated that even if they possessed the means or resources,

they would abstain from contributing to political organisations as they would receive no meaningful dividend both in the short and long term.

Zimbabwe is facing a challenging economic situation, with high levels of unemployment and limited job opportunities for youth. As a result, many youth struggle to make ends meet and prioritise their own financial stability over donating money to political parties. The limited financial resources available to them make it difficult for them to contribute financially to political causes.

> I am unemployed, so honestly, where would I get money to donate to a political party? (respondent, Harare focus groups) Things are tough in this country. There is no money. You may actually have noticed that people were attending ZANU PF rallies just to get the free two piecer meals and drinks, not because they love rallies (respondent, Harare focus groups).

There is also a sense of disillusionment and mistrust among the youth towards political parties in Zimbabwe. The country has a history of political corruption and instability, which has eroded the trust of many youth in the political system. They may feel that their donations would not be utilised for the betterment of society but rather for personal gain or to sustain a corrupt political establishment. This lack of trust acts as a barrier for youth engagement and involvement in political activities.

> If there is one party that displays affluence, it has to be ZANU PF. They buy all-terrain vehicles for their campaigns, so they have money which I wonder where they get it from if they cannot buy ambulances. Justify to me why I should donate money to such a party (respondent, Harare focus groups). I did a course in ethics where I got to learn that most of these politicians have been involved in corrupt deals from Willowvale scandal in the 1980s to the recent Gold Mafia scandal. There is no sane person who would donate money to such people (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

Moreover, the youth in Zimbabwe feel disengaged from the political process due to a perceived lack of representation and voice within political parties. Many youth felt that their opinions and concerns are not being heard or taken into account by established political parties. This lack of inclusivity and representation has led to apathy and a disinterest in contributing time and effort towards political parties.

4.6 Contact with local leaders

Respondents were also asked if they had been in contact with political leaders before and during the 2023 harmonised elections to raise specific matters of concern. Various reasons were raised as to why youth in Zimbabwe did not get in touch with political leaders during the 2023 electoral cycle. These include deep-rooted distrust, lack of representation, limited access to information, fear of repression, and a disconnect between generations.

As has already been noted, there is a lack of representation and inclusivity within the political sphere. The majority of political leaders in Zimbabwe are older individuals who do not fully understand or empathise with the issues and concerns of the youth. This creates a significant barrier for youth to feel heard and valued within the political system. As a result, 'Ama 2000' choose to disengage entirely, feeling as though their voices will not be taken seriously or considered.

Additionally, there is a fear of repression and retaliation from the government for speaking out against the status quo. Zimbabwe has a history of suppressing dissent and silencing opposition voices, which has created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation (Mutanda 2019; Dube 2021). Youth noted their reluctance to engage with political leaders out of concern for their safety and well-being.

> Getting in touch with a politician can get you in danger of either being beaten up by those of the opposing party or you may just disappear (respondent, Harare focus groups)

The advent of social media and technology has made it easier for people to connect. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp provide instant access to politicians and enable direct communication between citizens and politicians. This accessibility has empowered some youth to express their opinions, seek answers to their questions, and hold political leaders accountable for their actions or lack thereof. By utilising these platforms, a few of the youth in the study sought to engage with political leaders but faced challenges.

> There are too many accounts of political leaders especially on Facebook, so it is difficult to know which one is genuine and which one is fake (respondent, Harare focus groups). Some of the verified accounts are handled by other

> people and not the leaders themselves, so it is quite discouraging (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups). 'Mukomana' (nickname for Nelson Chamisa) is active on Twitter and has responded to one of my questions. The challenge is that he is too cryptic and avoids answering questions directly (respondent, Harare focus groups).

Another factor that contributes to the online disconnection between youth and political leaders is the digital divide prevailing in the country. Many youth in Zimbabwe do not have affordable and reliable access to the internet or other platforms where they can learn about political issues, engage in discussions, or connect with political leaders. This lack of access hampers their ability to stay informed and actively participate in political discourse.

> Data is just too expensive. With the little data I get, I would rather discuss business than politics (respondent, Harare focus groups). The monthly data that my parents buy for me is for research related activities only, if I get too excited and divert I will have only myself to blame if it gets exhausted mid-month or something (respondent, Bulawayo focus groups).

5. Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the electoral participation of 'Ama 2000' in Zimbabwe's 2023 elections. As noted, electoral participation involves a number of activities namely voting, attending political rallies, membership in political parties, donating money and time, and getting in touch with political leaders. Literature also identifies a number of factors that contribute to both the engagement and disengagement of youth in electoral processes, and these factors were classified into three categories namely micro, meso, and macro factors. From the findings, it can be argued that 'Ama 2000' are generally apathetic, as they only demonstrated some level of participation in voting, and not the rest of the other modes of electoral participation, where they are generally disengaged. The golden threads that run through in justifying their lack of interest in electoral politics are their disillusionment with politicians, gerontocracy, rigidity in political parties, politically motivated violence, and life cycle factors. From the micro level factors discussed, only life cycle factors partly explain the disengagement of 'Ama 2000' from the 2023 elections. Macro-level factors namely party structure, the political

environment, and elections management largely explain the apathy shown by the respondents. Meso level factors (family socialisation, peer, and trade union pressure) were hardly mentioned. However, 'Ama 2000' demonstration of political knowledge and interest plus the limited participation in voting demonstrate their commitment to democratic principles and also reflect their determination to shape the destiny of Zimbabwe, should there be the political will to address the other structural hindrances that stand in their way.

It is crucial for political parties to actively engage with the youth and to promote dialogue between politicians and young citizens to address the concerns of disillusionment. Addressing socioeconomic challenges and promoting inclusivity are essential steps towards encouraging youth participation in political activities and fostering a vibrant democratic society. Strengthening civic education programmes within schools to cultivate an informed electorate from an early age, establishing more accessible voter registration centres across all regions, and fostering transparent election monitoring systems can also bridge the apathy gap. By actively involving youth in the democratic process, Zimbabwe can build a solid foundation for inclusive governance, foster political stability, and ensure that the voices of its future leaders are heard.

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THE POLITICISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This article analyses local government politics in Zimbabwe. The political scene in Zimbabwe changed drastically in the year 2000 with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The party threatened the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front's (ZANU PF) political dominance and this resulted in ongoing conflict, with the ruling party using its power at central government level to frustrate the opposition that often dominated local government. Several events such as the clean-up operation in 2005 and the 2008 cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe were indicative of a governance system that had been politicised, with negative effects on citizens' lives. A watershed moment occurred in 2013 when a new constitution was introduced and for the first time since independence, local government was recognised. One of its key tenets is devolution of power to local communities. However, due to the polarised nature of politics in Zimbabwe, very little has been done to implement this principle, as the ruling party regards devolution as a threat to its political influence. The article argues that creating and fostering a democratic society in Zimbabwe will ensure that devolution is implemented, and that citizens will have a say in how their communities are governed.

Keywords: Constitution, Local Government, Decentralisation, Devolution, Democracy, Zimbabwe

1. Introduction

Scholars and policymakers regard local government as an important component of governance in any country. Within the African context, it is deemed important because it is the sphere of government closest to citizens. Chapter 14 of Zimbabwe's new constitution that was introduced in 2013 recognises the importance of local government. This was seen by many as an important step for the country as previous constitutions did not recognise this sphere of government. More importantly, the constitution advocates for the devolution of power to local communities. This was, again, regarded as significant as it provides a platform for citizens to have a say in governing their communities. However, there has been little progress in implementing this principle, which this article argues is due to the politicisation of local government.

In the early 2000s, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) faced a considerable challenge from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). With ZANU PF dominating central government and the MDC local government, the parties were at constant loggerheads, with each blaming the other for the woes of local government. The sections that follow discuss local government within the Zimbabwean context, starting with a general overview followed by a discussion on how local government in the country has been heavily politicised to the detriment of the citizenry.

2. Local Government During Colonial Times

The history of local government in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial period. The British South African Company (BSAC) which entered the country under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes in 1890 appointed the Salisbury Sanitary Board (SSB) to oversee the running of its affairs (Mapuva 2014, 12; Kurebwa 2015, 96). This centralised system meant that the British government maintained full control (Mapuva 2014, 13).

The colonial government dismantled the traditional African system of governance of kings, chiefs, headmen, and village heads (Chigwata 2018, 67). Between 1890 and 1980, the Rhodesian government adopted several governing systems to advance the interests of the colonial government (Chigwata 2018, 71). These would serve as a model for postcolonial Zimbabwe when, as in colonial times, local government became an instrument for the ruling party to retain power.

As noted by the literature on colonialism, this governance system was inherently racist, discriminatory, and based on ethnic divisions (Chigwata 2018, 76). While the structures were designed to control the African population, efforts were made to include it in decision-making processes as was evident in the 1969 constitution. It provided for a House of Assembly consisting of 50 European and 16 African members and a Senate made up of 10 Europeans and 10 African chiefs (Chigwata 2018, 77). Chigwata (2018, 77) argues that this was an attempt to contain the conflict between the nationalist movement and the colonial government (Chigwata 2018, 77). Local government thus became politicised as a strategy to appease the disgruntled, marginalised African population.

Furthermore, the Rhodesian government showed little respect for African culture and systems of governance. Traditional leaders served at the pleasure of the colonial government that also sought to reduce the number of chiefs serving rural communities and replace them with more pliant traditional leaders (Chigwata 2018, 86).

3. Local Government After Independence

On independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a racially skewed system. It has been argued that the democratically elected government under Robert Mugabe did little to change this system and this is also true of local government (Mapuva 2014, 13; Stoneman 1981, 8). The inherited system would be the foundation upon which local government would function. However, the government did adopt measures to redress the effects of colonialism. Most of these efforts were driven by the aim of uniting a country that had been divided along racial lines and thus advocated for nation-building (Dorman 2016, 45). As noted earlier, local government previously served the needs of the white minority.

Local government was centralised under colonialism, resulting in the marginalisation of African communities. To redress these inherited inequalities, the government promulgated the Rural District Councils Act which resulted in the amalgamation of African councils into District and Urban Councils (Mapuva 2014, 13). This was intended as a decentralised form of governance. In 1980, the government created a ministry to oversee local government which was headed by the late Eddison Zvobgo (Kurebwa 2015, 96). These initiatives reflected the desire to accommodate sections of society that had been marginalised by the colonial government.

Thus, following independence, from a policy perspective, the Zimbabwean government adopted a decentralised mode of governance. The uneven nature of the new Zimbabwean state would be one of the biggest challenges that the country would grapple with in its formative years. In 1984 and 1985 the office of the Prime Minister issued the *Prime Minister's Directives on Decentralisation.* These introduced changes to the local government structure that were seen as a shift from the colonial mode of governance. Local government legislation was enacted, resulting in an inclusive system based on universal suffrage (Kurebwa 2015, 97). This reflects a shift towards a system based on participatory democracy.

Decentralisation was seen as a strategy to improve local government by promoting good governance, accountability, and transparency (Kurebwa 2015, 97) that were lacking under the colonial government. The Prime Minister's directive of 1985 created the office of 10 provincial governors to coordinate and implement development plans within their provinces (Kurebwa 2017, 97). The Rural District Councils Act [Chapter 29:15] which came into effect in 1993 led to the creation of 55 Rural District Councils which covered all communal land in Zimbabwe (Kurebwa 2015, 98). This was viewed as a symbol of the shift to a new local government system.

Despite these seemingly progressive measures, challenges persisted in cities such as the capital, Harare, that continued to function like a regulated colonial city (Dorman 2016, 25) and the city battled with several issues such as urban agriculture which was also the case under colonial rule. Mugabe's government was also accused of focusing development on certain areas at the expense of others. Whilst Harare and other cities received significant support for development, areas such as Matabeleland, the Zambezi Valley, and Chipinge received less in the way of post-independence reconstruction and improved services (Dorman 2016, 47). One can, therefore, argue that the politicisation of local government was evident in the formative years of the Zimbabwean state. It has also been argued that although colonial rule had come to an end, the dual system that it established persisted. The government reforms of 1993 disenfranchised farmworkers, and mineworkers and divisions between communal, urban, and resettlement areas persisted (Dorman 2016, 55), perpetuating the inequalities that were evident under colonial rule.

The rising urban population was a major challenge confronting the new government. Post- independence, larger cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, and Gweru saw an influx of citizens. In Harare, this resulted in the development of squatter camps, much to the dismay of the government that embarked on clean-up projects to eradicate them.

The first major campaign, dubbed 'Operation Clean-up', resulted in the arrest of more than 6,000 women, some of whom were wrongly accused of being prostitutes (Dorman, 2016, 59). The government's heavy-handedness would be an on-going feature of its management of local government.

4. Local Government and Multiparty Competition (2000-2013)

In Zimbabwe's formative years, the ruling party, ZANU PF, did not face considerable political challenges. However, the early 2000s would change the dynamics in the country with the formation of a new vibrant opposition party, the MDC, which was founded by trade unions. From 2000, ZANU PF would be at loggerheads with the opposition and this resulted in a period of political violence, murder, assassinations, destruction of property and poor economic conditions which culminated in the economic crisis in 2008 (Jonga 2014, 79). This contestation would have a huge impact on local government as the two parties were pitted against each other at central and local government level.

Zimbabwe witnessed degeneration of the rule of law which played out on the political front with examples including the land reform programme and *Operation Murambatsvina.* Local government would also be affected as public institutions like urban councils whose duty it was to provide public goods and services to communities in a democratic manner failed to play their role (Jonga 2014, 79). The politicisation of local government came to the fore due to the conflicting political ideologies of ZANU PF and the MDC.

From the time of independence, Zimbabwe enjoyed relatively democratic local government. Although skewed towards the minority, the inherited system functioned to a certain extent with citizens receiving basic services such as water and refuse collection (Jonga 2014, 79). However, after 2000, local government failed to deliver these basic services to ratepayers. In 2002, for example, ZANU PF officials owed the Harare City Council US$7.3 million in unsettled bills (Jonga 2014, 82). It can be argued that ZANU PF officials used their proximity to power at central level to manipulate local government. In analysing the power dynamics within Zimbabwe, it is clear that while considerable competition is allowed in respect of local government and legislative elections, this does not apply to the presidency as "spanners" are thrown at opposition candidates to prevent them from assuming the presidency (Masunungure and Shumba 2012, 127). This explains why the opposition had, and to a certain extent continues to

enjoy more success in winning elections at the local government level than at central level. It not only illustrates the politicisation of local government but also sheds light on the electoral setup in Zimbabwe which makes it almost impossible for the opposition to win presidential elections.

The dynamics in Zimbabwe seem to confirm Harold Laswell's (2018) definition of politics as "who gets what, when, how." In the Zimbabwean case, central government funds some local government activities, and ZANU PF uses this situation to frustrate the efforts of the opposition. The politicisation of local government prevents it from fulfilling its primary duty, which is to deliver basic services to citizens on a non-discriminatory basis (Jonga 2014, 82). A prominent example of this state of affairs is *Operation Murambatsvina.*

The opposition won several seats in Harare in the 2005 parliamentary elections. In response, ZANU PF embarked on a campaign to clean up the city (Bratton and Masunungure 2006, 22). The chair of the government-appointed Harare Commission which was overseeing the city's affairs, Sekesai Makwavarara, announced that *Operation Murambatsvina*[1] sought to enforce by-laws to halt illegal activities, including vending, illegal structures, and touting/abuse of commuters by rank marshals (Potts 2006, 275). It was further announced that all illegal structures would be demolished and that activities in areas deemed undesignated would be halted (Potts 2006, 275). On paper, this was an effort to clean up a city that had once been dubbed the "Sunshine City" following independence. However, closer analysis reveals the political motivation behind the operation. First, the Makwavarara-led 'government-appointed' Harare Commission was imposed by ZANU PF on local government, and second, the operation targeted areas that the opposition dominated in the elections.

ZANU PF thus used *Operation Murambatsvina* to settle a political score with the opposition. According to Bratton and Masunungure (2006, 22), after the MDC won control of urban areas, the ZANU PF-led government launched this crackdown which had huge ramifications not only for the opposition but also for affected citizens. There have been conflicting reports on how many citizens were affected, but the academic literature estimated between 650,000 and 700,000 based on a report authored by United Nations (UN) special envoy Anna Tibaijuka (Potts 2006, 276). Those affected lost their source of livelihood, their homes, or in many cases both. This campaign highlighted ZANU PF's approach to dealing with dissenting voices, in this case, the

1 Shona term for "Move the Rubbish"

urban population. It has been argued that rulers who gain office through violence are prone to repression (Bratton and Masunungure 2006, 21), and this is applicable to ZANU PF in this instance. In addition, many analysts and commentators noted that this crackdown was conducted indiscriminately with excessive force, and that it violated national and international laws pertaining to evictions (Bratton and Masunungure 2006, 22). The actions of ZANU PF during *Operation Murambatsvina* are among the litany of acts deemed to be in violation of human rights carried out by the party, especially since the turn of the millennium.

The cholera outbreak was one of the lasting impacts of *Operation Murambatsvina* and the political and economic crisis in 2008. *Operation Murambatsvina* resulted in those affected having to find alternative accommodation and many settled in Hopley Farm which was described as a "highly-impoverished area" (Chigudu 2019, 421). The cholera outbreak ravaged Hopley Farm and other high-density areas such as Glen Norah, Glen View, Budiriro, and Mbare. Its cause can be linked to ZANU PF's interference in local government.

The lack of clean water was one of the major contributors to the cholera outbreak. In 2005, the state-owned Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) took over management of water in what was viewed as a move to wrestle public service delivery from the MDC-run municipality (Chigudu 2019, 423). It was believed that ZANU PF benefited financially from this takeover and it also frustrated the opposition's efforts in local government. Under the ZINWA, water management was in a sorry state with the organisation deemed incompetent by citizens (Chigudu 2019, 423). In addition, Zimbabwe's economy was in the doldrums with inflation reaching astronomical levels and believed to be in the region of 79.6 billion percent (Chigudu 2019, 416). These circumstances led to the deadly cholera outbreak. Chigudu (2019, 425) notes that "The implacable ruthlessness of cholera left behind a spectacle of death". Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health announced that 98,592 cases and 4,288 cholera deaths had been recorded (Morof et al. 2013, 645).

5. Local Government since 2013

After the controversial election in 2008, the two largest political parties in Zimbabwe—ZANU PF and the MDC—joined forces, albeit it reluctantly, to form a Government of National Unity (GNU). Part of this agreement was the crafting of a new constitution which for the first time since independence included local government. More importantly, the new constitution provided for devolution. As noted previously,

prior to 2013, citizens played a limited role in local government. Devolution as set out in Zimbabwe's constitution aims to enhance good governance, and empower local communities politically and economically by providing them with a platform to share resources and be involved in decision-making (Chikwawawa 2019, 19).

The new constitution was viewed as a watershed moment for Zimbabweans as, at least on paper, citizens had a say in the governance of their local communities. Chapter 14 Section 264 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for devolution of power from central government to local government with the overriding aim of ensuring good governance, democratic participation of communities, and accountability (Chikwawawa 2019, 20). Close perusal of this section of the constitution suggests that its authors were aware of previous cases whereby power had been misused by political leaders. The shift of power from central government to local levels, and advocacy for democracy, transparency, accountability, and peace all speak to a country that was deprived of these principles (Chikwawawa 2019, 20).

One of the major issues in relation to this section of the Zimbabwean constitution is the unclear role of the state. It states that the state should devolve power to provincial and local levels "whenever appropriate" (Chikwawawa 2019, 20), suggesting that power still resides with central government and that devolution will be implemented when and as it sees fit. This has further contributed to the politicisation of local government. This phrase also speaks to the dynamics that led to the adoption of the new constitution. ZANU PF and the MDC, that are diametrically opposed at an ideological level, were in a GNU between 2009 and 2013. ZANU PF, especially under Mugabe's leadership, was not in favour of devolution whilst the opposition angled for it (Chikwawawa 2019, 21). One of the reasons why ZANU PF was against devolution was that it undermined its stranglehold on power. As a result, devolution has been an extremely slow process. It is believed that former President Mugabe did not implement devolution because he was of the view that it was a divisive issue. The nature of Zimbabwe's centralised state, rampant corruption, and the citizenry's exclusion from decision-making were additional factors (Chikwawawa 2019, 22). This speaks to the power dynamics that are associated with devolution in the country.

A key obstacle in implementing devolution is the state of democracy in Zimbabwe. Nyikadzino and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2022, 7) note that successful devolution requires the creation of an environment that allows citizens to participate in governance. One can argue that this has not been evident in post-colonial Zimbabwe with its polarised political environment that is at its worst during election periods. For devolution to be

implemented and for it to yield results it is important that democratic principles are adhered to. For example, electoral laws should promote regular, democratic, free, fair, and transparent elections at both the presidential and local levels (Nyikadzino and Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022, 7).

6. Conclusion

Like many postcolonial states, Zimbabwe has struggled to implement democracy since its independence in 1980. Local government, which should serve citizens' needs, became a tool for the ruling ZANU PF to retain power. In analysing local government in Zimbabwe, it is important to acknowledge the role played by colonialism in centralising power through laws and institutions. The postcolonial government inherited this skewed system.

Up until the year 2000, ZANU PF faced little competition, but the formation of the MDC threatened its stranglehold on power. In order to retain power, it used its proximity to power in central government to thwart the efforts of the opposition at local government level. Events such as *Operation Murambatsvina* in 2005 and the creation of the ZINWA are examples of ZANU PF's efforts to prevent the opposition from making strides in local government. The introduction of a new constitution in 2013 provided for a platform to improve local government through devolution.

While the aim of devolution was to empower local communities, due to the power dynamics within Zimbabwe, this has not occurred at the pace many hoped for. Under former president Mugabe and current president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, very little has been done to implement devolution and many argue that this is due to the fear that it will cause the ruling party to lose its grip on power. Democracy calls for citizens' inclusion and successful devolution requires that all involved adhere to democratic principles. Only through the adoption of democracy at all levels of government will citizens have a say in how their communities are governed.

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ZIMBABWEANS AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY

"They do not want us in their country, yet we contribute significantly"
(havatide havo munyika mavo asi vanotida)

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Abstract

"They do not want us in their country, yet we contribute significantly," shared a Zimbabwean woman in the Cape Town region of South Africa**.** The economic turmoil in Zimbabwe has led to decades of immigration to South Africa with no clear resolution to migration in sight. Despite legal challenges and xenophobic backlash, Zimbabweans believe their impact on South Africa has been substantial. Xenophobia is defined by a host country's citizenry expressing anti-foreign sentiments implicitly through commentary or explicitly through escalation into violent attacks. The authors engaged 56 Zimbabweans with a 30-question questionnaire covering basic demographic information, employment-related inquiries, financial, and income-related matters. These were distributed among respondents from various socio-economic sectors. The research findings provide insights into Zimbabwean spending patterns and overall perspectives on living and working in South Africa. With this research and the study of recent court rulings in South Africa, the authors argue that despite the xenophobic atmosphere, Zimbabwean immigrants are contributing to the South African economy and the social fabric. The theoretical underpinning of xenophobia in this article is that although foreigners are not welcome in South Africa, the data reveal that Zimbabwean economic contributions in South Africa complicate a narrow

interpretation of xenophobia and suggest more multi-layered sentiments of both wanting and rejecting foreigners in the economy. Moreover, as the situation in Zimbabwe continues to deteriorate, South Africa looks to be their long-term place of residence. How South Africa handles Zimbabwean immigrants in the future offers an opportunity to reset current immigration policies and support economic growth in the region.

Keywords: Migrants, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Operation Dudula, ZEP, Economy

1. Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the political and economic crises in Zimbabwe have resulted in the migration of Zimbabweans all over the world. Following the March 2008 Zimbabwean elections, President Robert Mugabe cracked down on political opponents, forcing some Zimbabweans to flee for their lives and warranting refugee status (HRW, 2008). For many other Zimbabweans, the unfavourable economic landscape prompted migration. Today, it is estimated that more than five million Zimbabweans are residing outside their country (Moyo 2021, 335-370). Initially, many immigrants intended to return to Zimbabwe when the situation improved. Despite nearly two decades since the onset of Zimbabwe's economic crisis, Zimbabweans continue to confront a highly corrupt regime, goods and services priced in U.S dollars while workers are paid in Zimbabwean dollars, and high levels of inflation. These factors contribute to many Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa in the hope of better economic opportunities (Quora 2015). The August 2023 Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) presidential re-election dashed the hope for economic improvements and prompted more people to leave the country in search of better opportunities. (Muronzi 2023).

The economic component of Zimbabwean migration can be explained by the persistent inflation which contributes to the high rate of poverty and vulnerability (World Bank 2023). This economic turmoil has led to immigration to South Africa with no clear resolution in sight. Furthermore, diplomatic relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe are strained, with Pretoria accusing Harare of neglecting the plight of its citizens and compelling immigrants to come to South Africa. For South Africa, immigrants from Zimbabwe challenge its limited resources intended for its citizens. Zimbabweans are perceived as uncontrolled waves of migrants "flooding" and "swamping" South Africa and are sometimes called "*makwerekwere*" (a term

used to refer to foreigners, often considered derogatory and can carry negative connotations). Yet, Zimbabweans with established families and strong ties in South Africa, formed over twenty years, consider South Africa their primary residence. Most Zimbabweans in South Africa are seeking economic opportunities which often contribute to the South African economy.

This article builds on the works of Crush (2017) and Moyo and Nzima (2017, 335-370) to examine the Zimbabweans' economic and social contributions to the South African economy. The questions encompassed basic demographic information, employment-related inquiries, financial and income-related matters, as well as social contexts. The questionnaires were distributed among respondents from various socio-economic sectors to collect data on the general characteristics of Zimbabwean immigrants, including age, gender, marital status, and educational background. Additionally, the questionnaires aimed to capture information on their professional details, such as employment status, industry, and job roles. Furthermore, the questionnaires sought to elicit information about their spending patterns and overall perspectives on living and working in South Africa.

With these questionnaires and the study of recent court rulings in South Africa, the authors argue that despite the xenophobic atmosphere, Zimbabwean immigrants are contributing to the South African economy and social fabric. The theoretical underpinning of xenophobia in this article is that although foreigners are not welcome in South Africa, the data reveal that Zimbabwean economic contributions in South Africa complicate a narrow interpretation of xenophobia and suggest more multi-layered sentiments of both wanting and rejecting foreigners in the economy. Moreover, as the situation in Zimbabwe continues to deteriorate, South Africa looks to be their long-term place of residence.

The article begins by providing an account of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa since the early 2000s. The second section offers an overview of literature related to the topic, followed by a description of the study's methodology. The final section presents the results and discusses the study's findings, providing recommendations on how to address the issue of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. The paper is based on surveys and selected interviews with over 50 Zimbabweans residing in the Cape Town metropolitan area. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and is on file with the authors. Due to legal status concerns, full names were not requested from participants.

2. Background

South Africa, due to its middle-income status, stable democratic institutions, and relatively industrialised economy, acts as the host to the largest number of immigrants on the African continent (Relief Web 2021). Official estimates suggest that the country is home to approximately 2.4 million immigrants, constituting three per cent of the overall population of 62 million people (StatsSA Census 2022, 31). It is, however, widely believed that this number is an underestimate due to the significant presence of unauthorised migrants, particularly from neighbouring countries (Moyo 2021, 335-370). Attuned to the demography of those living in the country, South African functionaries in some ministries have aimed to limit immigrants and those admitted into the formal labour market. Immigration policies aim to limit critical skills permits, general work permits, and business permits, which enable foreigners to reside in the country and engage in various business and economic activities.

In 2017 the South African government White Paper on International Migration aimed to align migration policies with labour market needs (Department of Home Affairs [DHA] 2017). The DHA moved toward narrower and more restrictive enforcement. These immigration restrictions for economic migrants have resulted in the asylum-seeker path as the default immigration option. This development has raised concerns as it has created challenges for most migrants attempting to legalise their presence in South Africa and it is linked to the deprivation of a legal right to work in the country (Carciotto et al. 2018).

In April 2009 the South African government introduced the Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (ZDP/DZP) to regularise the status of thousands of Zimbabweans who had migrated to South Africa to escape political and economic instability between 2007 and 2009. The program received over 295,000 applications and over 245,000 were issued. Upon inception, the DHA issued the primary objectives of the ZDP as follows: regularise the status of Zimbabweans residing illegally in South Africa; prevent the deportation of Zimbabweans who were in the country illegally; alleviate pressure on the asylum seeker and refugee regime; and grant amnesty to Zimbabweans who had fraudulently obtained South African documents (DHA.org 2014).

In 2014, when the initial Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP) was set

1 The research project received approval from the Faculty of Law Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town on 14 November 2022. (L100011NS -2022).

to expire, the South African government decided to reissue the permits. One of the reasons cited was that "most Zimbabweans who were granted this permit were not yet ready to return home" (DHA 2014). The DZP was valid until 2014, after which it was succeeded by the Zimbabwean Special Dispensation Permit (ZSP). Subsequently, the ZSP was replaced by the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP), effective from September 2017 to December 2021. In November 2021, however, the Minister of the DHA decided to cancel the ZEP altogether. To address the concerns of the ZEP holders, the DHA functionaries granted a 12-month grace period that was extended until 31 December 2022. During this time, the permit beneficiaries were given the option to apply for a mainstream visa or leave the country. In September 2022 the DHA further extended the ZEP permits by another six months until June 2023. This extension created significant anxiety and uncertainty among the permit holders, as they were unsure about their future status in the country. The Helen Suzman Foundation and Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa challenged the DHA decision to terminate the ZEP program. In June 2023, the Gauteng High Court in Pretoria ruled against the decision, holding that the termination of the permits was invalid, unlawful, and unconstitutional. This ruling came about because the Minister of Home Affairs was deemed not to have followed a fair process, which should have included consultation with and an opportunity for ZEP holders to make representations. The South African Minister of Home Affairs filed an application to appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal which was dismissed in October 2023.

According to reports from the Zimbabwe Community in South Africa and the Zimbabwe Migrants Support Network, a considerable number of ZEP holders are low-wage workers who do not meet the criteria for obtaining work permits. They provide the needed labour and expertise in the various work sectors. Their inability to apply for a work visa prohibits them from a regulatory waiver (Mhaka 2023). As a result, many Zimbabwean immigrants are forced to reside and work in South Africa without legal status.

In addition, an estimated 15,000 migrants and refugees from Zimbabwe and other countries enter South Africa daily through official border posts or illegal crossing points, as reported by MSF (2021). The Zimbabwean population in South Africa is estimated to range from one million to five million individuals (Polzer 2008, 1-28). Within this population, approximately 245,000 were documented under the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP). This could suggest that as many as 750,000 Zimbabweans in South Africa are undocumented. According to the South African 2022 census, over 1 million

Zimbabweans are living in South Africa which is roughly 45% of the immigrant population (StatsSA Census 2022, 31). As with all undocumented immigrants, Zimbabweans who lack legal status cannot access local bank accounts and confront the inability to secure regular, formal employment. Despite these challenges, Zimbabweans contribute to the South African economy through purchasing goods and services and working in the informal economy. Many ZEP holders are employed in the formal sector and contribute tax payments to the South African Revenue Service (SARS). If the ZEP permits are not renewed, the 178,421 ZEP holders (as estimated by Mateko 2022), would cease paying taxes. Although the potential loss of tax revenue has not been calculated by SARS, it could hurt the already debt-ridden South African economy.

2.1 Significance of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa

South Africa's economic position in the South African Development Community (SADC) has drawn immigrants from the African continent. The arrival of African immigrants has drawn the attention of unemployed South Africans, a group that was recorded at 32.9% in the first quarter of 2023 (StatsSA 2023). Operation Dudula originally branched off from a faction within the "Put South Africans First movement" (Myeni, 2022) and has instilled fear among immigrants through its anti-immigrant campaigns on social media. This xenophobic movement has transitioned to on-ground actions. Many Zimbabweans feel targeted by members of Operation Dudula because they are the largest immigrant group in South Africa. The Operation Dudula campaign is rooted in concerns over the strain on public health services, job opportunities, and social welfare programs attributed to what they see as an "influx of illegal immigrants." The group strongly denies being a xenophobic vigilante organisation (BBC News Africa 2023). Instead, they assert that their mission is to "clean up communities" and "create opportunities" for marginalised South Africans due to perceived government neglect.

The Operation Dudula campaign, which has now become a political party (Allison 2023), has caused many immigrants to live in constant fear, especially with regard to their legal status in South Africa. Operation Dudula members have been vocal in opposing the extension of the ZEP program, arguing that undocumented immigrants worsen the crime situation. Operation Dudula has contributed to negative perceptions of casting Zimbabweans as potentially dangerous and associated with criminal activities in South Africa (Ellis 2023).

Economic theories of migration shed light on the interplay between xenophobia and economic development. Neoclassical theories of migration, such as those articulated by Sjaastad (1962), posit that migrants are drawn to destinations offering higher wages and better job prospects compared to their home countries. However, this pursuit of economic opportunity can fuel xenophobia in destination countries, as native-born citizens perceive migrants as competitors for limited resources like jobs and social services, leading to tension and hostility.`

The New Economics of Migration theory, as outlined by Porumbescu (2015), presents a more nuanced perspective. This theory suggests that migration decisions are often collective, driven by communities or households seeking to maximise income and employment while minimizing risks. From this viewpoint, immigrants are not just competitors but also contributors to economic development. They fill labour shortages, bring valuable skills and entrepreneurship, and stimulate growth in sectors of the economy. Additionally, immigrants can enhance consumer demand and cultural diversity, fostering innovation and productivity.

Overall, while xenophobia may arise from perceived competition between native-born citizens and immigrants, immigrants also play a pivotal role in driving economic development. Understanding the economic dynamics of migration and immigrants' contributions can help to address xenophobia and leverage immigration for economic growth and prosperity.

With the sluggish growth of the South African economy since the global financial crisis of 2008, job creation has been insufficient, contributing to chronic job insecurity among unemployed South Africans. The labour market is characterised by challenges of widespread unemployment and a simultaneous, unsatisfied demand for skilled workers. To address these issues, government policies prioritise employment and human resource development, as evident in several long-term labour market targets, while also dealing with macroeconomic challenges, including low growth and high budget deficits. The South African labour market requires both skilled and unskilled workers, necessitating an exploration of immigrants' contributions in various sectors, including informal employment.

3. Literature Review

Academic scholarship on immigrant economic contributions tends to rely on macroeconomic data and human rights law. These sources remain valuable as this article begins a discussion

on the Zimbabwean economic contributions to South Africa with ethnographic data.

In the global economy, immigrant labour has become increasingly important leading to a surge in immigrant workers seeking employment opportunities in other countries (ILO 2017). The presence of immigrants in the workforce has broader effects on economic growth, benefiting local and national economies. This in turn results in rising wage levels for native-born workers (Nijkamp and Poot 2015, 203-229). The ILO estimates that approximately 244 million immigrants worldwide, representing 3.3 per cent of the global population, and nearly half of them being women, contribute to the labour force (ILO 2017). Moreover, many low-skilled workers often face exploitative working conditions with limited access to human and labour rights. Their vulnerability is particularly acute within the informal economy because of heightened susceptibility to exploitation and abuse (ILO 2017).

Concerning South Africa, according to a study conducted by the OECD (OECD Development Centre—International Labour Organization project on Assessing the Economic Contribution of Labour Migration in Developing Countries as Countries of Destination), immigrants contribute to the country's economy in three distinct ways: labour markets, economic growth, and public finance (OECD 2018). The report highlights that immigrants are well-integrated into the South African labour market, with employment and unemployment rates similar to those of native-born workers. What is key is that the immigrants do not displace native-born workers, yet they are often employed at higher rates relative to the host country's generally low employment rate. According to the report, immigrants tend to fill occupations with high growth rates, reflecting demand-driven immigration patterns. Education levels among immigrant workers show polarisation at the lower and higher ends compared to native-born South Africans. While immigrants initially had a higher share of tertiary education, this advantage has decreased over time as education levels among the native-born population have improved. The presence of immigrant workers does not significantly impact native-born employment at the national level, but there are varying effects at the sub-national level.

The OECD analysis further notes that immigrant workers can also have both negative effects, such as lower employment rates among native-born workers, and positive effects, such as higher incomes, for the native-born population. Interestingly, the presence of new immigrants who have been in South Africa for less than ten years, appears to increase both the employment rate and the incomes of South African-born workers (OECD 2018).

The report also suggests that immigration has a net positive impact on South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. The econometric model estimates indicated that immigrant workers may contribute to increasing the country's income per capita by up to 5%. The higher educational attainment of foreign-born workers, their larger representation in the working age population, and the potential for increased total factor productivity through efficiency gains, such as labour force specialisation, could explain this positive impact (OECD 2018). Immigrants reportedly have a positive net impact on the South African government's fiscal balance as well. They tend to pay more in taxes, particularly in income and value-added taxes. In 2011, the per capita net fiscal contribution of immigrants ranged between 17% under the average cost scenario and 27% under the marginal cost scenario. In contrast, native-born individuals contributed -8% under both scenarios (OECD 2018).

However, it is essential to note that not all Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa are lawfully present and earning a decent living. In the Limpopo Province of South Africa, that borders Zimbabwe, locals claim that the influx of refugees and illegal foreigners from Zimbabwe puts a strain on their local labour market, leading to frustration. Many also assert that foreign nationals do not contribute anything significant to the South African economy (MSF 2021). Nevertheless, Mateko (2022) found that Zimbabweans helped in employment creation, increased supply of other services, infrastructure development, new business setups, transfer of skills, increased labour supply, and tax revenue. Similarly, Facchini et al. (2013, 15-29) conducted a study assessing the impact of immigration on native-born employment in South Africa. They found small negative effects of immigration on the income of native-born workers at the national level, but no significant impact on employment. At the district level, they observed a reverse pattern, with a negative effect on employment, but not on income.

According to Mathekga (2022), the reasons why many people are leaving Zimbabwe include seeking better living conditions and providing for their families. This is evident in the remittances of money back home by Zimbabwean immigrants, indicating their intention to maintain ties with their roots while working in South Africa (Polzer 2008, 1-28). Hungwe (2020, 54-76) also argues that the level of economic stability of Zimbabwean workers within the South African job market is the major pull factor into South Africa. This attractiveness of the labour market, however, exposes workers, especially those in career-less and unstable jobs to harsh exploitative working conditions.

Like Hungwe (2020, 54-76) and Polzer (2008, 1-28), Crush et al. (2018) have revealed that a significant proportion of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa are young

males, compelled to migrate due to economic hardship, unemployment, and political persecution. For many of these immigrants, the South African informal economy offers a vital source of employment, particularly in the retail, trade, and wholesale sectors (Crush et al. 2018). Crush's 2018 study on Zimbabwean migration in South Africa further highlights the complex dynamics of migration and xenophobia. The study describes a significant percentage of Zimbabwean immigrants involved in the informal economy, noting the role of the informal sector for Zimbabweans living in South Africa. In analysing the effects of illegal immigrant workers, particularly domestic workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa, Vanyoro (2019, 24-39) emphasises the importance of protecting foreign or local workers in informal workspaces. The study concludes that all domestic workers operating in informal settings require protection. Failure to address the issues faced by immigrant domestic workers could lead to a deterioration of working conditions and standards across the sector, putting all domestic workers at risk of exploitation and economic precarity. Thus, foreign workers also become subject to the existing conditions in different workspaces, and the challenges are not exclusive to South Africans, as complaints about foreigners causing problems are also prevalent in informal workspaces.

Furthermore, most studies that focus on Zimbabwean workers in South Africa tend to agree on one critical aspect: many workers, whether in informal or formal work, face exploitative working conditions, and the situation becomes even worse when one is undocumented. Unfortunately, obtaining valid work visas, which might afford some modicum of better protection, poses significant challenges due to the stringent immigration policies in South Africa (Baison, 2021). Building on the theme of challenges that Zimbabweans face in South Africa, Mateko (2022, 11-18) describes the fear of deportation, difficulties in securing working visas, lack of access to legal help, accommodation issues, xenophobia, marginalisation, segregation, discrimination, irregular incomes, short maternity leave, zero maternity leave benefits, non-payment of salaries, underpayment of wages, and lack of work permits. Studies by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) emphasise the need for further research on the effects of migration in destination countries and such discriminatory practices.

4. Methodology: Understanding Zimbabwean Immigrants in the study

The authors designed a primary data collection—a survey questionnaire that was distributed to 60 individuals of whom 56 responsed. One person requested the destruction

of their questionnaire due to concerns about being identified as undocumented.

The questionnaire presented 30 questions covering a wide range of topics. These questions encompassed basic demographic information, employment-related inquiries, financial and income-related matters, as well as social contexts. The questionnaire was distributed in a paper format among respondents from various socioeconomic sectors to collect data on the general characteristics of Zimbabwean immigrants, including age, gender, marital status, and educational backgrounds. Additionally, the questionnaire was intended to capture information on their professional details, such as employment status, industry, and job roles, and to elicit information about spending patterns and overall perspectives on living and working in South Africa.

The locations selected for data collection primarily included Zimbabwean churches in Cape Town. These data collection sites encompassed a diverse cross-section of the Zimbabwean community. Churches are known for attracting people from various backgrounds, ensuring a wide range of participants in the study. The research team visited Zimbabwean churches in Milnerton and Bellville Towns, explaining the study's purpose and its significance to potential respondents. Interested participants completed questionnaires voluntarily on Sundays in May and June 2023. At the time of the research, the Gauteng High Court had not yet ruled that the DHA Minister had acted unconstitutionally regarding ZEP holders. Interested individuals were also invited for interviews, either immediately after completing the questionnaire or at a later scheduled time.

A combination of random and snowball sampling methods was employed to select respondents and to ensure that the sample represented a significant portion of the Zimbabwean immigrant population. The snowballing technique involved encouraging participating respondents to refer other interested Zimbabweans to contribute to the research, enabling the inclusion of individuals who might not have been reached through traditional random sampling methods. Twelve interviews were conducted between April 2023 and July 2023 to gain a deeper understanding of various aspects discussed in the study. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing for open-ended questions and follow-up inquiries. This approach facilitated more comprehensive and nuanced responses, affording the researchers a richer understanding of the perspectives of Zimbabwean immigrants. Often, the immigrants felt more comfortable sharing their experiences through interviews following participation in the questionnaire survey component of the research.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were entered into statistical software, Eviews, to generate descriptive statistics and identify trends and patterns in the

responses. The qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and then subjected to thematic analysis to identify key themes and narratives related to the experiences of Zimbabwean immigrants.

Limitations

The sampling technique employed could introduce bias in respondent selection. The research focused on a specific geographic area, namely the City of Cape Town. This narrow scope might limit the generalisability of the findings to the broader population of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. Therefore, the study provides a snapshot of the Zimbabwean experience in the Western Province, but it may not apply to all the Zimbabwean people living and working in South Africa.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Representation

The study respondents included 15 male and 41 female respondents, which contrasts with Crush's (2018) findings that indicated a predominance of male Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The age range of the respondents was quite diverse. The youngest participant was 18 years old and had moved to South Africa at the age of 16, two years before the study. In contrast, the oldest participant was 60 years old, having moved to South Africa in 1996 when they were only 33 years old. Among the other most senior respondents, one relocated 16 years ago and another only two years before the interview. The median age of the respondents was 35 years, with 35 also being the mode age. Thirteen respondents were in the age range of 40 to 49, while only three fell between the ages of 50 and 60. Twenty-six respondents were between 30 and 39 years old, eight were between 21 and 29, and one respondent was below the age of 20. The length of time spent in South Africa varied among the respondents, ranging from two to 27 years. The majority of respondents had lived in South Africa for over 10 years, indicating a substantial period of residence.

5.2 Reasons for Migrating to South Africa

Questionnaire response data indicate that the majority of respondents can be broadly classified as economic migrants. "Economic migrants" can be defined as individuals

entering a state to engage in economic activities such as investors or business travellers. However, economic immigrants can also be understood in a narrower sense, similar to the category of "labour migrant" (Simon et al. 2015). Seventy-one percent of respondents reported that their primary reasons for migrating to South Africa were to support their families and meet their financial needs. They stated that they had moved to South Africa because they needed to provide for their families through any available job and business opportunities. Only four per cent of the respondents mentioned that they initially relocated to South Africa for educational purposes. While seeking employment was also the top priority for them, most were even willing to start their own informal businesses and become self-employed to make a living. Sixty-four per cent of the respondents indicated that they reside in South Africa with their families. This illustrates how many have established South Africa as their home after emigrating from Zimbabwe with their entire families.

The age of the respondents varied as noted above. One respondent mentioned that they first relocated to South Africa when they were just 14 years old, and now have no intention of returning to their home country as they now consider South Africa as their permanent residence. A 44-year-old woman who moved in 2018 explained that, despite her age, she felt compelled to leave Zimbabwe because there were no job opportunities available back in Zimbabwe. As a widow, she had to provide for her children. Since relocating to South Africa, she has not been able to secure any formal employment. Instead, she decided to become self-employed by setting up a vegetable stall where she sells vegetables in her local community in Dunoon. Through this venture, she has managed to send her children to school. Although she earns an average of R3000 per month, it is sufficient for her, especially compared to what she could have earned in Zimbabwe, given that her highest educational qualification is an Ordinary Level Certificate.

The oldest respondent in the study, a 60-year-old woman, reported that she initially relocated to South Africa in 1996. Since then, she has been self-employed as a vendor. Now that she has reached retirement age, she is eagerly looking forward to returning to her home country to retire. The second oldest respondents in the study were two individuals, both 57 years old. The first individual, a male, relocated to South Africa 16 years ago. He is a seasoned civil engineer who has successfully established a consulting firm, employing six people. Additionally, he is in a partnership with a South African engineer. His initial reason for moving to South Africa all those years ago was to find employment, and over time, he has not only found a job but has also built a life and a family in the country.

5.3 Employment Statuses and Economic Contributions

For many, the goal of migration – namely, to secure a job and to provide for their families – has been achieved. Fifty-four per cent of the respondents reported that they were formally employed, covering a wide variety of careers, including engineering, academia, accounting, and trade skills such as plumbing and carpentry. They all described making significant contributions to the South African tax base by paying employment taxes to the South African Revenue Services (SARS).

In the informal sector, there are domestic workers and caregivers, with some having established small backyard businesses. According to Hussmanns, "informal employment encompasses the following situations: own-account workers and employers in their own informal sector enterprises, own-account workers producing solely for their households, contributing family workers, members of informal producers' co-operatives and employees holding informal jobs (that is, if their employment is not subject to for example national labour law)" (Hussmanns 2004, 3). These individuals play a vital role in the social fabric of the South African economy. Many become integral parts of South African families, and some are even involved in raising their employers' children. A significant number of respondents engaged in informal work also mentioned that they have ventured into entrepreneurship. For instance, one respondent who works as a plumber, shared that they left formal employment due to the low salaries they were receiving and their desire to start their own business. They have successfully established their own plumbing business, employing seven individuals, four of whom are South Africans. Additionally, they diligently fulfil the tax obligations related to their business by paying their taxes to SARS.

In terms of tax contributions, 55% of the respondents disclosed that they earn no more than R24 000 per month. However, a significant number also earn more than R24 000 per month, placing them in the upper middle and top echelons of society, illustrating a range of income levels among Zimbabweans. Approximately 40% of the respondents stated that they contribute to SARS through Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) taxes. More than 18% of the respondents reported paying over R100 000 in PAYE tax annually. One respondent mentioned paying over R200 000 per annum in taxes related to their business. While these numbers represent only a small subset of the respondents, when combined they provide a signal of the significance of the Zimbabweans' contributions to the South African economy.

Many Zimbabweans contribute to the South African economy through various means, such as job creation, paying taxes to SARS, and even through rental payments. More than 50% of the respondents indicated that they pay over R5000 per month for their accommodation, either in the form of rent or mortgage payments. Housing, particularly for individuals with lower income, remains a prominent issue, with rent being one of the highest expenses for many. Among the respondents, 71% reported living in houses, with only seven per cent stating that they reside in shacks. As one respondent aptly put it, their contributions extend beyond their work and taxes, as they also stimulate economic activity through their housing-related expenditures. Translated from Shona, she stated "South Africans may not want us in their country, but we contribute significantly through the rent we pay and the transportation services we use." (*….havatide hedu munyika mavo asi vanotida, takavakoshera, Deno tisipo (foreigners) imba dzavo dzaigara ani and ma Taxi ndiani aikwira…"*). This aspect of money circulation in the housing market has not been fully explored in the literature.

In an overwhelming consensus among the respondents, 99% of them felt that they are making a positive contribution to the South African economy in one way or another. They believe this is particularly true as they offer their services in industries or job sectors that may not typically be attractive to native South Africans. One respondent shared her decade-long experience as a domestic worker in South Africa. She has remained employed by the same family since her arrival, initially caring for their single child and now looking after their two children, with the youngest being eight years old. Her sense of contribution extends beyond an economic frame and indicates an element of assimilation into South African society. Remarkably, 25% of the respondents reported that they had worked as domestic workers at some point. In their roles they have not only raised their employers' children but also taken care of their employers' families, enabling many of the families for whom they have worked to engage in other economic activities. This effectively frees up South Africa's labour force to participate in broader economic endeavours. Additionally, only seven per cent of the respondents mentioned that they had been in South Africa since they began their undergraduate studies. Notably, one of them graduated with an Honours degree in 2012 and has since earned a Doctoral degree while still residing in South Africa. Another individual, a respondent who initially moved to South Africa as an accounting undergraduate student, is now a chartered accountant working as an auditor for one of the country's most prestigious organisations. These stories highlight how deeply entrenched Zimbabweans have become in South Africa.

5.4 Employment Opportunities and Related Challenges

The respondents' educational backgrounds ranged from those with only secondary education to those holding doctoral degrees. This diversity highlights that Zimbabweans in South Africa are positioned to pursue a wide range of employment opportunities. Contrary to Operation Dudula's statements, Zimbabweans are not taking jobs away from locals, rather they are also filling scarce skills employment positions. Moreover, a considerable number of respondents fall under the "critical skills" category, indicating that they are making contributions to the South African economy in areas of specific needs. Zimbabweans, like other immigrants, fulfil the critical skills job positions that the South African Government states as important to the country. According to Sidimba (2023), "the majority of those who are unemployed (in South Africa) are not highly skilled and are not competing for the same vacancies at the global talent South Africa should attract to close the skills gap."

One persistent issue is that South African immigration regulations present—or seem to present—a formidable barrier to Zimbabweans. The respondents indicated a nearly unanimous consensus that possessing the necessary "paper" or visas authorising employment in South Africa is the most straightforward route to securing a job. Yet, the DHA often creates obstacles for qualified individuals seeking work permits, lengthening the visa application procedures, for example. One respondent recounted the loss of a job opportunity when attempting to modify their visa conditions, which were linked to their then-current employer. This process extended over three months, resulting in the prospective employer rescinding their offer due to the unresolved visa conditions. Another participant shared their ordeal of facing an average of four visa application rejections, with reasons that appeared arbitrary and unsupported by legal grounds. These rejections compelled the applicant to invest substantial amounts in reapplications and legal consultations before finally obtaining the visa. According to the Vulindlela report under President Cyril Ramaphosa, during the period between 2015 and 2021 over 68% of visa applications faced rejection (Vulindlela 2022). From 2014 to 2021, only 25,298 visas were approved across the various visa categories (Vulindlela 2022). A notable portion of the respondents, at least 25%, reported encountering hurdles during their visa application processes. Delays in visa processing pose a significant disadvantage for those eligible for various visa types, occasionally leading to missed job and educational opportunities. Over eight per cent of the respondents explicitly stated that they had missed job and educational opportunities due to delays in visa processing.

In addition to visa immigration hurdles, the Zimbabwean respondents described discriminatory behaviour, often from their colleagues and sometimes even from employers, resulting in lower wages than South African nationals earn. Yet, the respondents in manual or labour-intensive jobs such as waiters or salon workers reported that their employers openly preferred hiring foreign labour. This preference stemmed from the perception that foreign workers are more willing to work longer hours and on more days compared to local workers who are perceived as attuned to their labour and union rights. The theoretical notion that xenophobia is multi-layered and both welcomes and rejects foreigners, particularly Zimbabweans, broadens traditional approaches to anti-foreign sentiments in the South African economy. More than ten per cent of respondents faced challenges securing promotions at work due to their foreign status despite having the required qualifications, which hinders them from voicing concerns or seeking better opportunities. Yet, the need for employment compels them to remain in South Africa despite these difficulties and the high cost of living.

5.5 Why Zimbabweans are not leaving South Africa

The respondents often expressed conflicting sentiments about living in South Africa. They reported that the country offers ample career opportunities compared to Zimbabwe, which serves as a significant pull factor for immigration. Beyond the higher salaries associated with employment in South Africa, there are also prospects for career advancement that entice more Zimbabweans to relocate and for others to remain. South Africa also provides opportunities for career growth and skills development, and some respondents have benefited from employers' willingness to hire foreigners.

Although some employers prefer foreigners (Zimbabweans in particular), this can sometimes make the Zimbabwean workers targets of discrimination. Given this vulnerability, 20% of the respondents mentioned that they refrain from speaking their mother tongue in public to avoid being identified as foreigners and to mitigate potential xenophobic attacks. Zimbabwean immigrants often feel that discussions pertaining to "foreigner" in South Africa inherently refer to them, leaving them vulnerable to potential xenophobic incidents. Despite the highly visible Operation Dudula, none of the respondents explicitly mentioned it, which seems to suggest how deeply ingrained xenophobic sentiments have become in everyday life. This heightened sense of vulnerability results in a persistent state of fear, as Zimbabwean immigrants believe that any negative events attributed to foreigners in South Africa will invariably be associated with them.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the research reported herein identifies the majority of Zimbabweans in South Africa as economic migrants, and much like other populations of economic migrants, they play a significant role in contributing to the economic development and growth of South Africa. Their contributions take various forms, including paying taxes to SARS through PAYE taxes, owning both formal and informal businesses that employ South Africans and generating income, renting houses—which provides income to South African property owners—and engaging in all the economic transactions of everyday life. Additionally, their contributions extend to providing essential domestic services and taking care of South African families, thus playing a crucial role in raising the next generation of South Africans. While South Africa traditionally boasts one of the strongest economies in the Sub-Saharan region, it faces economic challenges, with average economic growth limited to around one per cent over the past decade (WCG 2023). Furthermore, the unemployment rate has reached its highest point in decades, standing at 32.6% in the second quarter of 2023 (Stats SA 2023).

In an attempt to revitalize the South African economy and job growth, President Ramaphosa has pushed for changes with ministers whose positions are regarded as anti-immigrant. South African economic policies need to protect its native labour market force while promoting economic growth and addressing structural unemployment. The ongoing xenophobia against immigrants in South Africa, particularly Zimbabweans, if left unaddressed, may drive these individuals to seek refuge in other nations where they feel safer. This potential exodus could lead to shortages in the labour force of both skilled and unskilled workers.

This research therefore recommends a set of actions. First, the South African government should reduce barriers for skilled Zimbabwean immigrants with job offers from South African employers. This would ensure that positions requiring skilled labour are promptly and adequately filled, promoting economic growth and productivity within the country. A new economic immigrant visa system, better than the ZEP program, needs to be developed and tailored to Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. It is essential to recognise that Zimbabweans in South Africa fall under various visa categories, including critical skills, ordinary skilled, and unskilled labour and contribute to the South African economy. Different visa systems with specific terms and conditions could be developed to accommodate these diverse labour force categories. For those deemed critical and desirable to the economy, permanent residency options may be

considered, similar to what is currently offered for critical skills and general work permit visas. For the low-skilled labour force, and those who work in the informal economy, an informal business visa could be issued. This would enable the lawful operation of informal businesses, with specific restrictions on their modes of operation and other regulations to ensure compliance with South African laws and regulations. The informal sector visa could also enable the unskilled to become documented and counted in census activities that survey South Africa and its economy. The Zimbabweans' economic presence and its substantial contributions to the South African economy through taxes and labour could then be more definitively recognised.

Building on the research findings herein, the authors advocate for a more inclusive society by dispelling misconceptions and promoting evidence-based policy-making. In the spirit of President Ramaphosa's Operation Vulindlela 2023 report, a society that embraces diversity and recognises the valuable contribution of immigrants will enable future South African progress and prosperity.

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Patriarchal politics, online violence and silenced voices
The decline of women in politics in Zimbabwe

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In this year's elections in Zimbabwe, the number of women nominated and elected to national office decreased. This decline can be attributed to increased online harassment of women in politics, as well as financial obstacles and patriarchal attitudes. To reverse this trend, it is crucial for the government, political parties and civil society to address gender-based electoral violence effectively. Additionally, the government should genuinely implement gender quotas, focusing on empowering women in politics rather than using quota as a means to improve their international image, attract international donor funds and secure more women voters.

Zimabwe held elections on 23 and 24 August 2023 to elect a new president, members of parliament and local government authorities. The main focus of the elections was the 'battle of the titans' between the incumbent, President Emmerson Mnangagwa, representing the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, and Nelson Chamisa, representing the main opposition party, Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). Although the voting days were described as calm, preliminary reports by election observers from the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) determined that the elections had not met the

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requirements of either Zimbabwe's constitution or SADC's principles and guidelines governing democratic elections.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced that Mnangagwa had won the presidential election, obtaining 52.6 percent of the national vote. The CCC rejected this outcome and appealed to SADC and the AU to intervene, asserting that a Zimbabwean court would not overturn the election results. These diplomatic appeals did not yield immediate results and Mnangagwa was sworn in as president of Zimbabwe on 4 September 2023. In its final report, SADC recommended that all grievances related to the outcome of the elections needed to be directed to the relevant domestic courts in Zimbabwe.

Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, the AU's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, went to Zimbabwe to observe the elections. Sallah-Njie said she was encouraged by Zimbabwean women's enthusiasm to participate in the electoral process. But with the focus of the election on the fight between the two 'Big Men', concerns over gender and women's representation were treated as peripheral.

Sallah-Njie cautioned the government over reports of escalating political tension and attacks on voters and members of political parties, especially women, both online and offline. She warned that violent gendered prejudices drove these online attacks and could result in physical violence against women. The rise in online and offline harassment of women in politics has made women's participation in elections less safe in Zimbabwe. Data from a 2023 Afrobarometer report shows that 75 percent of Zimbabweans believe women should have the same chances as men to be elected for political office, but 58 percent acknowledge that once elected, women are at higher risk of criticism or harassment.

Significant losses...

In 2023, the number of women nominated to contest Zimbabwe's elections declined significantly. Candidate data collected for the research project Making Politics Safer – Gendered Violence and Electoral Temporalities in Africa shows that of 633 registered candidates running for 210 first-past-the-post (FPTP) parliamentary seats, only 68 (11 percent), were women. FPTP means that the candidate who gets the most votes in their constituency wins, even if it is less than half the votes. Of the 68 women candidates, ZANU-PF fielded 23 (34 percent), the CCC 20 (29 percent) and the remaining 25 were from minority parties (27 percent) or independent candidates (10 percent).

In the Senate, 36 women (45 percent) were elected. In the National Assembly, 60 women were elected through the quota, 22 were elected through FPTP voting and three were elected through the youth quota, bringing the total to 85 women representatives (30 percent). Overall, women's representation in the Zimbabwean Parliament stands at 34 percent, which just exceeds SADC's minimum requirement or a critical mass of 30 percent, but falls short of gender parity. Only six ministers, six deputy ministers and five permanent secretaries (who are not elected but appointed by the president), out of a total of 67 appointees, were women.

Lack of financial resources also played a role in the exclusion of women candidates, especially in the competitive FPTP elections. The candidature fees were raised by 20 times since last election (2018) – for presidential candidates from USD 1,000 to 20,000 and for parliamentarian candidates from USD 50 to 1,000. Exorbitant fees exclude women from political participation, especially in the competitive FPTP elections – and, in particular, women from minority parties and independent candidates. For this reason, many women candidates failed to raise enough capital to successfully campaign. Linda Masarira wanted to run for president but did not contest the presidency because she could not raise the fee required for a presidential nomination. Both the AU and SADC linked increased nomination costs to the decline in women's political participation. The findings of an AU and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa joint election observation mission emphasised that these fees undermined "Zimbabwe's constitutional aspiration and international/regional commitment towards gender equality."

ZEC's arbitrary application of financial policies also exclude women. ZEC initially disqualified the only woman in the presidential race, Elisabeth Valerio, for paying late in local currency: ZEC had allegedly advised her to pay in US dollars to avoid disqualification. In Zimbabwe, both the US dollar and the Zimbabwe dollar are recognised as legal tender. However, the US dollar is preferred and in many instances government agencies, such as ZEC, discourage or refuse payments in Zimbabwe dollars. This is not done officially, but is arbitrarily applied depending on the agency or government department. Valerio took ZEC to court, successfully challenged the decision to disqualify her and had her nomination reinstated.

...and small gains

Amid the significant gender losses in the 2023 elections, there were small gender gains. The number of women representatives in local government increased due to the

extension of the quota to local government level. In Bulawayo Province, the smallest of Zimbabwe's ten provinces in terms of population, the proportion of women councillors increased to 39 percent from 31 percent in 2018; in Harare Province, the largest province in terms of population, women's representation increased to 36 percent from 12 percent. The cities of Masvingo and Mutare elected their first female mayors, and the capital Harare elected its first female deputy mayor.

Nonetheless, since the implementation of the national gender quota in 2013, with each election the number of women representatives in the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet of Zimbabwe has declined. This slow regression indicates a bias within political parties against women candidates, driven by patriarchal beliefs that portray women as being weak. These prejudices are also evident in the way women in politics are harassed and threatened online.

Escalating online violence

The democratic space for physical protest has diminished significantly in Zimbabwe since the highly contested elections in July 2018, when the army shot at protesters in Harare, killing six people and injuring 35. The state-led clampdown on protests has pushed Zimbabweans to increasingly use social media as a platform for political engagement.

This is especially true for women. A 2020 report by international non-governmental organisation Hivos looked at how women leaders use social media in Zimbabwe. The study showed that social media has become a critical tool for political agency, allowing women leaders to access a larger political base, campaign for support, share ideas with each other and voters, and engage in activism. But the Hivos study also revealed another side to the story. It showed that male dominance in Zimbabwe extends to social media, replicating the patriarchal attitudes that reinforce sexist attitudes towards women offline, and that online abuse against women is increasing.

Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie warned that allegations of persistent online violence targeting women involved in Zimbabwean politics should not be ignored. She implored the government to "strengthen its efforts in combatting hate speech and harmful content, that fuel animosity and incite violence against women in politics." Without such measures to safeguard women representatives, Sallah-Njie warned that women could eventually leave active politics.

Gender scholar Mona Lena Krook describes these types of attacks as semiotic violence, in which semiotic resources – such as words, images and body language – are deployed to injure, discipline and subjugate women. Semiotic violence also shapes public perceptions of female politicians, and can lead to women being judged as incompetent or unfit for political office.

Examples of online violence

This form of violence is prevalent in Zimbabwean online media. Women politicians are routinely attacked when they question male power. For example, Linda Masarira challenged journalist Hopewell Chin'ono over his position on xenophobia on social media platform 'X' (formerly Twitter). Chin'ono did not respond to Masarira' s questions but instead tweeted her that she should 'go and take a bath'. Masarira is often attacked by online 'trolls' as she is dark skinned (an example of 'colourism'). Chin'ono weaponised Masarira' s appearance, ignoring the substantive question she had raised.

Young female leaders are also attacked over personal matters such as their marital status, age and sexual history. Fadzayi Mahere, is a member of parliament for the CCC and an accomplished constitutional lawyer. Although her professional accomplishments are well known, trolls have repeatedly attacked her for not having a husband and children. For example, X user @CdeBhanan'ana tweeted: "rumour is saying Mahere has been involved in sex relationships for long, these [relationships] have been used as a Curriculum Vitae for acquiring high posts". X user @Mananabula2 asked: "How can one run a constituency when she can't have a husband...constituency problems are way bigger than those of a marriage".

In both instances Mahere's marital status is used against her. In the first example, it is implied that she has used sex to ascend the CCC leadership rather than her qualifications. In the second, her competence as a leader is questioned, not because she lacks professional experience, but because she has failed to secure a husband. More recently, above a picture of Tatenda Mavetera, the Minister for Information and Communication Technology, X user @jahman_adamski, a political commentator with more than 58,000 followers, posted the comment, "ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the Honourable Dr Ambitious Smallhouse (Mistress)." The implication was that Mavetera had been appointed as a minister because she was a 'smallhouse' or mistress to a high-ranking ZANU-PF official.

Using an intersectional approach to analyse the typology of violence women are

subjected to is important. Gender, age, marital status, sexuality/assumed sexual behaviour and political affiliation intersect to create a particular type of female politician that is highly susceptible to semiotic violence. This violence is driven by patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in politics. If women are unmarried, single parents or widowed, they are represented as immoral and rebellious and therefore unfit to be politicians. Fuelled by these prejudices, the persistent attacks make political participation less safe for women and deter them from running for public office.

Online media has also been used to invalidate claims of physical political violence against women. In 2020, three opposition leaders, Joana Mamombe, Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova, were allegedly abducted and sexually assaulted for participating in an anti-government protest. Police dismissed their claims and jailed the women for allegedly faking their own abductions. Zimbabwean media published stories that depicted the women as liars, promiscuous or mentally unstable. The women's online persecution and subsequent criminal prosecution indicate that Zimbabwean institutions are unwilling to address gendered political violence.

While physical violence was not recorded on the election days in August 2023, there were reports of gendered electoral violence in by-elections and primaries in March that year. Between 2018 and July 2022, Zimbabwean civil society organisation Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE) recorded 37 cases of gendered political violence against women, including an attack on Thokozile Dube, a CCC ward candidate from Matabeleland. WALPE Director Sitabile Dewa asserted that, "the reoccurrence of violence during elections has continuous negative ripple effects to the participation of women in electoral processes."

The misappropriation of the gender quota

Zimbabwe first implemented the gender quota through the new constitution in 2013, reserving seats for women through proportional representation. Between 2008 and 2013, in the National Assembly and Senate, respectively, women's representation rose from 14 percent to 32 percent, and from 33 to 48 percent; However, women's representation then declined in the 2018 elections, to 31 percent and 46 percent, respectively. Of these women, only 12 percent were elected through FPTP voting, and only 13 percent of local government councillors were women. Responding to the extremely low level of women's representation in local government, a constitutional amendment was introduced in 2021 to extend the 30 percent gender quota.

In theory, the purpose of the gender quota is to increase women's representation and ultimately to achieve gender parity – 50/50 female-to-male representation. It is worrying that even under the quota, the number of women nominated and elected continues to decline. This contradiction is a result of the misappropriation of the quota. Instead of using it to increase women's representation, political parties are segregating women to the quota. By nominating so few women for constituency seats, political parties are reducing the overall number of women who can be elected into office – in effect, using the quota to sequester women's participation in representative politics.

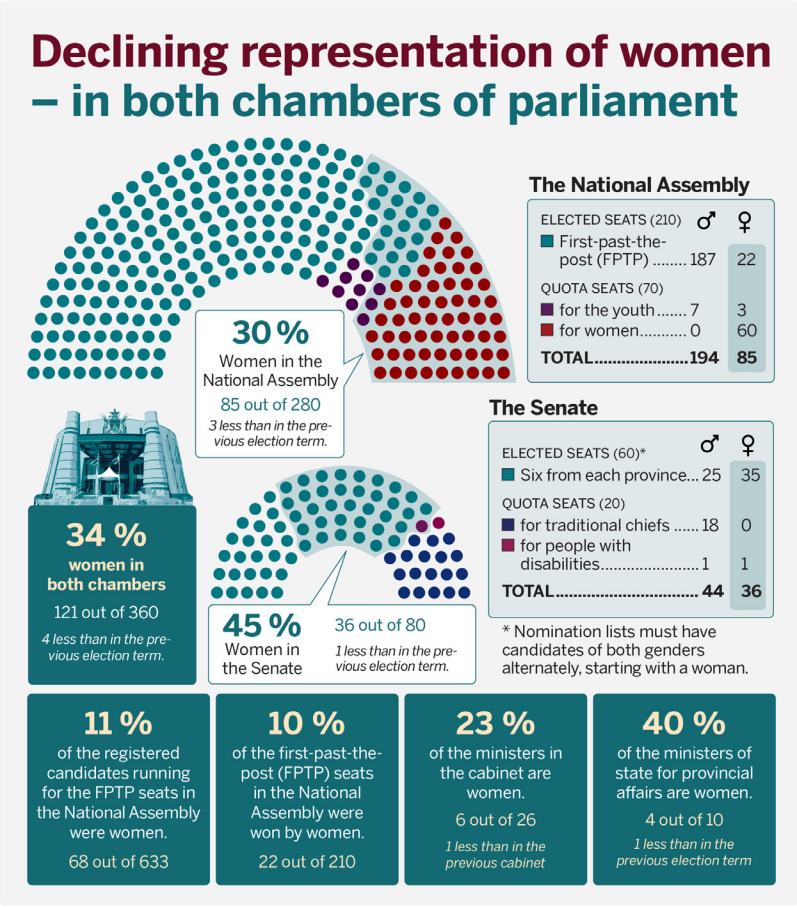
Often, countries adopt a gender quota after making what political scientist Melody Valdini calls an 'inclusion calculation', that weighs up the costs and benefits to the regime of including women. For Zimbabwe, using the quota to feminise governance structures could be beneficial as it would improve the nation's international standing and assist in securing international aid. Women's inclusion could be instrumental in securing political parties' success by winning more female voters. However, women representatives elected through the quota are often subjected to elite patriarchal bargaining and less inclined to push 'women's issues' as their loyalties are primarily to their political parties rather than to women at large.

Modified version of a model introduced by gender scholar Mona Lena Krook in *Violence against Women in Politics* (2020).

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the Maputo Protocol and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Article 29(3) of the African Charter emphasises that states parties should "take all possible measures to encourage the full and active participation of women in the electoral process and ensure gender parity in representation at all levels, including legislatures." However, as the 2023 elections have shown, Zimbabwe is moving further away from the regional guidelines it subscribes to.

Policy recommendations

- **Online harassment of women in politics should be punishable by law.** Zimbabwe's Domestic Violence Act and Cyber and Data Protection Act should be operationalised to assign punitive criminal charges against individuals or organisations that use online platforms to threaten, harass and ridicule women representatives or women who aspire to participate in elections.
- **Online gendered electoral violence should be adequately addressed at national level.** Key institutions such as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Zimbabwe Republic Police, ZEC and women's organisations should collaborate to create a framework for a national council that responds to incidents of online and offline gendered electoral violence. Part IV of the Domestic Violence Act could be used as a model for this council.
- **Financial barriers to women's participation in elections should be addressed.** ZEC should reduce nomination fees to align with fees set across the region. A subsidy should be introduced for nomination costs for women and other marginalised groups.
- **The Government of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean political parties** must meet their obligations to regional protocols on gender equality and parity. The gender quota should be used, in earnest, to in-crease women's representation, and democratic plurality in the country. Civil society organisations and other stakeholders should use their influence to compel political parties to nominate more women outside the quota to achieve gender parity.



Source: Data collected through the ongoing research project *Making Politics Safer – Gendered Violence and Electoral Temporalities in Africa*. (At the time of publication, some female CCC parliamentary and local government representatives had been recalled from their positions. As such the figures displayed here may change).

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RESPONSE TO AND COMMENT ON "PEACE ENFORCEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: REFLECTIONS ON THE FORCE INTERVENTION BRIGADE."

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George Abel Mhango and Angelita Kithatu-Kiwekete's article on peace enforcement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) offers a rich perspective into the evolution of the applied methodology to conflict resolution by the United Nations (UN), as well as a brief historical overview of the various stages of disintegration of the Congolese state since its independence. Both have been intertwined since the 1960s, therefore discussing one without the other provides a conversation without substance. This shared history, however, has also turned the DRC into the largest experimental ground for UN peacekeeping missions.

The UN operations in the DRC have gradually evolved from, and constantly shifted between, its well-known trademark approach of "passive" observer to a more "active" role. Whether it is the confrontation in Jadotville (currently Likasi, in Katanga Province), between an Irish contingent of the UN and Katangese military forces loyal to secessionist Moise Tshombe in the 1960s, or the recent Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) discussed amply by the authors. While being heavily bureaucratic, the UN has demonstrated some relative fluidity at times, when treating certain cases as deserving a Chapter VII response during its large history in the DRC, which has not often been acknowledged. But despite this long shared history, the UN seems to ignore that the ultimate success of any of its missions must rest solely on supporting the consolidation of state formation efforts in the DRC. This failure was glaring in the first UN intervention in the country, the United Nations Operations in Congo (ONUC), which was a response to the first Congolese war in 1960. And this has predominantly been the case with the United

Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) where the UN has often assumed attributes and responsibilities of the state, thus stifling the emergence of a professional state and army in the country.

The authors made a valid point when stating "a common thread in the experiences of the missions has been the inability of the UN to act decisively in order to protect civilians and its own personnel". It is in this context that the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) ought to be assessed, as its approach seems like a 'radical' shift to the traditional UN approach of "neutrality" and "impartiality". Moreover, this article could not have been better timed as MONUSCO is currently exiting and ending its mission in the DRC, which is happening in the midst of a resurgence of the Movement-23 (M23) into the Eastern Congo conflict stage. As such, this article provided an opportunity to kick start an evaluative conversation on the true effectiveness of MONUSCO peace enforcement in the country, and specifically, on that of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), which is claimed as MONUSCO's most successful initiative. The return of the M23 movement ought to raise the question over the legacy of MONUSCO operations, including that of the FIB. But this has not been addressed by the authors. The authors' point of departure is that previous attempts to assess the FIB have underestimated the political context within which the mission took place. While the FIB possessed a unilateral mandate as well as a joint operations mandate with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), ultimately it could only go as far as the DRC government allowed. As such, the authors' answer to the question whether the FIB operations have matched the expectations set by its proponent, is basically no. As they state: "Hence, we argue that the ambition of robust operations inherent in Resolution 2098 that authorized the FIB operations has not matched reality as the operational context reveals complex political hurdles facing the MONUSCO in its engagement with the DR Congo government." Moreover, the change in government in the DRC also deserves a second look, on whether the level of engagement and political will from the government have undergone any change.

The authors lay the failure of the FIB (UN at large) to fulfil its mission, solely on the DR Congo Government's uncooperative attitude. Their evidence is that the FIB operation that targeted rebel/terrorist groups considered unfriendly to the government such as the M23 were successful and saw better coordination with the government, while FIB operations targeting rebel groups considered friendly to the Congolese government saw less success, even blunt failure. However, this argument falls short on many fronts. Many are of the opinion that the UN mandate in the DRC was too

ambitious, spreading from politico-military reforms to direct military confrontation. But the UN zero-in approach was narrow minded and ignored the economic aspect (resource exploitation) of the conflict, which is a significant consideration to omit. The UN mandate lacked ambition in how it dealt with countries that support rebel/terrorist groups in the DRC. Specifically, Rwanda, where substantial evidence proves their support to the M23 in the form of personnel, weapons and more.

The Security Council Resolution 1565 lead toward a peacekeeping posture that adopted a multi-dimensional peace approach. In practice, this approach was not holistic enough when dealing with belligerent states such as Rwanda, who on many occasions backed various rebel groups in the DRC. As such, the UN approach aimed directly at military action against rebel groups and political reforms in the DRC was only addressing the result of the problem and not the root cause, in this case Rwanda's borderline state-terrorism sponsoring behaviours. In fact, for practically the entirety of the UN mandate in the Congo, Rwanda's conduct in the Congo has received less than a slap on the wrist. Despite Rwanda's role as a signatory to various peace treaties in the DRC, the lack of mechanisms to ensure its respect of said treaties is astounding.

As such, how can it be argued that the UN mandate was comprehensive, when there is a clear absence of a 'stick' and 'carrot' mechanism to target and ensure that a third party such as Rwanda abide by their obligations? It remains incomprehensible that such a large operation will ignore the effect of an essential economic element as well as the role of a third party with an economic incentive in the perpetuation of the cycle of violence. In this case, it means that the UN mechanism was built on a false assumption, that a belligerent aggressor state (Rwanda) would act against their own economic interest. Peace in the Congo, for instance, would strip Rwanda of over 1 billion dollars of revenue from stolen coltan from the DRC. As such, the UN approach to conflict resolution proved to be more idealistic than realistic.

The UN mission in the DRC suffered from tunnel vision, demonstrated in its obsession with dealing only with the military and political aspect of the conflict, while ignoring the economic incentives that continuously fuel the cycle of conflict. Unsurprisingly, while the FIB might have demonstrated strong results over the short and medium term, over the long term the recent resurgence of M23 clearly demonstrated that the FIB was a failure over a long-term period. With the UN's latest mission coming to an end in the DRC, perhaps a different tactic should be considered. One that focuses on sanctioning economic assets of individuals and companies that benefit from the conflict. Harsher consequences for Rwanda for failing to uphold its part of the peace

treaties is something else to be considered. Lastly, the article would perhaps benefit from a brief review of the best practices from not only the UN operations but specifically the FIB operation on the ground.

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Review Essay:

Civil Society Narratives of Violence and Shaping the Transitional Justice Agenda in Zimbabwe by Dr Chenai Matshaka

(Matshaka, Chenai, Civil Society Narratives of Violence and Shaping the Transitional Justice Agenda in Zimbabwe, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022.)

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Civil Society Narratives of Violence and Shaping the Transitional Justice Agenda in Zimbabwe provides a look back into the past and considers possible futures of Zimbabwean electoral and political discourse. The book discusses and engages with narratives of violence and how they have shaped the transitional justice agenda in Zimbabwe.

Derived from the doctoral work by Dr Chenai Matshaka, this book is a case study on the transitional justice agenda in Zimbabwe. It makes use of a qualitative interpretivist approach, as well as in-depth and structured interviews to explore the narratives of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. The book also made use of content analysis, including reports, statements, and publications between 2000 and 2013, which were a particularly contentious and volatile period within Zimbabwean history. Matshaka specifically focuses on showing the link between the narratives of violence, responses to violence, and the implications that these have on achieving transitional justice in Zimbabwe.

Matshaka's work is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, *Background of Violence and Coercion,* Matshaka sets the scene, describing the political and the electoral climate in June 2008. She discusses the multitude of understandings of violence, which are used as a framework for the narratives of violence which are explored throughout the book.

Matshaka then provides the reader with a discussion on narratives: what they are, their importance, and how they can be used to increase or diminish tensions within a state. She explains the influence of narratives, how they affect attitudes, perceptions

and actions, and how they can be used to bridge the past, present, and the future. Matshaka explains how narratives help to tell stories and provide guidance and lessons for states to tap into. Following this, Matshaka begins a discussion into civil society, which is a central pillar of the book. She provides a brief discussion of the nature and existence of civil society organisations in Africa. She also explains the role of civil society organisations and how they fill the gaps in leadership. In closing the chapter, Matshaka encourages the reader to consider whether civil society can be a support or a hinderance to transitional justice to the state.

In the second chapter, *Transitional Justice: Debates, Inclusion and Exclusion,* Matshaka provides key understandings and contradictions of transitional justice within academia and the post-conflict rebuilding space. She specifically focuses on providing an exploration of the transitional justice discourses, particularly those emanating from debates around judicial and non-judicial approaches, truth vs justice debates, and retributive vs restorative transitional justice. In this second chapter, Matshaka provides the reader with an overview of transitional justice, focusing on the historical origins, the development and evolution of the concept. In discussing transitional justice within Zimbabwe, Matshaka explores the contentions and complexity of the transitional justice process. She specifically discusses how transitional justice is viewed as a 'battleground' because of the definitional contestations and questions around who should lead the process in Zimbabwe.

The chapter then turns to a discussion on the work of civil society within the transitional justice space in Zimbabwe. She discusses civil society narratives in Zimbabwe, particularly those around human rights and a liberal transformation of the political system. Matshaka describes civil society as an actor working primarily in the governance space, who provides support and assistance in coalition building and navigating violence in Zimbabwe. While this is true, civil society has also been described as having difficulties with fully pursuing transitional justice aims because there is a lack of space within the governance arena in Zimbabwe.

In the third chapter on *Civil Society and Transitional Justice,* Matshaka looks at the intersection between civil society and transitional justice. As with chapter two, Matshaka defines civil society, tracing its origins and thinking. Central to this discussion is the importance of civil society and how it is complimentary to other actors and institutions within the state. While this is the case, Matshaka also points out how civil society has also been incompatible with realities of the state.

Matshaka then discusses civil society within Africa, giving different scholarly perspectives of its nature and existence. More broadly, Matshaka discusses how civil society has commonly been associated with its complicated entanglements and interactions with the state. On one hand, civil society are seen as a key partner, cooperating to establish liberal democracy within the state. At the same time, civil society is often seen as a threat and is associated with a struggle for democratisation and oppositional politics. Matshaka further discusses the intersection between civil society, violence, and transitional justice in Zimbabwe, discussing their nature, behaviour and activity. She focuses particularly on how civil society has tried to redress the legacy of violence in Zimbabwe. This discussion is underpinned by the findings and understandings of the four civil society organisations that Matshaka interviewed.

In chapter four on *The Civil Society Narrative of Violence,* Matshaka develops the crux of her argument — on how memory plays a significant role in shaping the transitional justice agenda. This chapter focuses on a broad discussion on narratives, specifically on how narratives are used within the book and how they are used to describe, think of, and understand events as coherent wholes. Matshaka explains how narratives are important, not only as historical accounts, but as a way to help people to understand progress and provide an account of violence.

Matshaka explains how narratives also refer to memory and the remembrance of particular events. She further explains how this remembrance is contested and interpreted differently. So, while in some respects memory is collective, it is also not homogeneous. It can be influenced by identity, social, and political actions, and is defined by those who tell them. Memory is therefore not static. It evolves and changes with time, interests, and perceptions. More critically, in this chapter Matshaka develops a discussion around dominant and marginalised narratives. She explains how marginalised narratives are suppressed by dominant narratives, and how these can lead to conflict. She further explains how memory and narratives have been used as a political tool to suppress and/or promote the experiences of groups. She contends that civil society should form part of these memory groups, as they shape the transitional justice agenda. Matshaka draws from the experiences electoral violence in the post-2000 period in Zimbabwe, and how memories of this period of violence shaped narratives on political violence in Zimbabwe.

Matshaka then offers her thoughts on civil society and how it shapes narratives on political violence in Zimbabwe. She states that civil society in Zimbabwe has a role in shaping and projecting narratives of violence. Civil society informs, records, and publicises political violence. These actions and narratives are then used to seek justice

for victims and advocate for an end to violence. Matshaka then explains prevalent civil society narratives in Zimbabwe, including:

- how violence is used to retain and consolidate political power
- how electoral violence is used as a way to preserve power
- how organised violence is used to preserve the power of the state
- how violence is used to perpetuate human rights violations against political opponents

In chapter five on *The Shaping of the Transitional Justice Agenda in Zimbabwe,* Matshaka discusses the battlefield of 'ideas, funding, and influence' in reference to shaping the transitional justice agenda space in Zimbabwe. She notes how often history and culture are not prioritised in discussions of transitional justice, and how the voices of those who experience violence are frequently silenced. Matshaka instead encourages discussions around norms that influence transitional justice agenda. She also describes how transitional justice in Zimbabwe is not as strong due to an absence of an operating environment.

Dr Matshaka then draws the discussion towards agenda setting, reflecting on how agendas are important. They exist at all levels and are considered as narratives of particular issues. She continues stating that agendas have many layers and so hierarchies become an important way to determine the importance of issues. Civil society becomes an important actor in setting and influencing the agenda because it appeals to social norms and justice. Civil society motivates policy makers, unifies their interests, and reminds them of neglected policies. They bring attention to domestic and international policy issues. According to Matshaka, this book is a way of understanding the agenda setting process. It looks at what is on the agenda, as well as how civil society shapes and influences transitional justice agenda. It specifically looks at the position of civil society, how it interacts with other actors, and how this determines their influence, power, and ability to influence agenda.

In chapter six, *The Transitional Justice Battlefield and Prospects for the Future,* Matshaka explains how transitional justice is a battle between funding, ideas, and norm dominance. Particularly in the Zimbabwean context, this has been based on what is and what is not transitional justice. She reiterates how contestations have been important to the transitional justice agenda and broader narratives on violence. She even explains how these contestations have shown up in the narratives of violence by the four civil societies she interviewed. Matshaka contends that

contestations and differences are not a negative thing but may hint at the necessary nuances needed to widen narratives.

At the same time, Matshaka also provided criticisms for civil society. She states that divisions between civil society in terms of ideology, training, and space are weaknesses. The lack of convergence has contributed to the weakness of civil society in shaping the transitional justice agenda in Zimbabwe. In addition, internal dynamics within civil society can be just as damaging as a repressive state that cannot respond to transitional justice matters. The four civil society organisations interviewed all commented on the fact that dynamics and polarisation between organisations forced a dominance of particular narratives and contributed to misalignments and blocks to transitional justice in Zimbabwe.

Overall, this was a balanced and well-written piece, presenting an overview of Zimbabwe's contentious past and history with electoral dynamics and the pivotal role players. Matshaka aimed to show that an understanding of violence must be based and drawn from the lived experience of those who have lived through violence and not from agendas with specific aims and goals. This is shown throughout the book, especially through the use of accessible language that keeps the reader engaged and interested in the material presented.

As a Zimbabwean and an academic, this book brings intense feelings and memories of challenging moments in Zimbabwe's electoral history. It navigates the intensity of these moments with ease, presenting factual evidence that explains the transitional justice journey in Zimbabwe. For a non-academic, this book provides a good overview of political and electoral dynamics in Zimbabwe. It provides insights into the complexity of Zimbabwean history in an easily digestible format. Readers will gain nuanced understandings of Zimbabwe, ones that may make them the more knowledgeable at a dinner table. While this book specifically focuses on civil society organisations, future studies in similar themes may benefit from exploring alternative actors and their relations with the state, electoral governance, and violence within Zimbabwe.