

A STUDY OF INTRA-AFRICAN RELATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS
INFORMING THE FOREIGN POLICY OF MALAWI TOWARDS ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

There has been only limited scholarly analysis of Malawi's foreign policy since its independence in 1964 with key texts focusing primarily on the early years of the new state. Perhaps due to its relatively small stature – economically, politically and militarily – in the region, very little attention has been paid to the factors informing Malawi's apparently uncritical foreign policy response to the Zimbabwe crisis since it began in the late 1990s. This thesis addresses this deficit by locating its understanding of Malawi's contemporary foreign policy towards Zimbabwe in the broader historical and contemporary context of bilateral relations between the two states and the multilateral forum of SADCC and SADC. It is argued that the Malawi's long-standing quest for socio-economic development has forced it to manoeuvre a pragmatic but sometimes contentious foreign policy path. This was also evident until the end of the Cold War and the concomitant demise of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s. Malawi forged deliberate diplomatic and economic relations with the region's white-ruled Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) and South Africa in pursuit of its national economic interests while the majority of southern African states collectively sought the liberation of the region by facilitating the independence of Zimbabwe and countering South Africa's apartheid and regional destabilization policies. In the contemporary era, there has been a convergence of foreign policy ambitions in the region and Malawi now coordinates its regional foreign policy within the framework of SADC, which itself prioritizes the attainment of socio-economic development.

However, to understand Malawi's response to the Zimbabwe crisis only in the context of SADC's "quiet diplomacy" mediation efforts obscures important historically rooted socio-economic and political factors that have informed relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe and which cannot, it is argued, be ignored if a holistic understanding of Malawi's position is to be sought. This study argues that the nature of historical ties between Malawi and Zimbabwe and the role of Malawi's leaders in driving its long-standing quest for socio-economic development have not only informed its overall foreign policy behaviour in the region but underpin its contemporary relations with Zimbabwe.

Declaration

I, Eugenio Njoloma, declare that this thesis has never been submitted by me for a degree at Rhodes University or any other institution of higher learning. It is work of my own design and implementation. All materials contained herein have been fully acknowledged.

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List of Abbreviations

AATPO	Association of African Trade Promotion Organisation
APR	African peer Review Mechanism
ANC	African National Congress
ARV	Anti-Retroviral (drugs)
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAF	Central African Federation
CHRR	Centre for Human Rights Rehabilitation
CNN	Cable News Network
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONSAS	Constellation of Southern African States
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Commission
ESC	Economic and Social Commission
EU	European Union
FLS	Frontline States
FMSP	Forced Migration Studies Program
FRELIMO	Front for Liberation of Mozambique
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NASO	[Malawi] National Statistics Office
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development, The
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLM	National Liberation Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPDSC	Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation

PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance Movement
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
TEBA	The Employment Bureau of Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UFP	United Federal Party
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Unity-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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General introduction

Since the end of the 1990s, Zimbabwe has endured socio-economic and political hardships that have manifested through, for example, escalating poverty, soaring inflation, widespread food shortages and increasing human rights violations (Coltart, 2008). The ramifications of this ‘crisis’ have been felt regionally, triggering demands both in southern Africa and in the international community for a more robust response. In fact, the European Union (EU), Commonwealth and bilateral donors including Britain and the USA have suspended aid to the country and/or imposed economic and diplomatic sanctions. The regional response has primarily been co-ordinated through the multilateral forum of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Its approach has been one of “quiet diplomacy” mediated through the official offices of former South African President Thabo Mbeki. The process came under intensified criticism until the Power Sharing Agreement was signed between President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, in September 2008 (Dugger and Cowell, 2008). Throughout the whole period, however, both SADC and the majority of its member states, including Malawi, have demonstrated continued solidarity with President Mugabe’s regime, refraining from public reproach for the political and economic crisis that has prevailed. Only Botswana and Zambia have broken rank by publicly condemning the leadership of President Mugabe over the crisis.

While the situation in Zimbabwe continues to generate interest across media, political, and academic disciplines, the purpose of this study is not to provide a detailed analysis of the crisis or its impacts on Zimbabwe or on the SADC region as a whole. An extensive discussion of the multifaceted elements of the crisis and its domestic and regional implications has been made elsewhere (see for example Coltart, 2008; Besada and Moyo, 2008; Clemens and Moss, 2005; Gatsheni, 2003). This thesis, however, is specifically concerned with the factors and influences that have informed the Malawian government’s engagement with Zimbabwe regarding the crisis. It does so by exploring historical and contemporary socio-economic and political factors which have informed Malawi’s position in the region and its relations with neighbouring countries, particularly Zimbabwe, both historically and in the contemporary era. It argues that a holistic understanding of Malawi’s official response to the crisis can only be achieved through an analysis of bilateral relations between the two states which are founded on economic and political processes of interaction and interdependence in addition to the multilateral framework offered by the regional forum of SADC.

Since the beginning of the crisis in the 1990s, Malawi has avoided unilateral reproach of the Mugabe regime with the exception of a comment made by former President Bakili Muluzi. Concerned about the negative effects the escalating crisis in Zimbabwe would have on the region, President Muluzi publicly bemoaned the ruinous way in which President Mugabe implemented his land reform policies when speaking as the chairperson of SADC in 2001 (Berries, 2002; Carver, 2002; Cauvin, 2001). Notwithstanding this incident, Malawi has however demonstrated consistent reluctance to criticise the leadership of Zimbabwe regarding the crisis. In fact, a few months after assuming office in May 2004, Malawi's incumbent President, Bingu wa Mutharika, openly "assured [President Mugabe] and the people of Zimbabwe that Malawi will stand by [Zimbabwe] and will provide its support in all international and regional issues" (Malawi Government, 2004). While Malawi's stance on Zimbabwe in recent years is comparative to that of other regional states, the idiosyncratic nature of its historical and contemporary relations with both Zimbabwe and the wider region warrants specific analysis of Malawi's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe.

In this study, it is argued that the nature of historical ties between the two states and the role of Malawi's leaders in driving its long-standing quest for domestic socio-economic development have informed not only the country's overall foreign policy behaviour in the region but more specifically its contemporary relations with Zimbabwe. The Malawian government's desire to "promot[e] closer cooperation among countries of the region in order to achieve economic integration, encourage trade, cross-border tourism, and foreign direct investment" evidences the centrality of these policy objectives in its regional relations (Malawi Government, 2000: 6). This has forced Malawi to adopt a pragmatic and sometimes contentious foreign policy approach in an attempt to pursue its national economic development objectives through co-operative bilateral and multilateral relations in a region that has been historically beset with political and social divisions.

Study context

A brief appraisal of Malawi's geographical, socio-economic, and political background is crucial to understand Malawi's foreign policy choices. Geographically, Malawi shares borders with Tanzania to the northeast, Zambia to the northwest, and Mozambique to the east, south and west. Given its landlocked location, Malawi has depended heavily on South African, Mozambican, and Tanzanian ports for access to overseas markets and trade since its independence in 1964. Arguably, this geographical limitation informed the choice of Malawi's first President, Hastings Banda, to foster positive political and economic relations with the white ruling regimes in South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia and herein referred to as Rhodesia). He

argued that such relations were crucial for the realisation of Malawi's economic development aspirations (Malawi Government, 1964: 5). The incumbent President, Bingu wa Mutharika, has recently attempted to overcome Malawi's dependency on its neighbours by building an inland port that provides direct access to the Indian Ocean via the Shire and Zambezi rivers. The hope is that this will enhance Malawi's import and export trade markets to facilitate its domestic economic growth and development (Malawi Government, 2008). However, with a population of approximately 13 million people (NASO, 2008a), Malawi is considered one of the poorest countries not only in southern Africa but also in the world. In fact, it is ranked 160 out of 182 countries on the global human development index (HDI, 2009: 145) and in 2008, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounted to only \$4.27 billion, which is between two and three times lower than the GDP of its conterminous neighbours: Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania (World Bank, 2009). Malawi's weak economy is further evidenced and exacerbated by growing and widespread poverty, low levels of education, poor health status including HIV/AIDS, job scarcity, and rapid population growth (Malawi Government, 2002: 6).

Since independence Malawi's foreign policy has primarily focused on addressing these domestic realities. However, the formulation and implementation of the country's foreign policies has repeatedly been dominated by its leaders (Cammack, 2007; Meinhardt and Patel, 2003; Kaunda, 2002; McMaster, 1974; Short, 1974). During President Banda's reign (1961-1994), for example, prominent cabinet ministers regularly resigned or were dismissed for dissenting with President Banda's foreign and domestic policy choices (Short, 1974). President Banda's categorical refusal to recognise communist China, despite offerings of unconditional development aid, was one such instance (Short, 1974: 206). His recognition of Taiwan however highlights his personal inclination towards Western countries, particularly the United Kingdom (UK); relations which also proved influential on his foreign policy choices during this period (Short, 1974). It also illustrates how the overall objective of domestic economic development was potentially undermined by the whims of the Malawian leadership. It must be noted, however, that Britain and other Western countries provided Malawi with the majority of its foreign aid and investment and it is unlikely therefore that President Banda would have jeopardised these relations by pro-actively engaging China.

Patronage of the state machinery has continued under the leadership of Malawi's subsequent, and democratically elected, premiers, Presidents Muluzi and Mutharika (Meinhardt and Patel, 2003: 61). Despite the more active profile of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kaunda, 2002) it could be argued that Malawi's expansion of diplomatic contacts during President Muluzi's leadership were

informed more by his own religious persuasion (Islam) and personal agenda than by economic factors. In fact, since 1994 Malawi expanded its diplomatic missions through ambassadorial appointment and/ or the establishment of High Commissions in Libya, Sudan, and Kuwait (Kaunda, 2002). However, although the subsequent move to non-residential ties with these countries under President Mutharika is attributed to financial constraints (*Libyaonline.com*, 2008), the personalisation of the state machinery appears to continue under his leadership (Cammack, 2007). In a reversal of President Banda's position, and in line with the West's post-Cold War position, Malawi has demonstrated equal pragmatism, switching its diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China. This move has proven popular among both civil servants and political opposition within Malawi because of the potential economic gains to be made by Chinese investment in the country (Masina, 2008a). However, the shift is rather attributed to the leadership aspirations of the President, as are Malawi's unceremonious termination of (residential) diplomatic ties with Libya (Msompha, 2010). Arguably, close links between Taiwan and Libya with the opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) party, of which President Mutharika was a member prior to 2005, further prompted the discontinuation of Lilongwe-Tripoli as well as Lilongwe-Taipei relations (Msompha, 2010). It is therefore clear that an understanding of Malawi's foreign policy choices cannot easily be disentangled from the preferences and personalities of the country's leaders – a point which will become apparent in Chapter Four when the close relations between President Mutharika and President Mugabe of Zimbabwe are discussed.

At independence in 1964, Malawi's founding President Hastings Banda inherited a government that was faced with serious socio-economic problems as discussed above. It was for this reason that the new government laid down three major policy objectives to facilitate the process of socio-economic development, which included the quest to improve agricultural production; to diversify into manufacturing and industrial processing; and to eliminate ignorance, disease and poverty (WHO, 2005: 6). These domestic objectives resulted, at times, in a divergence of Malawi's national interest with those of the majority of (southern) African states. In the immediate post-independence period, for example, the majority of other states in the southern African region were preoccupied with external politico-military issues, namely continuing the liberation struggle against white minority regimes and the countering of apartheid South Africa's destabilisation policies (Patel and Hajat, 2007; Nkiwane, 1999). However, President Banda asserted that Malawi's landlockedness and its peripheral position in relation to South Africa and Rhodesia's politico-military supremacy deterred it from embarking on a confrontational policy towards them (Patel and Hajat, 2007; McMaster, 1974; Short, 1974). Thus, President Banda's overarching economic development objective

informed a tripartite foreign policy strategy: “non-interference in the affairs of other countries, assessment of individual situations on their merits rather than by the alignments of the countries involved, and willingness to accept the aid of any country prepared to help Malawi,” although the last tenet proved rhetorical when President Banda refused the Chinese aid (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 385). It can therefore be contended that Malawi pursued a pragmatic foreign policy approach reflective of its own relative weak and peripheral status in the region, one “more attuned to low-politics than to political-military geopolitics” (du Plessis, 2006: 132).

In the closing years of the 1980s the Cold War ended and brought with it the concomitant demise of apartheid in South Africa which fundamentally changed regional politics. A wave of political pluralism swept across the continent and many regimes which assumed power at independence, including that of President Banda, lost power to new political leaderships. Consequently with the apparent demise of South Africa’s regional aggression and in the global context of the new neo-liberal capitalist order, socio-economic development became central foreign and national policy objectives of many of the region’s states (Nkiwane, 1999). Furthermore, when the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was reconstituted into SADC, this became one of the central forums for the development of multilateral economic and political relations in the region (SADC Treaty, 1992). Thus, Malawi’s foreign policy aspirations have experienced continuity in a region that has otherwise practised a shift in foreign policy priorities, allowing it from the 1990s onwards to enter a phase of congruence with its southern African neighbours (Kaunda, 2002). In particular, under the leadership of Presidents Muluzi from 1994 to 2004 and Mutharika from 2004 to the present, Malawi has considered good relations with every regional state as crucial for the attainment of its own economic development (Malawi Government, 2000: 6). While this could be understood through the regional drive for African solutions for Africa’s problems’ and the African Renaissance discourse promulgated by South Africa’s Thabo Mbeki (Møller, 2009; Mbeki, 1998), the historical relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe are crucial to understandings of and explanations for Malawi’s solidarity with President Mugabe in the face of gross human rights violations and economic collapse in Zimbabwe from the late 1990s onwards.

Objective of the study

This study provides a holistic analysis of the factors informing Malawi’s official response to the crisis in Zimbabwe. It does so by exploring the historical and contemporary, socio-economic and political factors that have informed the bilateral and multilateral contexts of the relations between

the two states. It argues that the long-standing socio-economic development priorities of the Malawian government have been of central importance but that these are themselves rooted in historical ties between the two states in question. Given the comparatively limited scholarly analysis afforded to Malawi's foreign policy – perhaps due to its marginal economic and political status in the region – this study also aims to 'fill the gap' by providing a deeper understanding of Malawi's foreign policy, particularly in response to the Zimbabwe crisis, for scholars, policy makers, diplomats, foreign affairs bureaucrats and other stakeholders.

Research problem

Since the beginning of the Zimbabwe crisis, the international community, particularly the UK and the USA, have persistently pushed southern African states to find an expedited solution to the crisis. Indeed, SADC countries have regularly met over the 'Zimbabwe issue' and have at times demonstrated displeasure at the inefficiency of President Mugabe's regime to bring about an effective resolution to the problems facing the country and at the continued suppression of press and opposition political movements. Generally, however, it has been evident that nearly every regional state has provided a cordon of support for President Mugabe against external, notably

Western, demands for extensive political and economic reforms (Booyesen, 2003). Notwithstanding the overt criticism of President Mugabe by Botswana's President Ian Khama and Zambia's late President, Levy Mwanawasa, the majority of regional states have resolutely stuck to the principles of regional solidarity, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect of member states' territorial sovereignty as articulated in the SADC Treaty (SADC Treaty, 1992). It is within this context that the majority of SADC member states, including Malawi, have opted for diplomatic rather than forceful means to resolve the crisis.

According to Baylis and Smith (2005: 772), "diplomacy is essentially a communications process between international actors that seeks through negotiation to resolve conflict short of war". Additionally, diplomacy "is regarded as the most direct, traditional, conventional, and peaceful instrument of foreign policy" (du Plessis, 2006: 125). While diplomacy is considered to be the most effective foreign policy implementation tool (White, 2005), its appeal and effectiveness have been controversial in the context of the Zimbabwe crisis, particularly because of the manner in which it has been employed. SADC, through its appointed mediator –President Mbeki – has consistently pursued a policy of "quiet diplomacy" amid increasing popular (international) demand for an expedited resolution to the crisis. By definition, quiet diplomacy is diplomacy which is

“conducted with minimal publicity behind the scenes.” In other words, quiet diplomacy involves developing contacts, ideas or pursuing formal conflict or crisis resolution initiatives in the public domain but without directly seeking high levels of public press attention (Barston, 2006: 91).

It is in light of this foreign policy strategy that international actors, specifically the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), the European Union (EU), and the Commonwealth adopted more robust measures to express their dissatisfaction and to pressurize the Zimbabwean leadership to take action. The measures included, for example, the imposition of economic sanctions, travel bans on President Mugabe and a selected number of prominent ZANU-PF officials and an “indefinite” suspension of Zimbabwe’s membership of the Commonwealth in December 2003 (*BBC*, 2003).

This strategy of “quiet diplomacy”- widely ascribed in academic and media circles to SADC’s response to Zimbabwe- has proven highly contentious (Little, 2008; Wintour and Elliott, 2008; Adelman, 2004; Landsberg, 2004). Despite reports of the worsening situation in Zimbabwe and the exodus of large numbers of Zimbabwean citizens to neighbouring countries and further afield, President Mbeki and the majority of SADC leaders consistently and conspicuously avoided an outright condemnation of President Mugabe, let alone the adoption of more rigorous diplomatic or economic sanctions. Southern African leaders preferred that “criticism of each other [be] confined to within the [region] and not made in forums outside the [region] or in a public manner that could be seen as opposing a fellow [southern] African state” (Schoeman, 2006: 252). This explains the apparent solidarity and defence garnered by President Mugabe from SADC leaders in response to external (Western) criticism. Malawi demonstrated such support when in May 2006 President Mutharika publicly stopped local and international human rights groups from opposing his government’s honouring of President Mugabe and concomitantly hailed his Zimbabwean counterpart as an anti-imperialist “200% African, a son of the [African] soil and a true democrat” (Mutharika *in* Masina, 2006: 23).

It can be argued that SADC’s strategy “carries the danger of being misunderstood as ‘appeasement’ and/or even instrumentalised by the regime under pressure. It can also easily be misinterpreted by external observers as signs of showing political weakness as far as the mediators are concerned” (Berries, 2002: 201). But the strategy of ‘quiet diplomacy’ is concomitant with the principles that govern SADC, particularly the notion of solidarity which is deeply entrenched among regional leaders, including President Mutharika. However, the current context offers only a partial

explanation for Malawi's solidarity and a more comprehensive understanding can only be achieved by situating these current events in the broader historical context of bilateral and multilateral relations in the region.

Research methodology

An extensive body of literature, such as the one listed above, has amply defined Zimbabwe's volatile political atmosphere and the economic meltdown as a crisis. Moreover, research papers on Zimbabwean migration patterns across southern Africa (FMSP, 2009), Zimbabwean migrants in Zambia (Mandrilly, 2008), and Malawi (CHRR, 2007a) all attest the severity of the Zimbabwe situation. This study employs a qualitative research method to explore the factors that have shaped Malawi's foreign policy response since the inception of the crisis in the late 1990s, to the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009. The analysis is situated within the wider (historical) framework of intra-African relations which has informed the foreign policy trajectory of most southern African states, including Malawi. An analysis of the secondary literature pertaining to Nyasaland (Malawi) and Rhodesian relations will be accompanied by official government and institutional documents from the Malawian and Zimbabwean governments, SADC and other regional bodies, in addition to media reports and public speeches. The significance of using this literature is that it serves as a "map" of the places that researchers have ventured before (Mouton, 1996: 119) as well as providing insights into the changing contexts in which Malawi's foreign policy has emerged and been sustained. Although existing scholarly (historical) literature on Malawi's foreign policy is primarily focused on its engagement in the region and towards international regional groupings (see for example Sagawa, 2009; Patel and Hajat, 2007; McMaster, 1974) little has been written on the country's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe or the factors that have informed the apparent pragmatism of its foreign policy agenda. The lack of literature in this regard is both a potential limitation of the study but also a justification for its pursuit.

Thesis structure

The study comprises four chapters which address different elements of Malawi-Zimbabwe relations in the historical – pre 1990s – and contemporary eras. *Chapter One* defines the framework of the study and provides an overview of the basic trends of African states' foreign policies. It goes on to define Malawi's historical and contemporary foreign policy behaviour within the southern African context and pinpoints the important factors that reinforce its solidarity with regional states, including Zimbabwe. *Chapter Two* provides an analysis of the context of historical relations

between Nyasaland and Rhodesia. It argues that a knowledge of Nyasaland labour migration to Rhodesia is crucial to understanding contemporary socio-cultural and economic relations between the two countries. Furthermore, the chapter shows that the creation of the political Federation of Rhodesia (Northern (Zambia) and Southern) and Nyasaland, herein referred to as the Central African Federation (CAF), entrenched and diversified economic ties between the two territories which continued during the struggle for independence and the creation of the Frontline States (FLS) and SADCC. *Chapter Three* analyses the multilateral framework offered by SADC and its response to the crisis. In this chapter it is argued that there is inconsistency between the collaborative rhetoric and policy responses of the regional body in response to crises in the region. Despite this, however, member states including Malawi have continually advocated for diplomatic engagement with President Mugabe and, furthermore, have employed an anti-imperialist discourse in their defence of his position against external criticism. In aligning itself with this approach Malawi has been careful to demonstrate solidarity with the region whilst balancing its relations with its primary international donor – the UK. *Chapter Four* argues that personal relations between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe enhance the contemporary economic interdependence between the two states which appear, in the wake of the crisis, to have moved in Malawi's favour, thus further entrenching its official solidarity with Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER ONE

Foreign Policy in the African and Southern African Context

1.1. Introduction

The landscape of African foreign policy has experienced remarkable change since the beginning of the 1990s. Attempts by African leaders to advance an economic and development agenda through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) manifested through their adoption of different initiatives including, for example, the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, and the establishment of the Economic and Social Commission (ESC) and the Association of African Trade Promotion Organisation (AATPO) within the OAU structures (OAU, 1963). Notwithstanding these initiatives, the common foreign policy trend that characterised the majority of African states during the Cold War and apartheid eras included the privileging of external security and national consolidation in their foreign policy objectives over economic development issues (Engel and Porto, 2010: 1; Bischoff, 2008: 179). In southern Africa this arguably transpired because of the politico-military divide between South Africa (and Rhodesia until 1979) and the majority of the region's independent states (Nkiwane, 1999: 127) who united within the frameworks of the FLS and SADCC against South Africa's internal apartheid and external regional destabilization policies, including its intention to create clientalism and economic dependency through the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS). Thus, through these offensive foreign policy strategies South Africa hoped to strengthen its military, political and economic dominance in the region whilst weakening the position of its neighbours (Evans, 1984). The primacy afforded to political and 'traditional' security concerns within the region thus resulted in the neglect of economic development issues by many southern African states during this period (Blaauw, 2007). However, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland consistently defined their foreign policy in terms of attaining economic development through regional cooperation. Furthermore, they believed, and in tension with the priorities of the FLS, that this necessitated collaboration with the region's more economically buoyant white minority regimes (Patel and Hajat, 2007).

Following the end of the Cold War and the concomitant demise of apartheid, new and expansive foreign policy agendas emerged across the continent. These world historic moments brought to the fore a complex set of competing interests, not necessarily all concerned with external security priorities (Nkiwane, 1999). In particular, deepening regional cooperation and economic integration, improved intra-African trade relations, democratic governance, and the recognition of non-state actors in the foreign policy decision-making processes have gained prominence on the continent's

agenda (Nkiwane, 1999). This shift in the foreign policy objectives of African states, particularly their renewed emphasis on economic development issues, has been significant to those states, including Malawi, whose foreign policy objectives have been pragmatically and consistently guided by the necessities of socio-economic development.

This chapter identifies the key elements and trajectories of the foreign policy behaviour of African states in order to locate Malawi's foreign policy priorities within the wider African and regional context. In doing so, it highlights the points of congruity and incongruity between Malawi's foreign policy objectives and those of its neighbours and analyses why they have emerged. To achieve this, the chapter first assesses the general trend of the foreign policy behaviour of African states during the Cold War and apartheid eras. Secondly, it evaluates the foreign policy behaviour of southern African states in the contemporary (post-1990) era. The chapter begins, however, with an explanation of the meaning and purpose of foreign policy in order to situate the aforementioned analysis. It subsequently discusses the role of diplomacy and leadership (within the domestic setting of foreign policy) in the formation of foreign policy as these have been two key elements of Malawi's foreign policy behaviour, particularly towards Zimbabwe.

1.2. Foreign Policy

As with many terms used in international politics, 'foreign policy' does not have a single or universally accepted definition primarily because of the varying approaches and methodologies used (du Plessis, 2006: 120; Cohen and Harris, 1975: 318). For example, Coulter (1991) defines foreign policy as decisions and actions that concern relations between one state and others in pursuit of their national interests. Others see it as the goals that states seek to obtain abroad, "the values that gave rise to those objectives, and the means and instruments through which they are pursued" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1989: 37). These conceptions are traditionally crafted in the mould of orthodox realist and liberal understandings of international relations which privilege the sovereign territorial state as the primary (and for realists only) unit responsible for the creation and implementation of foreign policies in international relations (Morgenthau, 1966). Moreover, the primary foreign policy objective of the state in the anarchical international system has traditionally been regarded as its own security and survival through the development and maintenance of military (and economic) capabilities. However, the rapid emergence of non-state actors including international financial institutions (IFIs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational corporations within the international system, has affected the foreign policy calculations of states (Vincent, 2006). The emergence of these actors in world politics has

undermined the narrow conceptualisations of foreign policy offered by the orthodoxies. Thus, states are no longer considered to be the only actors “among whom diplomacy is conducted, and whose conduct of foreign policy is geared towards the maximization of power” (Morgenthau *in* Akokpari, 2001: 36). Notwithstanding this, the pursuit of national interests by states is, however, crucial to understanding Malawi’s long-standing pragmatic foreign policy behaviour in the southern African region although it has done this within a more neo-liberal framework, preferring economic integration and collaboration to achieve its national interests.

1.2.1. Diplomacy

Central to the process of foreign policy is the concept of diplomacy (Berridge, 2005) but like foreign policy, the notion of diplomacy is difficult to define (du Plessis, 2006: 124). But for analytical purposes, diplomacy is conceived as a process whereby international actors conduct their business through a set of well defined practices such as representation, communication and negotiation (Robertson, 2005: 5). From this definition it is apparent that diplomacy is not, as foreign policy entails, the making but the implementation of foreign policy. Hence, diplomacy principally involves the methods and mechanisms employed by states (and other actors) in the pursuit of their foreign policy goals (Akokpari, 2005). The use of diplomacy is mainly necessitated by the varying and often conflicting interest among international actors (both state and non-state) so as to lessen the harm the state may do to other actors while simultaneously maximizing its benefits (Akokpari, 2005). Malawi has consistently sought to achieve its foreign and domestic policy objectives through negotiation and co-operation (Malawi Government, 2000) with its regional neighbours in contrast to more aggressive economic and military approaches employed by others at various moments in the region’s history.

Since the inception of the Zimbabwe crisis however it has been evident that the majority of southern African states have more frequently employed diplomatic means to resolve regional issues. This has for example been evident in the use of “quiet” diplomacy, i.e. discussing problems with officials of another country in a calm way without telling the press about it, in their engagement with the regime of President Mugabe. While “quiet” diplomacy is indeed effective in resolving (internal) conflicts in other states without the use of force (White, 2005), its continued use by regional states in resolving the Zimbabwe issue amid strong international and local civil society demands for an expedited resolution of the crisis has raised serious questions as to who controls the foreign policy process in various SADC countries. A common view, supported by the discussion of Malawi’s premiers presented above, suggests that African leaders tend to dominate the political scene as well

as the foreign policy-making process (Quinn, 2010; van Wyk, 2007; Khadiagala, 2001). It is to the role afforded to leadership as one of the important domestic determinants of a state's foreign policy in understandings of foreign policy formation that the chapter now turns.

1.2.2. Leadership as a domestic determinant of foreign policy

Prior to the analysis of the role of leadership in foreign policy formation, it is worthwhile to stress the significance of the domestic environment in shaping the foreign policy of a state. In fact, it is “impossible to discuss international relations without paying attention to the domestic environment, politics and conditions of states” because “domestic concerns and issues impact heavily on international relations and need to be considered if the international relations of states are to be understood” (Schoeman, 2006: 241). It is in this regard that foreign policy acts as a “bridging discipline,” one with “limitless boundaries” that deals with “the continuing erosion of the distinction between domestic and foreign issues, between the socio-political and economic processes that unfold at home and those that transpire abroad” (Rosenau, 1987: 1,3). It is through such a framework that Malawi's foreign policy can be understood.

The interdependence between domestic and external foreign policy settings defined above is crucial to understanding Malawi's foreign policy objectives precisely because it has consistently premised its foreign policy aspirations on its most significant domestic imperative, the need for economic development (Malawi Government, 2006a; 2000; McMaster, 1974) which has been the thrust of Malawi's foreign policy in the region throughout its existence as a sovereign and independent state (Malawi Government, 2005; 2000). Furthermore, the quest for economic development constitutes one of the key issues defining contemporary relations among southern African states under the auspices of SADC (Söderbaum and Hettne, 2010; SADC Treaty, 1992). But also, as mentioned earlier, leaders in the southern African region play a central role in deciding their respective countries' national interests.

Indeed, leadership has long been recognized as one of the most important variables in influencing the success or failure of the character and quality of nation-state foreign and domestic policies (Preston, 2010). While various academic disciplines define the concept of leadership within their own contexts (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Cartwright, 1983), this study understands leadership as the “ability to persuade others to comply voluntarily with one's wishes” (Cartwright, 1983: 19). The centrality of pivotal African leaders in the development of their countries is crucial to understanding the concept of leadership on the continent (Apter, 1963; Pye, 1962). In the moment of

independence premiers “were to provide a new moral leadership, a short-cut to political and economic development, and the drive and charisma to move the post-colonial state from its period of suspended animation into the twentieth century” (Hayward, 1984: 19). In this regard, it can be argued that leaders and the decisions they make do have an effect on the foreign policy behaviour of a state (Hudson and Vore, 1995). This is precisely because leaders are by nature “conscious entities capable of reacting to, and often modifying, the variables and conditions they encounter. They can at times see the future taking shape; they can devise, within limits, measures to hasten, retard, or even reverse trends” (Gaddis, 1992: 55).

It should, however, be emphasized that several factors inform the behaviour of (African) leaders in the foreign policy processes. Firstly, they are often influenced by the environment in which they operate. In other words, if the leader is situated in a position that can give him/her power or the ability to impact on policy, he or she is likely to influence foreign policy choices. Secondly, leaders’ personalities and leadership style frequently influence foreign policy decision-making (Greenstein, 1969). The leaders’ personality traits are determined by certain conditions including, for example, “the more authority (or personal control) heads of state have over foreign policy i.e. the machinery of government, etc., the more likely their personality characteristics are to affect foreign policy behaviour” (Hermann, 1976: 328–31). Moreover, “the less developed and differentiated the foreign policy organization of the nation, such as in new or economic underdeveloped states, the more likely the personality characteristics of leaders will impact foreign policy behaviour” (Rosenau, 1971: 113). As has been indicated above and will be extrapolated further in Chapter Four, Malawi’s post-independence leaders have personally played a pivotal role in the formation and implementation of the country’s foreign policy goals. This is a trend that has regularly been attributed to post-independence states across the continent (van Wyk, 2007). But too, this requires an understanding of the historical context in which African foreign policies have emerged. It is to this that the chapter now turns.

1.3. African states’ foreign policies pre 1990

The creation of a collective foreign policy by African states in the early post-independence era, as proposed by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and articulated in its Charter (1963), was beset with difficulties. Firstly, at the moment of decolonisation, the necessary and appropriate structures for foreign policy formation were lacking by virtue of the fact that decision-makers were for the first time “on their own” (Phillips, 1964: 4). This was compounded further by “an absence of highly trained administrators, an insufficient and efficient civil service, and a poorly developed

economy” (Phillips, 1964: 4). Secondly, the majority of African states lacked documentation of their foreign policy behaviour. This often resulted in a mismatch between what African leaders said and what they actually did about their external environments (Aluko, 1977). Thirdly, Africa is a vast continent “characterised by divergences across a range of characteristics, from levels of development to types of regimes, from fairly homogenous national entities (such as Botswana) to multiethnic, multilingual and multi-religious states (such as Nigeria)” (Schoeman, 2006: 241). States were often pre-occupied with achieving and then consolidating their own independence from colonial rule and therefore the emergence of a collective foreign policy position across the continent proved difficult.

These difficulties aside, many newly independent African states did share a common foreign policy goal: to “gain respect on the world stage and ... to be treated as equals [with other world states] after centuries of inferiority witnessed in slavery and colonialism” (Wright, 1992: 338). Thus, the interests of African states in the early post-independence period centred on external security issues which included, for example, safeguarding state sovereignty, unity, nonalignment with either the Western or the Eastern bloc, and the fight against continued colonialism and white minority rule on the continent (Quinn, 2010; Walraven, 2010; Bischoff, 2008; Khadiagala and Lyons, 2001; Wright, 1999; Mashat, 1985; Aluko, 1977; OAU, 1963). These external factors did not occur in isolation as they were also shaped and influenced by domestic imperatives including, for example, the quest of African states to consolidate national identity, sovereign independence, internal cohesion, stability, and economic development. However, while recognizing the importance and multiplicity of these pre-1990 foreign policy themes of African states, this section confines itself to the contextual variables that influenced the foreign policy behaviour of southern African states during the Cold War and apartheid eras. In particular, the following three subsections discuss their pursuit of economic development, the impact of colonialism on their foreign policies, and their unity against white minority regimes in southern Africa.

1.3.1. The quest for economic development

During the colonial era, the economic structures on the continent largely suited the interests of the white colonisers and settlers rather than those of indigenous African communities (Wright, 1992). For instance, the introduction of the wage economy by European settlers subjected many Africans to menial jobs such as manual labour in the commercial farming and mining sectors which, as discussed further in the next chapter, characterised the political economy of the southern African region during the colonial era. In turn, labour exporting territories, particularly those with limited

natural resources of their own, experienced economic underdevelopment exacerbated by the absence of economically productive men and women in various sectors of the domestic economy (Christiansen and Kydd, 1983). The legacy of this has continued in the post-independence era.

The dawn of national independence in the 1950s and 60s presented an opportunity for African leaders to restructure this economic disparity through the economic empowerment of the continent's black populations. In general, African leaders perceived political transformations in the 1960s as "an instrument for a better and more prosperous life for [the African] people" (Tafawa *in* Aluko, 1977: 3). Thus, the majority of African leaders, including Malawi's President Banda, tied their foreign policies to the goal of attaining economic development (Collier and Gunning, 1999). For instance, President Banda stated at Malawi's independence that "my business...now is to develop this country, because the political struggle is over. My job now is...to wage war against three enemies: poverty, disease and ignorance (Banda *in* McMaster, 1974: 70).

While it is pertinent to contend that African states have always given priority to political independence and sovereign independence, particularly if one considers the exhortation by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah to fellow African leaders to "seek...the political kingdom...first and everything else...later" (McKay, 1966), the need for economic development frequently motivated the conduct of their foreign relations. In fact, African leaders demonstrated the importance of this objective by attempting to establish close relations with foreign industrial powers, primarily former colonial metropolises, to benefit from foreign aid and investment opportunities (Aluko, 1977). For instance, Malawi received (and still does receive) substantial monetary and technical support from its metropole, the UK (Patel and Hajat, 2007; McMaster, 1974). Although aid flows to African states contributed significantly to their national development, this arrangement appeared contradictory to African states' own espoused nonalignment policy. As indicated above, for example, Malawi publically rejected Chinese offers of financial aid under the presidency of Hastings Banda during the Cold War. This highlights the tension experienced by many African states between seeking sovereign independence whilst remaining politically and economically dependent on former colonial powers.

In an attempt to minimize South-North economic dependency, African states, including Malawi, enhanced intra-African economic cooperation in line with Article 2, Section II of the OAU Charter. The provisions set forth in Article 2 aimed to guide and facilitate the coordination and harmonisation of member states' foreign policies, particularly for the attainment of shared

economic development (OAU Charter, 1963). It spurred the proliferation and intensification of continental and regional integration and cooperation processes including, for example, the Economic and Social Commission (ESC) and the Association of African Trade Promotion Organisation (AATPO) which were designed to facilitate economic and trade relations among African states (Aluko, 1977). But various factors, including a lack of transport and communication systems, the existence of different currency zones, and the continued association of many African states with the West through the European Economic Commission (EEC), derailed efforts to realize economic development on a continental scale (Aluko, 1977).

These limitations arguably impelled African leaders to form regional scale customs unions in order to strengthen trade flows among neighbouring states (Aluko, 1977), even those whose political regimes ran counter to black independence. This attempt at regional integration had historical precedence in southern Africa, for example with the establishment of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in 1910. SACU provided a platform for trade harmonization among South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and later Namibia at its independence in 1990. Thus, SACU adopted common external tariffs and common excise duties towards all non-member countries and the duty free movement of goods among its member states (McGowan, 2006). Similarly, African leaders used larger regional political and economic groupings such as the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), established in 1975, and SADC in 1980 to advance the process of regional economic integration (ECOWAS, 2007; SADC Treaty, 1992).

However, African states primarily focused attention on bilateral trade and economic arrangements to accelerate the process of internal economic development (Aluko, 1977). Within the immediate post-independence period, for example, Malawi maintained sound bilateral relations with Rhodesia and South Africa (McMaster, 1974). As discussed further in the chapters to follow, Malawi's bilateral relations with these countries constituted one of the most important determinants of Malawi's regional foreign policy throughout the pre-1990 era (Patel and Hajat, 2007). Moreover, as argued in Chapter Four, Malawi's friendly relations with Zimbabwe rest on (historic) bilateral trade and economic arrangements between the two countries. While most contemporary bilateral relations among African states are shaped by mutual interests outlined and governed by legal agreements, in the wake of independence most bilateral arrangements on the continent were determined and structured by colonial legacy (Aluko, 1977).

1.3.2. The impact of colonialism

The prolonged experience of colonialism on the African continent had a major bearing on intra-African relations (Wright, 1999; Okumu, 1971). In the early post-independence period, tangible and intangible links existed between the majority of independent African countries and their metropolitan powers as well as between states that were colonised by the same powers (Aluko, 1977). Immediate commonalities among African Francophone, Anglophone, and Lusophone countries and their respective metropolitan powers included languages, currency zones, administration, education, legal systems and rule of law, democratic institutions, and informal personal links between politicians, businessmen, or professional bodies. This made it easier for one to mix and work closely with people who shared language, educational, legal or administrative systems (Aluko, 1977). By virtue of operating under the dominion of Britain, for example, Malawi and Rhodesia shared a predominantly Christian orientation and developed similar educational, legal, and administrative systems. However, ideological fissures between Francophone and Anglophone countries emerged, thereby shaping the main lines of interstate cooperation across the continent. These developments give credence to Williams' (in Aluko, 1977: 8) argument that the colonial legacy defined the main cause of disunity in intra-African relations.

Attempts to foster unity among African states were facilitated by the OAU's call for closer collaboration for the liberation of other (southern) African states from white minority regimes. The majority of African leaders including President Banda fervently acceded to these calls. For instance, President Banda once told a gathering of African leaders at an OAU summit in Cairo that,

the independence of Malawi would be meaningless as long as there is an inch of African soil under colonialism and imperialism. I share the views already expressed in this conference and elsewhere that all independent African states and all African leaders must do everything possible in their power to help those [southern African] countries which are still under the colonial yoke (Banda *in* Patel and Hajat: 2007: 384).

The central motivation for liberation from white minority rule was that “no citizen of Africa (white or black) can live in the comfort of his own self-respect while other [southern] African citizens are suffering discrimination and humiliation for being born what they are” (Nyerere, 1966: 374). The following section of the chapter addresses this enthusiasm and determination among African leaders to achieve the complete liberation of the continent. But it also demonstrates how and why President Banda opted to collaborate with the white regimes, despite having expressed solidarity with those

seeking an end to white minority rule. The next section also reveals the temporary shift in focus by the majority of (southern) African states from economic development issues to politico-military concerns.

1.3.3. Southern African unity in opposition to white rule: the FLS and SADCC

A detailed analysis of the evolution and the purposes of the FLS, SADCC and SADC has been extensively covered in southern African political literature. For instance, Oosthuizen (2006) has documented the origins of SADC in the FLS and SADCC. Similarly, literature on the emergence of SADC from the FLS and SADC by Chingono and Nakana (2009), Tjønneland (2005), Schoeman (2002), Sellström (2002), Malan (1998), Gwaradzimba (1993) constructs a comprehensive picture of the birth of regional cooperation in southern Africa. Drawing on this literature, this chapter provides a contextual analysis of the FLS, SADCC, and, albeit briefly, SADC in relation to Malawi's regional foreign policy behaviour.

As indicated above, the FLS grouping constituted the backbone of nearly all southern African regional cooperation and integration initiatives including the current SADC (Chigono and Nakana, 2009; Tjønneland, 2005; Gwaradzimba, 1993). In attempts to decolonise the southern African sub-continent, the OAU mandated the decolonization task to the FLS which initially comprised Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia. The central aim of the FLS was to enhance the independence of Zimbabwe as well as to counter South Africa's apartheid and regional destabilization policies (Oosthuizen, 2006; Chakaodza, 1990). After being formally constituted in 1975 the FLS met regularly to co-ordinate efforts, resources and strategy with regard to the National Liberation Movements (NLMs) including South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), that were fighting against colonialism, racism, and white minority rule in respective southern African countries (SADC, 2004). Given this mandate, it is evident that the FLS was primarily politically rather than economically focused, which perhaps prevented the incorporation of Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi into the FLS (Blaauw, 2007; McMaster, 1974; Short, 1974).

It was perhaps also illogical for Swaziland and Lesotho to have mounted an explicit condemnation of South Africa and other white ruled states given their strong economic dependence on the apartheid regime (McMaster, 1974). Moreover, their geographical proximity to South Africa made them reliant on it for communication links, immigration (cross-border migration) and other infrastructural support (see for example Adepoju, 2006a). In fact, Lesotho was also a steady and

reliable supplier of labourers for the South African mining industry. The remittances accrued “accounted for 39 % of Leotho’s rural household income in the mid-1980s and the payments made by The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) to this country totalled 284 million rand in 1992 – an amount equal to 65 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product in 1990” (Davies and Head, 1995: 447).

In the case of Malawi, however, its non-membership of the FLS movement appeared to contradict President Banda’s professed support for total decolonization on the continent. However, it reinforced his prioritisation of socio-economic development in Malawi by tying the country’s fortunes to more economically buoyant regimes in the region. Moreover, Malawi’s geographical location distanced it from the direct impact of South Africa’s destabilisation policies whereas active FLS members such as Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia had conterminous boundaries with both South Africa and Zimbabwe. As a result, they were more immediately exposed to political insurgencies in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The proximity of the FLS, however, also enhanced their unrelenting support for the liberation of their neighbours and provided a platform for political solidarity and military counter-insurgencies. As a black independent state, Malawi was expected to cooperate with other independent governments in isolating the white minority regimes in the region (McMaster, 1974). However, President Banda deliberately developed closer political and economic ties with the white ruled states, thereby effectively transgressing wider regional solidarity during this period. Although President Banda did provide material and fiscal support to some NLM states, most notably his donation of a Land Rover to President Mugabe’s ZANU-PF in the 1960s (Mugabe *in Nyasa Times*, 2009), this minor diplomatic gesture paled in comparison with the wider region’s efforts to secure independence from the white ruled regimes.

President Banda’s reluctance to align with the leading FLS’ states – particularly Tanzania and Zambia – could arguably be attributed to their provision of safe havens for Malawi’s exiled rebellious ex-cabinet Ministers (Short, 1974), but it is also evident that his non-involvement in the liberation struggles was pragmatically driven. In other words, President Banda’s foreign policy was based more on national economic and political development factors rather than by concerns for the peoples of other states or amity with them. Such purposeful foreign policy could be considered “good foreign policy; for only a rational foreign policy minimizes risks and maximizes benefits” (Morgenthau *in* Thompson, 1993: 10) and President Banda’s position suggests such a move. Indeed, before the independence of Mozambique in 1975, for example, Malawi collaborated with the Portuguese settlers in that territory who promised to exchange the northern part of Mozambique

for President Banda's support by prohibiting Mozambiquan rebel fighters, the Front for Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), from passing through Malawi or from using it as a buffer state (Chiume *in* Robinson, 2009). But perhaps a rather more relevant consideration was that President Banda had envisaged three major long-term benefits for cooperating with the white regimes. Firstly, there was a possibility of the development of an integrated transport network throughout the region which would enable Malawi to coordinate shipments passing through the country from the east and west sections of Mozambique and between Rhodesia and Mozambique's Nacala Sea port (McMaster, 1974). This proposal would undoubtedly have strengthened Malawi's economic position, enabling it to generate revenue through toll fees as well as through transportation of goods from one side of the border to the other. Secondly, Malawi also sought to accrue foreign exchange earnings through tourism with South Africa and Rhodesia as obvious sources of (white) tourists. This resulted in the improvement and development of Malawi's infrastructure, including new hotels and airport renovations in expectation of considerable air traffic from South Africa and Rhodesia in and out of Malawi (McMaster, 1974). Thirdly, President Banda was assured by the white regimes of readily available markets for Malawi's agricultural products in South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique (Kadyampakeni, 1985; McMaster, 1974). It can therefore be argued that President Banda's foreign policy objectives were primarily influenced by his desire to strengthen Malawi's economic viability given its landlockedness and subsequent dependency on neighbouring states for port access. By securing efficient transportation links, unconditional loans particularly from its close regional ally South Africa for infrastructural development and trade cooperation Malawi could have expanded its domestic economy by accessing and building relations with foreign markets.

Malawi's deviation from the accepted position of black African states towards the white minority regimes was actually qualified by President Banda at an agricultural show in Nairobi in 1967:

African states, and the leaders in the independent African states, have a much better chance, much better opportunities and hopes of converting South Africa, Rhodesia, and Mozambique to liberation towards ... fellow Africans in those countries by adopting a policy of co-operation and understanding towards them rather than by boycott and isolation (Banda, 1967).

These words were underpinned by his personal conviction that the real problem facing Africa and the African people was a lack of economic viability across the continent and not colonialism, imperialism or apartheid as such. Thus for President Banda, "the first duty of every leader [was] to

see his country economically independent” and not to place the country’s interests on external political and security concerns (Banda *in* McMaster, 1974: 90).

1.3.3.1. Malawi’s pragmatism and foreign policy divergence

President Banda’s continued diplomatic and economic collaboration with the region’s white ruled regimes amid constant criticism from fellow leaders of independent African states resulted in strained relations between Malawi and its neighbours. For example, he once told the Malawian parliament that “other African leaders are fools...who do not know what they are talking about... [as they] follow whatever is said by their friends without thinking for themselves simply because they are ignorant” (Banda *in* Short, 1974: 249). The regional (and most African) leaders were undoubtedly enraged by the impudent way in which President Banda defended his foreign policy strategy. Such derisive behaviour prompted Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere, for example, to bemoan the OAU for including Malawi in a committee for the liberation of the region, arguing that Tanzania “would find it difficult to continue as a member of [the] Committee, knowing...that Malawi, in collaboration with Portugal is sabotaging the work of liberation” (Nyerere *in* McMaster, 1974: 138). Likewise, Mozambique’s Samora Machel, Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe (as Prime Minister), and Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda collectively informed President Banda that Malawi’s alleged foreign policy aspiration, namely the quest for economic development, was equally imperative in other regional states and that if they isolated Malawi, they could effectively frustrate its (Malawi’s) efforts of achieving its foreign policy goal (Hedges, 1989: 640). Perhaps these countries did not fight Malawi outright considering that they, particularly Zambia, also traded with South Africa even more significantly than Malawi (McMaster, 1974). To this cause, President Banda told the Malawian parliament in 1967 that:

As for my critics in neighboring countries, I treat them with utter contempt. Because they are physical and moral cowards and hypocrites. While they are criticizing me of trading with South Africa openly they themselves are trading with South Africa secretly. While they are decrying South Africa, they are doing so on stomachs full of South African beef, mutton and pork; their shops are full of South African consumer and capital goods. [They employ] white miners from South Africa to mine their [copper] minerals, they allow South African financiers and industrialists to invest heavily in their mines, industries and agriculture (Banda *in* McMaster, 1974: 99).

Hence President Banda did not perceive collaboration with black independent regimes as pragmatic and it was primarily rhetorical on the part of these other southern African leaders.

Nonetheless, the stance adopted by the leaders of Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia was indeed plausible considering that the three countries were, and continue to be, of strategic importance to Malawi. Malawi was dependent on access to the Mozambican ports of Nacala and Beira and Zimbabwe provided (and continues to provide) Malawi with shorter road access to South African markets. And as discussed further in the following chapter, Zimbabwe has historically been the primary destination for Malawian labour migrants employed in its agricultural and domestic sectors. Furthermore, Chapter Four reveals that Zimbabwe has historically been one of the two major bilateral trade and economic partners of Malawi in the region. Therefore, despite external pressure on President Banda to align Malawi with the FLS and NLMs, relations between Malawi and the region's white minority regimes continued to blossom as he remained steadfastly committed to and pragmatic in his foreign policy agenda (Patel and Hajat, 2007).

1.3.3.2. The possibility of re-alignment: Malawi and SADCC

However, in the wake of Zimbabwean independence in 1980 and with Robert Mugabe at its helm, the FLS expanded its own regional foreign policy agenda to incorporate economic development issues (Blaauw, 2007). This led to the formation of SADCC whose principle objective was to reduce inevitable economic dependence on South Africa by encouraging economic cooperation among its members thus triggering a shift and/or expansion in its members' foreign policy objectives (Gwaradzimba, 1993). It was precisely for this reason (the expansion and re-orientation of the regional foreign policy agenda) that Malawi and other non-FLS members joined SADCC (Kadyampakeni, 1985). But membership did not deter Malawi from also maintaining close ties with South Africa's white regime. Thus, Malawi sought to balance the interests of SADCC with its economic and political relations with South Africa. This was a pragmatic but difficult move for Malawi, and could have resulted in its isolation by other SADCC members and hampered its desire to diversify its economic relations. Perhaps the other regional states did not punish Malawi for this "deviance" since, for example, Zambia also traded heavily with South Africa, a point which President Banda made when he told the Malawian parliament that Malawi's neighbour also trade with South Africa but "secretly" (Banda *in* McMaster, 1974: 99). Hence it could have been inconceivable if they penalized Malawi.

Malawi's efforts to balance its regional relations- particularly its close ties with the white ruled regimes and its membership of SADCC- ultimately proved advantageous since SADCC's promises to focus on economic development failed to come to fruition and remained largely rhetorical. Instead, it continued to focus efforts on countering South Africa's regional destabilisation policy

and its increasing political and economic dominance in the region (Blaauw, 2007). At the same time, the region's white ruled South Africa continued to prove a reliable bilateral trading partner for Malawi.

1.4. Overview: Malawi, SADC and regional foreign policy post 1990

Events in the late 1980s caused southern African states to reconsider their foreign policy agendas. These events were of a regional and global nature. At the regional level, for example, clear signs manifested about imminent democracy in Namibia and South Africa. Namibia became independent in 1990 and within a year, Nelson Mandela was released from prison, signifying the beginning of the end of apartheid and the emergence of democracy in South Africa (Wright, 1992; Chakaodza, 1990). On the global stage, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the apparent failure of communism led to the subsequent domination of neo-liberal democratic and free-market capitalism through which intensified global and regional economic and political integrationist frameworks evolved.

It was within this period that the winds of political transformation blew across the region. In Zambia, for example, promises by then leader Frederick Chiluba to serve the domestic interests of his country facilitated his rise to the presidency and the defeat of Kenneth Kaunda whose premiership had been preoccupied with liberation struggles in the region (Khadiagala, 2001). One critic argued that it was not surprising that Kaunda lost power because "liberation was [his] pet project, and he kept it up until all those countries were free. Unfortunately, these preoccupations gave the impression he was neglecting his own country and preferring to play on the world stage" (Ngwiri *in* Khadiagala, 2001: 135). Further political changes occurred in Zimbabwe when President Mugabe succumbed to internal and external pressure arising from growing concerns over poverty and declining social service delivery. Combined with other factors, this led to the first post-independence multiparty elections in Zimbabwe in 1990 (Khadiagala, 2001). Although President Mugabe won the vote, the elections were a turning point in Zimbabwe's post-independence political history ending his 10-year reign without significant opposition (Bauer and Taylor, 2005). In Mozambique, the two warring parties – FRELIMO and the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) – moved their conflicts from the battlefield into the regularized institutions of state and society (Zuercher, 2009). In Malawi, these global and regional changes architected the rebirth of democratic pluralism which President Banda had suppressed in the early 1960s in favour of a one party state (Meinhardt and Patel, 2003).

More importantly, southern African leaders recognised the need for greater regional cooperation and integration, particularly with the incorporation of South Africa into its grouping. This inspired the reconstitution of SADCC into SADC. The central argument for this transformation was to:

promote deeper economic cooperation and integration to help address many of the factors that [made] it difficult to sustain economic growth and socio-economic development... Thus, the small size of their individual markets, the inadequate socio-economic infrastructure and the high per capita cost of providing this infrastructure as well as their low income base made it difficult for them individually to attract or maintain the necessary investments for their sustained development (SADC, 2004: 3).

As highlighted by du Pisani (2001: 207) “the creation of SADC denotes an attempt at effecting structural change which favours both national and regional development and which activates all sectors of the population to participate in the development process”. In other words, SADC provided a multifaceted and more developmental approach to regionalism while embracing both economic and political processes and a shift of focus from external (security) to domestic (economic) concerns (Blaauw, 2007).

The regional prioritization of economic and development concerns over political and security issues proved significant for Malawi. It presented the country with an opportunity to pursue, for the first time in alignment with its regional neighbours, its primary foreign policy objectives through a common diplomatic and economic framework. This was effectively summarised by the Malawian government:

Malawi’s participation in SADC affairs has a huge potential to assist in fulfilling the mission and objective [of the country]. This is because SADC has developed a very comprehensive regional integration agenda which Malawi has already benefitted from. ... There is high potential for additional development opportunities in the medium to long term (Malawi Government, 2006b).

SADC has thus proven not only important for Malawi’s regional credibility but for its socio-economic development as it has attempted to foster viable policy regional development policy options which incorporate the region’s economic powerhouse (South Africa). Furthermore, as will be evidenced in Chapter Three, it has enabled Malawi to build solidarity with its neighbours, including Zimbabwe, against external economic and political pressure, particularly from the West.

1.5. Conclusion

The quest for economic development was the centrepiece of Malawi's foreign policy in the immediate post-independence era. Prior to 1990 this resulted in Malawi diverging from the common foreign policy agenda of the FLS, which was premised on political and security concerns and regional solidarity against white minority rule. Although Malawi joined the regional grouping with the emergence of SADCC upon the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 when promises of economic co-operation appeared forthcoming, it pragmatically maintained diplomatic relations with apartheid South Africa. As anticipated by the then President, Hastings Banda, Malawi's own interests were best served by pursuing relations with both SADCC and South Africa. The transformation of SADCC into SADC in 1992 provided a more viable opportunity for Malawi to pursue its foreign economic policies in alignment with the majority of the region's states. SADC member states have sought to define common socio-economic and political agendas with an emphasis on regional (and national) development as articulated in the SADC Treaty (SADC Treaty, 1992). This alignment and expansion of regional foreign policy concerns through SADC has brought Malawi closer to its counterparts, enabling it to act in unison rather than in tension with the wider regional political and economic agenda. This, as will become evident, has resulted in Malawi's continued cooperation and alignment with other SADC members on crucial regional matters including the crisis in Zimbabwe. The following chapter locates Malawi's apparent solidarity with Zimbabwe within a historical perspective of their bilateral relations.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Context of Malawi-Zimbabwe Relations

2.1. Introduction

Malawi's solidarity with Zimbabwe can only be understood in the context of the historical relations between the two countries. As argued by Deighton (2007), history affects states' policy outcomes since "the past seeps into the present" and "it shapes the identities, perceptions, and attitudes of individuals and institutions." The historical fabric of relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe is shaped by the broader context of shared cultural, political and socio-economic experiences among the countries of the southern African region (Mijere, 2009; Matlosa, 2006; Mhone, 2001; MacLean, 1999). This chapter specifically explores Malawi-Zimbabwe relations within this historical framework. It demonstrates that from the late 1800s to 1980s labour migration from Nyasaland to Rhodesia constituted the single most important factor that informed relations between the two territories (Malawi Government, 2004) and that this was entrenched further by their incorporation into the CAF in 1953 (Chikowero, 2008; Mashiri, 2002).

Much of the literature on labour migration to Rhodesia (and South Africa) has focused on the causes and the (social and economic) effects of immigration on the labour supplying country (see for example Crush and Frayne, 2010; Adepoju, 2006a; 2006b; Oucho, 2006; Davies and Head, 1995). Very little attention has been paid to the exploration of the resultant socio-cultural integration between the labour supplying and the labour receiving countries (Morapedi, 2008). Yet this neglected element constitutes one of the core themes of this chapter. Skinner (1960: 375) argues that "labour migration...not only touches nearly all aspects of the lives of the peoples involved, but is often the cause...of important social and cultural changes". An analysis of the implications of Nyasaland labour migration to Rhodesia will therefore assist in understanding the extent to which it informs contemporary socio-cultural integration between the two countries.

While historically binding factors such as colonial connections and other socio-culturally cohesive conditions fuelled labour migration across the southern African region (Adepoju, 2006a; Oucho, 2006), the migration of Nyasaland labourers to Rhodesia (and South Africa) was primarily economically induced (Andersson, 2006; Christiansen and Kydd, 1983; Makambe, 1980; Sanderson, 1961). Although socio-cultural similarities often manifest between two societies that exist along conterminous borders (Mijere, 2009), the geographical distance between Nyasaland and Zimbabwe precludes such reasoning. In addition to their shared colonial history, present day

Malawi and Zimbabwe possess considerable socio-cultural bonds which, this chapter argues, were largely constructed by the flow of Nyasaland labour migrants to Rhodesia. But this is best understood in the context of labour migration within the region.

2.2. Labour migration in southern Africa

Organised and informal labour migration in southern Africa historically centred on Rhodesia and South Africa and dates back to over 150 years (Crush and Frayne, 2010; Oucho, 2006). However, in the initial years, labour demands were often met by the local populace since the greatest demand stemmed from South Africa's plantations (Kanyenze, 2004). But the development of South Africa's mining industry in the late 1860s stimulated demand for more labour. This demand was primarily served by the region's peripheral states, particularly those lacking natural resources of their own (Wentzel and Tabela, 2006). In 1871, for example, the diamond mines in Kimberly (South Africa) attracted between fifty and eighty thousand migrant workers from various regional territories including Nyasaland (Kanyenze, 2004: 2). Furthermore, the flow of labour to South Africa's industrial hubs later facilitated the apartheid government's destabilisation policy in the region by weakening the domestic economies of neighbouring states, increasing the productive capacity of South Africa and creating greater dependency on its economic sector for regional employment (Bohning, 1981).

Labour migration to Rhodesia started toward the end of the nineteenth century. It was induced by white settlers who developed the agriculture and mining sectors in the territory following the discovery of extractive minerals (Kanyenze, 2004). As argued by Sunseri (1996: 581) "the dominant capitalist sector ultimately acted to capture peasant enclaves, pump out labour for industrialization, and preserve peasant societies for the benefit of capitalism". The small population of white settlers in other regional territories implied that Rhodesia, which had many white settlers (second only to South Africa), prevailed as a reliable destination for regional labour migrants due to its vast and substantial agricultural and industrial activities (Phiri, 2008).

The bulk of labour migrants to Rhodesia and South Africa originated from the region's economically weak states such as Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Nyasaland. In addition to the aforementioned reasons, this helps to explain why Swaziland and Lesotho shared Malawi's later pragmatism in fostering and maintaining economic relations with South Africa after independence. The diversity of the labour source also explains why labour migration played such a major role in tying together all of the various colonies and countries of the

sub-continent into a single regional labour market (Crush *et al.*, 2005). Labour migration is therefore central to understandings of the region's political economy because of its crucial role in the development of large-scale and highly profitable mineral and agricultural production (Andersson, 2006). Indeed, without cheap migrant labourers over a sustained period, South Africa's key gold mining industry or even Rhodesia's commercial farming sector would perhaps not have developed to the scale that they did (Jeeves and Crush, 1997).

Migration in the region was primarily driven by economic factors (Adepoju, 2006a; Oucho, 2006) but other historical, social, and structural dynamics also facilitated the movement of people across the region to the centres of production. Therefore, and because of the arbitrary division of territorial units by colonial powers, peoples with a common ethnic and/or cultural heritage could be found on both sides of shared colonial boundaries (Cogneau *et al.*, 2010; Walraven, 2010; Crush *et al.*, 2005; Englebort *et al.*, 2002). This was solidified by the OAU's decision, though reluctantly, to accept the colonial boundaries (Ajala, 1983). Mijere (2009: 5) contends that southern African states "share geographical borders that cut across ethnic traditional kingdoms and cultures. Thus the peoples of the region, despite having different citizenships, often share common cultures and/or ways of life (see also Walraven, 2010; Matlosa, 2006). Numerous examples include the presence of the Sotho in Lesotho and South Africa, the (Ba) Tswana in Botswana and South Africa, the Chewa in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, all of which entrenched cross-border social integration.

These cross-border interactions were further enhanced by the porosity of the international borders in the region (Crush and Frayne, 2010). This was particularly evident in the 1960s when border controls between southern African states were either partial or non-existent (Crush *et al.*, 2005), besides which "border regulations can be circumvented and extensive borders make effective policing against clandestine migration extremely difficult" (Adepoju, 2006a: 33). As such, many migrant workers found it easy to traverse the borders in search of work in the economic centres of South Africa and Rhodesia. Furthermore, the absence of an established formal contract labour system, particularly in Rhodesia's commercial agricultural and domestic service sectors, meant that migrants flowing into the country did not have to acquire work permits to serve in those sectors (Williams, 2006).

2.3. The flow of Nyasaland labour migrants to Rhodesia

Although Nyasaland labour migration to Rhodesia also dates back to the late 1800s (Makambe, 1980), the trend was particularly well established by 1914 when an estimated 123,000 of 169,000 Nyasaland migrants worked in Rhodesia (Sanderson, 1961: 259). By 1936, there was only circa 49,000 people in domestic wage employment in Nyasaland compared to more than 170,000 Nyasaland workers abroad, of which approximately 63 percent plied their trade in Rhodesia and a further 17 percent in South Africa (Christiansen and Kydd, 1983: 313). In subsequent years, the number of Nyasaland migrant workers increased such that between 1948 and 1962, for example, circa 684,000 Nyasaland migrants worked in Rhodesia (Boeder, 1973: 37).

The flow of Nyasaland migrant workers to the region's labour centres was largely dictated by the absence of "significant...field of economic exploitation" within Nyasaland's borders (Sanderson, 1961: 259). The attendant factors that underpinned the unprecedented migration of Nyasaland labourers to Rhodesia as compared to South Africa were however both legal and structural. In the first place, South Africa's immigration controls were exclusionary to black migrant workers from 1948 onwards when the nationalist government rolled out its apartheid policies. In particular, the South African government erected a legal and institutional framework which precluded their permanent (legitimate) settlement in the country (ILO, 1998). Arguably, this combined with segregationist social regulations which further discouraged the majority of Nyasaland migrant workers from seeking employment in South African mines. Moreover, the entry of Nyasaland migrant workers into South Africa was by way of bilateral labour agreements between the two governments (Chirwa, 1996; Christiansen and Kydd, 1983). This meant that migrant workers from Nyasaland had to undergo bureaucratic and physical assessment to determine their eligibility for South African work permits. In contrast, the work arrangements between Nyasaland labourers and (white) Rhodesian employers were largely informal, thus bypassing the legal requirement for official work permits. In addition, work opportunities in Rhodesia extended to agricultural and domestic service sectors – and therefore women – whereas in South Africa, jobs were primarily limited to the mining sector.

The reluctance of local Rhodesians to work in domestic farming or mining sectors, perhaps due to "difficult working conditions" and low wages, increased demand for external labourers (Sachikonye, 2003: 23; Loewenson, 1992) and foreigners, including those from Nyasaland, were willing to provide their services at "cheaper and more exploitable" costs (Williams, 2006: 5). However, this did not necessarily imply that the locals were more educated than the immigrant

labourers but that the latter were (and still are) often more willing to adapt in order to survive and therefore accept lower wages, particularly if employment opportunities in their home countries were scarce (Adepoju, 2006a). Furthermore, the difficulty of regular travel to and from Nyasaland due to distance, high travel costs and commensurately low wages (Chikowero, 2008) ensured a relatively stable work force and arguably made Nyasaland migrants more appealing to Rhodesian employers.

2.3.1. Economic and social implications of Nyasaland labour migration to Rhodesia

The migration of Nyasaland labourers to Rhodesia had both social and economic implications for Nyasaland. It encouraged economic development while at the same bringing about changes to the social fabric of the country. Interestingly, however, this latter implication was central to the construction of socio-cultural relations between the peoples of Nyasaland and Rhodesia.

It can be argued that labour migration boosted Nyasaland's economy and "improved" the well-being of an average family in Nyasaland through the influx of remittances to the country (Boeder, 1973: 40). As Adepoju (2006a: 31) argues, "migrants' remittances help[ed] sustain and enhance livelihoods of poorer family members – paying education fees for siblings and basic services, health care in particular, investing in real estate and taking steps to enhance agricultural production". The remittances sent back to Nyasaland and taxes paid by the employers to the territory's authorities constituted an important source of income for both the government and the migrants' families (McMaster, 1974). In 1960, for example, the total of all remittances to Nyasaland amounted to an estimated £1.6 million (McMaster, 1974: 36). Considering that tea, the second largest export of Nyasaland, was valued at approximately £3.8 million in 1960 this gives some indication of the significance of the remittances as a source of foreign currency (McMaster, 1974: 36).

However, there were also negative consequences of such high levels of labour migration. The exodus of working age people arguably contributed to Nyasaland's domestic economic stagnation and underdevelopment (McCracken, 1977). For example, labour migration limited the capacity to develop a strong local agricultural sector through large-scale farming through which the domestic economy could have developed. It can also be contended that labour migration placed severe strains on Nyasaland's human resources and social structures (Makambe, 1980). That is to say, labour migration restricted the growth of Nyasaland's indigenous population by removing reproductive age males from society, reducing the population of the domestic work force. So, while remittances were generally substantial to both the locals and the development of the country, the long absence of the migrants from their homes affected social patterns of the lives of the

(predominantly) rural people (Stichter, 1985). As indicated in the following section, it is within this context that the Malawian government, upon independence, made significant strides to reverse the exodus of its own labour force in an attempt to develop its own domestic economy (Christiansen and Kydd, 1983). It can therefore be argued that “Malawi was underdeveloped in the sense that [its] economy had been restructured to meet the demands of the Southern African metropole and, in consequence, the control of [its] economy was no longer in any meaningful sense in the hands of [its] own inhabitants” (McCracken, 1977: 195). The labour migration patterns between Malawi and Rhodesia also cemented socio-cultural relations between the peoples of the two states. The “absenteeism” of Malawians, particularly males, also brought about socio-cultural integration between Nyasaland and Rhodesia through intermarriages and cultural assimilation due to long spells these men spent in Zimbabwe while others never returned home. In the contemporary era, it is believed that Zimbabweans of Malawian origin (popularly known as Malawian-Zimbabweans) constitute the largest immigrant ethnic group in Zimbabwe (Mashiri, 2002: Muzondiya, 2004). As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the strength and significance of socio-cultural relations between the two countries was reiterated as an important historical bond between the two countries by President Mutharika when he visited Zimbabwe in 2004.

2.4. Relations between Nyasaland and Rhodesia in the context of CAF

Rosberg (1956), Hance (1954) and Short (1974) amongst others provide comprehensive overviews of the establishment and running of the CAF in its ten year existence between 1953 and 1963. The Federation was established on 1 August 1953, with the aim of providing an “equal” platform for the interests of the newly independent and socialist black independent states and the white-dominated governments of South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique (Short, 1974). Moreover, the establishment of the CAF was premised on economic factors (Rosberg, 1956). The proponents of the Federation argued that it would help to attract investment capital and facilitate the diversification of the respective economies for the benefit of all inhabitants regardless of racial background (Rosberg, 1956). Furthermore, those who favoured the Federation’s establishment argued that it would enhance economic interdependence among the three federal territories, particularly through “the supply of Rhodesian coal to Northern Rhodesia’s Copperbelt; the migration of labour from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to the farms, mines, and industries of Rhodesia; the supply of cotton from Nyasaland to Rhodesia and the subsequent sale of cloth and clothing to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia” (Hance, 1954: 29). In addition, the greater size of a unified area arguably made it more attractive to foreign investors. Under the Federation, it was

believed, the area would develop as a unit, whereas lacking cohesion, each territory would prove less viable economically and would, as a result, engage in unnecessary competition (Hance, 1954).

While the quest to enhance economic interdependence among CAF territories provided the dominant motivation for its constitution, inter-territorial trade among the three entities amounted to only five percent of total trade (Hance, 1954: 29). This raises questions about the plausibility of the Federation, particularly as intra-group trade could have developed under trade agreements without the establishment of a political union. But as Short (1974) noted, the Federation was motivated by prospects of individual gains by the leaders from each of the three territories. Colonial leaders from Rhodesia, for example, believed that through the Federation they could rid themselves of (central British) colonial office rule whilst also expediting the territory's independence in order to fully exercise its regional economic and political power through the acquisition of a considerable share in Northern Rhodesia's copper revenues. For the colonial leaders of Nyasaland the Federation brought the prospect of accelerated economic development (Short, 1974). As argued by its colonial government, "Nyasaland outside the Federation would become a rural slum" since it had "no reserves worthy of the name and its own domestic earnings could go little more than half way towards meeting the present annual liabilities" (Nyasaland Financial Secretary *in* McMaster, 1974: 36). However, the Federation did not bring about the said economic development benefits, at least not for Nyasaland as an individual territory, and it remained economically the poorest and, perhaps as a result, numerically the least Europeanized of the three territories (Blake, 1977).

The lack of meaningful economic development combined with demands by African nationalists for a greater share of power resulted in political agitation to end the Federation. This was coupled with the belief among the nationalists, particularly those of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, that the anticipated (economic) benefits would serve the interests of the white settlers, particularly those in Rhodesia who were numerically more than any Europeans in the other two federal entities (Short, 1974). In Nyasaland nationalist resistance to the Federation idea pivoted on the fear that the amalgamation of the three territories would undermine their own pursuit of national independence. Moreover, they argued that the Federation would hinder Nyasaland's prospects for economic development because foreign aid and investment would likely be concentrated in Rhodesia due to the existing presence of white settler industries and commercial agriculture (Short, 1974). Some of these fears were subsequently realised when the Federation brought "economic pinpricks such as a duty on hoes and a wide difference in the quality of services provided for Europeans by the Federal government and for the Africans by the Territorial Government" (McMaster, 1974: 14). The defeat

of the colonial United Federal Party (UFP) by Hastings Banda's Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in the 1961 elections made Nyasaland's secession certain (Short, 1974: 166) and in February 1963, Hastings Banda became Nyasaland's first Prime Minister and subsequently president on 6 July 1964.

2.5. Malawi's (Nyasaland) post-independence relations with Rhodesia

Nationalists within Nyasaland considered the Federation to be a major obstacle to the achievement of independence. However, a sharp reversal of this attitude prevailed in the wake of Malawi's independence in 1964. In particular, Malawian nationalists collaborated with the (white) Rhodesian government in pursuit of economic development interests. As indicated in the previous chapter, the foreign policy aspirations of Malawi's first independence leader, Hastings Banda, were premised on the attainment of national economic development rather than on providing resistance to the region's white ruled regimes. Perhaps in recognition of the country's dependency on neighbouring states for access to ports, for example, President Banda promoted a number of development priorities. These included increasing the productivity of small holder agriculture; giving every facility and encouragement to the production of agricultural commodities by large estates with commercial capital; assisting all kinds of business enterprises including the increased participation of Malawians in commercial and industrial activities; and maintaining fiscal prudence in order to retain the services and assistance of international institutions and donor countries (McMaster, 1974: 73).

Malawi's development priorities manifested more explicitly when a large number of labour migrants returned to the country in search of work. This can be understood in the context of broader economic changes in host countries such as increased demands for labour by the locals that served to "push" out expatriate Africans (Christiansen and Kydd, 1983: 311). However, President Banda also sought to develop a strong domestic workforce during this period and thus also encouraged the return of Malawian migrant workers (Chirwa, 1996). One motivation for this decision could have been his fear that the imminent victory of FRELIMO in Mozambique would result in the blocking of Malawi's sea port access in that country given Malawi's agreement with the Portuguese settlers not to allow FRELIMO to operate from Malawian soil. Given the landlockedness of the country and its peripheral positioning in relation to regional markets this could have been very damaging to President Banda's economic development objectives. FRELIMO's victory also had the potential to increase Malawi's isolation as the alleged friend of the repressive white racist regime in South Africa (Chirwa, 1996). On the other hand, the increased demand for wage labour within Malawi, particularly for the planned expansion of Malawi's

agricultural economy, served to “pull” many towards employment at home (Chirwa, 1996; Christiansen and Kydd, 1983). Moreover, President Banda needed more labour for the construction of the new capital in Lilongwe, for the extension of the railway line from the lakeshore of Lake Malawi to the west of the country, and for several roads connecting newly opened agricultural areas to urban centres (Chirwa, 1996: 625).

More importantly, however, was the continuation of friendly relations with the white minority regime in Rhodesia by the government of independence despite the potential damage it could do to relations with other newly independent states in the region. While President Banda’s friendly policy towards Rhodesia could have been shaped by his “respect and friendship” with its leader, Winston Field (McMaster, 1974: 50), it is evident that his policies were reinforced by the need for domestic economic development. Amid severe criticisms from fellow African leaders, President Banda justified Malawi’s friendly relations with Rhodesia (and other regional white minority rulers) by reminding them of the crucial role that these states played in Malawi’s socio-economic well-being given that, in the 1960s, between 80,000 and 200,000 Malawians were working in South Africa and Rhodesia respectively, sending remittances back to Malawi and Mozambique, which had, under colonial rule, facilitated Malawian exports and imports via its sea ports (Banda, 1967).

To preserve the interests of the Malawian labour migrants still residing in Rhodesia and maintain positive relations between the two states, President Banda did nothing when Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was made in 1965 despite public condemnation of the declaration by other southern African leaders (McMaster, 1974). It can therefore be argued that President Banda’s reluctance to adopt a confrontational foreign policy towards Rhodesia stemmed from the fact that if such an approach were pursued, it could have severely and adversely affected Malawi’s national interests. Frankel (1970) asserts that national interests are crucially important as a basis for the formulation of the foreign policies of new states, such as Malawi, which perhaps explains why President Banda believed that “it [was] not realistic on the part of any of the African leaders to ask the British Government to send an army to Rhodesia, suspend the Constitution of Rhodesia and impose a new one by force, by killing the European settlers” (Banda *in Short*, 1974: 240-241). Although Malawi abrogated a trade agreement it signed with Rhodesia due to pressure from the UK (its main donor), President Banda continued to encourage the Malawian corporate sector to find alternative sources of supply to Zimbabwe and made it clear that “there could be no question of Malawi cutting overnight all its existing trade ties with [Southern] Rhodesia” (Banda *in Short*, 1974: 244). Furthermore, President Banda was unwilling to condemn the Rhodesian regime

because it provided Malawi with primary commodities such as meat and sugar (McMaster, 1974: 117). Statistics indicate that in 1965 an estimated 40 percent of Malawi's imports came from Rhodesia, most likely making Rhodesia the largest single source of its import during that time, and in addition, close commercial links flourished between the business community in Malawi and their counterparts in Rhodesia (McMaster, 1974: 117).

Apart from trade and economic interdependence, President Banda's principle of "dialogue and discretionary alignment" regarding the Rhodesian question was underpinned by three arguments he put forth at the 1965 OAU Summit in Accra, Ghana. First, President Banda argued that the British, as Rhodesia's colonial power, should be responsible for dealing with Rhodesia regarding the UDI issue and not African or any other states. Second, he argued that the British army was likely to mutiny if ordered to invade Rhodesia since nearly all white Rhodesians were of British descent, so, for President Banda, there was no point in African leaders advancing an agenda that was likely to fail. And third, he argued that calls by African leaders for a military invasion of Rhodesia were "childish" given the immensity of the Rhodesian army which, he claimed, could conquer even the combined forces of the FLS within a few days (McMaster, 1974: 114). This line of argument did much to consolidate amicable relations between the white Rhodesian government and Malawi in the face of widespread resolve within the OAU to sever diplomatic relations with Britain if it refused to adopt a firm stance in response to the UDI. Malawi, it should be noted, abstained from voting for such a resolution. It argued that breaking diplomatic relations with Britain was an "empty and idle gesture" and had no significant importance to black Rhodesians (McMaster, 1974: 114). It is apparent however that central to President Banda's position was the UK's role as the chief foreign aid donor to Malawi (McMaster, 1974), a legacy of the colonial era which has continued into the present and served to inform Malawi's diplomatic alignments at various moments in its history.

2.5.1. Bilateral socio-economic relations

Malawi possessed favourable economic relations with Rhodesia which were owed to President Banda's principles of dialogue, "discretionary alignment and co-existence" that underpinned his regional foreign policy (Short, 1974: 173). Thus, President Banda prioritised "non-interference in the affairs of other countries, assessment of individual situations on their merits rather than by the alignments of the countries involved, and willingness to accept the aid of any country prepared to help Malawi" (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 385). Indeed in recognition of Malawi's stand on the UDI question, Rhodesia gave Malawi preferential treatment in a range of economic areas. This was particularly evident when Malawi and Botswana emerged as the only countries in the region (and in

Africa) whose import levies were exempted by Rhodesia. In the case of Botswana, however, the exemption was based on the fact that it controlled part of the railway that connected Rhodesia and South Africa. Friendly relations therefore ensured unfettered access to South Africa's markets. However, it could be argued that the exemption of Malawi appeared to have been in recognition of Malawi's pragmatic position on the UDI issue. In addition to the exemption of import levies, Rhodesia also permitted Malawi to use Sterling (common currency to Rhodesia) in bilateral transactions while the rest of the region continued to trade in their own currencies resulting in higher trade transaction costs. Furthermore, Rhodesia did not take any direct action against Malawian labour migrants residing in the country despite the warning it issued that foreign workers would be sent home if its own workers lost their jobs because of the effects of the (British) sanctions following the UDI (McMaster, 1974).

Such favourable policies catalysed closer economic relations between the two states on one level but there was often a lack of commensuration in trade arrangements in practice. For example Rhodesia's large and vibrant domestic agricultural and industrial sectors and Malawi's small and largely subsistence agricultural sector resulted in Rhodesia exporting more agricultural and non-agricultural commodities to Malawi than Malawi to Rhodesia. Thus, trade relations between the two states were not always equitable. The only major "export" for Malawi in the 1960s and 70s was the cheap labour it provided to Rhodesia's farms and South African mines, which contributed as much as 25 percent of Malawi's economy (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 388). The trade imbalance between the two countries manifested further even after Rhodesia – now Zimbabwe – gained full independence in 1980, particularly following the implementation of the bilateral Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) in the following decade. The PTAs – trade pacts between countries to reduce tariffs for certain products to those countries – created a situation where Zimbabwe's exports to Malawi tripled over a period of ten years (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 389). The irregularity of the PTAs was particularly evident, for example, when Zimbabwe imported broken rice from North Korea but used non-tariff barriers such as denying trade permits to import rice from Malawi. This impeded Malawi's rice exports while at the same time deluging the country with Zimbabwean produce including chickens, eggs, and potatoes (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 389).

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Nyasaland labour migration to Rhodesia was crucial in shaping socio-cultural and economic relations between the two territories. Moreover, both territories operated within the CAF, which encouraged and broadened economic relations between them albeit

not on an equal footing. Due to Nyasaland's economic deprivation however, its association with Rhodesia, which was then more economically stable than Nyasaland, reinforced its pragmatic approach – both as Nyasaland and later independent Malawi – to co-operate with the white Rhodesian regime because it ensured access to markets and remittances from emigrant labourers. While economic factors continue to shape Malawi's bilateral relations with Zimbabwe in the contemporary era, as will be argued in Chapter Four, the membership of both countries in the multilateral forum of SADC is also informative of Malawi's solidarity with Zimbabwe particularly during the crisis in the 1990s-2000s. It is therefore to their relationship within this institutional framework that the discussion now turns.

CHAPTER THREE

Foreign Policy Relations within the Framework of SADC Multilateralism

3.1. Introduction

This chapter assesses Malawi's engagement with Zimbabwe within the multilateral framework of SADC, the regional organisation of which both Malawi and Zimbabwe were founding members. In the post-apartheid era, southern African states united, in principle at least, within SADC to coordinate and harmonise their foreign policies (SADC Treaty, 1992). SADC provides member states with an equal platform through which to engage on regional issues, advance their economic and political interests and collaborate for the prosperity of the region through collaborative mechanisms for decision-making and policy formulation. Moreover, and as articulated in Chapter One, the principal objective of SADC is to "achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration" (SADC Treaty, 1992). This complements the foreign policy aspirations of the majority of SADC member states, and particularly the long-standing foreign policy objectives of Malawi.

The pertinence of SADC to the foreign policy aspirations of Malawi is evident. Although based on rotational selection of the venue, Malawi has hosted a number of SADC summits and Ministerial Meetings including a Summit on Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes region in August 1997, the formulation of a common strategy on the transformation of the OAU to the African Union (AU) in August 2001, and an Extraordinary Summit on the Zimbabwe issue in January 2002 where President Muluzi "expressed a desire for sustainable peace, security and stability throughout the SADC region" for meaningful socio-economic integration (SADC, 2002). More recently, Malawi also hosted the SADC Tourism Ministers Meeting in April 2010. The significance of these meetings is that they give Malawi a stake in region matters and increase its profile within the region and the wider continent. Moreover, delegates to such meetings bring foreign currency and potentially investment opportunities which are essential to Malawi's economic development (Mchazime, 2010; *Nyasa Times*, 2010a). In 2008, Malawi also pledged to donate 5,000 tonnes of maize to Swaziland and Lesotho when the countries were experiencing food shortages (Masina, 2008b). These, and many other factors, are illustrative of Malawi's apparent solidarity and more positive relations with its neighbours in the post-apartheid era.

Given that much has already been written about the evolution and the objectives of SADC (see for example Chingono and Nakana, 2009; Oosthuizen, 2006; Schoeman, 2002; Malan, 1998; SADC Treaty, 1992), this chapter focuses on the multilateral framework offered by SADC and its response to the crisis in Zimbabwe. There appears to be an inconsistency in the collaborative rhetoric and the actual policy responses chosen by SADC members in response to emerging crises in the region. To expose this tension, this chapter evaluates the foreign policy behaviour of SADC member states towards other members plagued by internal crises. Ideological divisions and policy variances pursued by member states in response to the conflicts in Lesotho and the DRC in 1998 have been replicated in the individual responses to the Zimbabwe crisis, but in the main SADC members have demonstrated solidarity with President Mugabe's regime. This has been complementary to, and arguably facilitated, Malawi's continued alliance with the state. Furthermore, SADC has promoted political and economic integration across the region which has perhaps given Malawi greater capacity to assert itself more vociferously – although not without some caution – with its former colonial power, the UK, on issues where the two states disagree. This has been evident in the wake of the Zimbabwe crisis. As this chapter progresses, it is pertinent to stress that Malawi's soft stance on Zimbabwe in the eras of Presidents Muluzi and Mutharika has been guided by both political imperatives and economic interests whereas, during President Banda's regime, relations with Zimbabwe and the wider region were arguably driven by economic interests alone.

3.2. Regional relations in the context of SADC

Regional cooperation in southern Africa owes its origin to historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors that have created strong bonds of solidarity and unity among the leadership and peoples of the region (Madakufamba, 2007). These factors have contributed to the formation of a “distinct identity that underpins political and economic co-operation” pursued through SADC (SADC, 2004: 1). The transformation of SADCC to SADC in 1992 signified a multifaceted approach to regional cooperation and integration through a more distinctly developmental strategy for both economic and political processes in the region (Blaauw, 2007; Madakufamba, 2007). This was enhanced by the inclusion of the newly democratic South Africa into SADC, signalling a shift in the foreign policy preoccupations of the region's independent states from one of political and racial alignment to a new found cooperation. Thus, nearly all states in the region assumed similar political and economic ideologies enshrined in and supported by the SADC Treaty (SADC Treaty, 1992). In particular, the Treaty stipulates “sovereign equality of all member states; solidarity, peace and security; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; equity, balance, and mutual benefit; and peaceful settlement of disputes” (Article 4 of the SADC Treaty, 1992). In fact, these tenets have

been crucial in reinforcing the spirit of regional solidarity among the majority of southern African states in their quest for a common destiny, namely the attainment of socio-economic development (SADC, 2004).

It should be emphasized that SADC remains consistent with the spirit of Pan-Africanism and many of the general principles developed under both the OAU and the AU. This Pan-Africanism corresponds to “a talismanic [African Renaissance] idea...to mark a new moment in African affairs” advanced by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki (Vale and Barrett, 2009: 454). Some of the common objectives for SADC and the AU include the quest for greater unity and solidarity among member countries and their people; defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of their member states; accelerating the political and socio-economic integration among member states; and promoting and defending member states’ common positions on issues of interest to the countries and their peoples (Article 3 of the African Union, 2000; Article 4 of the SADC Treaty, 1992). While respect for the sovereignty of member states and non-interference in their internal affairs are key AU and SADC principles, the AU does have “the right to intervene” in another AU member state in respect of grave circumstances such as war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, arguably such as the human rights infringements Zimbabwe (Söderbaum and Hettne, 2010: 22; Article 4 of the African Union, 2000). But at a 2008 summit on Zimbabwe in Egypt, the AU failed to use its capacity to intervene in the domestic affairs of the country and instead called for serious negotiations between President Mugabe’s ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC (*AllAfrica*, 2008).

Article 19 of the SADC Treaty stipulates that “decisions of the institutions of SADC shall be taken by consensus” (SADC Treaty, 1992). Thus, for the regional grouping to function effectively and smoothly there is a need to have unity of purpose among the member states. Therefore, in the face of regional crises affecting one or more SADC members, SADC states are keen to use a multilateral forum to generate solutions or mitigate the effects of such situations and to “avoid adversarial relations that might jeopardize regional trade and functional cooperation” (Nathan, 2004: 93). This illustrates how SADC was/is primarily concerned with the pursuit of economic development and the adverse effects such events may have on the fulfilment of this objective. However, since the formation of SADC, regional events have indeed challenged the maintenance of this institutionalised solidarity. The advent of the DRC and Lesotho conflicts in 1998 and the political and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe since the late 1990s have exposed significant ideological

divisions and personal tensions between SADC leaders, notably between former South African President Nelson Mandela and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe.

Two distinct factions seeking to pursue divergent foreign policy approaches emerged within SADC over the conflict in the DRC (Nathan, 2006; 2004; Sachikonye, 2005). The division emanated from the question of whose authority it was to sanction regional military interventions: the SADC Chairperson, who at that time was Nelson Mandela, or the Chairman of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC), who at the time was Robert Mugabe (Madakufamba, 2007). The tension between the two leaders must be seen in the context of South Africa's, and indeed Nelson Mandela's, ascendancy in the region (and globally) in the post-apartheid era and President Mugabe's bristling at his own usurpation as *the* liberation leader. A sentiment shared, it seems, by President Mandela when he said that "Mugabe's problem [was] that he was the star – and then the sun came up" (Kagwanja and Rupiya, 2008: 311). However, the disagreement was not simply one of personalities, but also one of strategy. Pursuant of a new image for South Africa in the post-apartheid era and determined not to be conceived as a pariah in the region (Vale and Taylor, 1999), President Mandela favoured a diplomatic approach to resolve the conflict while President Mugabe advocated for military intervention in the DRC (Madakufamba, 2007). South Africa was supported by Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Botswana while Zimbabwe was aligned with Angola and Namibia. The latter group argued that preventive diplomacy was no longer a viable option as the rebels were on the verge of attacking the capital Kinshasa (Madakufamba, 2007). Malawi's position is not clear although it sent its forces to Rwanda under the auspices of the UN following the genocide there in 1994 (Rupiya, 2005). It can be contended that Malawi was more likely to support the diplomatic efforts of the South African faction since its own foreign policy objectives include the "promotion of harmonious social and political order with other countries of the region based on democracy and respect of the rule of law, and strengthening of regional mechanisms for peace and security as well as conflict prevention, management and resolution" (Malawi Government, 2000: 6). Furthermore, it was unlikely that Malawi would have had the resources or capabilities to support a sustained military intervention or that such an option would have gained widespread domestic support, particularly since the introduction of democratic rule within the country in the early 1990s.

Paradoxically, South Africa and Botswana, which had earlier pursued a diplomatic approach to the DRC conflict, became the main players in a military peacekeeping mission in Lesotho's conflict of 1998 (Likoti, 2007; Neethling, 1999). These two cases thus reveal profound inconsistencies in the

foreign policy approaches among SADC member states, and the national priorities of each. It indicates SADC's failure to implement diplomacy rather than force in solving regional crises. In particular, these events demonstrate a lack of clarity about when SADC states are acting in concert and when one or two members act unilaterally, or claim to be acting on behalf of the wider SADC community (Santho, 2000). Moreover, the function of the OPDSC, which operates in seven clusters – military issues; peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement; conflict prevention, management and resolution; crime prevention; intelligence; foreign policy; and human rights – (Article 10a of the Amended SADC Treaty, 2008) was surpassed by states' own interests (Söderbaum and Hettne, 2010: 28). It can therefore be argued that SADC members often struggle to achieve policy coherence in the pursuit of their vision to promote collective regional security (Santho, 2000).

These inconsistencies are further evidenced in the context of the Zimbabwe crisis. It is widely acknowledged that the majority of SADC leaders have demonstrated a lack of “courage and decency to look Robert Mugabe in the eyes” against his erroneous policies (Tsvangirai *in* Harrison, 2008; Sachikonye, 2005; Berries, 2002). However some, notably President Khama of Botswana and the late President Mwanawasa of Zambia, voiced stern criticism of President Mugabe's regime in unison with others in the wider international community, including the UK and the USA (*CNN World*, 2007).

3.3. SADC's response to the Zimbabwe crisis

3.3.1. Dissent within SADC over Zimbabwe

While the majority of SADC leaders have demonstrated solidarity with President Mugabe, President Khama has shown his contempt of President Mugabe's government since he came to power in 2008. He boycotted a number of SADC summits, particularly in the wake of Zimbabwe's June 2008 elections on the basis that his government “does not recognize Mugabe as president” (Piet, 2009; Dzirutwe, 2008). He also warned that if the subsequent power-sharing agreement between President Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai collapsed, his government would not “recognize a ZANU-(PF) only government or certainly not one headed by President (Robert) Mugabe because he certainly did not win the presidential elections” of 2008 (Khama *in Prime Minister*, 2009). In a similar manner, Zambia's President Mwanawasa likened Zimbabwe's economic tailspin to a “sinking titanic” (Mutasah, 2007) and asserted that “the...political situation in Zimbabwe falls far short of the SADC principles” (Muleya and Chimakure, 2008) including respect of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Although illustrative of divergent views among SADC member

states, such unilateral criticisms are indeed incredible given that SADC has openly and consistently demonstrated regional solidarity with Zimbabwe by failing to publically criticise President Mugabe's regime or implement more robust economic and/or interventionist measures to address the escalating crisis.

It is possible to argue that Presidents Khama and Mwanawasa adopted such a tough stance against President Mugabe because they do not belong to the generation of liberation struggle leaders. In other words, while leaders such as President Mbeki, Namibia's Sam Nujoma and Angola's Eduardo dos Santos sympathized with Mugabe for being a fellow liberation leader, these post-liberation leaders "saw an ailing demagogue [in Mugabe] whose freefalling economy was having a devastating effect on the region" (*The Independent*, 2008). It can also be contended that the influx of Zimbabweans into Zambia strained an already weak economy and exacerbated existing poverty levels as the majority of fleeing Zimbabweans were destitute and unemployed, thus increasing the burden on already limited social and economic resources (Mandrilly, 2008). The 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa where an estimated 62 people, the majority of them foreign nationals, were killed and more than 35,000 people driven from their homes (Steinberg, 2008: 1) further highlights the tensions which can emerge between those fleeing crises at home and the recipient communities.

3.3.2. "Quiet diplomacy" and solidarity

Notwithstanding the criticism of President Mugabe by Presidents Khama and Mwanawasa, it is common knowledge that SADC has openly expressed solidarity with Zimbabwe and has been reluctant to intervene aggressively in its domestic affairs (Kikwete *in* Ankomah, 2007; Shaw, 2000). Efforts by SADC leaders to address Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis have often been made through a series of SADC (Extraordinary) Summits and official mediation processes. For instance, concerned with continued political stalemate in Zimbabwe, in January 2009 South Africa's caretaker President, Kgalema Motlanthe, stated that efforts by SADC to see a transformed Zimbabwe demonstrate the organisation's "collective recognition of its responsibility, concern and empathy concerning the deteriorating political, economic and social situation in the sisterly country of Zimbabwe" (Motlanthe *in* Appel, 2009). At this particular summit, SADC resolved and committed to ensure that, for example, the Zimbabwean parliament passed the Constitutional Amendment 19 – a bill to amend the constitution of Zimbabwe – by 5 February 2009 and that the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers were sworn in by 11 February 2009. It also resolved to continue monitoring the smooth running of the inclusive government (SADC, 2009). But regardless of the string of summits on Zimbabwe, including for example the ones held in Blantyre,

Malawi in January 2002, in Lusaka, Zambia in April 2008, and in Johannesburg in August 2008, the majority of SADC leaders have proven reluctant to break ties with President Mugabe for fear that a forceful approach or loud admonition of his controversial political and economic policies would further escalate the crisis and exacerbate refugee/migrant flight from Zimbabwe into neighbouring states had he not cooperated (Kagwanja, 2006). Moreover, President Mugabe continues to be politically influential within southern Africa (Berries, 2002).

A clear reluctance to make an outright condemnation of the Mugabe regime manifested when President Mbeki, entrusted with the mediation mission, infamously argued that there is “no crisis” in Zimbabwe, implying that the public (both local and international) ought to exercise patience over that year’s election results (*Mail and Guardian*, 2008a). As argued in the Introduction, President Mbeki’s conviction of no crisis in Zimbabwe is reflective of the ‘quiet diplomacy’ approach which has been the mainstay of SADC’s response since the inception of the crisis. Moreover, it appears that SADC exercised caution particularly after President Mugabe professed reluctance to voluntarily hand over power to the opposition even if the latter succeeded in the 2000 elections (Berries, 2002). And, it could further be argued that by appearing to back him politically, “the SADC leaders indirectly supported him against [the opposition] in the hope that he would win the elections and the [possible] civil war could be averted” (Berries, 2002: 210).

Although “quiet diplomacy” arguably facilitated the emergence of the 2009 Unity Government between ZANU-PF and the MDC, its sustainability is unclear and its implementation came nearly a decade after the economic and political crisis began. Former US President, George Bush Jnr, referred to Mbeki as his “point man who was working hard and making progress towards bringing order in Zimbabwe” (The American Presidency Project, 2003) but President Mbeki’s reluctance to hasten the mediation process frustrated the optimism and expectations among various state leaders both within and outside the region. He appeared reluctant to use South Africa’s diplomatic (and economic) weight to expedite an end to the crisis and instead appeared resolute in advancing a “softly softly” approach underpinned by regional solidarity.

It is possible to assume that SADC’s apparent solidarity with Zimbabwe is informed by the common political and cultural socialization of SADC leaders. Although this contention may appear conjectural, it is, nonetheless, a common fact in the (southern) African context that open criticism of an elder is socially and culturally impolite (Berries, 2002). Hence, admonition of President Mugabe by regional leaders, most of whom are younger, is arguably unlikely. This fact makes Presidents

Khama and Mwanawasa's reproach an interesting tale in the history of SADC's solidarity given their relative youth. But the historical framework of the relations among SADC states cannot be ignored. Chiroro (2005) opines that most SADC regimes including that of President Mugabe emanated from the NLMs and their commonality enabled them to dominate the political sphere in the region. Hence, it would perhaps seem illogical for such regimes to criticize President Mugabe given their shared history of struggle and liberation. Moreover, most southern African regimes exhibit authoritarian tendencies. In Zimbabwe, the political situation and economic meltdown are solely and directly attributed to the policies of President Mugabe (Dansereau, 2003). Similarly, Malawi's President Mutharika appears to control the (foreign) policy machinery in Malawi (Cammack, 2007).

Mindful of all these factors, an analysis of the circumstances behind SADC's support for Zimbabwe also reveals that SADC leaders are unwilling to operate under the influence of the West (Sachikonye, 2005). This manifested through strong anti-Western imperialist sentiments expressed by many of the region's leaders which also resonated with other African leaders (Phimister and Roftopoulos, 2004). President Mbeki's "I am an African" speech during the period of widespread political changes in Africa in 1996 can be regarded and interpreted as a precursor to the resurgence of anti-imperialist discourses in the contemporary era. Moreover, the call for solidarity in the pursuit of mutual socio-economic development, again prevalent in President Mbeki's African Renaissance ideas, perhaps explains the widespread anti-imperialism language among many African leaders because it fitted with the 'African solutions to African problems' concept and thus challenged the dependency of many states on developed country support. President Mugabe also promulgated and reinforced this anti-imperialist sentiment among regional leaders and used it to garner support and legitimacy for his disastrous national policies by exhorting his counterparts to be vigilant against the:

Western and especially Anglo-American plot to destroy ZANU-PF and evict it from power because it was a liberation movement. If this plot succeeded in Zimbabwe, it would then be applied successfully against all other ruling liberation movements in Southern Africa (in Sachikonye, 2005: 574).

Thus President Mugabe deftly employed an anti-imperialist discourse "to represent the fundamental human and civic rights questions placed on the Zimbabwean political agenda since the 1990s as marginal, elite-focused issues driven by Western interests, and having little relation to urgent problems of economic redistribution" (Phimister and Roftopoulos, 2004: 399).

The anti-imperialism thrust by SADC leaders revolves around a number of issues including, for example:

the political and economic power imbalance between the North and the South, to the great detriment of the poor; the need to transform the UN and other international bodies in order to address global inequities; the domineering, hypocritical and self-serving approach of Western countries that chide and bully developing states; South-South co-operation and solidarity; and multilateralism and respect for international law in the conduct of international affairs (Nathan, 2008: 5).

It is within this context that President Mbeki, in his double capacity, as both SADC's official mediator and President of the region's economic powerhouse, implored other (southern) African leaders to enhance regional solidarity by recognizing that:

The fight against Zimbabwe is a fight against us all. Today it is Zimbabwe, tomorrow it will be...any other African country. And any government that is perceived to be strong, and to be resistant to (Western) imperialists, would be made a target and would be undermined. So let us not allow any point of weakness in the solidarity of SADC, because that weakness will also be transferred to the rest of Africa (Mbeki *in* Ankomah, 2007b: 13).

This was a reiteration of similar sentiments previously shared by the former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, when he argued that the West tended to undermine the history of the liberation struggle by "portraying [some] heroes of the freedom struggle as anti-democratic and even dictators". He contended that SADC leaders are "democrats and...want democracy to work according to the will of our people in each one of our countries" (Chissano *in* Taylor, 2002). Other regional leaders, including Namibia's former President, Samuel Nujoma, even borrowed Mugabe's tough language against the West and openly lashed out at the former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, accusing him of causing "one big problem" in southern Africa, namely the Zimbabwe crisis (*Guardian*, 2002). All this diplomatic support rendered to Zimbabwe by SADC signifies its "solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe" (Kikwete *in* Ankomah, 2007a: 25). In light of this, it is unlikely that a comparatively weak state such as Malawi, given its historical relations with Zimbabwe as well as its peripheral position in the region, would dissent from the over-riding regional alignment by adopting a more overtly critical or aggressive stance against Zimbabwe.

3.4. Understanding Malawi's uncritical stance within SADC

It was argued in Chapter One that the reshaping of the region's foreign policy agenda in the wake of the emergence of SADC corresponded well with the long-standing foreign policy aspirations of Malawi. This implies that there is every reason for Malawi to demonstrate solidarity with other regional states. It can therefore be suggested that Malawi also joined the anti-imperialist position of its regional counterparts. However, this neglects the fact that Malawi is a "heavy" recipient of foreign aid from the West, particularly the UK and the EU. For instance, in the 2008/09 financial year, aid from the EU constituted 18 percent of all foreign aid to Malawi followed by British aid at 14 percent (Malawi Government, 2009). Moreover, Malawi has consistently maintained a pro-Western foreign policy since its independence, although in recent years it has started to extend a hand of friendship to other countries including communist China (Masina, 2008; Patel and Hajar, 2007; Malawi Government, 2000). But Malawi's pragmatism is evident in its balancing of relations with powerful members of the international community whilst maintaining allegiance with the regional grouping.

The increasing anti-imperialist discourse among Malawian leaders on regional issues thus attests the country's inclination to regional solidarity. President Muluzi's regime (1994-2004) seldom mounted anti-imperialist attacks on the West, the most significant exception being the caution it issued to Denmark informing it not to "try to teach democracy to Malawians because the country was mature enough to know itself what was good for it" (*The Daily Times*, in Berries, 2002: 210). However in the wake of the Zimbabwean crisis, Malawian leaders appear to have heightened their anti-imperialist criticism. More importantly, the authorities have often done so to defend and justify Malawi's quiet foreign policy stance on the Zimbabwe crisis. The verbatim employed below demonstrates this further whilst reinforcing Malawi's apparent solidarity with other regional (SADC) members.

Following the West's mounting pressure on SADC to reprove President Mugabe, Malawi's former Foreign Affairs Minister, Lillian Patel, reasoned that "SADC would not go along with evil machinations of some Western powers using the neo-colonialist press locally and internationally" to criticize President Mugabe. However, "SADC would remain on Zimbabwe's side because blood is thicker than water" (Patel in Sachikonye, 2005: 573). The reference to the expression 'blood is thicker than water' is reflective of deep-rooted political, economic, and socio-cultural ties among the southern African people as indicated in the previous chapter. Hence, open condemnation of the Zimbabwean government would be tantamount to fighting one's own brothers and sisters.

It is within the same context that the Malawian government categorically defied Britain's calls for it to adopt a unilateral reproach of the Mugabe regime. President Mutharika made it clear that SADC was the only vehicle through which policy statements on the Zimbabwe crisis could be made (Msiska, 2008). He argued that:

The British government has always wanted me to speak out against Robert Mugabe, but I have always kept quiet, because during one SADC summit, we agreed that we should speak with one voice through SADC and not just individually. And for your own information, you should know that SADC is a highly disciplined entity...We [Malawi] shall always speak through SADC and not on our own (Mutharika, *in* Martin, 2009).

The evidence above clearly indicates that anti-imperialist sentiments are pragmatically employed by the leaders of Malawi. By declaring alignment with SADC and repeating that any policy decisions pertaining to the crisis in Zimbabwe are made through SADC, Malawi is able to reinforce its alignment with the regional body. At the same time, it is able to use this as a platform to make some criticisms of the West, particularly Britain, without really jeopardising its relations with either. Moreover, it reveals the centrality of national sovereignty in their thinking. It is interesting to note that the issue of sovereignty has also been trumpeted by President Mugabe in attempts to keep the West, and particularly Britain, out of the internal affairs of African states, and not least Zimbabwe itself. An explicit promulgation of the importance of national sovereignty by President Mugabe manifested through his public exhortation to President Mutharika "to stand strong by not allowing anybody [the West] to undermine or dictate to the country what direction it should take on various matters" (Mugabe *in* Masina, 2006: 23). Yet "how we have come to know sovereignty in Southern Africa has determined the quality of regional community, and this all too often has offered the regions' people only the most deadly of outcomes" (Vale, 2003: 37). This has been clearly demonstrated by the adoption of quiet diplomacy by SADC member states who, despite reports of worsening socio-economic and political conditions in the 1990s and majority of the 2000s, have not wished to be embroiled in a potentially messy and protracted intervention in Zimbabwe (Oosthuizen, 2006; Booysen, 2003).

3.5. Conclusion

Malawi's solidarity with Zimbabwe has been considerably influenced by SADC mainly due to its pragmatic but long-standing pursuit of economic development. It would have been difficult for Malawi to adopt a critical stance against President Mugabe when the majority of SADC members, including the region's hegemon, South Africa, supported Zimbabwe's right to resolve its own

internal affairs. Thus, Malawi's pursuit of domestic economic development and a cooperative regional foreign policy position has been pivotal in reinforcing its deep-rooted relations with Zimbabwe. It must be stipulated that the string of SADC summits on Zimbabwe, (for most of which Malawi has been in attendance) suggest that the regional leaders have been acknowledging the severity of the crisis. This could have arisen from the imperatives of democracy that swept across the continent in the early 1990s as well as the necessities of good governance being advanced by the African Peer Review (APR) mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). While this chapter has argued that Malawi's response can only be understood within the framework of SADC, its contemporary bilateral relations with Zimbabwe, reinforced by the personal friendship between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe, provide a further analytical lens through which Malawi's foreign policy position can be understood. It is therefore on the contemporary bilateral relations between the two states that the next chapter is focused.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contemporary Bilateral Relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe

4.1. Introduction

As indicated in Chapter Two, bilateral relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe are built upon historical socio-cultural, economic and political ties solidified during the colonial era with the influx of Malawian labour migrants to Zimbabwe's agricultural and domestic sectors. The establishment of CAF strengthened relations further through bilateral trade and economic arrangements as well as commercial links between corporate groups from both countries (Patel and Hajat, 2007). These historical ties continue to play a significant role in determining inter-state relations between the two countries in the contemporary era, a reality acknowledged by leaders from both countries. In 2006, for instance, the Zimbabwean High Commissioner to Malawi, Thandiwe Dumbutshena, stipulated that the "bilateral co-operation between Zimbabwe and Malawi is so strong that it can resist any attempts to divide it because it is entrenched in the grassroots" (Dumbutshena *in* Motsi, 2006). This gives credence to the fact that although historical ties have been induced by state level interaction, this has ultimately created strong bonds between the peoples of the two states as a result of historical labour flows and settlement by Malawian workers in Zimbabwe. A strong friendship between the incumbent leaders of the two states is also evident. President Mugabe, speaking at Malawi's independence celebrations in 2009, publicly stated that "Malawi is [his] second home" since he has been "associated with the leadership of Malawi for 45 years" (Mugabe *in* *Nyasa Times*, 2009). Likewise, President Mutharika in 2004 openly hailed "strong bonds of brotherhood" between Malawi and Zimbabwe and pledged to "ensure that relations between [the] two countries continue to remain strong and cordial" (Malawi Government, 2004). As is common in bilateral diplomacy, relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe have manifested through various official processes including the establishment of bilateral treaties, exchanges of ambassadors, and high level state visits. This chapter specifically focuses attention on the economic and socio-cultural interdependence and the personal relationship/friendship between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe which have informed, it is argued, bilateral relations between the two countries in the contemporary era. It is important to stipulate that Malawi's foreign policy behaviour towards Zimbabwe is influenced by national economic interests, an assertion that will be substantiated below when exploring, for example, Malawi's provision of a credit facility to Zimbabwe. This suggests that national interests may be underpinning Malawi's apparent political solidarity with the country.

4.2. Economic interdependence between Malawi and Zimbabwe

Malawi and Zimbabwe have mutually benefited from various economic activities. For instance, foreign direct investment, particularly of Zimbabwean companies or those with significant shareholdings in Malawian companies, including Murray and Roberts, Dairibord, United General Insurance, and Charles Stewart Poultry Day Old Chick, have increased tax revenues and job creation in Malawi while raising revenue for their home country (see for example ZimTrade, 2009; CHRR, 2007a). Moreover, the participation of Malawian nationals (usually providing cheap labour) in various sectors of the Zimbabwean economy has been vital in reinforcing Malawi-Zimbabwe economic ties. As indicated in previous chapters, the historical relations between the two states primarily benefited the economic development of Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe rather than the domestic economy of Malawi. This was largely secured through Malawi's provision of cheap labour to the domestic, agricultural and mining sectors. However, in the wake of the crisis it appears that the situation has somewhat reversed, with Malawi enjoying more trade and economic leverage in its relations with Zimbabwe (ZimTrade, 2009; CHRR, 2007a). It is, therefore, important to start by considering the socio-economic impact of the Zimbabwe crisis on Malawi, a major consequence of which is the influx of Zimbabweans to Malawi as a result of the economic downturn in their home country, and it is to this that the chapter first turns.

4.2.1. Zimbabwe migrants in Malawi

The 2008 Malawi housing and population census recorded approximately 37 thousand Zimbabweans living in Malawi (NASO, 2008a). However, this number could rise if frequent cross-border Zimbabwean traders, who usually spend a week or less in Malawi, are put into consideration. What is not known about this number are the reasons that brought them to Malawi. It can be speculated, though, that as with other regional states, the flow of Zimbabweans into Malawi is largely underpinned by three key factors. Firstly, it is evident that a considerable number of Zimbabweans entered Malawi to escape hard economic conditions and political repression in Zimbabwe (FMSP, 2009; CHRR, 2007a). Secondly, a driving factor of Zimbabweans fleeing to Malawi is arguably the host country's record of hospitality towards refugees. This was particularly evident from the mid 1980s to early 1990s when Malawi hosted more than a million Mozambican refugees (Mwakasungula, 2008: 50). During that time, "the UNHCR recorded very few incidents in which displaced Mozambicans were refused admission to the country or were forced to leave Malawi against their will" (UNHCR in Abiri, 2000: 78). Furthermore, even though Malawi is ranked as one of the poorest countries in Africa (WHO, 2005), and the majority of its people are out of formal employment (NASO, 2008b) and it is a comparatively under-developed economy,

incidents of abuse, violence or racial attacks against foreign nationals have been negligible (Ntaote, 2010). The experience of Zimbabwean and other foreign nationals in Malawi stands in sharp contrast to the xenophobic violence and killings experienced in South Africa in May 2008 and the continued tensions in rural areas over jobs ever since (South Africa Government, 2010). Further, although Malawi does not share common borders with Zimbabwe, socio-cultural relations between the two countries are deeply rooted. A study conducted by FMSP (2009) on Zimbabwean migration in southern Africa revealed that migrants with Malawian ancestry moved to Malawi to restore their Malawian citizenship in order to escape untenable conditions in Zimbabwe. Given that most Malawians in Zimbabwe worked on (white owned) farms (Carver, 2002: 4), the seizure of farms by President Mugabe's regime resulted in widespread job losses among farm labourers. This was further exacerbated by the unproductivity of many of the farms since their seizure (Shore, 2010). Moreover, by virtue of working for white farmers, Malawian labourers were exposed to widespread politically induced violence which led to the death and/or torture of both farm owners and their labourers (Garbus and Sakutukwa, 2003). Importantly, widespread food shortages and general economic collapse fuelled the departure of most Malawians either back to Malawi or elsewhere in the region, such as South Africa (Carver, 2002: 10).

4.2.1.1. Implications of the Zimbabwean influx

Negative impacts

The socio-economic repercussions of the influx of Zimbabweans into Malawi have been diverse. On the negative side, their presence has arguably exacerbated poverty levels by increasing pressure on scarce social resources and employment opportunities in the country (CHRR, 2007a). This is not unexpected given Malawi's status as one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than half of the population living on less than one dollar a day (Malawi Government, 2002: 19). The provision of free public healthcare in Malawi, including Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drugs to every person regardless of nationality or migration status, is a further incentive for Zimbabweans to relocate to the country, but it has the adverse effect of increasing pressure on social and healthcare services. The relocation of Zimbabweans to Malawi and other neighbouring countries is arguably also motivated by the collapse of healthcare services in Zimbabwe in the wake of the crisis as well as shortages of ARV drugs for nearly 400,000 thousand out of circa 1.2 million Zimbabweans living with HIV/AIDS (*PlusNews*, 2008; Zimbabwe Government, 2008: 4). The Malawian government's perceived willingness to extend health services to foreign nationals could perhaps be better understood as a loophole in its policy rather than an explicit policy decision *per se* because hospitals do not require identity documents for patients due to nationwide absence of identity

documents for Malawians. This is not the case with other states in the region, including for example, Botswana, where full identity documentation is required to access public facilities such as hospitals (FMSP, 2009). Hence it is logical that Zimbabweans would find it favourable to enter Malawi for healthcare support but this in turn adversely affects the capacity of the state to deal with the increased demand.

Furthermore, Zimbabwean migrants allegedly compete more successfully with Malawians for already scarce jobs in the country given their higher levels of education. This is the legacy of the colonial ordering of the region which created a much more effective and advanced education system in Zimbabwe compared to Malawi (Mwakasungula, 2008; CHRR, 2007a). This phenomenon has been attested by Malawi's incumbent High Commissioner to Zimbabwe, Richard Phoya, who wishes to "take advantage of [Zimbabwe's] educated people and see how [Malawi] can tap into their expertise" (Phoya *in* Machivenyika, 2010). Moreover, there are also concerns among Malawians that Zimbabwean migrants take money out of the country in the form of remittances in order to support their families who remain in Zimbabwe (CHRR, 2007a; FMSP, 2009). This appears to be a reversal of the role of remittances in the historical relations between the two states as discussed in Chapter Two. Remittances play a major role in economic relations across the continent as discussed by Konseiga (2007), Adepoju (2006a) and Davies and Head (1995), acting as a survival mechanism and thereby incentivising economic migration. In Zimbabwe where there is a "situation of hyperinflation and of parallel exchange rates that are (far higher) than the official rates, and a very stressed economy, remittances have become even more crucial... [t]here are few, if any, similar contemporary examples of a country whose quarter of its population has left in order to fend for its living" (Bracking and Sachikonye *in* IRIN, 2007a).

The situation in Zimbabwe as well, perhaps, as the high influx of Zimbabweans into Malawi spurred popular calls and demands for the Malawian government to adopt a more robust approach towards the regime of President Mugabe (*Nyasa Times*, 2007; CHRR, 2007b). However, it is interesting to note that such demands have not deterred the Malawian government from maintaining positive relations with President Mugabe's regime. Perhaps, as President Mutharika argued, historical, socio-cultural and economic ties between Malawi and Zimbabwe form a strong foundation for their mutual cooperation (Malawi Government, 2004). Moreover, if President Mutharika condemned the leadership of Zimbabwe, it would potentially invite scrutiny of his less than democratic regime (Cammack, 2007). Indeed, one Malawian on an online discussion space

noted that “the problem is that Bingu wa Mutharika is not different from Mugabe. They are all dictators...It is therefore difficult for him to calm Mugabe down” (Manga *in topix*, 2007).

Positive impacts

Despite the aforementioned issues, the entry of Zimbabwean migrants into Malawi has arguably also been socio-economically advantageous to the host country. Indeed, recent research focusing on the influx of Zimbabweans into Malawi in the wake of the crisis reveals that the host country has realized more economic benefits than losses as one would think (FMSP, 2009; CHRR, 2007a). Many Zimbabwean migrants are within the productive age range of 20 to 40 (Mandrilly, 2008; CHRR, 2007a) and are thus able to engage in a range of ‘hard’ manual labouring tasks in the construction, agricultural, and manufacturing industries (Mandrilly, 2008). However, the fact that many Zimbabweans come without correct work or identity documents restricts their earning potential as they are often forced into the informal job market, which limits their capacity to earn wages comparable with those of Malawians. It can therefore be argued that Malawi has benefited from this cheap workforce as it enables an increase in production, leading to an increase in exports and economic growth for Malawi (CHRR, 2007a) without the prerequisite legal provisions required in the formal sector. In addition, those with “professional” skills and correct paper work are able to find employment in the public service sector. In 2009, for example, there were 383 Zimbabweans holding Malawian business or employment permits, most of whom were employed or self-employed as university lecturers, business people and, to a lesser degree, doctors and nurses, thereby contributing to service delivery (FMSP, 2009).

Moreover, due to food shortages in Zimbabwe and the devaluation of the Zimbabwean currency, the majority of Zimbabwean migrants use their income to purchase foodstuffs, clothes and other basic consumables such as medicines in the host country, which they send back to dependents in Zimbabwe (FMSP, 2009). In this way, the money they earn is reinvested in the host country’s economy. This is contrary to the belief among many Malawians that the money earned by Zimbabwean migrants is extracted from the local economy (FMSP, 2009; Mandrilly, 2008). It is thus interesting that while some Malawians believe that money is being sent out of the country, evidence suggests rather that it contributes to economic development by remaining within the country. Similarly, many Zimbabwean migrants engage in cross-border trade, purchasing items in Malawi for sale at home. Purchases include essential commodities such as maize meal, sugar, cooking oil, bottled drinks, soap, and clothes, which are often scarce in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, this cross-border trade is facilitated by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

(COMESA) and SADC Trade protocol arrangements. Under these agreements traders, whether formal or informal, do not pay tariffs for goods that are wholly produced in member countries (SADC Protocol on Trade, 1996; COMESA Treaty, 1994). Moreover, they allow free entry of the traders into the respective countries to facilitate the sale of their goods. Hence, given the widespread economic collapse and food shortages in Zimbabwe as a result of the crisis, a large number of Zimbabweans engage in informal cross-border trade as a coping strategy to sustain livelihoods (FMSP, 2009).

In addition, some Zimbabwean business people, especially owners of Zimbabwean companies, have re-located and now operate from Malawi (CHRR, 2007a). Such companies include, for example, African Leaf, Vehicle Components Manufacturers, Stuttford Removals and many others. This ‘brain drain’, whilst adversely affecting Zimbabwe, can be seen as an opportunity for Malawi as these companies help to generate local employment and manufacturing within the country. However, while it has been argued that they tend to employ mostly Zimbabwean nationals (CHRR, 2007a), it can still be argued that their presence in Malawi contributes to a certain extent to the economic development of the country through infrastructure development and tax revenues.

4.2.2. Contemporary trade and economic relations

In the wake of the Zimbabwe crisis, there has been a significant reversal in trade and economic relations between the two countries. Between 2005 and 2009, for example, “Zimbabwe has been incurring a trade deficit in its trade with Malawi. From 2005 to 2007 Malawi managed to boost its exports to Zimbabwe by more than 800%”. This was deemed to be “unfavourable” by the Zimbabwean corporate sector (ZimTrade, 2009: 1). However, Zimbabwe is no longer Malawi’s only significant trading partner as the latter has also expanded its bilateral relations with several other southern African countries including Zambia, Mozambique, and South Africa. Moreover, there has been a sharp decline in the value of Malawi’s imports from Zimbabwe, contrasting to the pre-crisis period when Zimbabwe used to be Malawi’s single most important source of imports. For instance in 2004, Malawi imported more goods from South Africa and Mozambique than from Zimbabwe. The overall amount of money for imports accrued to circa 30 million Kwacha from Mozambique as compared to only 4 million Kwacha from Zimbabwe (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 390). According to a 2006 Intra-SADC Trade Performance Review, Malawi’s importation of Mozambican tobacco for processing and re-exporting has made Mozambique Malawi’s fastest growing importing partner (Mapemba, 2006: 31).

Malawi's diversification of bilateral trading partners within southern Africa fall within the frameworks of COMESA and SADC, which provide member states with opportunities to expand their bilateral economic partnerships. For instance, Article 164 Section 1 of the COMESA Treaty stipulates that: "the Member States agree to adopt, individually, at bilateral or regional levels, the necessary measures in order to achieve progressively the free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence by their citizens within the Common Market" (COMESA Treaty, 1994). Similarly, Article 27 Section 2 of the SADC Protocol on Trade states that: "Member States may enter into new preferential trade arrangements between themselves" (SADC Protocol on Trade, 1996).

However, the most significant reversal in the trade arrangements between Malawi and Zimbabwe is that the latter has emerged to be the largest regional export market for Malawi after South Africa (Simwaka, 2006). Interestingly, much of Malawi's exports to Zimbabwe include agricultural commodities which constituted the heart of Zimbabwe's economy before the crisis. Thus, Malawi's pursuit of its own agenda has meant that solidarity has served its foreign policy ambitions during the crisis and thus it is unlikely to want to undermine the gains it is making. It is clear that Malawi has been able to take advantage of Zimbabwe's faltering economy to boost its own government revenue and economic development prospects. It is also interesting to note that Malawi is one of the few states in the region to provide fiscal and material support to Zimbabwe, a point extrapolated further below.

In 2007, the Malawian government guaranteed a credit facility worth \$100 million from the Reserve Bank of Malawi to be provided to Zimbabwe. The purpose was to enable Zimbabwe's importation of Malawian maize following severe food shortages in that country (Reserve Bank of Malawi, 2007). The Malawian government estimated that the interest accrued on the loan and the subsequent purchase of the maize by the Zimbabwean government would help boost its revenue (Denning *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, the government argued that the selling of the maize to Zimbabwe at an increased price would also benefit local farmers (IRIN, 2007b). This continues to manifest even beyond the timeframe of this study. For example, an export of maize from Malawi to Zimbabwe was reported at the beginning of the second half of 2010 (Reuters, 2010) and earlier in the same year, the Malawian government exported and transported fertilizer to Zimbabwe after the latter failed to produce its own supplies (Nyasa Times, 2010b).

To some extent, Malawi's willingness to conduct such trade and economic transactions with Zimbabwe has also come with negative socio-economic implications and has been undertaken with limited foresight given the potential for drought and/ or crop failure within Malawi which could increase Malawi's dependency on other states for basic food provisions. Although Malawi has recently become a net maize exporter (Perkins, 2009), it is in fact a drought-prone country as a result of excessive deforestation, a situation likely to be further exacerbated by adverse climatic changes (Khamis, 2006; Mweninguwe, 2005). Therefore the selling of maize to Zimbabwe (as well as to Kenya) could undermine the socio-economic well-being of many Malawians, particularly those in rural areas, and damage the government's already precarious financial viability if Zimbabwe fails to pay back the loans. The consequences of this were witnessed in 2007, for example, when an estimated 500,000 Malawians direly required food aid following widespread drought (Disaster Statistics, 2010). Similarly, at the beginning of 2010 the lives of more than 720,000 Malawians were threatened by looming famine due to inadequate rainfall across large parts of the country (Mpaka in *IPSNEWS*, 2010).

Furthermore, the lending of such huge sums of money to Zimbabwe appears to contradict Malawi's "promotion of foreign direct investment, trade tourism, and foreign aid" for the economic development of the country (Malawi Government, 2000: 11). On the other hand, the returns anticipated from the loans and the sale of Malawian products could outweigh the apparent risks. It does however seem illogical that a country such as Malawi, which is traditionally dependent on donor aid for the running of the government and public services, would turn itself into a donor. Such critical factors therefore compel analysis to reach beyond the assumed benefits emanating from economic trade relations between the two states. Indeed, it is argued that most contemporary trade and economic arrangements are actually facilitated by the personal friendship between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe (CHRR, 2007b: 16). It is therefore necessary to consider the underlying characteristics of these relations and to consider how they inform Malawi's apparent "quiet" response to the situation in Zimbabwe.

4.3. Leadership relations and domestic dissent

In addition to the leadership (autocratic) characteristics of both President Mugabe and Mutharika and the political environment in which they operate, the personal relations between the two are shaped by other socio-cultural factors. It is argued that friendship between the two presidents can be partly explained by Mutharika's first wife, the late Ethel Zvauya Mutharika, who was a Zimbabwean. As indicated in Chapter Two and elsewhere, intermarriages between the peoples of

Malawi and Zimbabwe resulting from patterns of economic migration and settlement constitute one of the most significant ingredients for socio-cultural integration between the two countries (Chikowero, 2008; Mashiri, 2002). Furthermore, President Mutharika's marriage to Ethel Zvauya facilitated the family's acquisition of a commercial farm in Zimbabwe, which has allegedly been protected by the Zimbabwean government since farm seizures began in 2001 (Dongozi, 2005). On a personal level, President Mutharika may not therefore be inclined to condemn President Mugabe's involvement or handling of the crisis precisely because of the personal gains he accrues from the friendship.

It has also been suggested that President Mugabe's father was a Malawian of the Matabiri clan and that President Mugabe regularly participates in post-funeral traditional rituals with the clan in Malawi. One such reported incident was a few days after the passing of his sister, Sabina Mugabe, in July 2010 (*The Zimbabwe Mail*, 2010). Furthermore, President Mugabe has made frequent state visits to Malawi which appear to be in recognition of Malawi's solidarity with his regime regarding the crisis. For example, a variety of Malawian and Zimbabwean media reports indicate that President Mugabe has attended various state and non-state events in Malawi more than eight times between May 2006 and August 2010 (see for example *The Zimbabwe Mail*, 2010; *Nyasa Times*, 2009; Masina, 2006) which is more than any other SADC leader within the same period. Moreover, President Mugabe has often been the only head of state from the southern African region to be present at important official ceremonies including Malawi's 45th independence celebrations in 2009. Other regional states, including neighbouring Tanzania and Mozambique, were in contrast represented by non-dignitaries (*Nyasa Times*, 2009). It could be argued that President Mugabe is using his personal and economic relations with Malawi to garner support from the country when pressure against his regime at home and abroad is mounting. It also serves to suggest, however, that the close relations between the two countries, and particularly the heads of state, are likely to render any public criticism of Zimbabwe on the part of Malawi's President Mutharika unlikely.

However, it could also be argued that the Malawian premier could use this leverage to raise concerns about the situation with President Mugabe (CHRR, 2007b) and that it would be shrewd to do so because regional stability is in part informed by stability within member states and the resuscitation of Zimbabwe's economy and the calming of political tensions are thus crucial (Chinsinga *in* Ligomeka, 2010). In reality though, Malawi's peripheral status in the region and its limited economic and diplomatic power *vis-à-vis* other states (notably South Africa and Botswana for example) perhaps limit its influence. It would therefore be imprudent of President Mutharika to

personally confront his Zimbabwean counterpart and rather pragmatic to maintain what appear to be mutually beneficial personal and national economic and political relations in the process. Moreover, and unlike the Botswanan and Zambian premiers, he regards President Mugabe as “an African hero” for fighting “colonialism” and imperialism on the continent (Mutharika *in* Masina, 2006) and thus solidarity between the two leaders seems more likely to define their relations.

In the first half of 2006, the Malawian government named a road “Robert Mugabe High Way” after President Mugabe (Masina, 2006). Of most significance to the current argument is the anti-imperialist sentiment employed by President Mutharika in defence of his decision to do so. Amid heavy public outcry, particularly from the local civil society and human rights groups, President Mutharika asked:

Who else, and I repeat, who else is more eligible to have this honour of this highway than Comrade Robert Mugabe? There [are] many streets in Malawi named after colonialists perhaps for killing more blacks... Here we are, we have a hero, an African hero, and someone in his proper sense of mind, born here in Malawi, will come and say ‘no it is not right and proper to honour Robert Mugabe’. Are you serious? If we cannot honour Robert Mugabe and other true sons of Africa, who can we honour? Europeans we don’t know? When are we going to end colonial domination? (Mutharika *in* Masina, 2006).

Similarly at the beginning of 2009 when Britain openly demanded that Malawi intervene in the Zimbabwe crisis – perhaps because of colonial legacy and the apparent close bonds between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe – President Mutharika publicly denounced Britain, arguing that:

The British should know this...we will not speak against Mugabe for the sake of pleasing them. We are a disciplined nation and we are not ready to throw that to the wind. By pressing me to speak out, the British, you are wrong and at the same time you have been undermining the sovereignty of Malawi. And by accusing me for not speaking out, the British acted immorally and they need to know this (Mutharika *in* Martin, 2009).

The Malawian government has also drawn in other issues including the sanctity of state sovereignty and historical ties between Malawi and Zimbabwe to give credence to its response to the Zimbabwe crisis. One manifestation of this occurred when in 2006 Malawian civil society groups voiced

concerns over escalating human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The then Information Minister, Patricia Kaliati, responded:

Issues of human rights are internal politics in Zimbabwe...People in Zimbabwe voted for Mugabe, which shows that they had trust in him. Should we [Malawi] interfere with internal matters of Zimbabwe? ...Zimbabwe has been a friend of Malawi for a long time and it is playing host to over five million Malawians. If we quarrel with Mugabe, where will these Malawians go? *Will some of these Western countries host them?* Malawi is a sovereign state fully entitled to choose its friends (emphasis added) (Kaliati *in* Masina, 2006).

This is not to suggest, however, that the position of President Mutharika (or the government) on the Zimbabwe crisis is reflective of wider public opinion in Malawi. For instance, research by the Centre for Human Right Rehabilitation (CHRR) on the impact of the influx of Zimbabweans into Malawi revealed that nearly all Malawian respondents in the study wanted the Malawian government to adopt a more active role in resolving the crisis (CHRR, 2007a). The major concerns expressed by Malawian respondents included socio-cultural ties between the two countries, human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, and a belief that a thriving Zimbabwean economy would prove more beneficial to Malawi than the prevailing situation (CHRR, 2007a). Indeed, human rights groups and numerous non-governmental organizations in Malawi have, since the inception of the crisis, put pressure on the Malawian government to condemn human rights violations and to influence President Mugabe to reconsider his domestic policies, particularly those relating to forced farm acquisition and political intolerance (CHRR, 2007b). One such organisation is the CHRR which has been advocating for Malawian government intervention, particularly on human rights violations in Zimbabwe. The Malawian government has proven reluctant to reproach President Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party, preferring instead to quell domestic criticism of his counterpart's political behaviour. In 2004, for example, President Mutharika halted a candle-light vigil organised by Malawian human rights activists and civil servants who were demonstrating against an NGO bill in Zimbabwe that sought to restrict donor aid distribution through NGOs as well as to stifle human rights groups in that country (Gama, 2004). Similarly, Malawi's former Information Minister, Patricia Kaliati, hushed interest groups and literally told them to stop "poking their nose in Zimbabwe's problems" because "the problems of Zimbabwe are for the people of Zimbabwe" and not for Malawi (Kaliati *in* Magombo, 2006). While public opinion is considered to be a major variable in foreign policy formation (Foyle and van Belle, 2010; Foyle, 1997; Risse-Kappen, 1991;

Holsti, 1992; Frankel, 1963), particularly in democratic states, the popular protests in Malawi seem to have borne little influence on the state's engagement with President Mugabe's regime. It is therefore possible to argue that decision-making in Malawi is, as it has historically been, highly influenced by the impulses and the idiosyncrasies of its leaders (Hajat, 2010; Mwakasungula, 2010). Thus, it seems that a reproach of the Mugabe regime by the leadership of Malawi is highly unlikely.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that relations between Malawi and Zimbabwe are strongly premised on economic interdependence between the two countries as well as on the personal friendship between the incumbent Presidents, Mutharika and Mugabe. It is evident that the influx of Zimbabweans into Malawi has both positively and adversely affected Malawi's socio-economic well-being but that trade and economic links between the two countries have been enduring but turned in Malawi's favour. Moreover, strong personal bonds between the presidents have informed Malawi's continuation of a friendly and uncritical foreign policy towards Zimbabwe regarding the crisis which looks set to continue.

Summary and Conclusion

Understanding Malawi's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe

The damaging ramifications of the Zimbabwe crisis in southern Africa necessitated intervention by Zimbabwe's neighbours either bilaterally or multilaterally through the organisation of SADC. Although SADC employed various diplomatic efforts, and most notably "quiet diplomacy" under the leadership of South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, it has nonetheless been widely acknowledged that SADC has expressed continued solidarity with President Mugabe's regime, arguably at the expense of ordinary Zimbabweans. Similarly, the public criticism of President Mugabe by Botswana's President Khama and Zambia's President Mwanawasa has been drowned out by the silence emanating from the majority of states in the region, including Malawi. It is within this context that this study sought to explore and analyse Malawi's position on the crisis through an analysis of its historical and contemporary, socio-economic and political ties with first Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe. In doing so, it has highlighted the continued pragmatism of Malawian foreign policy as a relatively weak and peripheral state in the region, demonstrating how it is been steadfast in its pursuit of economic development even when it has proven to be at odds with the political objectives of its regional counterparts.

Furthermore it has argued that, as a direct result of this economic policy agenda, Malawi has consistently maintained close ties with Rhodesia/Zimbabwe both during and after the colonial era. While there are a host of potential factors that have shaped and reinforced Malawi's official solidarity with President Mugabe, this thesis has identified five relevant factors spanning the framework offered by the historical context, the broad framework of SADC, and the bilateral relations between the two countries. These factors are socio-cultural relations among the peoples of both countries; the inclusion of both countries in the CAF; the notion of regional solidarity largely constructed by the anti-imperialist discourse promulgated by President Mugabe and adopted by the majority of SADC leaders; economic interdependence between Malawi and Zimbabwe; and the personal friendship between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe.

But, as argued, central to these factors has been Malawi's quest for economic development. As elaborated in Chapter One, Rhodesia stood as one of the few countries in the region with a prosperous economy and for Malawi, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) has historically been one of its economic pillars. This constituted one of the core reasons for Malawi's departure from the collective foreign policy of the FLS against the white ruled states in the region. As argued in

Chapter Two, during the colonial era thousands of Nyasalanders migrated to Rhodesia seeking employment in that country's agricultural and domestic sectors. Consequently, the frequent flow of Nyasaland labour migrants to Rhodesia resulted in the creation of socio-cultural integration between the peoples of the two territories. Shortly before Malawi's independence in 1964, economic relations between the two were formalised through the CAF. Thus, trade and commercial links between Nyasaland and Rhodesia, as well as between the corporate groups within both countries, emerged.

Following the end of the Cold War and the concomitant demise of apartheid in South Africa, southern African states refocused their attention towards socio-economic foreign policy aspirations as a cornerstone of regional integration and development. This shift brought Malawi firmly into the regional fold, no longer pursuing its own national economic development in tension with the political and security objectives of its neighbours. It was for this reason that in the post-1990 era Malawi improved its regional relations as the majority of southern African states aligned their foreign policy goals and further solidified them through regional institutions including SADC. This alignment and the dominance of economic co-operation and integration in their foreign policies provided the immediate backdrop through which to understand Malawi's official solidarity with President Mugabe despite criticism from its primary external aid donor and former colonial power, Britain.

Chapter Three highlighted the anti-imperialist sentiments which have been echoed across the region, and further enhanced not only regional solidarity but bilateral political relations between SADC members. But it identified Malawi's peripheral position (geographically and in terms of power) as another factor informing its foreign policy choices since independence. It seemed unlikely, given the stance adopted by more powerful states in the region and especially its largest trading partner – the regional hegemon South Africa – that Malawi would dissent from the common regional position. In this regard, it can be argued that Malawi seeks to harmonise its foreign policy with those of other regional states in order to facilitate the advancement of its national (economic) interests.

Malawi's solidarity with Zimbabwe is further underpinned by economic interdependence between the two countries. Firstly, the influx of Zimbabwean migrants into Malawi during the crisis has arguably contributed to Malawi's socio-economic well-being through the growth of foreign direct investment particularly by Zimbabwean companies operating within Malawi. This has contributed

to government revenue earnings and arguably stimulated job creation for the local populace. The purchase of Malawian merchandise by Zimbabwean (cross-border) traders further contributes to Malawi's economic growth. But the crisis in Zimbabwe has also resulted in a dynamic shift in economic relations between the two states. While Zimbabwe stood as Malawi's single largest importer before the inception of the crisis, the relationship has since reversed allowing Malawi to realise significant economic gains throughout the first decade of the 2000s (ZimTrade, 2009). While the Malawian government has argued that a continuation of these economic relations is likely to remain beneficial to Malawi, it is difficult to separate them totally from the influence of personal relations between Presidents Mutharika and Mugabe or the shared history which bind the countries' people and economies together.

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