# FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

An examination of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine after 1994, with a specific focus on the conflict between these two respective territories/countries.

By

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# DECLARATION

I, **Themba Innocent Radebe**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, except where otherwise stated. Ethical considerations were undertaken in the course of producing this research study. This dissertation is submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences in International Relations in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal. It has never been submitted to any other university for this or any other qualification.

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# ABSTRACT

The Israel-Palestine Conflict, which fully broke out in 1948 after the United Nations officially recognized the State of Israel, has been dragging on for decades. Incidentally, South Africa also introduced the apartheid policy in 1948. Henceforth, an unholy relationship between these two pariah states began in earnest. Both Israel and apartheid South Africa were accused of dispossessing and ill-treating the indigenous people of their land. Moreover, these states saw themselves as exporters of Western values into the two very distinct worlds and cultures they found themselves in. However, the demise of apartheid in 1994 saw a change of tune from the incoming administration, as it sided with the marginalised Palestinians. The majority Black government in a majority Christian country, South Africa, chose to side with the Palestinians despite strong Biblical evidence supporting Israel's claims to the Palestinian territory. All this was owing to the fact that South Africa's liberation movement, the African National Congress [ANC], had fought alongside and enjoyed the support of its Palestinian equal, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation [PLO].

The study adopted the qualitative paradigm. This decision was predicated on the fact that the study was mostly desk-top based. Primary data were collected by administering questionnaires via email to purposively selected informants. Secondary data were generated through consulting books, journal articles, newspapers and internet resources.  Realism, Institutionalism and Human Rights theories were chosen to guide the study. These three theories assisted in deciphering how states deal with one another, how institutions can mediate or escalate tensions between states, and how human rights are significant in the formulation of foreign policies.

The study reveals that although, at face value, South Africa seems to be favouring the Palestinian State, its official foreign policy towards both Israel and Palestine is even-handed. This is despite vocal voices from within some members of the cabinet and leaders of the tripartite alliance supporting Palestine and condemning Israeli atrocities in that territory. Furthermore, the study reveals that religious fundamentalism and intolerance have contributed in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. South Africa as a multicultural society with diverse religions could serve as a catalyst in providing solutions to this struggle. That is if the role of religion in the encounter is not relegated to the periphery.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS/ACCRONYMS

ADL             Anti Defamation League

ANC             African National Congress

AL              Arab League

AU              African Union

BDS             Boycott Divestment and Sanctions

BRICS           Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa

CBD             Central Business District

COSATU          Congress of South African Trade Unions

DIRCO           Department of International Relations and Cooperation

DRC             Dutch Reformed Church

FDI             Foreign Direct Investment

ICC             International Criminal Court

LGE             Local Government Elections

LoN             League of Nations

MEPP            Middle East Peace Process

NATO            North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NP              National Party

OAU             Organisation of African Unity

OPT             Occupied Palestinian Territories

PLO             Palestine Liberation Organisation

SACC            South African Council of Churches

SA              South Africa

SACP            South African Communist Party

SADC            Southern African Development Community

SAZF            South African Zionist Federation

SWC             Stop the Wall Campaign

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| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNHRC | United Nations Human Rights' Council |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| UNRWA | United as Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republic |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Most parts of the Palestinian or Israeli land are a desert, making the land unsuitable for agriculture. This is what stood out the most during the religious holiday that the researcher undertook in December 2013. Little did he know that, two years later, he would be conducting a study on this disputed land focusing on the conflict which has been a niggling challenge for several decades. It was rather surprising that this land is said to be one of the highest exporters of fruits and vegetables in the world despite the challenges it is wrestling with. Upon the researcher's visit to Bethlehem which falls under the state of Palestine, he was also equally fascinated and troubled that the state of Israel is most developed compared to the Palestinian state.

These observations left the researcher unsettled and curious. He wondered if these inequalities and injustices against the poorer people of Palestine were a result of the so-called apartheid Israel or if Palestinians brought these inequalities and injustices amongst themselves. He also wondered if the whole world, except for the United States of America and its allies, was against the establishment of an independent state of Israel as often reported in the media. He was at pains trying to reconcile with the fact that his country's leaders are wildly seen by the Israelis as siding with Palestine. This became more evident when the first ever democratically elected South African President, Nelson Mandela died on the second day (5 December 2013) of the researcher's visit to Israel thereby leaving an indelible mark on the researcher's mind.

As the researcher interacted more with the populace of Israel he was showered with words of condolences and comfort as the Israelis learnt that he was from South Africa. While they acknowledged his stature and role in ushering the democratic dispensation in South Africa, they were equally worried that the great statesman was a staunch supporter of Palestine. This left the researcher with more questions to ponder on. He wondered if the newly democratic South African leaders could have been hasty in taking sides in such a complex conflict. He wondered if they might have missed an opportunity to help guide the warring states as they have been able to have a peaceful transition from apartheid to a democratic South Africa.

Perhaps this could be dismissed as the musings of a naive young man (or not so young) from South Africa who just saw things at face value.  First and foremost, as a journalist, the researcher tries by all means to be neutral, impartial and fair in every situation he encounters. No person on earth deserves to be treated inhumanely and be made to feel subhuman.  There have been many gross violations of human rights in the world whenever oppressed people are fighting for emancipation. This rings even truer when looking at apartheid South Africa. This was when one race dominated over another race because the former thought it was superior. This form of treatment and domination of blacks by their white counterparts was known as apartheid.  It was a racist policy which excluded most indigenous people from enjoying their rights in their land of birth.  Some have even called the state of Israel, apartheid Israel as they feel this state is administering the same treatment to the Palestinian people.

Is it really fair though to compare Israel and apartheid South Africa? Perhaps it is worth looking at what might have motivated both these 'pariah states' to act the way they did. Apartheid South Africa under the leadership of Afrikaners had come from a brutal war with the British, called the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, with the first one having been fought in 1881. They had lost everything during the war. Upon gaining power in the Union of South Africa in 1910 they ensured that they looked after their own race, giving jobs to Afrikaners and passing laws that favoured whites over blacks who were the majority in the country.  On the other hand, the Jews experienced the most horrifying persecution in the hands of Nazi-led Germany during the Second World War. Therefore, in 1948 it was almost inevitable that the United Nations would give them a go-ahead to settle in what was known as Palestine. The establishment of the State of Israel had simultaneously contributed to the displacement of a group of people who have lived there for thousands of years.

At face value this might look and sound the same.  Both the Afrikaner and the Jewish nations had suffered humiliating losses and defeats.  Therefore, they might have felt justifiable to administer the methods and policies the way they had but at what cost?  The Afrikaners, it could be argued, are a fairly new race, having been established by travelling Dutch, French and other European whites who arrived in Cape Town in the 17th century.  On the other hand, the Jews have been around for about three thousand years. According to the Bible, they have been persecuted most of this time due to disobeying their God.  Furthermore, according to the Bible, God gave the land to their founding father, Abraham, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates," (Genesis 15:18). However, this might be disputed as not all people believe in the Holy Book, more

especially those involved in the conflict. Most Palestinians believe in Islam and very few are Christians. It is therefore quite clear that what is in the Bible might be disputed on religious grounds.

Be that as it may, most of the world believes in what is written in the Bible and therefore people are likely to side with Israel when it comes to the ownership of the land of Palestine. On the other hand, there is no historical basis for the Afrikaners to have segregated their fellow black population the way they did during apartheid. This was just a nation obsessed with white supremacy that they even perceived themselves as chosen people by God to rule just like the Jews. It is therefore quite disheartening to have this young minority race of Afrikaners being compared to a people who have been around for more than three thousand years and have suffered persecution for most of their existence. Consequently, this and other arguments put forward in the foregoing paragraphs is what troubled the researcher to wonder if perhaps there is more to this Israel-Palestine conflict than meets the eye. It was against this backdrop that the researcher decided to embark on this study

In essence, this introductory chapter provides the background behind the study – putting it in a broader context. The research aims/objectives, research questions and issues addressed in the study are presented in this chapter. It also explains why the study is important in terms of contributing to knowledge. Moreover, the chapter also explains the overall approach of the dissertation and its limitations. Within this context, the chapter presents the outline of the entire dissertation by introducing each of the subsequent chapters in order to prepare the reader's mind-set.

## 1.2 Background and outline of the research problem

It has always been intriguing how this small portion of barren land called Palestine by some and Biblical Israel by others has captured the attention of the world and might lead to the third world war if not handled properly. The land has pitted nation against nation and different religions against each other. Although described in the Bible as 'a land of milk and honey', Palestine was, in fact, a barren, rocky, neglected and inhospitable land with malaria-infested swamps. But it was nevertheless of strategic importance as it provided a bridge from Asia to Africa (Bregman, 2000). The saying which goes: 'dynamite comes in small packages' cannot be truer with regard to this land. It is rather amazing that such a seemingly insignificant land could be home to some really significant happenings in the world. It is also

equally amazing what the Jewish people have done with this barren land as it is now one of the top exporters of fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, Israel is said to be among the leading nations in information technology in the world.

It is imperative to get to know the origins of the disputed land of Palestine in order to understand the full crux of the matter at hand. It is also equally important to try and ascertain who first set foot in this disputed land which is now at the centre of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Smith (2001) describes Palestine as referring to the Philistines, a people of Greek origin who settled in the coastal plains of the area at about the same time the Jews took over the hill country in the interior. A familiar story in the Bible goes further to explain this mystery where David killed Goliath, the giant Philistine. It is therefore not quite clear-cut as to who is the rightful owner of the land between the Israelis and Palestinians. However, as Smith (2001) further expatiates, after nearly two hundred years the Jews united to defeat and subjugate the Philistines and other peoples in Palestine, notably the Canaanites. The establishment of the Kingdom of Israel dates back to 1000 B.C. It could therefore be argued that during those olden days it was the norm that whichever country won a battle against a nation would then annex and incorporate that nation under its rule.

Prior to Zionists [Israelis] wanting to return to the land of Palestine there was little of what might be referred to as Palestinian nationalism. The Palestinians regarded themselves as some smaller part of the Arab nation in the Middle East. The main aim of those who might have been characterised as nationalists was not Palestinian self-determination but the inclusion of their society into a larger independent Arab polity. In addition, there was little attention given to the social-structural and political changes that might be necessary for Palestine to develop (Lesch & Tessler, 1989). It is therefore quite surprising that the Palestinians would develop this kind of nationalism after the Jews had voiced interest in the land of Palestine. This then poses the question: would the area be as developed as it is today had it not been for the Jews who had fled the holocaust and persecution around the world? Could it also be the fact that it might have bothered the Palestinians that they would now have to live alongside Jews as equals after the Jews had lived under the control of the Arabs for so many centuries? All these are very tough and intriguing questions which cannot be easily answered.

The real desire and first notable attempt at establishing a Jewish state for the persecuted Jews was when the Zionist Movement met for the first time in a congress in 1897. This was the

first Zionist congress where the foundation to establish the state of Israel was laid. According to Mallison and Mallison (1986:19), "This Congress was called by Dr. Theodor Herzil to provide political and juridical implementation for his basic assumption of ineradicable anti-Semitism and the consequent necessity of a Jewish state." This is where the intentions to create a Jewish state were first made. Fifty-one years later, these intentions became a reality when the state of Israel was formally established.

The state of Israel was established in 1948 – the same year that the National Party (NP) came into power in South Africa and institutionalized racism under the apartheid policy. The apartheid state felt that it had some connection with the newly formed Jewish state. This view was premised on the fact that both the Afrikaners and the Jews embraced segregation. Over the years, as Israel annexed more of Palestinian lands it drew more hostility from its Arab neighbours. Similarly, South Africa was also being ostracized by the international community due to its repressive apartheid system which discriminated against the black indigenous population (Dadoo, 1997). As proof that relations were growing stronger between these two countries, the first National Party Prime Minister, Dr. D.F. Malan became the first South African head of state to visit Israel in 1953.

One would be forgiven to think that every Jew in Israel supports the creation of the state of Israel but that is however not the case. It is most surprising when this opposition is coming from the religious section of the Jewish community as they would be expected to know about the Biblical implications of the formation of the state of Israel. However, there is an organised body of strictly observant Orthodox Jews, called *Neturei Karta* which is vehemently opposed to Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel. Gee (1998) posits that the *Neturei Karata* views the ingathering of the Jews to the ancient Jewish homeland and considers it to be consequent upon the coming of the Messiah to the Jewish people, who have meanwhile forfeited the land because of their non-adherence to God's commandments. It is therefore quite clear that the *Neturei Karta* believes that by creating the state of Israel the Zionists are blasphemous; they are going against God's design and are trying to replace the role of the Messiah.

The assumption that all Arab states support the plight of the Palestinian people was reduced to a myth upon discovery that some of these states were secretly trading with apartheid South Africa which was a close ally of the state of Israel. It therefore came as a surprise to African states when news came out that some of the Arab nations had been trading with apartheid

South Africa after agreeing to impose sanctions against the country. According to Oded (1987) the sanctions expressed the stated Arab wish to cooperate with African countries in their fight against racism and apartheid, and also reciprocated for Africa's solidarity with the Arab cause in the October 1973 War. That October 1973 War or the Yom Kippur War was against the state of Israel and it was largely hoped that if the Arab nations were victorious against Israel the Palestinian land taken during the Six Days War of 1967 would be returned. However it was not to be as there was no outright winner during this war.

Furthermore, African nations were much angrier when reports of more Arab states trading with Apartheid South Africa emerged. It was discovered that countries such as Jordan, a supporter and close neighbour of Palestine, Iraq as well as Saudi Arabia were all trading with apartheid South Africa. Ties between the Arabs and South Africa caused indignation in Africa. At the 1975 Organisation of African Unity [OAU] conference held in Kampala, African delegates criticised the trade and financial contacts of some Arab states with South Africa. They were accused of playing a double game with Africa (Oded, 1987). This double standard by these Arab states did not only negatively affect Black South Africans but the Palestinians as well. As a general norm, in order to bring any particular government to its knees, there is always a united front by the international community. The question becomes: how is that possible if the Arab nations cannot even afford to support their neighbour and simply pay lip service? Could this perhaps be the reason that the Israel-Palestine conflict has gone this longer without any signs of ceasing? These are all pertinent questions which are worth pursuing if we are to fully understand the sustained conflict between the two countries.

Another notable point that is also of interest is the similarity between apartheid ideology in South Africa and Zionism, which is the political ideology of the state of Israel. According to Dadoo (1997) on account of their domestic policies, South Africa and Israel became international pariahs over time. These domestic policies entailed marginalization and systematic segregation of a certain portion of the population. In the case of South Africa, it was the majority black African population that was marginalized and never given equal opportunities as their white minority counterparts. In Israel's case, it was the Palestinians who were denied opportunities as the Jewish State was hell-bent on turning that state into a wholly Jewish State. It is therefore against this background that these two countries became pariah states.

Furthermore, powerful Jewish financial interests played a crucial role in forging and maintaining diplomatic links between the two countries. This era also drew interesting national security links between the two countries. On the one hand, South Africa saw herself as an integral part of the Western World by sharing its values, its economic system and its security concerns. On the other hand, Israeli rulers also stressed their country's role as the beacon of Western values in a sea of hostile Arabs. Because of the treatment of the indigenous people in their respective countries, in the case of South Africa, black Africans and, in the case of Israel, the Palestinians, these states were seen as international pariahs over time (Bishku, 2010). In these circumstances the two states combined to share economic and military strengths in order to reduce isolation and to limit their dependence on others.

As stated in the foregoing paragraph that Israel and South Africa's relationship was one of convenience not of affection, it eventually fell apart. Even Israel was eventually forced to take cognisance of the depth of international opprobrium directed at Pretoria's racist politics. For example, in 1987 Israel took a brave decision of imposing sanctions against South Africa (Benjamin, 2001). This is quite an irony since Israel is also accused of racist policies towards the Palestinians living within its borders. So, why would Israel impose sanctions on its fellow pariah state? This certainly defies logic and poses a serious question as to whether the state of Israel is as racist as it is made out to be.

Perhaps one primary reason that made the Western countries much more sympathetic to the cause of Israel was the persecution of the Jews in Europe, more especially in the Nazi-ruled Germany. This has, in some way, led to the turning of a blind eye to the ill-treatment the Israelis have meted out against the Palestinians. Adams and Mayhew (1975:141) pose the following question: "Did they [early Zionists] take into account that there was already in Palestine a settled population, whose consent to such a scheme could hardly be expected since it must mean for them a choice between exile and submission to the alien rule of the newcomers." This overlooking of the plight of the Palestinians already residing there could have been one of the factors that are behind one of the greatest conflicts that the world has ever seen. Either way, the conflict was almost inevitable as the Jews felt that they were justified to go back to their homeland they believe they were given by their God. On the other hand, the Palestinians had already lived in that Promised Land for thousands of years and they were just not ready to relinquish their right to it that easily. This made conflict ineluctable.

The relationship between Israel and South Africa was not as mutually beneficial as some would expect it to be. Some critics argued that South Africa needed Israel to thwart the negative international sentiments brought by apartheid. On the other hand, Hunter (1987) posits that it is not quite clear-cut what South Africa is expected to do for Israel as some Israeli critics have argued that there is nothing that South Africa can do for Israel which is worth the price Israel has paid in international opprobrium. It is therefore quite apparent that Israel's relationship with apartheid South Africa was not evenly balanced and mutually beneficial to both countries. It seems that Israel had more to lose than to gain by pursuing its relationship with South Africa.

Because both Israel and South Africa were vilified by the international community and were widely known as pariah states, it became inevitable that they got closer. Their relationship was more of convenience than of affection. Furthermore, things became worse for the two states during the sitting of the United Nations General Assembly [UNGA]. Barber and Barratt (1990) state that both apartheid South Africa and Israel were condemned as racist and Zionism was bracketed with apartheid while the Palestinian Liberation Organisation [PLO] and the African National Congress [ANC] were supported as liberation movements. Consequently, after the 1973 Arab/Israeli war the Arabs denied oil to South Africa and African states broke ties with Israel. It is therefore quite clear that although these respective countries were at times suspicious of each other, they had no choice but to forge a relationship of convenience because they were both marginalised by most of the international community due to their ill-treatment of certain members of their communities.

It would seem that Israel was troubled by being compared to apartheid South Africa and consequently instructed their representatives on how to respond to these allegations. Some of these responses according to Payne (1990) were that the conflict with the Palestinians, as opposed to the white-black confrontation in South Africa, was not an internal problem but connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole. Similarly, unlike South Africa, Israel did not deny basic human rights to the Palestinians. This therefore proves that the Israel-Palestine conflict is far more complex than initially thought and therefore calls for careful consideration before taking any sides. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the apartheid National Party government came into power in 1948 and the state of Israel also came into being the same year. However, the former crumbled in 1994 and the latter is still standing. This feeds to the notion of how complex the Israel-Palestine conflict really is compared to the erstwhile apartheid.

Another factor that makes the Israel-Palestine conflict much more intriguing and complex is that it brings about curiosity to both believers and non-believers. This is because when the state of Israel was established in 1948 this meant the return of the Jews to their promised land after thousands of years of wandering in foreign lands. Decalo (1998) argues that the re-emergence of a sovereign Israel after an eclipse of two thousand years was viewed by many religious people in the world as a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. The non-religious viewed the event as a grave and momentous historical milestone. It is therefore apparent because of this that Israel has won so many supporters in countries where most people are Christian believers. This explains Israel's close relationship with apartheid South Africa as the latter's leaders claimed that they were God's chosen people as well and therefore posed as Christians.

The most significant city and a bone of contention in the Israel-Palestine conflict, is the city of Jerusalem. Its importance is even felt in three religions, namely: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. As such, Jerusalem is regarded as the source of all these three religions. According to Gelvin (2005) for Jews, it is the capital of David and Solomon's kingdoms and the site of the Western (Wailing) Wall. As for Muslims, it is viewed as the site from which Muhammad ascended to heaven on his famous night journey, while for Christians it is the site of the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Some experts believe that the City of Jerusalem will be the major cause of the conflict between Jews and Muslims as it plays host to both Jewish and Muslim temples. Moreover, there seems to be no compromise as to how to allow the believers of these two faiths to practice their faith as both the site of the Wailing Wall for Jews and the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosques are located at the same vicinity.

When apartheid came to an end in 1994, the ANC-led government revisited its foreign policy and became more sensitive to the issues and plight of the Palestinian people. The new ANC-led government of Nelson Mandela had developed a long-standing relationship with Yasser Arafat and the PLO during the anti-Apartheid struggle. Top ANC leaders as well as leaders within the tripartite alliance comprising the ANC, South African Communist Party [SACP] and the Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] have often openly voiced out their disapproval of the way Israel is treating Palestinians (Dadoo& Osman, 2013). Another case in point was when in early 2003, the South African government held a meeting with Israeli opposition figures, while shunning the Ariel Sharon government.

Furthermore, because some Arab states, including Palestine, had supported the ruling African National Congress, it was therefore not surprising that the party would be sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. The then post apartheid President Nelson Mandela even indicated that as the ANC, they would not abandon those who supported them during the struggle years. According to Benjamin (2001:159), "In 1994 Mandela reportedly told Hanan Ashrawi, one of the leading Palestinian negotiators, that 'You [the PLO]' were the first to stand by us [the South African liberation movements] and support our struggle, and we shall never forget that." With the highly revered leader in Mandela voicing such allegiance to the Palestinians, it is not difficult to see why the ruling ANC has taken such a stance towards Palestine. However when it comes to the government it is a whole different story as it continues to trade with the state of Israel and even has an embassy in Israel.

Other incidents relate to the successful blocking of Israeli politician Tzipi Livni's travel to South Africa in 2011 by South African Palestinian solidarity organizations. The vigilance of various South African Palestinian solidarity groups against Zionist lobbying has been fairly successful in post-Apartheid South Africa. The involvement of the powerful trade union federation, COSATU, in the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel also proved vital to the change of South African foreign policy towards Israel. In addition, the 2012 decision by the SA Ministry of Trade and Industry to consider re-labeling products of illegal settlements, and Deputy International Relations Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim's efforts to discourage South Africans from visiting Israel because of its treatment of and policies towards Palestinians served as proof that there was a change of heart from the SA government regarding Israel (Dadoo& Osman, 2013).

The approach by the South African ruling party, the African National Congress and the government with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict have been different with the former choosing to support the Palestinians and the latter engaging both sides. This has led to confusion in the sense that the ANC is the ruling party and therefore it should be expected that its policies would be reflected in the government of the day. Responding in the Sunday Times to criticism leveled against the ANC for hosting Palestine's Hamas leadership led by Khaled Meshaal, ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa wrote, "Both Hamas and the ANC were formed as responses to political oppression. Both movements adopted the liberation of our people and land through a comprehensive struggle: internal uprisings, a sanctions campaign, and armed resistance" (November 8, 2015, p. 16). It is quite clear that the ANC continues to take the same stance it took under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The ANC might be

justified in taking this position towards Hamas and Palestine but is that contributing to reconciliation in the Israel-Palestine conflict? This is the most critical question. Perhaps with the ANC taking a more diplomatic approach on both Israel and Palestine that might help bring a breakthrough in this decades-long conflict as South Africa is seen as a shining example of reconciliation, not only in Africa but globally.

The ANC's close relationship with Hamas has left the state of Israel feeling alienated. The South African Zionist Federation [SAZF] has lamented that the ANC's exclusive support of Hamas is undermining the peace process. Expressing his views in the Sunday Times, SAZF Chairman, Ben Swartz stated that the ANC, "By embracing Hamas as a liberation movement, has helped legitimize that organisation (much to the disdain of other Arab states) concerned about radical Islam. Hamas has revealed itself to be a radical Islamist movement that seeks the violent eradication of Israel," (November 8, 2015, p. 16). It is therefore imperative that the ruling ANC and the government revisit their stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict as it seems ambiguous and somewhat confusing. The party on the one hand supports Hamas and Palestine and on the other hand the government is taking a neutral stance and is still trading with Israel. It is high time that the country takes its rightful place in the world and shows both Israel and Palestine how peace can best be achieved as it did in 1994 when it brought the apartheid regime to its knees.

This is the broader context within which this study was conceptualized and conducted. The research explores the extent to which the diversity of the South African society, its liberation history and economic aspirations and interests have impacted upon South Africa's foreign policy in the Middle East, more especially on Israel and Palestine since 1994. In a nutshell, the study looks at the extent to which South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine has changed and the causal factors behind such change. The study is significant given the perpetual turbulent relations which exist between South Africa and Israel as evidenced in the recent incident whereby the Israeli government denied Minister Blade Nzimande a visa to enter Palestine on an official visit.

## 1.3 Problem Statement

Although so much has been written about South Africa's foreign policy towards the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine question, however, no literature has sought to look deeper at this issue in a balanced manner. Most literature that looks at the Israeli-Palestine conflict is

usually biased in favour of Palestine.  Moreover, some of it seeks to undermine the very foundations that both the Israelis and Palestinians owe their existence to, their religions, i.e. Judaism and Islam, respectively.  So, this study examines all the angles. This includes the examination of SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the role religion has played in the conflict, the extent of the influence of apartheid in determining SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine as well as the influence of international institutions in the determination of SA's foreign policy agenda towards Israeli and Palestine.

Another pressing issue is that of the foreign policy posture taken by the Southern African states.  During apartheid, Israel was South Africa's only ally in the Southern African region.  This is not hard to fathom as both these countries were regarded as pariah states.  However, since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has since changed its tune, opting to take an even-handed approach towards Israel and Palestine.  On top of this, the ruling African National Congress has opted to side with the Palestinians and has even invited its leaders to the country.  Since there is still a gap in terms of a deeper analysis regarding the foreign policy frameworks within Southern Africa, especially in the South African context and what drives such foreign policy positions, this study addresses these issues and delves deeper into their crux.

Furthermore, Jews are said to be the most successful people wherever they reside in the world. Business, the film industry as well as the music industry are some of the areas where Jews dominate.  They are also, apart from blacks, the most persecuted people in the world. On the other hand, you have the Palestinian people who since 1948 have been subjected to all sorts of oppression in their own country by the Jewish state.  Therefore at face value it would seem that the state of Israel is ill-treating the Palestinian people the same way apartheid South Africa treated its black populace from whom they stole the land. However, the Jewish State has the Bible to back it up. Apart from that both the Jews and Palestinians are Semitic people and they share a common ancestor in Abraham.  So, the question becomes: is South Africa best placed to take sides in a conflict that seems to run deep in the family? This study is set to investigate these issues as a way of contributing to knowledge.

**1.4 Study Objectives**

**1.4.1 Main Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the validity of the posture taken by some of the leaders in the South African government and the Tripartite Alliance regarding the complex Israeli-Palestine issue.
- To establish the impact of South Africa's impartiality and objectivity on the Israeli-Palestine question given the similar history of Apartheid South Africa and the so-called Israel Apartheid towards the Palestinians.
- To investigate the role played by the different religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the escalation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict.
- To establish the extent of the influence multilateral organizations such as the United Nations has had on South Africa's foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict.
- To understand the approach of regional groupings such as the African Union and the SADC, of which South Africa is a member, towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

**1.4.2 Research Questions**

The study aims to address the following questions:

**Key Questions**

- What drives the South African Foreign Policy towards Israel and Palestine?
- How does South Africa benefit from its current posture towards Israel and Palestine?
- Is the nexus between SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and the ruling ANC government of any assistance to South Africa's international aspirations in the long run?

**Sub-questions**
- How realistic is SA's posture towards Israel and Palestine in the modern era of International Relations?
- What role has religious groups and civil society played in the formulation of SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

- To what extent are South Africa's foreign policy imperatives determined by global developments?
- How significant is the tension caused by the position of the ruling ANC on Palestine/Israel which has adopted the BDS campaign and the SA Government, that has formally decided to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

## 1.5 Importance of the Research

At the root of the conflict between Israel and Palestine is the question of who owns the land that is being fought over by the Israelis and Palestinians. The answer to this question is highly disputed and it has prolonged the century-long conflict. According to Hinn (2009) to the Arabs, the land was illegally seized from them after World War II by pro-Israel international governing bodies while to the Jewish people the territory has always been rightfully theirs and was given to them by Almighty God Himself. This is even more problematic because it also involves different religions. If you believe in Islam, then surely you will dismiss the notion which suggests that Palestine belongs to the Jews. But if you believe in Judaism or Christianity, you are likely to accept what the Bible says regarding the Holy Land. The question then would be: can South Africa really afford to take sides in such a complex century-long conflict? The most sensible thing to be done by the ruling ANC and the South African government is to take an even-handed approach in order to provide solutions to this conflict. This study tackles relevant questions and will probably give useful answers to the authorities as to how to best handle this Israel-Palestine conflict without having to take sides.

The relations between South Africa and Israel have in recent times cooled off as a result of the stance taken by the South African government. The government has chosen to limit the interaction with the senior leadership of Israel. It would seem South Africa is missing an opportunity to use its experience as a country that averted a civil war when it transitioned from apartheid to democracy in 1994. Furthermore, it also seems that by rejecting Israel, South Africa is inflicting deep wounds on itself. Writing in Dispatch Live (November 6, 2013), former deputy editor of the Rand Daily Mail, Benjamin Popgrund stated, "Israel could be of inestimable help as South Africa struggles with its deep-seated problems. It is depriving itself of opportunities to gain access to invaluable, often unique, Israeli expertise in areas such as agriculture, use of water, health, education and hi-tech." When a country takes a

foreign policy position it looks at what it will benefit first from such a position as per the assumptions of the realism theory. A country looks after its own interests first before displaying the attitude of benevolence towards other countries. It was thus important to conduct this research as it pinpoints and examines all the good and bad sides of the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine.

What is more intriguing about this Israel-Palestine conflict is that it is set in the Middle East where all three of the world's foremost religions originated. Hinn (2009) states that the three great religions of the world – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – were all birthed in the Middle East and share one common denominator and therefore trace their lineage to Abraham. Now, this is becoming even more complex and confusing. If both the Arabs and Jews owe their existence to Abraham, then this means that they are related and therefore this makes this conflict a family dispute. In African culture when family members are having a dispute a third party does not interfere and thus gives the family members an opportunity to resolve their issues. The fact that the international community had to intervene so that the state of Israel could be formed is in direct conflict to this African adage. Furthermore, by taking sides, this would make the situation even more problematic. However, the amount of time both factions have had to resolve their issues and failed might justify foreign or outside intervention.

What is further confusing about the South African foreign policy is its ambiguity when it comes to other countries accused of human rights violations. When it comes to human rights violations countries such as China, Cuba and Iran come into one's mind. It looks like South Africa will lend a hand toanyone who gave support to the ruling ANC even if this is at the detriment of the country's political image internationally. By its association with such countries South Africa risks deviating from the principle of promoting human rights as espoused in its constitution which is regarded as one of the best in the world. Zondi (2010) cites political analysts who have criticised government's departure from the promotion of human rights in its foreign policy and he points out that these concerns were first expressed when press reports emerged in the mid-1990s suggesting that the new government was selling arms to rogue states. The question becomes: Why can't the South African government treat the Israelis the same way they treat countries such as Cuba and China? The Israeli state imposed sanctions on apartheid South Africa in the late 1980s. Surely this should count for

something when it comes to dealing with the Israel-Palestine conflict as it calls for impartiality, objectivity and an honest reflection without alienating of the parties.

Although during the Mandela era relations between Israel and South Africa cooled off due to South Africa's support for Palestine but the rhetoric against the Jewish state was not as strong as it is today. The state made sure that it separated itself from the ruling party and this is a far cry as in recent times you get cabinet ministers discouraging South African citizens from travelling to Israel due to that state's treatment of Palestinians. According to Benjamin (2001) in 1996 and 1997, despite the considerable cooling in relations between South Africa and Israel, the Jewish state remained South Africa's most important export market in the Middle East as it accounted for more than 50 percent of the country's exports to that region. The points made above clearly reflect the separation of the state from the party as the government continued to trade with Israel despite the misgivings from the party principals. Although there have been calls from within the tripartite alliance consisting of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP, the government is yet to terminate its trade with the Jewish state.

The formulation of a foreign policy in this global village called the modern world is quite problematic and complex. This task is made even more difficult by the fact that democratic countries have to consider human rights when formulating such policies. This basically means trying to be many things to different countries and trying to please them all. According to Dadoo (1997) formulating foreign policy was much simpler, even though more objectionable, during the apartheid era when the communitarian and realistic approach was employed. Therefore to a certain extent South Africa has done well with its even-handed approach towards the Israel-Palestine conflict although the recent meeting of Hamas leadership with the ruling ANC has ruffled a few feathers within the South African Jewish community.

South Africa under President Nelson Mandela's leadership was seen to be punching above its weight. Although he was regarded by the international community as the icon for peace and human rights at times Mandela would make blunders while trying to keep South Africa's policy of protecting human rights. A case in point is that of condemning Nigerian dictator, General Sani Abacha in 1996 after executing human rights activists, including author, Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni 9. Mandela was vilified by fellow African leaders by breaking ranks and criticizing one of their own. Therefore it soon became apparent that principled morality and idealist leanings were proving hard to sustain. Consequently, the Thabo Mbeki

presidency came in with a renewed sense of purpose and change of approach. Nieuwkerk (2006:41) argues that under President Mbeki, the primary emphasis on human rights was gradually replaced with South Africa's subtle advocacy and support for human rights through multilateral institutions and quiet bilateral diplomacy. Therefore, the Mbeki leadership thought it prudent that in order for South Africa to survive and pursue its developmental agenda in a commercially driven and capitalist global environment it should take a more realistic approach.

Indeed during President Mbeki's tenure between 1999 until 2008 when he was recalled from office, the South African economy had been growing healthily at above five percent per annum. This serves to confirm just how much of an impact the realism approach makes when applied to the letter in order to serve the interests of the country. Although there were dissenting voices against the country's even-handed approach towards Israel and Palestine during Mbeki's presidency, however it did not become so hostile that the Israeli government would deny a South African cabinet member a visa to visit Palestine, as it did with Higher Education Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande earlier in 2014.

Although solidarity with the Palestinians has increased within the tripartite alliance and calls to halt trade with the state of Israel have been made, it is not a government policy as yet. However, there are signs that this could soon change as the South African government has limited its communication with the senior leadership of the Israeli government. Furthermore, they have discouraged South African citizens from travelling to Israel. How does this assist South Africa's developmental agenda? Isn't South Africa returning to the Mandela era of miscalculation and thus compromising its economic opportunities at the expense of human rights and moral posture? This is not to say South Africa should ignore human rights abuses by the Jewish state. But if it takes such a stance, it must then extend it to other countries that have worst human rights violation records such as China and Cuba.

Although South Africa grew in stature after 1994 due to Mandela's iconic status, it should not be forgotten that it is still a developing middle income country with one of the most unequal societies in the world. The country's success in ushering in a new democratic dispensation from apartheid rule has been spectacular and won the country many admirers. However, the country should not remove its eyes from the price, which is the plight of many of its poor citizens. Benjamin (2001) warns that it should not be forgotten that South Africa is as a middle power, with limited capacity to influence other states and therefore South Africa,

acting unilaterally, simply cannot in any direct or meaningful way influence the Middle East Peace Process. Perhaps the South African government should take heed of this warning as the country seems to be punching above its weight. Taking a more realistic approach towards Israel will benefit both South Africa and Israel. The latter is a semi-desert country and experiences low rainfall. However through its advanced technology Israel has made strides in agriculture as it is among the largest exporters of fruit and vegetables in the world. This is not to suggest that South Africa should simply overlook human rights violations in any given country. However, this should be consistent and realistic. Therefore, this research is important in that it looks at other alternatives to South Africa's rather ambiguous foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine.

## 1.6 Methodology

The study falls within the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research entails that which deals not with numbers or figurers used in quantitative research but with text or words. Put more profoundly by Bryman (2004), qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. On the other hand, Berg (2001) describes qualitative research as the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. It is therefore quite clear that the qualitative approach only deals with text not figures.

The primary data for this study wereobtainedthrough open-ended interviews conducted with the Palestine and Israel embassies, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), the Pro-Israel civil society groups as well as Pro-Palestine civil society groups. The informants were purposively selected based on their knowledge about the issue under investigation as well as their support for both Israel and Palestine. Initially, the sample was set at twenty informants from civil society, eight from each of the two sides (Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel) and two from DIRCO and one each from the Israeli and Palestinian embassies. However, in the end, the response rate was 16, with six responses from Pro-Israel informants, seven from Pro-Palestine informants, one from the Israeli Embassy in South Africa, one from the Palestinian Embassy in South Africa as well as the response from the

South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process. Secondary data were generated through books, journal articles, newspapers and internet sources.

As the study is largely qualitative in nature, it was therefore imperative that the chosen methods used to analyse the data are suited to the study. Apart from this, as a norm, the research should also provide a description of methods and processes undergone to analyse the data. According to Roberts (2004) if the study is qualitative, the researcher should provide a description of matrices used to display the data and identify the coding processes used to convert the raw data into themes or categories for analysis. This description should also include specific details about how the researcher managed the large amount of data associated with qualitative analysis. The research therefore used the meanings, concepts, definitions and metaphors to try and find the meanings from the answers provided by officials and pro-Israel and Palestine groups.

Doing an analysis on qualitative research is not as simple and straightforward as is the case with quantitative research. This is because a qualitative study consists of so many details. This takes time to ascertain which one to cut out and which one to use. According to Swetnam (2004) descriptive, qualitative data can be tricky to present and to avoid tedium they need careful editing and presenting in blocks which can be broken up with sub-headings. Some of these may not require presenting in full and parts can be relegated to the appendices. Therefore the data were analyzed thematically and consisted of the coding of themes that emanate from the data.

With regard to the theoretical framework, the three theories that underpin this study: are realism, institutionalism and human rights theories. These three theories assisted with the investigation of the research problem and they will be expounded upon in Chapter Three which focuses specifically on the theoretical framework of the study.


## 1.7 Demarcation/Scope of the Study

The study deals with the examination of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine after 1994 with a specific focus on the conflict between these two respective countries. Furthermore, the research explores the extent to which the diversity of the South African society, its liberation history and economic aspirations and interests have all impacted upon South Africa's foreign policy in the Middle East since 1994. Since there is

still a gap in terms of deeper analysis regarding the foreign policy frameworks within Southern Africa and especially the South African context and what drives such foreign policy positions, this study addresses these issues and delves deeper into their crux. In a nutshell, the study looks at the extent to which South Africa's foreign policy towards the Middle East has changed and the causal factors behind such change focusing specifically on Israel and Palestine.

## 1.8 Structure of dissertation

The study is organized into seven chapters arranged as follows:

### Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

This chapter provides the background behind the study putting it in a context. The research aims/objectives, research questions and issues addressed in the study were be presented in this chapter. It also explains why the study is important. Moreover, the chapter explains the approach of the dissertation and its limitations. Lastly, this chapter presents the outline of the entire dissertation by introducing each of the subsequent chapters in order to prepare the reader's mind-set.

### Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter basically deals with what has been covered on the topic by other scholars and identifies existing gaps which still need to be filled. This serves as justification for the relevance of the present study. It also provides the background and context of the research drawing from previous works and discusses the documents that are of value and relevance to the study.

### Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

The three theories on which the study is grounded are explicated in this chapter. In addition to summarizing what each theory entails and identifying any criticism leveled against the theories, the chapter also justifies the relevance of each theory to the study.

### Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter spells out the methodology that was followed in conducting the study and provides reasons why certain research paradigms and data collections methods were preferred

to others. Where applicable, the challenges experienced during the data collection stage are spelt out and answers provided as to how those challenges were dealt with or responded to in order to ensure that the study maintained its quality and credibility.

**Chapter 5: Research results/findings**

The results or findings of the study are presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 6: Analysis and discussion of the results**

This chapter builds on the previous one. The results presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 5) are discussed and given meaning in the context of the study.

**Chapter 7: Summary, recommendations and conclusions**

This chapter pulls the entire study together in the form of a summary. It achieves this by reiterating key points which emerged from the study. Limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations made on future research on a related theme.


**1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the necessary background on how the study was conceptualized. In other words, the chapter has discussed the reasons for choosing this study theme and topic. It outlined a brief history of the Israel-Palestine conflict. It showed how the conflict originated and laid bare some of the issues that are contentious and thus make this conflict complex. The chapter also made reference to why certain countries sympathize with Israel and why others choose to side with the Palestinians. The discrepancies within the Arab world that seem to be paying lip service on their support for Palestine while trading with countries who are Israel's allies were also enumerated and explicated in this chapter.

Importantly, the chapter also discussed the inconsistencies within the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. It touched base on the ambiguity of this foreign policy which is evidenced when the government opts to trade with Israel yet the ruling African National Congress leaders choose to publicly side with the Palestinians. The chapter also pointed out how this could compromise the peace process in the Middle East as South Africa is regarded as a symbol of world peace since its peaceful transition from apartheid rule. The

ruling party is also slated for taking sides in the conflict while it is silent on human rights abuses by other countries such as China and Cuba.

Furthermore, the chapter talked about the role and the impact of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict. All three prominent religions, namely: Christianity, Islam and Judaism owe their roots to Abraham and they originated in the Middle East. As a result, the conflict has thrown these religions into the mix by pitting them against one another in one way or the other. One point that has been made more explicit in this chapter is that these religions, especially Islam and Judaism, are in direct conflict because their sites of worship are in the same vicinity in the city of Jerusalem. Apart from this, both Christians and Jews believe what is written in the Bible, i.e. that the land of Palestine belongs to Israel. The chapter has also dealt with research aims/objectives, research questions and issues addressed in the study. The chapter introduced the three theories which guided the study without providing detail (leaving this for chapter 3). Above all, the chapter explained why the study is important. This was informed by the understanding that any research at PhD level should contribute significantly to knowledge by presenting something that has not been presented in the same way by previous authors. Moreover, the chapter explained the approach of the dissertation and stated its limitations.

The next chapter reviews existing literature on the theme of this study. It deals with what has been covered on the topic by other scholars and identifies existing gaps which still need to be filled. This serves as justification for the relevance of the present study. It also provides background and context to research and discusses the documents that are of value to the research, at times giving those documents a different interpretation and focus.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter, as stated in the introductory chapter, reviews existing literature on the theme of this study. The chapter also provides the background and context to the present research as outlined in different sources in the literature and discusses documents that are of value to the study. Conventionally, the literature study deals with what has been covered on the topic by other scholars and identifies existing gaps which still need to be filled. This serves as justification for the relevance of the present study and its likely contribution to knowledge. The literature review is an integral part of research in that it plays a tremendous role in shaping the research problem. The literature study also serves to summarize the current knowledge in the area under investigation by identifying any strengths and weaknesses in previous works. It also provides the context within which to place the current study.

Although so much has been written about South Africa's foreign policy in general and about the country's policy towards the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestine question, however, no literature has sought to look deeper at this issue in a more balanced manner. Most sources that look at the Israeli-Palestine questionnaire usually somewhat biased in favour of Palestine while dismissing Israel's claims and activities. Moreover, some of the literature seeks to undermine the very foundations that both the Israelis and Palestinians owe their existence to, that is, their religions (Judaism and Islam, respectively). The existing literature also tends to support South Africa's foreign policy that is friendly towards Palestine and hostile towards Israel. This is due to the fact that the ANC-led government felt that the state of Israel sided with the National Party government during the height of apartheid and therefore cannot be trusted.

The state of Israel, incidentally, was established in 1948, which is the same year that the NP came to power in South Africa and institutionalized racism under the apartheid policy. The apartheid state felt that it had some connection with the newly formed Jewish state. This view was premised on the fact that both the Afrikaners and the Jews embraced segregation, albeit in different contexts. Therefore, the ANC's assertion that the state of Israel sided with the apartheid government is not far-fetched. Over the years, as Israel annexed more of Palestinian lands it drew more hostility from its Arab neighbours such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Similarly, South Africa was also being

ostracized by fellow African countries as well as the international community due to its repressive apartheid system which discriminated against the black indigenous population (Dadoo, 1997). As proof that relations were growing stronger between these two countries, the first National Party Prime Minister, Dr. D.F. Malan became the first South African Head of State to visit Israel in 1953.

When apartheid came to an end in 1994, the ANC-led government revisited its foreign policy and became more sensitive to the issues and the plight of the Palestinian people. In a way, this was not an anomaly. The new ANC-led government of Nelson Mandela had developed a long-standing relationship with Yasser Arafat and the PLO during the anti-Apartheid struggle. Top ANC leaders as well as leaders within the tripartite alliance comprising the ANC, SACP and COSATU have often voiced their outright disapproval of the way Israel is treating Palestinians (Dadoo& Osman, 2013). Another case in point was when in early 2003, the South African government held a meeting with Israeli opposition figures, while simultaneously shunning the Ariel Sharon government.

What is also of interest here are the similarities which exist between the apartheid ideology in South Africa and Zionism in Israel. According to Dadoo (1997:175), "On account of their domestic policies, therefore, South Africa and Israel became international pariahs over time." These domestic policies entailed marginalization and systematic segregation of a certain portion of the population. In the case of South Africa, it was the majority black African population that was systematically marginalized and never given equal opportunities as their white minority counterparts. In the case of Israel, it was the Palestinians who were denied opportunities as the Jewish State was hell-bent on turning that state into a totally Jewish State. It is therefore against this background that these two countries became pariah states.

Another pressing issue is that of the foreign policy posture taken by the Southern African states and, of course, South Africa. Noticeably, during apartheid Israel was South Africa's only ally in the entire Southern African region. This is not hard to fathom given the point made above that both these countries were regarded as pariah states. However, since the advent of democracy, South Africa has since changed its tune, opting to take an even-handed approach towards both Israel and Palestine. As stated earlier, the ruling African National Congress has opted to side with the Palestinians and has even invited its leaders to the country. Since there is still a gap in terms of deeper analysis regarding the foreign policy

frameworks within the Southern African and South African contexts and what drives such foreign policy positions, this study addresses these issues and delves deeper into their crux.

So, this chapter examines all the different angles presented in the literature and deals with four sections, namely: The historical perspective of the Israel-Palestine conflict; SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine; the role that has been played by religion in the conflict; and the influence of regional continental and international institutions in the determination of SA's foreign in the Israeli-Palestine conflict. The historical perspective deals with the origins of the Israel-Palestine conflict. It also discusses the role of the superpowers such as England, the United States of America and the Soviet Union in this conflict. Moreover, it also touches on the wars fought between Israel and the Arab states in the Middle East region. The section on foreign policy deals with how apartheid South Africa interacted with Israel before 1994 and how this interaction has changed after 1994. The third section looks at how the three religions that originated from the Middle East, namely: Christianity, Islam and Judaism have influenced this conflict. In the fourth and last section the chapter deals with the role of regional, continental and international institutions such as the Arab League [AL], the African Union [AU] and the United Nations [UN] in influencing South Africa's foreign policy on Israel and Palestine.

## 2.2 Israel-Palestine Conflict: the historical perspective

The historical perspective of the Israel-Palestine Conflict would be incomplete without questioning whether, in actual fact, there was ever a territory or country called Israel? Perhaps, the most reliable source on the existence of Israel is the Torah or the Old Testament of the Holy Bible. However, some Israeli historians like Professor Shlomo Sand, have questioned the reliability of the Old Testament which shakes the very foundations on which the claims of the Israelis of the Holy Land are built. Sand (2009) posits that there is a huge probability that the early events in the book were written during the time of David and Solomon, and that their literary adaptation was done at the end of the two kingdoms, in about the eighth century. However, on the other hand, Professor Martin Noth, an expert in the Old Testament argues that Israel was a historical reality with its own historical period, during which it was intimately involved in the multifarious life of the surrounding world. It can therefore be adequately understood only by historical research (Noth, 1959). If the two distinguished professors are having these evidently different opinions, then how can lay

people of Israel, Palestine and even South Africa be expected to agree on such a sensitive and complex subject and argue from a strong position? It is therefore of utmost importance that the citizens of the rest of the world fully grasp the issues surrounding this conflict before attempting to take any sides.

History informs us that the state of Israel was formed in 1948 as mentioned earlier. This was three years after the end of the Second World War in 1945. During this war, about six million Jews are said to have been killed by the Nazi-led Germany. Logic would have dictated that the world would be sympathetic to the Jews because of the holocaust. However, that was not the case. According to Kimche (1991) the hostility between Palestine and Israel sharpened in 1948 when the Arab League states tightened their hold on Palestinian affairs and rejected the UN partition plan which would have created an independent Arab state and an independent Israeli state in Palestine. What made matters worse was the fact that ancient Israel was already occupied by other people and this created tensions. Payne (1990) argues that the Zionist's dream of a return to the homeland of millions of Jews scattered through the world, was made difficult by the fact that other people were already in possession of most of that territory. This definitely created a prelude to what is currently known as the Israel-Palestine conflict which has lasted more than five decades and still continues to this day.

Underlying the Israel-Palestine conflict, are rather complex factors that need to be taken into consideration. On one side of the conflict Jews claim to have been given the Promised Land by their God while on the other hand Palestinians claim to have lived in this land for thousands of years. Dadoo and Osman (2013) contend that the very creation of the state of Israel in 1948 was based on the hypocrisy of Zionism, a political movement established by Theodor Herzl in 1897. However Smith (2001) argues that the present state of Israel encompasses a substantial portion of what was once called Palestine. Therefore, there is bound to be conflicting accounts of how the conflict really came about.

The search for truth can be quite an exhausting and challenging task as the seeker needs to search all angles in a thorough and dispassionate manner. So many historians on both Israel and Palestine sides of the conflict have written extensively on this issue. Not surprisingly, the manner in which these historians would write would always be in a way that shows allegiance to their countries/territories, be it Israel or Palestine. Rogan and Shlaim (2001) point out that in Israel, nationalist historians have reflected the collective memory of the Israeli public in depicting that the victory over Palestine was as a desperate fight for survival

and an almost miraculous victory. They further add that on the other hand, in the Arab world, histories of the Palestine War have been marked by apologetics, self-justification, and conspiracy theories (Rogan & Shlaim, 2001). It is therefore quite clear that the issue of Israel and Palestine is very problematic. As such, individual countries need to tread carefully and thoroughly apply their minds before attempting to mediate or take sides.

It can be argued that the Israelis and Palestinians have a legitimate claim to the disputed land of their ancestors as there is no clear evidence to disprove these claims. Both the ancestors of these two warring parties had at some point lived in Israel/Palestine. The Jews have the Bible to back their claims to the holy land as well as some experts who have done extensive research on the matter. According to Noth (1959) the Old Testament records the conquest of the land of Palestine as the 'promised land' by the whole of the tribes of Israel. On the other hand, the Palestinians have lived there for many centuries. According to experts who are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, it was a violation of God's law to just grab the land without His approval. Dadoo and Osman (2013) posit that for the last 2000 years or so, the Jewish people have been in a state of exile decreed by God and this state of exile was to exist until the present day. Therefore, according to the supporters of Palestine the Israelis are being presumptuous and going against what their God taught them. They further argue that the Jews should have waited for God to tell them when to occupy the land just like it happened when they first occupied the land over two thousand years ago. This is the religious lens to understanding the conflict.

Some authors have shed light on why the Israel-Palestine conflict runs so deep and is quite daunting to solve. According to Patai (1986) after being kept in subjection by Islam for thirteen centuries, the Jews have within a few decades metamorphosed into a figure seen as a threat to the Arabs. Furthermore, Theodor Herzl (1969) asserted that wherever the Jews lived in perceptible numbers, they were more or less persecuted. It was therefore against this background that the Jews felt that they had to go back to their homeland, Israel, which was on present day Palestine. On this land they thought they would be free from persecution. The holocaust during the Second World War only served to further this ideal which was finally realized in 1948.

One of the factors that contributed to the Israel-Palestine Conflict was the 1917 Balfour Declaration which was aimed at bringing European Jews back to Palestine. This inevitably created tensions between the Jews and the Arabs who were already residing in Palestine.

According to Cohen (1987) the Balfour Declaration was not only ambiguous but also fatally vague as there were no borders established for the Jews' national home and no machinery created whereby the British might facilitate its well-being and progress. This policy statement which was aimed at returning the European Jews to ancient Israel which was then known as Palestine after the First World War is said to be crucial in the establishment of the state of Israel.

Since the Arabs were already inhabitants of Palestine, it was therefore inevitable that tensions would erupt between them and the incoming Jews. Just as they had done years earlier with regard to the partition of Africa – which later created conflicts in this continent, the British, it could be argued, were also responsible for the Israel-Palestine Conflict. As Muslih (1988) aptly states, the circumstances made it impossible for the Palestinians to abstain from establishing their own independent resistance movement as the British Empire was there to divide, rule, and subjugate. This definitely served as the setting for the confrontation between the emerging Palestinian Nationalism and the Jewish Zionism of which the chief instigator was the British Empire. This quest for conquest and expansion has been the norm since the ancient times. As it were then, and as it has been even in recent times, it has left nothing but destruction, calamity and powerlessness to those on its receiving end.

At the heart of the conflict is who has the legitimate claim to the disputed land of Palestine or ancient Israel? On one hand, you have the proponents of Jewish nationalism known as Zionism, pointing out that the existence of Jewish kingdoms in Palestine dates back to Biblical times. Palestinians, by contrast, argue that they are the indigenous people of that disputed land. According to Tessler (2007) the Jewish claim reflects not only the national history of the Jewish people, but also a promise by God that one day Jews would return to *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel. However on the other hand, the Palestinians have also lived in this land for more than two thousand years and it would seem unfair to kick them out after having lived there for such a long time. Tessler (2007) further states that the Palestinians' argument is that Jews, whatever their experience might be in Biblical terms, cannot suddenly appear after almost 2000 years and announce to the people living in Palestine that Jews are the territory's rightful owners. It is therefore against this background that the Israel-Palestine conflict was unavoidable. These sobering facts and differing views show how complex and sensitive this issue is.

Furthermore, some Christian Zionists have strongly disputed the existence of the country or nation called Palestine. They further dispute that the land in which Israel is situated never ever belonged to Palestinians. They argue that this land was never occupied by Israel as it already belonged to her anyway. One such person, who holds these views, is Hagee (2007) who contends the Palestinians have never existed as an autonomous society, and the land of Israel never belonged to them. The author describes media reports in America referring to Israel as an occupier as having no basis; he sees them as nothing more than anti-Semitic propaganda. Could the silence over Jordan and Egypt be attributed to the fact that both these countries identify themselves as Arab nations and was therefore downplayed? Whatever the reasons, what is more evident is that both Jews and Palestinians, at some point in their lifetime, lived in that disputed land. As to who has more claims to the land remains a contested subject.

The emergence of Arab and Jewish nationalism which aimed to create an Arab nation state and Jewish state in the land of Palestine also contributed to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This, according to Jahn (2015), was further complicated by the late colonial competition from 1917 to 1948 between Britain and France as to who should gain control over the former Ottoman territories. This desire to expand, just like in the 19th century scramble for Africa, was not only confined to the British Empire but other European powers shared the same ambitions as well. Palestine and many other Middle Eastern countries had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire since the first quarter of the 16th century until the end of the Second World War in 1918. The end of this empire ushered in a new era for the land of Palestine, its citizens as well as the Jews who were escaping persecution in Europe and were moving to the land of Palestine.

For people that are marginalized and oppressed, for them to rise up against the perceived injustice, there has to be that extra determination that stirs them to rise against the adversary or oppressor. The French Revolution is said to have been fuelled by the writings of the philosophers of the day, such as Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu. Incidentally, it was France and her fellow European countries that were responsible for the mess that is currently unfolding in the Middle East, known as the Israel-Palestine Conflict. As Cohen (1987) aptly argues, the Palestinian Arab nationalism was ignited by two major processes after The First World War, namely: the division of Ottoman Syria into mandates by France and Britain and by the British promotion of Zionism in Palestine. Therefore, it could be argued that if the division of Ottoman Syria into mandates and then the resettlement of the Jews into

Palestine/Israel had been handled better, the Middle East would have been a much more peaceful region than is the case today. Instead, these European powers missed the chance because as it is always the case with nation states, they are concerned with their own interests.

Further proof that the origins of the Israel-Palestine conflict should be rightly attributed to the expansionist interests of both Britain and France in the Middle East region is found in most middle-eastern experts' work. Jahn (2015) states that when the Ottomans entered the First World on the side of the Germans, Britain encouraged the Arabs to rebel against Ottoman rule from 1915 to1916 by promising the creation of an Arab state. However, a little while later in 1917 Britain promised the Jews in the Balfour Declaration that they would be given a national homeland in Palestine, covering areas in today's Israel. It can therefore be argued that the British Empire was playing the Jews and Arabs against each other and thereby escalating tensions between them as opposed to finding a lasting solution to the crisis.

Furthermore, even France had a hand in using both Jews and Arabs in advancing their own interests. In the process, just like the British Empire, France played them against each other. Muslih ((1988) avers that France, too, needed the Arab nationalist movement to counter British influence in the Arab territories, and muster the requisite support for French ambitions in the Syrian interior. After all, the Middle East had been divided into a mandate system between Britain and France. According to Kissinger (2014) the mandate system, as ratified by the League of Nations, put Syria and Lebanon under France. Mesopotamia, later known as Iraq, was placed under British influence; and Palestine and Transjordan became the British mandate for Palestine. The Arabs expected that both Britain and France would assist them in obtaining their independence from the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and thus establish the Palestine state.

However, that was not to be as the State of Israel was formed in May 1948 after the United Nations resolution was passed. To Jews, this was obviously a day of celebration but to Palestinians it was the beginning of the extension of their troubles as they began in the late 19th century when Jews who were fleeing persecution in Europe were gradually flocking to Palestine. The formal establishment of the state of Israel left Palestinians with no choice but to retaliate. Cohen (1987) avers that the Arab world was determined to oppose the resolution with all the means at its disposal, and the Palestinians began a civil war on the day after its adoption. Henceforth, the battle for the soul of Palestinian/Israeli territory had officially

begun and was perpetuated by European powers, Great Britain and France. International institutions such as the League of Nations and United Nations have been unsatisfactory in their handling of this conflict. This will be discussed further in later sections of this chapter.

Soon thereafter, the Palestinians would attack the newly formed Israel state with the help of other neighbouring Arab states but without success. Instead the state of Israel succeeded in warding off the Arab challenge and gained more of the Palestinian territory. According to Tessler (2007) approximately 700 000 Palestinians who had lived in the territory that now became Israel left their homes and became refugees in neighbouring countries. Most of these refugees lived in the West Bank and Gaza. Lebanon and Jordan also absorbed some of these of these refugees. This was the beginning of a long and painful journey for Palestinians as they were displaced from their homes and became wanderers with no place to call home. Since the Palestinians were no longer a significant political force, opposition to Israel was spearheaded by the Arab states, resulting in the transformation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict into the Israel-Arab inter-state conflict. What had started as a battle for land and survival for both the Israelites and Palestinians escalated into the much broader and much deadlier Israel-Arab conflict. The situation escalated from bad to worse partly because the powerful countries, such as Britain and France, who had a hand in how things turned out in this conflict, were looking for their own interests, that is, they both wanted to rule Palestine.

In subsequent years, it was inevitable that the Palestinians and the Arab states in general would lose hope in western powers and thus sought assistance elsewhere. They looked no further than the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), a superpower which was in the cold war with another western superpower, the United States of America (USA). Jahn (2015) posits that in the following years, Arab nationalism turned primarily against Britain and France, making the Arab states of interest to the Soviet Union as political partners. In fact, soon after the formation of Israel by the United Nations there emerged some form of anti-Zionism in the USSR and this brought a new dimension to this conflict as well as the Cold War. Even at the present moment, most Arab countries view fellow Arab countries who are allies of the US and the West with suspicion. Saudi Arabia comes to mind as one of the countries that have frosty relations with some of her neighbours due to the country's close relations with the US.

Henceforth, there was the Six-Day War of 1967 whereby Egypt, Jordan and Syria fought against Israel. However Israel managed to win the war and in turn gained the Sinai Desert

and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and from the Kingdom of Jordan they seized control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem – including the famed Western Wall of Solomon's temple (Hinn, 2009:43). This created more chaos and problems as the number of displaced Palestinians increased. There were more questions than answers as well. Israel might have won that war but at what price? And how were the Palestinians and the Arab world going to respond to this humiliating defeat?

There is, without a shadow of doubt, a view that the six days of fighting completely changed the face of the Middle East geo-political affairs. According to Shapira (2015) Israel was transformed from an underdog under threat of destruction to a regional power whose positions had to be taken into account. However, many Palestinians were still left in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This was bound to further fuel tensions between the Israelis and Palestinians, and these tensions are still experienced even today. As Bailey (1990:240) eloquently puts it, " The area newly occupied by Israel in Sinai, Gaza, the West Bank of the Jordan, and the Golan Heights, was three times the size of Israel proper, and Yitzhak Rabin commented that 'a million hostile Arabs' would now be living under Israeli rule." This added further fuel to a conflict that will need a miracle or divine intervention to resolve.

With Israel now in full control of most of the Palestinian land and territories acquired from Egypt, Syria and Jordan it had won after the Six-Day War, it held all the cards when it came to negotiating with the Arabs. Instead of weakening the Palestinians the latest developments fuelled them to organize themselves in order to counter the latest Israel victory. As Tessler (2007:45) observes, "…the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), established in 1964 as an instrument of the Arab League, transformed itself in 1968 into a genuine and authentic Palestinian political institution." This enabled leaders of the PLO such as Yasser Arafat to take back the struggle from the Arab states and make it a Palestinian struggle again. The new struggle spoke to Palestinian interests instead of Arab interests as had been the case before.

The goal of the PLO was to create a Palestinian state in the whole of the land of Palestine, which most of its land was now taken by Israel. However, this goal was reduced after the 1967 Six-Day War where Israel managed to gain the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Instead of focusing on the emancipation of the whole of Palestine, the PLO then had to concentrate on freeing the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Dadoo and Osman (2013) posit that Arafat advocated the adoption of an armed struggle and successfully sought to make the PLO a fully independent organisation. Arafat and the PLO were now firm favourites among the

Palestinian people to bring independence to them. This was affirmed when the PLO was made the sole representative of the Palestinians at the United Nations.

Although the Six-Day War was significant for Israel in that it gave this state more territory, it was just as equally important for the Arabs and Palestinians as well. This is because this war unwittingly gave rise to another form of ideology aimed at reviving Arab solidarity. Since Islam is the dominant religion of most of the Arab states, it was almost inevitable that it would have some sort of influence in renewing Arab hopes and in turn assist the Palestinian cause. According to Etheredge (2010) with the defeat in June 1967 of the Arab states by Israel in the Six-Day (June) War, socialist and Pan-Arab ideologies declined in the Islamic world while political Islam emerged as public force. So, the Six-Day War might have given Israel more territories and victory over the Arab states but this war also gave the Arabs a sense of solidarity. This was to also rub off to Palestine as witnessed in the rise of the PLO.

The elements of the Arab-Israel conflict did not just completely fade away after the PLO came into the picture and narrowed this conflict into Israel-Palestine conflict. This was because Israel fought another intense war with Egypt and Syria in 1973. Hinn (2009) avers that by purposely choosing Yom Kippur which is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Egypt and Syria mobilized their combined forces for a coordinated surprise attack on Israel's borders. Since this was a holiday, many soldiers were not on duty; they were away at home with their families. This caused Israel's forces to be greatly outnumbered. Although the Israelis suffered greater casualties than during the Six-Day War they nevertheless managed to drive back the Egyptians and Syrians once they had managed to regroup after the soldiers had come back from the holidays. This was probably the last elements of the Arab-Israel conflict as afterwards Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty.

The Yom Kippur War or the October War took Israel and the Western world by surprise as the situation seemed to be peaceful between Israel and Arab states after the Six-Day War of 1967, save for the War of Attrition of 1970. There was no doubt however that this war would change the history of the Middle East. As Shapira (2015:326) states, "The Yom Kippur War – or the October War, as the Egyptians called it – was a watershed in both Israeli and Middle Eastern History. Perhaps even more than the Six-Day War, it reshaped Israel's self-image, as well as its political and social space…" This is because prior to the war Israel viewed its army as superior compared to Egyptian and Syrian armies and that they would not think of attacking given Israel's humiliating victory in the Six-Day War. However after this war the

country went back to viewing itself as it did before the Six-Day War – as a small and vulnerable country that is surrounded by danger on all sides.

The Yom Kippur War/October War also elevated the US status in the Middle East as the country was an ally of both countries, although the USSR supplied arms to Egypt and the US to the Israeli army. However, the Egyptians knew that although the USSR had supplied them with arms but it had no power to force Israel into a cease-fire and only the US had such power. This was because Israel had sought the US assistance in the war when it was on the verge of defeat and the US promptly airlifted weapons to Israel. According to Herzog (1982:342), "It was the United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger who negotiated a cease-fire between Israel and Egypt, including Israeli military concessions that involved opening a supply line to the beleaguered Egyptian Third Army." Therefore, the Yom Kippur War/October War changed all the Middle Eastern power dynamics into America's favour. The US had scored a huge victory on USSR when it came to the Middle East as the two most prominent and powerful states, Egypt and Israel, were now indebted to this Western Superpower.

The Yom Kippur War or the October War had significantly changed Egypt's standing in the Middle East and it also defined the role of the two superpowers involved in a Cold War. After this war, Egypt was now able to negotiate on an equal footing with Israel. The Yom Kippur/October War had helped undo the damage and humiliation meted by the defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War. Bregman and El-Tahri (1998) argue that although Sadat had lost the war, by giving the Israelis a beating and crossing the Suez Canal, he had won an important battle that enabled him to now negotiate with them as equal. As for the involvement of the Soviet Union and the US, its significance could not be over-emphasized. Hertzog (1982) points out that the major resupply operations were mounted by the Soviet Union in favour of the Egyptian and Syrian armies and by the United States in favour of the Israeli forces. The US and the Soviet Union succeeded in bringing both Egypt and Israel together. From then on there had never been any war between Israel and any other Arab countries except for the 1982 War in Lebanon, which was triggered by an attempt on Israel's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, (Bregman & El-Tahri, 1998). However, the conflict between Israel and Palestine still rages on to this day.

**2.3 South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine**

Foreign policy can simply be described as that which deals with matters that are outside of a particular country's borders. Kaarbo et al. (2012) describe foreign policy as that which is meant to apply to policy toward the world outside a particular state's territorial borders. Moreover, Du Plessis (2006:123) contends that foreign policy, "is concerned with the purposes of the actions undertaken by international actors, with the national and international societal sources from which they derive, with the processes that initiate them and with the form they take." Furthermore, Hughes (2004) defines foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states, and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. It is therefore quite clear that foreign policy is mainly concerned with outside matters. But despite this, it is equally true that foreign policy is influenced by domestic matters. A country decides on how to relate to others for its interests.

Before delving deeper into this section, perhaps it would be more appropriate to first give a short description of what South Africa's foreign policy entails as per existing sources. South Africa's present foreign policy is premised on the spirit of humanity (ubuntu) as well as that of human rights. There was no escaping the latter given the country's liberation history. According to the final draft of the White Paper on Foreign Policy (2011), South Africa shall continue to pursue a diplomatic role based on South Africa's successful political transition and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Furthermore, through various mechanisms, the country will continue to support the developmental and humanitarian needs in Palestine. Despite the government's assertions that it has taken an even-handed approach towards the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is quite clear that it has opted to cater for the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians. This is merely because of the shared history of fighting for liberation that South Africa identifies with the Palestinians.

Although the study is exploring South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine after 1994, however to provide some brief background, this section will in the first few paragraphs touch base on what happened in South Africa's foreign policy arena before 1994. As mentioned earlier, during apartheid, South Africa was Israel's only ally in the Southern African region. This is not hard to fathom given the fact that both these countries were regarded as pariah states. Furthermore, powerful Jewish financial interests played a crucial role in forging and maintaining diplomatic links between the two countries. This era also

drew interesting national security links between the two countries. Dadoo and Osman (2013) state that from 1973 to 1975, the two countries signed a number of economic, technical, and scientific agreements, and maintained a secret and highly profitable military relationship in spite of UN sanctions against South Africa. So, these two pariah states, clearly isolated by the international community, found solace in each other and they entered into an unholy alliance.

Moreover, apartheid South Africa saw herself as an integral part of the Western World by sharing its values, its economic system and its security concerns. On the other hand, Israeli rulers also stressed their country's role as the beacon of Western values in a sea of hostile Arabs. Because of the treatment of the indigenous people in their respective countries, in the case of South Africa, black Africans, and in the case of Israel, the Palestinians, these states were seen as international pariahs over time (Bishku, 2010). In these circumstances it is therefore quite clear that they combined to share economic and military strengths, because they felt isolated. Israel was like an island in the sea of hostile Arab states and South Africa did not win herself many friends in Africa either, as a result of her apartheid policies aimed at Black people.

The relationship between Israel and South Africa was not only limited to profiteering economically but the two countries shared a common goal of surviving as minorities in regions hostile to their form of governance. Dadoo and Osman (2013:304) make the point that "Many members of the Likud Party shared an ideology of 'minority survivalism' with South African leaders that presented the two countries as 'threatened outposts of European civilization defending their existence against barbarians at the gates." In other words, South Africa saw herself as a beacon of hope and the only custodian of European civilization in Africa; so did Israel in the Middle East. It was little wonder that these countries enjoyed a strong bond prior to the demise of apartheid in South Africa in 1994.

So, how has South Africa managed its relations in the Middle East, more especially with regard to Israel and Palestine after 1994? The democratic South Africa has completely altered its foreign policy altogether when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. South Africa's foreign policy is now taking a direction of even-handedness and is quite on par with international institutions such as the United Nations. Former deputy foreign affairs minister, Pahad (2007) argues that South Africa's policy is in line with various UN Resolutions, the Oslo Accords, the Arab Plan of 2002 and the Roadmap, all of which accept that the only solution is a two-state one, with a viable Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with

East Jerusalem as its capital. The South African government's position as per the assertion of Pahad, is clearly not taking sides in this conflict although some pronouncements by senior government officials, suggest otherwise. This will be explored further in this section.

Furthermore, given the history of South Africa and the ruling ANC, it was only natural that they would choose human rights as a light to guide the country's foreign policy. This was formerly asserted by the founding father of South Africa's democracy, Nelson Mandela in 1993 (Le Pere and van Nieuwkerk, 2006). However, the country's foreign policy posture was not without criticism as it concentrated more on the ideal of human rights rather than on guidelines for implementation of strategic vision. Le Pere and van Nieuwkerk (2006:284) further explain, "Also in its failure to transcend allegiances developed in the course of its global anti-apartheid crusade, the ANC-in-power has been criticised for failing to distinguish between party-government and party-state interests." This may seem too harsh on the ANC but this statement contains some elements of truth in it. Whether this is right or wrong, the reality is that the ANC has continued to support those countries that supported it during the struggle years, despite their poor record of human rights abuses. Countries such as Cuba, Russia and even China are classic examples.

Of course, South Africa is within its rights to voice its disapproval of human rights abuses in Palestine but it should apply consistency as well and extend it to other countries such as China. However, in the realist view of the world of international relations as posited by Orend (2008), realists emphasize power and security issues, the need for a state to maximize its expected self-interest and, above all, their view of the international arena as a kind of anarchy, in which the will to power enjoys primacy. Therefore, South Africa is no different in this regard.

Furthermore, some supporters of Israel have defended South Africa's stance of supporting Palestinians because of their shared history. They state that South Africa's allegiance with leaders and countries with suspect human rights records is justified since they were there for the ANC during its time of need during the liberation struggle. Mandela in particular, came under attack for supporting people like Yasser Arafat, Muammar Gaddafi as well as Cuban leader, Fidel Castro. According to Popgrund (2014) Mandela's detractors never understood that during the years of struggle against apartheid these were the people who aided the ANC while Israel stood back. ANC fighters trained with Palestinians while Cuba and Libya supplied arms and training. It was therefore unlikely that Mandela thought well of the

oppressive actions of Castro and Gaddafi. It was rather a humane thing to not discard people that were there for the ANC struggle against apartheid.  Besides this, it was against the nature of who President Mandela was to dispose of people who were with him in the darkest hour of need during apartheid, just to appease those who were on the other side of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Moreover, the ruling ANC soon discovered that it is not always easy to apply the principles of a foreign policy that has been formulated in the real world.  The party had to find this out the hard way. It realized that its foreign policy was not always shared by the outside world, more especially the Western countries.  Barber (2005) arguesthat a strong case can be made that the ANC government has been more open in setting out its principles and, more often than not, in trying to implement them. Although South Africa is viewed as a regional power in Africa, it is equally seen as a middle-power by the rest of the world. Therefore, to have representation or embassies in almost every country in the world seemed a bit ambitious for this newly democratic country.  Consequently, the southern African giant's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine cannot be expected to make notable inroads in that region.  It is simply not easy to apply or implement policies but rather easy to formulate them.

Such was the Israel-Palestine conflict so important to South Africa's elevation of her status in the international stage that then president Thabo Mbeki had to personally take charge of it. This close attention given to the conflict was later elevated into South Africa's foreign policy towards the Middle East known as the Presidential Initiative.  According to Hughes (2004) despite the geographic and cultural chasm between South Africa and Israel/Palestine, the conflict has particular resonance for South Africa and its foreign policy. This was because at the heart of South Africa's foreign policy was the issue of the preservation and protection of human rights. Because of its history the country felt that it was best placed to fight for the course of the oppressed, marginalised and disfranchised the world over.  This Israel-Palestine conflict also presented the country to test the waters and to see how far it could go with its ambition to spread its wings and elevate its status as one of the influential states.

Moreover, to its credit South Africa has somewhat tried to apply the policy of even-handedness when dealing with Israel and Palestine.  It has done so despite its perceived similar history to oppressed Palestinians.  Moreover, as stated earlier, Israel had a strong military cooperation with apartheid South Africa while the ANC received support from Yasser Arafat and other Gulf states.  Jordaan (2008) argues that regarding the Israel-Palestine

conflict, South Africa has repeatedly stated its preference for a two-state solution, with a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Although this stance has not changed at government level in recent years, the public comments from some members of the ruling party have been contrary to this policy of even-handedness.

Most of the literature on South Africa's foreign policy, as stated at the beginning of this section, is mostly critical of the country's relations with Israel and quite rightly so. Since 1994 trade with Israel has increased despite objections and misgivings from the Pro-Palestine lobby groups such as Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). As evidenced in the research conducted by one of the affiliates of the BDS, Stop the Wall Campaign, trade has been growing on average at a steady 5% per annum through the post-apartheid era. In 2003, Israel was the biggest Middle East destination for South African exports ([www.stopthewall.org](www.stopthewall.org)).Therefore, it is quite apparent that South Africa is still one of the biggest trading partners of Israel in Africa despite the fact that it is against the policies pursued by Israel in Palestinian settlements.

However, not much should be written into this as at times countries do not mix their political interests with their economic interests. According to Jordaan (2008) South African anti-imperialism should be stripped of any economic connotations for, even though the country's policy-makers sometimes talk left, they certainly walk right. Although, the southern African country seems to be concerned about human rights but it also had to be mindful of its economic interests in order to expand its economy during the post-apartheid era. In other words, while dealing with a state that is pursuing policies that are perceived to be as similar to apartheid South Africa, the country had to make sure that it did not neglect its ambitions to be well-developed economically and thus provide for millions of its previously economically marginalised Black population.

No sitting South African president had ever visited Israel and no sitting Israeli Prime Minister had ever visited South Africa after 1994. Yet, the leader of Palestine, Yasser Arafat visited South Africa on numerous occasions. President Mbeki never visited Israel, but he did go to other Middle Eastern and North African countries, including Saudi Arabia, Libya and Tunisia. He also traveled to the Sudan in January 2010, after leaving office. These trips concerned both political and economic matters (Bishku, 2010). This could be interpreted as further proof of how awkward and ambiguous the relationship between South Africa and the state of Israel has been. They enjoy a healthy trading relationship between themselves yet

politically there seems to be strained relations. Failure by President Thabo Mbeki to visit Israel could have been another reason for the failure of South Africa's mediation efforts in subsequent years.

There have been many instances where South Africa had tried to bring together in dialogue both Israel and Palestine despite misgivings from certain quarters that it is a middle power that is punching above its weight. One such meeting was held in Spier Wine Estate, outside of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape in January 2001. Another round of these talks were held a year later at the same place in Spier Wine Estate. Although much important than any dialogues facilitated by South Africa between Israel and Palestine, these talks failed to bring major breakthroughs despite being attended by SA's chief negotiators at the 1993 talks before the 1994 democratic elections. This further fed to the notion that South Africa is really not as influential as it thought it was in the international affairs, more especially in the Middle East. Hughes (2004) argues that it is difficult for the country to be taken seriously in this role as a mediator due to the strategic importance of the Middle East; South Africa remains a peripheral player. Although the Spier Talks were not a resounding success and no major breakthroughs were evident, they showed South Africa's desire to be a major player at the world stage and to position itself as Africa's leader.

Moreover, the Pro-Palestine lobby groups and individuals within South Africa have successfully ensured that the sufferings of Palestinians at the hands of Israel are well documented (Dadoo and Osman, 2013). It would seem that the Pro-Palestine lobby groups and individuals have managed to twist the arm of the South African government and that this resulted in the officials being more vocal on this issue. It could be argued that this has indirectly led to the change of South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. It appears that although the South African foreign policy can be at times confusing, it is definitely very different from what it was during apartheid.

Most recently, South Africa's foreign policy has proven to be confusing and as having double-standards. The country had an opportunity to prove to the whole world that it is the champion of human rights as espoused in its constitution and foreign policy. As the parliamentary foreign policy handbook (2014:11) states, "South Africa's foreign policy has been inextricably linked with the protection and promotion of human rights, which Mandela once described as 'central to international relations." However, in June 2015 when South African authorities ignored an order to arrest President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, in the eyes

of the government's critics, it became evident that South Africa's foreign policy has moved away from the protection and promotion of human rights. President Al-Bashir is accused of genocide in that country's region of Darfur. He was issued with a warrant of arrest by the International Criminal Court [ICC] of Justice in 2009. South Africa is a signatory of the Rome Statute of 1998 which established this court in 2002. By not arresting President Al-Bashir, there was a feeling in different quarters –both locally and internationally – that it went against its foreign policy principles. Of course, this remains debatable as some argue that President Al-Bashir was not in South Africa on a state visit but had come to attend the AU Summit. Given that the AU is not a signatory to the Rome Statute, they argued that arresting President Al-Bashir would have not been procedural.

Furthermore, there have been many other instances where South Africa has been found to be at the wrong side of the cause to fight for human rights for the marginalised and oppressed. In 2014, due to suspected pressure from China, South African authorities delayed granting the Dalai Lama a visa to attend Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's eightieth birthday and thus leading to the cancellation of his visit. This highlighted the challenges South Africa faces in maintaining human rights as the pillar of its foreign policy and international relations in the face of competing and more pragmatic economic and geopolitical considerations (Thipanyane, 2011).

Moreover, the Dalai Lama has been exiled in India and yet India is part of the same BRICS grouping that consists of SA and China as well as Brazil and Russia. India never bowed to any Chinese pressure but in the eyes of many, South Africa has managed to compromise its human rights values for fear of economic marginalisation. So, the question could be phrased as follows: what about the Tibetans' human rights? Do they not deserve to be autonomous? It would seem the ruling ANC would support any country that supported its liberation struggle irrespective of that country's human rights record. It can be really hard to advocate for human rights while at the same time faced with practical economic considerations. But South Africa has to strike a balance for its credibility as a player at the world stage. Muller (1997) asserts that South African foreign policy is a tug of war between realists who are concerned with getting investment and radicals who want us to take the moral high ground. With regard to Israel, South Africa has maintained its trade relations with the country while simultaneously advocating for the country's better treatment of Palestinians in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

## 2.4 The role of religion in the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Israeli-Palestine question is quite complex and problematic in many ways. It is complex because it has divided the whole world ideologically. Moreover, its complexity is occasioned by the fact that countries view this conflict from different vantage points. Another reason is that it is problematic due to the fact that it has pitted three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, against one another. This would have been inevitable as the Middle East is the epicentre where these religions originate from. Philo and Berry (2004) identify Jerusalem (which became a major point of conflict) as the religious centre for both Muslims and Jews. Furthermore, Kaye-Kantrowitz (2007:31) posits that Muslim hypervisibility creates a tripartite structure of religions, in which Judaism is situated theologically between Christianity and other non-Christian faiths. In other words, Islam as a religion is already at a disadvantage, given that Judaism and Christianity are viewed as similar by the outside world. The September 11 attacks in the US have not helped things either, as Islam phobia has been on the rise since then.

The three religions are in one way or the other connected to the Holy Bible. All these religions have been influenced by the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament has without doubt been regarded as sacred by the devout Jews. According to Hayes (1971) devout Jews have looked to these writings for authority in matters of faith and worship, while Christians have regarded the entire Bible as the "Word of God" in much the same way as Islam, though it has its own holy book, known as the "Koran." It should be noted that the Koran has been largely influenced by the Old Testament and to some extent by the New Testament too. Therefore, it is quite clear that the significance of the Bible and most importantly religion in general can never be overlooked in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This can be attributed to the fact that in this conflict there are elements of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Without the knowledge of the Bible the leaders of the Zionist movement such as Theodor Herzl would not have propagated for the return to the ancient land of Israel which was and is still currently known as Palestine. Moreover, as Christianity is rooted on Judaism, this idea of returning to ancient Israel resonated well with leaders of Britain such as Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour as they 'knew their Bible well' (Cohen, 1987). It is therefore quite clear that religion contributed hugely in ensuring that the Jews return to ancient Israel or Palestine. It was also inevitable that the Jews who had been subjected to Islam for thirteen centuries were

now metamorphosed into a figure seen as a threat to Arabs, would come into conflict with these Arabs, who in their majority, have Islam as their religion (Patai, 1986). It can then be argued that religion has played a major part in this conflict.

Furthermore, one of the people directly involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict has emphasized that indeed religion has played a big part in this conflict. Abuna Chacour, a Palestinian peacemaker, asserts that religion has been a divisive factor in this conflict and has failed to fulfill its potential for good. Chacour (2007) argues that religion has not played a unifying role when dealing with religious extremists such as: Christian fundamentalists in the United States; Muslim fundamentalists in Israel; and Jewish fundamentalists in Israel. The conflict is not caused by religion, but religion has been distorted to negatively convert religious principles. As such, religion has been used to sustain the conflict. This is quite profound coming from a person who has lived in Palestine his whole life and who has dedicated his life to bringing peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. What is also worth noting is that Chacour is a Christian who, as a child growing up in Palestine, has watched the conflict evolving over the years. This further feeds into the notion that religion, if used incorrectly and for selfish means, can instead of unifying warring parties, further escalate the tensions. Most importantly, this statement provides another important dimension to this tension, which is the importance of religion in the analysis.

There are two important factors that are also a bone of contention amongst these three religions. These are: the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock. Although some have downplayed the importance of these two historic institutions in this conflict but they have in recent times, more especially with regards to the Dome of the Rock, conceded that it has been the source of conflict between Muslim worshipers and Israeli soldiers. The Dome of the Rock is said to be the place where King Solomon built his temple, this rock is also close to where Jesus was buried and is also near a place from which Muhammad the Prophet ascended to Heaven on the Night Journey (Lawrence, 2006). Furthermore, Hinn (2009) adds that Muslims had conquered Jerusalem by 637 yet they did not build the Dome of the Rock till 692. The Dome was designed to be more prominent than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – the place of Jesus' tomb. The fact that the same spot is important to Christians, Jews and Muslims can be viewed as at best unifying to all sides of the conflict. However, viewed from another angle, it can be argued that this has in some way escalated the tensions in this Israel-Palestine conflict due to these divergent and fundamental symbolic features of these different religions.

The fact that the argument brought forward by the Jews that the land of Israel/Palestine is theirs because it was given to them by their God has not resonated with both Palestinian Muslims and Christians, speaks volumes and leaves unanswered questions. According to Tschuy (1997:56), "The Jews claim this land on the basis of a 4000-year-old promise by God to their ancestor Abraham, an idea which both Muslim and Christian Palestinians consider presumptuous and outdated. They have settled in this country for centuries; they believe the land is theirs." The question of who has the legitimate claim to the land of Israel/Palestine has been at the centre of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The situation has not been helped by the fact that the Jews had to use force to settle in Palestine and consequently displace millions of Palestinians.

Ever since the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 which escalated the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, there have been numerous attempts and suggestions to provide solutions to this impasse. Jewish religious leader, Rabbi Menachem Froman argues that Jerusalem deserves to be a realization of the potential of all parties to rise above the narrow sense of nationalism as it should be a place where members of all faiths convene to renounce their breeding of prejudice, hostility and work to bring world peace (2007). Froman sees the importance of Jerusalem in bringing together all faiths and thus acting as the mediator to bring peace to this conflict. More importantly, he calls for the abandonment of the narrow sense of nationalism such as ensuring that the Jews are a majority and other ethnic groups are kept out. Although the Jews have been persecuted wherever they have been exiled, this does not justify the treatment they have meted out to their fellow Semitic brothers and sisters, the Palestinian Arabs.

Jews have always called themselves the chosen people of God. This statement is not really far off and farfetched as Deuteronomy 7:6 in the Holy Bible attests to this. Furthermore, this endurance and survival against all odds has defied logic and confused many a people. According to Tschuy (1997:57), "Many peoples throughout history have thought of themselves as a chosen race. But when they encountered difficulties or defeat, they cursed and abandoned their divinities and followed other gods. Not so the Jews." They might have been persecuted and driven from their homes for centuries, but they have remained faithful to their faith. They continued to pray to their God whom they felt had abandoned them.

What would cause this innate belief in their God and continuity in praying to this deity whom they felt had abandoned them? Perhaps the answer lies with the realization that they

themselves have brought this calamity and suffering onto themselves. Throughout the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, the Jews have continually sinned against their God and He would allow trouble to befall them, such as other nations attacking them. As Munroe (2006:41) aptly puts it, "Israel rejected theocracy, the rule of a gracious and loving King who would protect and provide for them. Instead, they substituted a king for the King. Their decision led to calamitous consequences." The Israel-Palestine conflict is one such calamitous consequence, all on its own. The world is divided as to who is the rightful owner of the disputed land merely because of the so-called chosen people of God rejecting the Kingship of their God.

Furthermore, it is rather important to look at the fundamental difference between Christianity and Judaism. Christianity owes its origins and existence from Judaism and both these religions believe in one God. However one difference, which still remains a major divide between these two religions, is that while Christianity believes that the Messiah has already arrived on earth, Judaism is still expecting the Messiah to come. Because of this, there have been many false Messiahs even after the arrival of Jesus Christ, the one that is acknowledged by the Christians as the true Messiah. This would prove detrimental to Jewish hopes of emancipation from brutal Roman rule. Jewish people so much expected the coming of the Messiah that so many pretenders managed to attract to themselves large numbers of followers. However this was met with violent resistance from the Roman authorities who ruled Israel at the time. According to Zeitlin (1988) the Roman authorities treated all such gatherings of crowds under the leadership of popular individuals as the preliminary stage of a violent insurrection. The Romans would then accordingly ruthlessly suppress this gathering as it was deemed to be a precursor to a revolution. This was probably the same thing that happened to Jesus and His followers as they were seen as revolting against Roman rule. So, they made an example by crucifying Him.

Furthermore, the desire to avoid the revolt and the harsh response by the Roman authorities in quelling such an act would in subsequent centuries result in Jews being persecuted by the Christians for killing Jesus. Rulers strategically placed by Romans acted in concert with Jewish high priests to arrange a plot to arrest Jesus as He was gaining popularity and could be a threat to their rule. Sanders (1992) asserts that puppets ruled on behalf of an overwhelmingly strong foreign nation, and the imperial power could intervene at any time to impose its will. The people, left to themselves, would have preferred to be governed differently. When this plot succeeded it also unwittingly acted as a justification for the false

accusations of Jews as the killers of Jesus. Consequently, this would later result in the persecution of the Jews by Christians.  This pattern culminated in the Jewish Holocaust that was led by Hitler's Germany, who was a Christian as well. To be exact Hitler was, in fact, raised a Roman Catholic (Tschuy, 1997).

Moreover, the false Messiahs also made the Jewish authorities feel uneasy as they did not want to be seen as revolting against the Romans.  This is the logical explanation as to why the Jews were prosecuted, in later years, by the followers of Jesus, the Christians. This is because the Romans had made Christianity their state religion but did not really leave their aspect of religion of pagan worship. According to Hagee (2007) the devotion of Jews to their monotheistic theology was something Rome could not comprehend and did not want to tolerate as Rome had a pantheon of gods and disdained the Jews' loyalty to only one deity. The Roman consensus was that the Jews were simply stubborn, rebellious people, when in fact the Jewish people were keeping the first commandment. Jews were seen by the followers of a Jewish Rabbi from Nazareth, Jesus, as his killers and henceforth began Anti-Semitism. What is more ironic is that Jesus commanded His followers, the Christians (as they became known in the latter centuries following His death), to love one another (John: 13:34). Yet what these followers were actually doing was a gross violation of this commandment.

What is clear from the discussion thus far is that although religion is not the main or the only cause of the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is irrefutably one of the causes. Moreover, it is rather worrying that it has not thus far managed to successfully mediate between these two parties. If these three greatest monotheistic religions have managed to amass a following of billions and billions of people worldwide, surely they should find a way of bringing an end to this conflict.  However, according to the Israel based peacemaker, Yehezkel Landau, the situation is deteriorating and these religions are not as effective in dealing with the situation. He argues that the mixture of religion and nationalism is dangerously combustible because when God's will is invoked to absolutise one or the other claim, then compromise sacrilege, and religious extremism generates grotesque ideologies of domination, death, and destruction (2007). This is a rather sad state of affairs as observed by one of the people that are working towards bringing peace in that part of the world.  It captures the fact that although all these three religions espouse the basic values such as human rights, however, they have in all totality failed to bring about the positive change in the Israel-Palestine conflict.  Furthermore, it also brings to attention the fact that although one way or the other these religions claim to be under the authority of a merciful God, they have failed to find common ground and instead

have found themselves competing for supremacy as to which religion is superior and more effective over the other.

Another important factor in this section is the Islamic religion. It is a religion of most of the Palestinians and other Arabs in the Middle East region. It is therefore worth examining the popular held view that Islam is the religion that perpetuates violence against infidels or those who do not subscribe to it. This is due to the teachings allegedly contained in the equivalent of the Bible, the Qur'an. However Lawrence (2006:125) posits that, "To understand the Qur'an, one must recognize the signs that go beyond the printed word. Too many settle for one-dimensional reading, thinking and hearing of the Qur'an, just as ordinary folk look only at the literal meaning of the saints' words." It can therefore be argued that it is safe to state that some people have misinterpreted the Bible and used it for their own ends. Blacks, from the world over, have bitterly complained that it had been used to brutally oppress, colonize and enslave them. It then renders the argument that one religion is more violent than the other rather hypocritical. A deeper approach and a deeper search of both the Bible and the Qur'an would eventually lead to a deeper understanding of their meaning. However, not everybody holds the same views to approaching these important books. Consequently, conflicts such as the Israel-Palestine conflict remain unresolved. Moreover, countries (South Africa included), in trying to mediate, seem to downplay the role religion can play in resolving this conflict.

Christian Zionists however, as expected, disagree with the notion that the violent undertones in the Qur'an are exaggerating and are a result of misinterpretation. They argue that the founder of Islam, Prophet Muhammad was at first peaceful but when he failed to convert Jews and other peoples of that era into Muslims he then became violent. Hagee ((2007) argues that at first Muhammad taught his adherents to live at peace with their enemies but as time passed and he saw that attempts to win over Jews through peaceful coexistence were unsuccessful he then came up with a new strategy, the one that declared jihad (holy war) and convention to Islam by the sword. Osama bin Laden, a Saudi expatriate, who killed thousands of people in the name of religion before being killed himself by the American troops in Pakistan in 2011, seemed to be practicing the latter parts of Muhammad's strategy. For him, argues Lawrence (2006), the Qur'an is a book with only one message and that is killing in the name of Allah. He believed in pursuing the jihad defensive holy war no matter what the cost. Although the majority of Muslims are peaceful, there are fears that a number of violent people who kill in the name of Allah is increasing at an alarming rate. The phenomenon of

fundamentalism is not only confined to Islam, as Christianity and Judaism have their fair share of such elements.

The fact that Christians are divided among themselves when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict does not make things any easier in dealing with this issue. This is actually confusing as religion is supposed to play a unifying role in a conflict situation. But in this regard, it is rather divisive. Blaming the other side and favouring another is not helpful in this conflict. Smith (2010) believes these divisions within Christianity merely contribute to the polarisation of Christian opinion, making consensus quite impossible. Meanwhile, overly negative or pejorative Christian portrayals of Israel make sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the Jewish people incredibly difficult. This is actually truer when considering the history of the persecution of Jews in the hands of Christians. Moreover, this once more serves as proof that the Israel-Palestine conflict is very complex and religion further complicates this matter even more. It also indicates that it might take longer than expected to resolve this matter. It is rather disappointing that Christians would choose to take sides in this pressing matter when innocent people from both Israel and Palestine are dying.

Both Islam and Judaism religions agree that the land of Israel/Palestine is the Holy Land and should therefore be occupied. On one hand, Judaism argues that the land was first inhabited by its patriarch, Abraham. On the other, the Muslims posit that this land was conquered by Muhammad and his followers and therefore cannot just forfeit it. According to Reiter (2011:239), "From a Jewish perspective, it is even a religious duty to settle in all parts of the land. The concept of the holiness of the land in its entirety derives from two parallel processes – a traditional one and a modern one." The traditional process is that which is based on the conservative reading of Holy Scriptures, while the modern one is related to the right of self-determination that encourages willingness to sacrifice in order to defend the land. Furthermore, Reiter (2011) posits that the radical Palestinian interpretation also regards all of the Land of Israel/Palestine as holy. They assert that since the land of Palestine was captured by the Muslim army it became Muslim land and is therefore supposed to remain in Muslim hands. On top of these differing Jewish and Muslim positions there are also divergent Christian positions which do not do any justice to the situation and the innocent people who are killed as a result of this on-going conflict.

Furthermore, what makes things even more complicated is the fact that the situation is being simplified when in fact it is very complex and should be handled as such. Smith and Marshall (2010) argue that the inheritance promised to the Israelites also applies to settled aliens. They further posit that geneticists state that Palestinians are as much descendants of Isaac as of Ishmael. That is because in terms of DNA they are indistinguishable from Israelis and both groups are distinct from Arabs. Moreover, the identity of Jews is so varied these days that it can be really difficult to distinguish which one is the real or authentic Jew. Some are Jews by virtue of being born Jews and others by religion. Jews are scattered the world over and some are Jewish by birth, some by religion and there are also black Jews from Ethiopia. Therefore, there is substance to the latter part of the argument put forward by Smith and Marshall.

The interpretation of the Bible or the misinterpretation thereof regarding the Holy Land of Israel/Palestine could be attributed to differing Christian views when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Munayer (2010) points out that most Christians are divided into two camps, which although having positive contributions are somewhat problematic when the goal is to achieve reconciliation. Munayer (2010) further argues that there is the Christian Zionist camp, adhering to one form or another of Dispensational Theology and the Social Justice Camp, comprising a number of different positions but finding strongest expression in Palestinian Liberation Theology. The Holy Bible itself, regarded by Christians as a Holy Book inspired by God Himself, is not easy to read if a person were to take an academic approach. It requires the reader to be really in touch with God in order to avoid getting excited and lose the meaning of what the Holy Book contains. Thus Christians who hold different views could have been victims of not consulting God in themselves before reading the Bible and thereafter end up making pronouncements about the Israel-Palestine conflict that are not inspired by God. While they are still debating as to who has the best interpretation innocent people continue to suffer in both Israel and Palestine. This is unbecoming of the people who are supposed to be the custodians of God's Word. This is the conundrum the sources discussed in this chapter expose.

Judging by the pronouncements made by believers of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, it is clear that religion has played a big part in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The late Jihadist, Osama bin Laden once propagated that to push the enemy of the Muslim faith, known as the greatest *kufr* or non-believer out of the country is a prime duty (Lawrence, 2006). On the other hand, when Rabbi Amos Sharki was asked whether they have a religious duty to defend

the State of Israel from enemies that surround it and to recapture Gaza and Sinai, he simply replied by stating that there is a religious duty to conquer all of greater Israel (Reiter, 2011). Furthermore, John Hagee (2007), a Christian fundamentalist identifies the problem as the rejection of Israel's right to exist and radical Islam's bloodthirsty embrace of a theocratic dictatorship that believes they have a mandate from God to kill. This is a clear indication that these religions are divided when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Moreover, it is quite interesting to note that Islam propagates that those other religions that are practised in the majority of the Muslim states, although allowed, should be regulated and their followers subjected to extra taxes. In the view of those who made this arrangement, this ought to be done so that Islam can get priority and prominence at all times as it is the 'superior religion.' Kelsay (2015:90) posits that, "Limits on Jewish or Christian religious expression, were construed as a way of recalling members of these communities to the true religion. According to this line of thinking, Moses hand not founded a religion called Judaism any more than Jesus founded Christianity." Therefore, according to Islam both Christianity and Judaism had proclaimed Islam. Consequently, where contradictions between the practice of Jews or Christians and that of Muslims became manifest, the judgement of Muslim tradition would be that the former had corrupted the preaching of the prophets. With such a rigid posture that is being postulated by religion, not only in Islam but also in Christianity and Judaism as well, it is then quite clear that there is absolutely no room for compromise. Given that the state of Israel is a Jewish state, although some would say it is a secular state, then it is understandable why there is such hostility from the Palestinians and other Arab states, as they all have Islam as the majority religion.

Even the leader of the most powerful state in the world, the United States, had at some point used a religious line to try and bring together warring parties in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In a speech made in Egypt, President Barack Obama appealed to the Arab world whose majority of citizens are devout Muslims when he stated, "I am Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azaan (call to prayer) at the break of dawn and the fall of dusk." President Obama had to play to the gallery and ensure that he appealed to the Muslim community even though he is a Christian. He knew that he had to use Islam to try and bring together different people with divergent views. Judging by the fact that the Israel-Palestine

conflict has not shown any signs of ending, it is quite obvious that Obama's attempt failed to achieve its intended purpose.

It can therefore be argued that most of the problems on earth have been caused by this natural phenomenon called religion. However, it is Myles Munroe who aptly illuminates the dangers posed by religion when he states, "Religion has motivated the massacre of millions over the years in such horrific events as the Crusades, the Inquisition, and wars....Slavery, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, segregation, racial discrimination, and other oppressive practices all have been justified by some religious code" (Munroe, 2006:12). Instead of being a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, religion has proven to be more divisive. Furthermore, even the South African religions are divided on this matter, as it is seen in Chapter Six, where the findings of this study are discussed extensively.

With regard to South African Christians, they were quite vocal in the fight against apartheid. Christian organisations such as the South African Council of Churches [SACC] led the fight against apartheid while on the other hand some churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church [DRC] supported this evil regime.  Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu had been the leading religious figure in the fight against apartheid and had on one occasion tried to mediate in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is part of the speech that Tutu made in a synagogue in New York in the United States, regarding Israel's treatment of the Palestinians:

> It is uncanny and it is deeply, deeply distressing. Israel cannot do that: it is out of line with her biblical and historical traditions. Israel, or shall we say Jews, having suffered so much, cannot allow their government to cause other people to suffer so much.  Jews, having been dispossessed for so long, cannot allow their government to dispossess others. Jews, having been victims of gross injustice, cannot allow their government to others victims of injustice.  (Tutu, 2011:88).

Tutu made this heartfelt plea to the Jewish community in attendance partly because he is South African and in some way related to the Palestinian plight. The latter part of the reason was that he is a Christian and some Palestinians are also devout Christians.  As this speech was made in 1989, it therefore goes without saying that the archbishop was unsuccessful in his mediation attempts as the Israel-Palestine conflict still rages on without any hope of ending.

Moreover, another prominent South African who was instrumental in the fight against apartheid and also a devout Christian decried the then ruling National Party for using religion, more especially Christianity, to justify apartheid atrocities.  Former Deputy Health Minister, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge (Madlala-Routledge, 2007) contends that religion was

used to justify apartheid and to justify dividing the people of South Africa on racial lines. She further argues that however, on the other hand religion was used in opposition to apartheid as the faith communities formed opposition groups to apartheid. It is really unfathomable that a white regime in a country where the majority of the people are black would use religion, more especially Christianity, to oppress and discriminate against the majority through apartheid. What is noteworthy is that some Christians actually supported the apartheid regime just like some Christian Zionists support the state of Israel without condemning its brutal treatment of ordinary Palestinians who are not directly involved in the war. After all, all people are created equal before the eyes of the Lord and it seems that religion in apartheid South Africa and in many conflicts such as the Israel-Palestine has been distorted and used for evil gains.

However, despite the noted ill-treatment of innocent people by both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the claim that the Jews are God's chosen people is well supported by the Bible (Deuteronomy 32:8-9) and by many other Bible scholars mentioned earlier in this chapter.  On the other hand the basis for white supremacy of the apartheid regime is unknown.  Apparently, as indicated in the foregoing paragraph, the proponents of apartheid and even churches which supported them also claimed that they were God's chosen people. This could be one of the reasons that the Jews have been persecuted wherever they went. As Prince (2008:149), grudgingly puts it:

> There are certain elements of national pride and prejudice in most of us that would reject the fact that God made His plan for all nations centre around Israel. But that is exactly what Scripture says. Israel was allotted her inheritance, and then all other nations were allotted their inheritance in relationship to it. We must remember that the inheritance, well-being and blessing of all nations come from and ultimately revolve around Israel. When Israel is out of her place, then all other nations are in some measure also out of order.

Indeed, knowing that a certain group of people is chosen and set apart by God can be a bitter pill to swallow.  However, even these so-called chosen people have turned against their God and consequently He allowed their enemies to persecute them, the biggest of which happened in the latter part of the Second World War, which infamously became known as the Holocaust. Some have argued that the reason the United Kingdom faded in the background as the superpower in world affairs, was due to the empire's handling of the Palestine mandate between the two world wars. They further argue that the United States has prospered simply because of her support for the state of Israel since its formation in 1948. After all, the Bible (Genesis, 12:3) says, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Could this be true for the state of

Israel? Only time will tell as the once mighty and seemingly invincible apartheid government came down crashing in 1994 through a majority vote. The proponents of apartheid also held the notion that they were God's chosen people and therefore had a divine right to rule over and suppress the blacks who were a majority. However, there was no biblical evidence supporting the assertion that they were God's chosen people. In fact, there is no verse in the Bible which specifically suggests that God prefers one race over another, except in the case of Israel.

Furthermore, the Book of Revelation in the Bible seems to have foretold the current state of affairs in the Middle East, more especially the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Book talks about the dragon and the beast that began to take over the rule of the nations of the world in the 18$^{th}$ century Europe. The French Revolution is the classic example of this, whereby citizens revolted against the church and wanted to be ruled by their elected government. South African Bible scholar and renowned historian, Dr. Elan Janson asserts (1999:353), "Lawless, non-Christian majorities already rule large sections of the earth and are now threatening the core of Christianity. We just have to look at what is happening in Jerusalem – the city God loves. According to Revelation all this started when the 'dragon' was cast down to earth." The devastating Second World War was the culmination of this desire for men to rule themselves. Moreover, in this war, more than six million Jews were called and this served as a justification for the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

## 2.5 The role of international institutions in the Israel-Palestine Conflict

This section primarily deals with the role that has been played by international institutions in trying to bring about peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict. For the purposes of clarity, these institutions are grouped under regional, continental and international institutions. The role played by an international institution such as the United Nations and its predecessor the League of Nations, in this conflict can never be overestimated. The current superpower, the United States and the former superpower, Great Britain, are constantly used interchangeably with the United Nations as they all had roles to play in this conflict. On more than one occasion these countries, together with other members of the United Nations Security Council, have used their veto right to further prevent the toothless body from executing its job with regard to the conflict. It is therefore due to this reason that these nations are also mentioned quite regularly alongside the United Nations. Other continental and regional

institutions, like the Arab League and the African Union have also tried to arrest the situation but to no avail. Therefore, the section explores the successes, though limited, and the failures of these institutions.

## 2.5.1 The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was formed in 1945 after the Second World War. It is the successor to the erstwhile League of Nations [LoN]. Due to the failure of the latter to execute its mandate, world leaders felt that it was incumbent upon them to establish the United Nations and ensure that it had its own peace-keeping force that would monitor peace and if possible prevent wars from taking place. After all, the world had seen the destructive Second World War where millions of people lost their lives. Article 1 of the founding charter of the UN duly states:

> To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace; (UN Charter, art. 1, para. 1).

The aforementioned article of the United Nations describes, in essence, the core objectives and purposes of this world body. In order for this section to be fully understood, it would be in vain, and totally defeat the whole purpose of the chapter, if the above article were to be omitted.

The formation of the state of Israel cannot be stated without mentioning the role of the United Nations and that of the superpowers of the day. The birth of Israel in 1948 marked the emergence of one superpower, the United States of America, while simultaneously announcing the end of another, the British Empire or Great Britain. According to Bregman and El-Tahri (1998) between 29 November 1947 which is the date of the UN partition vote and 15 May 1948 which is the day the ruling British departed from Palestine, Palestine was a disaster waiting to happen and British rule dwindled into powerlessness. When British rule dwindled into powerlessness, it did not only do so in Palestine but it was to follow suite in other colonies of the British Empire as well. This was evident in subsequent years when several British colonies, especially those in Africa, received independence from British rule. With the fortunes of Britain changing and Israel coming into existence, the United States was emerging as a superpower. Three years earlier, the United States had played a major role in the ending of the Second World War.

When it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict there are always conflicting views as to how Israel got the support of the Western powers and another superpower, the Soviet Union, shortly after the Second World War. According to Tschuy (1997), although the new state of Israel was recognized by Cold War Superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, it was immediately attacked by Palestinian Arab guerrillas and by the armies of five neighbouring states, namely: Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. He further posits that had it not been for the guilt that these powers felt for the extent of the Holocaust, they would not have supported the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. However, Al-Ashaal on the other hand, is more explicit and merciless in his analysis of the Western sympathy towards Israel owing to the Holocaust. He states, "In this regard, Israel abused Germany and others both psychologically and financially, building a propaganda base around the image of a weak, embattled, though lofty people, persecuted by all nations" (Al-Ashaal, 2007:262). It is therefore apparent that this conflict has divided the world. In that sense, finding the real truth of what really happened is quite a daunting task and an objective that is hard to achieve.

It is also interesting to note that the then fading superpower, Britain, is not mentioned among the supporters of Israel. In fact, the British did not even want to co-operate with the United Nations to oversee the transfer of power to the successor states because it feared alienating the Arabs. According to Cohen (1987) foreseeing that the Arabs would blame them for collusion with the UN attempt to impose partition on Palestine, the British refused the UN Commission entry into Palestine until just two weeks before the end of the mandate. The fact that a country can have the audacity to refuse an institution authorized to handle world affairs of its member states to which Britain also belonged, showed how toothless and powerless this world body could be at times. Years later (in 2003), history would repeat itself with the United States unilaterally bombing Iraq despite protestations and without prior authorization by the United Nations as should be the case under international conventions.

The United Nations has not covered itself in glory when dealing with the Israel-Palestine conflict. For instance, it has been too weak to force the warring parties to ceasefire shortly after the civil war broke out following the recognition of the state of Israel in 1948. As stated earlier, after the withdrawal of the British Mandate Government in Palestine there was no proper transfer of administrative authority to anybody – which served as one of the catalysts to the war that broke out immediately after Israel's announcement of independence. Moreover, the United Nations, which was tasked with ensuring world peace after the

destructive Second World War, also failed to handle the situation properly. This was despite its proposal to the Mandate Government to co-operate with it in an orderly manner to transfer power under the partition resolution, which was to ensure the smooth transfer of power by dividing Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arabic. Hertzog (1982) posits that unsuccessful appeals were made to the British to postpone their departure, and events in Palestine moved forward inexorably to their inevitable conclusion. The inevitable conclusion was the resultant attack on the newly formed state of Israel by its Arab neighbours. Although subsequent wars have since ended the Israel-Palestine conflict rages on and the United Nations seems unable to arrest it.

The United Nations' partition resolution that led to the formation of the state of Israel and ultimately the Israel-Palestine conflict became known as Resolution 181. It also reflects and lays bare the weakness of the United Nations. As mentioned earlier, Israel was attacked by her Arab neighbours soon after her birth in 1948 and upon prevailing, she managed to expand her territory beyond the borders allocated to her. Tessler (2007) avers that the borders of the newly independent Israeli state, which was accepted in the armistice agreements that Israel signed with its neigbhours, thus defined a Jewish state one-third larger than that proposed in UN181. As a body that is charged with overseeing world affairs and conflicts such as these, it would have been expected that the UN would in one way or the other force Israel to respect Resolution 181 and give those territories gained during the war back to the Palestinians. However, it was not to happen. Instead, Israel would also get away with the same thing in 1967 during the Six-Day War.

Besides the failure to enforce compliance with Resolution 181, the United Nations had to contend with another problem of a growing number of refugees as a result of Israel winning the 1948 war. This did not only lead to many Palestinians leaving their homes but it also rendered them stateless. As Tschuy (1997:67)) states:

> The principal victims were the 580 000 Palestinians Arabs who had fled their country in 1948 and 1949. Their eviction, together with the massive arrival of Jewish immigrants from Europe and the Arab countries and later from the Soviet Union, resulted in one of the largest population 'exchanges' in this century. While Israel, with massive foreign support, provided housing and jobs for the Jewish arrivals, many Palestinians ended up in bleak United Nations refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, on the West Bank, around Jericho and in Lebanon and Syria.

Moreover, other Palestinians were forced to migrate and thus support their families from abroad. This change of events, although long time coming, was to further fuel the anti-Jewish sentiment among the Palestinians and the Arabs in general. To any ordinary Palestinians

born around this period, it would be understandable to be anti-Jewish given the fact that the homes they had known all their lives were taken forcefully away from them by a 'foreign occupier'. Therefore, the failure of the United Nations to keep Israel in check and its inability to deal with superpowers such as the United States escalated the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Further testimony of how preponderant the issue of Palestinian refugees has been on the United Nations is the fact that the Israel-Palestine conflict has not been resolved to this day. Hinn (2009) asserts that nowadays there are more than fifty camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza where Palestinians reside. In the six decades the number of registered Palestinian refugees has soared to over four million. Furthermore, the birth rates are said to be very high among refugees. Jahn (2015) observes that it is estimated that in 2002, there were around five million Palestinian refugees, of whom 4.7 million are registered with the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East [UNRWA], the UN refugee agency. The escalating number of refugees shows how much of a problem the United Nations has in its hands. The rapidly growing number of refugees signifies that there is an ever increasing number of dissatisfied and displaced Palestinians. This, coupled with Arab nationalism and Muslim fundamentalists who would want to see the total wipe out of the state of Israel, serves as a build-up to a conflict of gigantic proportions. This is partly owing to the ineffectiveness of the United Nations in handling the Israel-Palestine conflict.

There have also been talks of the United Nations being used as a pawn in the Israel-Palestine conflict by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation or the PLO. This sounds incredulous as this is an international institution that is supposed to be impartial and cater to the needs of different states and countries without allowing any undue influence. However, this seems to be not the case as the UN agency that is responsible for the Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, is only catering for the Palestinian Arab refugees, while ignoring the Palestinian Jewish refugees. Revered scholar Harris Schoenberg who has been working in the UN for over twenty years observes:

> UNRWA was unusual in another way as well. It was not mandated, indeed, indeed not permitted, to solve the Palestinian Arab refugee problem. Yet it received many times over the funding received by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), even though the UNHRC's mandate covered the whole rest of the world and UNHRC was engaged in the resettlement of refugees. Ralph Galloway, a former UNRWA official admitted in Jordan as early as August 1958: "The Arab states do not want to solve the refugee problem. They want to keep it as an open sore, as an affront to the United Nations and as a weapon against Israel. Arab leaders don't give a damn whether the refugees live or die," (Schoenberg, 1989:182).

According to the aforementioned, it seems that the world body is not doing its job properly as per the principles and purposes of its charter that were adopted upon its formation. The latter part of Schoenberg's statement further shows that the Israel-Palestine conflict has deeper underlying problems that require an honest reflection from both sides in order to be resolved.

Moreover, the United Nations has also failed to ensure the implementation of Resolution 242 that was passed by the UN Security Council right after the 1967 War, also known as the Six-Day War. This resolution called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and for Arabs, in return, to recognize and make peace with Israel. However, this was not to be as the resolution was confusing and the two parties were not really sure what it meant as it was too vague. Furthermore, Tessler (2007) argues that the UN 242 reflected a view that the conflict was between Israel and the Arab states, among which states the June war had, in fact, been fought. Its emphasis on land for peace thus said nothing significant about the Palestinians. Invariably, the only thing that this resolution said about the Palestinians was that there should be a just settlement for the Palestinian refugee problem. As stated in the earlier sections of this chapter, the 1967 War ignited Palestinian nationalism aimed directly at fighting for the needs and wants of the Palestinians.

Even the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, agrees that the world body has lost its way in that it has failed to protect the human rights of the most vulnerable people in society. Annan (2012) argues that the United Nations had drifted toward becoming an institution focused, above all, on self-preservation. He further argues that in so doing the UN has in many respects lost its way and thereby forgot the first words of the Charter, 'We the Peoples.' It is evident that from the get go, in its establishment, the United Nations was meant to cater for the needs of the people who found themselves vulnerable in times of conflict. It seems as if the needs of the vulnerable people in the Israel-Palestine conflict have taken a back seat. Instead, it is the individual states that are taking centre stage.

However, there are those who feel that the criticism leveled against the United Nations is not fair although some of it contains the core of the truth. One of the defenders of the UN is Luard (1979:3), who argues that, "It merely assembles together the multiplicity of individual national states with all their imperfections….If the world is one of rich/poor confrontation (as today), so will the UN be also….If the world is beset with nationalism, so too must the UN be." In light of the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is therefore quite clear that the United Nations

is a reflection of the current state of affairs in the world. It also mirrors the image of all its member states, from the most powerful to the weakest, the rich and the poor; they are all represented in this world body.

Furthermore, Israel, arguably owes its existence to its most powerful ally, the United States of America. Kissinger (2014) contends that Israel is by definition a Westphalian state, founded as such in 1947 and the United States, its principal ally, has been a steward and key defender of the Westphalian international order. Israel is situated in the Middle East, where most countries are Arab nations and share a culture and religion vastly different from that of the Jewish state. Moreover, Israel is a product of Western institutions such as the United Nations. As such, it is only natural that countries like the United States would be Israel's biggest allies. Moreover, the failures and successes of the United Nations reflect the power dynamics at the world body – the most powerful seem to control the body while for smaller countries in order to get their points across at the UN, have to be allies of powerful nations. Hence Israel seems to get away with murder under the protection of countries such as the USA. Given the fact that the USA sometimes uses its permanent status in the UNSC, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that at times the UN platform is used to suppress other nations.

**2.5.2 The Arab League**

The League of the Arab States, commonly known as the Arab League was formed in 1945 by the newly independent Arab states following a consultation that was initiated by Egypt, Iraq and Syria. The membership of this grouping was initially seven countries but has since grown to twenty two member states (as of 2016). However, there is something unique about the League in that its membership is not only confined to geographical location. Israel and Turkey for instance, are not members yet they share the same geographical space as the League members. At the same time, some North African countries such as Libya are part of the League. According to Rishmawi (2014:9), ''The League Charter does not specify any criteria for membership except that the country has to be an independent Arab country—without specifying what an Arab country is.'' Therefore, the League of Arab States is unique among other similar regional organizations in that all its members share one and the same feature: all are Arab states.

The exclusion of regional powers has however in some way contributed to the weakening and ineffectiveness of the Arab League. It is rather unimaginable that the United Nations would function without the influential members of the Security Council, such as the United States, China, Russia and others. That would be like an African Union without the powerful Nigeria or South Africa. Pinfari (2009) observes that the Arab League excludes from its membership a crucial regional player lying in the heart of the Middle East – the state of Israel; and also excludes two other 'regional powers,' namely Iran and Turkey, which are often considered as parts of the 'wider Middle East'. It is therefore not hard to see why the Arab League has not made a meaningful impact in dealing with the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

In recent times however, the Arab League has taken some bold steps with regard to human rights violations by its fellow member states. According to The International Federation for Human Rights (2013) on 11 March 2011, the Arab League asked the UN Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya in hopes of halting Gaddafi's attacks on his own people and protecting the civilian population. This rare and unprecedented invitation by the Arab League for the Western military force to intervene on Arab territory was extraordinary, and has proved how the organisation has evolved over the years. Perhaps in the not so distant future the League will devise a much better plan to stop the conflict as it is the best suited to deal with it as a regional power.

The Arab League is said to be behind the formation of one of the foremost organisations in the fight for Palestinian liberation, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, shortly named, the PLO. This organisation, which was for a long time led by the Yasser Arafat, has been influential in the United Nations and was also instrumental in changing South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine due to its close links with the ruling African National Congress. Beinin and Hajjar (2014) contend that the Arab League established the PLO in 1964 as an effort to control Palestinian nationalism while appearing to champion the cause. However, the Arab defeat in the 1967 war paved the way for militant Palestinians to take over the PLO and gain some independence from the Arab regimes. It can therefore be argued that the PLO was unique in that it consisted of different organisations with varying political ideologies. This uniqueness might have had an impact in its failure to pressure Israel to give in to Palestinian demands for territory.

Just like the United Nations, the Arab League should share some of the blame for the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. After the UN had proposed the partition of Palestine into two separate states, the League (which represented the Arab countries) vehemently opposed this. Kissinger (2014) avers that they believed they were in a position to triumph militarily and claim the entire territory. But the subsequent failure of the attempt to extinguish the newly declared State of Israel did not lead to a political settlement and the opening of state-to-state relations. It seems that the league made an error of judgment which would prove too costly to fellow Arabs, the Palestinians. Even to this day they are still paying dearly. What makes matters worse is that innocent people are the most affected.

The Arab League and the United Nations have both failed to make a meaningful impact that would bring a long lasting solution to the on-going Israel-Palestine conflict. However, there was almost a breakthrough in the Arab League conference held in 2002 when the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's proposal was embraced by the Arab leaders. This proposal, according to Annan (2012) was aimed at the full normalization of relations by all members of the Arab League with Israel in exchange for a return of the 1967 territories and a just and agreed solution for the refugees on the basis of UN General Assembly resolution 194 adopted in 1948. However, since there were disagreements with regard to the UN General Assembly resolution which referred to the right of return of refugees, this proposal did not materialize. This was owing to Israel's rejection of this proposal on the basis that it would be a threat to its aspirations of being a wholly Jewish state.

Although the Arab League has not had any success in bringing peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict, it has somewhat been influential in trying to bring together regional powers that might broker this elusive peace. This was evidenced in the 2010 summit hosted by US President Barack Obama at the White House with Mohammed Abbas of Palestine, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, Abdullah II of Jordan and Hoshni Mubarak of Egypt. Gerges (2012) argues that by gaining the backing of the Arab League, Obama sought to shift the burden of brokering a peace settlement to the regional states that have a direct stake in the conflict resolution and could provide security guarantees to Israel if and when a Palestinian state is established. Therefore, this somewhat shows that the Arab League has tried to bring peace in the Israel-Palestine situation but this did not happen as there were disagreements between Israel and Palestine as to how to solve the issue of refugees.

The emergence of Israel as a state and her triumph in all the wars against the Arabs was a source of embarrassment in the Arab world. It was for this reason that Egypt was expelled from the Arab League when the country signed a peace agreement with Israel. As Kissinger (2014:116) states, "…the anti-Soviet orbit inaugurated a period of intense diplomacy that led to two disengagement agreements between Egypt and Israel and a peace agreement with Israel in 1979. Egypt was expelled from the Arab League." Such was the intense dislike for Israel by the Arab World that it led to the vilification of and ultimate assassination of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat.

It has not all been negative as there have been some positives that have emerged from the Arab League's efforts in mediating in the Israel-Palestine conflict. These significant gains have been made despite major obstacles such as violence in recent times. Halper et al (2009) state that both the Palestinians and the Arab League have recognized Israel within the "Green Line" (that is, on 78% of the shared country), Israel is at peace with Egypt and Jordan, has relations with many Arab countries and expanding ties throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds. There is also a promising diplomatic Road Map that was formulated by the US, Europe, Russia and the UN. Moreover, the majority of Israeli Jews recognize the existence of the Palestinian people and have even indicated a willingness to relinquish the Occupied Territories if their security could be assured. However, since then, there have been numerous occasions where both sides have attacked each other. It is therefore doubtful that the Arab League could come up with a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict in its current status.

### 2.5.3 The African Union

Before the African Union (AU) there was an Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in 1963 with an original membership of thirty-two states. Amongst its principal objectives was to defend the sovereignty and independence of African states as well as eradicate all forms of colonialism. It was no surprise at all that the OAU was replaced by the AU in 2002 due to its ineffectiveness in handling continental conflicts. Hamill and Spence (1997) point out that the organisation's staunch commitment to the doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states has caused it to remain passive in the face of atrocities perpetrated by dictators. The OAU's successor, the AU, is not immune to this ineffective doctrine of non-interference as is the case with Zimbabwe, which is currently experiencing economic problems. However, it has tried by all means to ensure that it

improves where the OAU has failed. For example, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 is mostly blamed on the UN. However, the OAU as the continental power concerned with African affairs ought to have done something as well.

The end of the Cold War signalled the start of a new era in the early 1990s and African states saw it fit that they had to usher in a new organisation that would enable the continent to face the challenges of the so-called new world order. As the world was gradually becoming a global village, the general feeling among the African states was that a new continental body is needed to fight multifaceted social, economic and political challenges facing the continent. Throughout that decade the African countries deliberated among themselves on the possible successor of the OAU. As a consequent, three summits were held in the lead up to the official launching of the African Union. These were the following:

- Lome Summit (2000), which adopted the AU Constitutive Act
- Lusaka Summit (2001), which drew the road map for implementation of the AU
-Durban Summit (2002), which launched the AU and convened its first Assembly of Heads of State and Government (African Union Handbook, 2014:10.).

The newly formed African Union has built on some of the structures of the OAU.Similarly, a significant number of the OAU's core values have been carried through to the AU. In essence, it could be posited as previously stated, that the new AU's vision has many elements of continuity with the old OAU. Williams (2011) observes that the AU retains its predecessor's emphasis on the sovereign equality of members; upholds its preference for non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes; and maintains the general commitment to non-intervention in the affairs of its member states. It is therefore no surprise that the AU is repeating some of the mistakes of its predecessor such as ignoring the cries for help of many suffering innocent Africans. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Sudan, South Sudan and Libya are classic examples.

Most notably, it had to take the intervention of 'outside forces' to quell the Libyan conflict between government and protesting citizens who were dissatisfied with the arrest of the human rights activist. Those 'outside forces' were in the form of the United Nations passing Resolution 1973 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enforcing this resolution. The resolution, simply put, was aimed at implementing a no-fly zone over Libya which would ensure that the Muammar Gaddafi-led government and the opposition reached a

cease-fire. The intervention of NATO by way of implementing Resolution 1973 dealt a great blow to Africa's ability to solve its own problems on its own. According to Dersso (2012:41) "….it robbed Africa of its role of pursuing the solutions it proposed to the crisis and in so doing it marginalised AU's admittedly weak voice. In the process, it undermined the…AU's political principle of 'African solutions to African problems'." It is quite clear that whenever African conflicts threaten the interests of major powers, as has been illustrated in the Libyan conflict, the ability of African states to deal with these conflicts independently is compromised. In fact, the implementation of the resolution also revealed the powerlessness of regional institutions such as the AU and the Arab League.

As stated earlier in the first paragraph of the Arab League section, it was the League that requested the intervention of the United Nations. This is owing to the fact that for some inexplicable reason, Libya belongs to both the Arab League and the African Union. There are other countries which, like Libya, enjoy dual-membership of both the AU and the Arab League. Countries like Mauritania and Sudan come to mind. The AU has nonetheless continued to make resolutions with regard to the Israel and Palestine conflict despite its apparent failures in its own continent. During its July 2012 meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the African Union reaffirmed its support for a Two-State solution as the only viable option for peaceful co-existence between the State of Palestine and Israel, (African Union, 2012). It is therefore a bit too much to expect these two countries, which do not even fall under the jurisdiction of this institution, to adhere to its proposal when it cannot adequately deal with matters within its region.

However, viewed from another perspective, Israel has had cordial relations with a number of African countries as some of them have voted for the country to be kept in the UN after the 1967 Six-Day War. Neuberger (2009) contends that Israel's standing might have fallen to the depths of Apartheid South Africa, which was expelled from the UN and most international institutions. Clearly, Israel's relationship with Africa is a bit ambiguous as it has good relations with some countries and relations with other African states are almost non-existent. Some of the countries that Israel has friendly relations with include Kenya where its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently visited (in July 2016). This was the first trip by an Israeli Head of State in forty years. Other countries visited were Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. Apparently, these two respective countries (Israel and Kenya) have a common enemy to fight, and that is terrorism. It is the same reason that brings Kenya and the USA

closer. Therefore, it is quite apparent that where the institutional bodies have failed, individual countries have stepped in to work together in ensuring that their interests are protected.

There are some positives for the African Union as well. The continental body has made some strides that have even surpassed those of the United Nations in the early 2000s. This was achieved by enshrining the principle that any member state caught seizing power through a coup d'état or any other unconstitutional means would be kicked out of the AU.  As Annan ((2012:182) aptly puts it, "A coup meant you would be immediately kicked out as a matter of course.  I hoped and expected the UN to follow the AU's lead but that has yet to happen." This was quite progressive as this African regional body showed intolerance for misrule and dictatorship that is always associated with some African states. Henceforth, there have been several coups in Africa such as in Mauritania, Madagascar and Mali, however these countries were suspended from the organization and thus suffered diplomatic isolation as well as other sanctions.

This section would be incomplete without touching on the relationship between Israel and apartheid South Africa and how this affected the relationship between the African and the Middle Eastern states.  Israel had enjoyed cordial relations with many African states prior to the 1967 Six-Day War.  Southall (2006) observes that while African states would adopt a principled stance regarding Palestinian self-determination, their relations with the Arab states would be determined by pragmatic self-interest.  The African states had realized that they had been taken for a ride by the Arab states which had pretended to have had no dealings with the apartheid South Africa. However some of these Arab states were trading with both South Africa and Israel, therefore the African states chose to closely guard their own interests by also dealing with the Jewish state as mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs.

**2.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the existing literature on the theme of the present study. It has dealt with what has been covered on the topic by other scholars.  The chapter has also tried to identify existing gaps which still need to be filled such as the major role played by religion in this Israel-Palestine conflict. As is evident from the literature reviewed above, most scholars have downplayed the significance of religion in this conflict. Even those who acknowledge religion's role fail to elaborate on the role played by this factor in the conflict. This is

something the present study brings into the discussion as its contribution to knowledge. Moreover, the chapter also provided both the background and context of the theme as provided by various authors and discussed in detail the documents that are of value to the study. This was done with the view to give the reader the much needed context within which subsequent chapters should be understood and their content interpreted.

In essence, the chapter dealt with four sections, which are: the historical perspective of the Israel-Palestine conflict; SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine; the role that has been played by religion in the conflict; and the influence of regional continental and international institutions in the determination of SA's foreign policy towards Israeli and Palestine and how this foreign policy imperative has shaped the country's engagement with the persistent conflict.  What was noteworthy during the literature review was the lack of effectiveness of the international institutions in trying to arrest the Israel-Palestine conflict. This point will be expatiated upon in chapter six of this study where the results will be analyzed.

The following chapter discusses three theories that underpin the study.  These are: realism, institutionalism and human rights theories. These three theories assisted in the investigation of the research problem. The theory of institutionalism which deals with international institutions in the international relations realm has been dealt with indirectly in the current chapter but will be further explicated in Chapter 3.  The other two theories – realism and human rights theories – have also somewhat featured in the latter part of this chapter, albeit in a rather tantalizing manner.  These theories provide more clarity on the situation that is currently taking place in the Middle East and the world in general at the moment, i.e. political instability. Moreover, these theories assisted in the investigation of the research problem. In addition to summarizing what each theory entails and any criticism leveled against each theory, the chapter also justifies the relevance of each of these theories to the study.

# CHAPTER 3

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 3.1 Introduction

Before delving any deeper into this chapter perhaps it would be justified to first remind the reader about what theory is and what it entails and then introduce the theoretical framework which guided this study. This is critical so that both the researcher and the reader could view the content of this chapter from the same vantage point. From a general perspective a theory is understood to be an inter-related set of ideas and propositions. But in its technical meaning, the concept proffers conditional knowledge and its expectations are not normative. There are three ways in which theory is relevant to social research. First, theories open up research problems by identifying what has been hidden, misunderstood or misinterpreted. Second, theory can draw together unrelated fragments of empirical evidence and research. Third, as a norm within the research community, research is theory dependent (Miller & Brewer, 2003).

Furthermore, Kauppi and Viotti (1999) define theory as an intellectual construct that helps one to select facts and interpret them in such a way as to facilitate explanation and prediction concerning regularities and recurrences of observed phenomena. Therefore when it comes to this study, the behaviour of both Israel and Palestine as international actors is explored. The study also examines patterns, the nature and possible direction of these two respective countries within the realm of international relations.

Theories may exist apart from facts. Within this context, mathematical theorists deal entirely in the realm of abstraction. They hold the view that empirical theories in the social sciences relate to facts and provide explanation for observed phenomena (Kauppi & Viotti, 1999). The three theories that will underpin this study are: realism, institutionalism and human rights theories. These theories provide more clarity in the phenomena that is currently taking place in the Middle East at the moment. These three theories helped to investigate the research problem.

In this chapter, the three theories enumerated above will be explicated. In addition to summarizing what each theory entails and spelling out any criticism leveled against them, the chapter will also justify the relevance of each theory to the study. This will be done with the view to demonstrate that the three theories were cogently selected to guide the study.

To combine these three theories in order to get a clearer picture on issues in the Middle East makes sense in that they all provide a different perspective on the issue under discussion in this dissertation. Although different in nature, each theory brings something different and offers a unique perspective, thereby making it easier to comprehend all the underlying factors in the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Nye (2003) contends that for the realist, the central problem of international politics is war and the use of force, and the central actors are states. The study explores the Israeli-Palestine conflict and how both these states have contributed in the usage of force in this conflict.

In a nutshell, realism is state-centric. It believes that everything that happens in a country revolves around the state. Moreover, this theory holds that by nature, all states are selfish; they strive to satisfy their own interests. On the other hand, institutionalism gives more power to institutions as opposed to states (Kauppi & Viotti, 1999). For example, the theory looks at how international institutions such as the United Nations deal with the Israeli-Palestine conflict. According to Ruggie (1998:56), "International organisations are the most concrete forms of institutionalisation." In Ruggie's view, their general environment includes the principal actors and characteristics of world politics.

The third and last theory is human rights theory. This theory deals with how the citizens of a particular country are treated. It pertains to the dignified way in which people ought to be treated. Going further, according to Evans (2001) the theory and practice of human rights is generally conducted in the language of legal and philosophical reason, which focuses upon international law, methods of implementation and the source, justification and meaning of rights. It is therefore quite evident that human rights consist of international law and the right to dignity of individuals. This theory will assist in looking at how the victims of both Israeli-Palestine conflict are treated in these territories. Below is a further look at how the three theories apply and their relevance to the whole study.

### 3.2 The theories which guided the study

### 3.2.1 Realism

The origins of realism can be traced back to the works of philosophers. One of the philosophers credited for popularising realism is the Greek philosopher, Thucydides. According to Nye (2003) Thucydides is the father of realism, which is the theory that most people use when thinking about international politics even when they do not know they are

using a theory. Theories such as realism can be used as indispensable tools used to organise facts. Therefore this theory is quite relevant in this study. Furthermore, Nye (2003:12) elaborates by stating that "many of today's statesmen and editorial writers use realist theories even if they have not heard of Thucydides." This shows that this theory is everywhere and can be used unwittingly.

Niccolo Machiavelli, the Italian political philosopher, is also regarded as one of the early proponents of realism. Kauppi and Viotti (1999) contend that like Thucydides, Machiavelli wrote of power, formation of alliances and counter-alliances, and the causes of conflict between different city-states. Realism in Machiavelli's view focuses on what is rather than what ought to be. The reality with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict is that more than a million people are affected and have been displaced since the conflict started in 1948. The reality is that some citizens are living with the danger of being attacked at any time in a territory they call home.

The definition of realism as a theory and its application into this study cannot be complete without mentioning the name of another great contributor to this theory, Thomas Hobbes. According to Hobbes individuals are driven by both pride and desire for glory. Hobbes is of the view that anyone may at any time use force, and all must constantly be ready to counter such force with force. Hence, driven by acquisitiveness, having no moral restraints, and motivated to compete for scarce goods, individuals are apt to "invade" one another for gain (Korab-Karpowicz, 2013). Consequently, it is therefore quite clear that because they (the states) are suspicious of one another and driven by fear, they are therefore likely to engage in pre-emptive actions and invade one another to ensure their own safety. This provides some insight into the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Realism, it can be said without any hesitation that due to its nature of calling things as they are, is totally suitable for this study. As its name suggests, the theory does not beat about the bush but is very realistic in its approach. As Kauppi and Viotti (1999:87) put it, "Realism has a lot going for it: It has a venerable tradition, is often policy relevant, addresses the big issues of war and peace, is intuitively plausible, and has more recently aspired to truly scientific status." It is therefore quite clear that realism is the relevant theory, more especially because it deals with issues of war and peace. These issues are the ones that are being dealt with in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

Although some of the important proponents of realism such as Machiavelli and Hobbes both agree that there is no existence of morals when states are dealing with one another, there are instances whereby Hobbes differs from Machiavelli. Korab-Karpowicz (2013) contends that what separates Hobbes from Machiavelli and associates him more with classical realism is his insistence on the defensive character of foreign policy. His political theory does not put forward the invitation to do whatever may be advantageous for the state. This means that Hobbes' approach is much more humane compared to that of Machiavelli. Hobbes advocates for an international relations approach that is prudent and pacifist. In other words, Hobbes believes that sovereign states, like individuals, should have a disposition towards peace and should be commended by reason.

The issue of Israel and Palestine is very complex and therefore hard to resolve. This is because there are so many factors surrounding this conflict. Nationalism, land and religion are some of the issues that are at play in this ongoing conflict. Nye (2003) avers that Arab governments were slow to make peace because they did not want to legitimize Israel, and in their rejection they reinforced the domestic position of those Israelis who did not want to make peace with the Arabs. This goes to prove that the regional conflicts based on ethnicity, religion and nationalism in the Middle East tend to become embittered and difficult to resolve. Therefore it can be much more difficult to resolve the Israel-Palestine as many factors are at play and both sides in the conflict are finding it hard to compromise. This is within the realm of realism whereby each state is egocentric and wants to gain as much power and resources as possible– even at the expense of another state. South Africa needs to revise its approach towards the state of Israel and not just take things at face value as things do not seem as they are, but are indeed complex.

At first glance realism could be described as a theory that is pragmatic and takes a deeper look at the interests of an individual country first, then considers the interests of other countries next. This is the true nature of humans the world over as they go for what will benefit them first and thereafter what will benefit the society at large. It is within this context that Korab-Karpowicz (2013) describes realism as practical and largely depending on the actual historical and political conditions, and is ultimately judged by its ethical standards and by its relevance in making prudent political decisions. Donnelly (2010) further describes realism as that which emphasizes the constraints on politics imposed by human nature and the absence of international government. For the Jews who were scattered all around Europe and eventually became victims of a holocaust in Nazi Germany, it was realistic to seek a territory

where they would feel safe and at home. It was therefore inevitable that they would find such place in historic Palestine which was their ancestral home. On the other hand it was only realistic that Arabs would resist such claim to the territory they called home for over a thousand years. It is against this background that the world has a conflict that threatens to shake world stability.

What makes realism problematic is that, it is not a theory defined by an explicit set of assumptions and propositions. This theory takes a realistic look at issues and events that surround the states across the globe. According to Slaughter (2011:1), "States are sovereign and thus autonomous of each other; no inherent structure or society can emerge or even exist to order relations between them. They are bound only by forcible → coercion or their own → consent." What makes matters worse in the Israeli-Palestine conflict is that Palestine has never been an autonomous state. For centuries the territory had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire. After the First World War, it fell under the rule of the British Empire. It would seem that the Palestinians had no problem with such authority. However, when the United Nations recognised the Jewish State of Israel that was when the real resistance started.

What could have made the Palestinians not to resist the Ottoman and British Empires and then resist the formation of the Jewish State within their territory? Could this perhaps be attributed to the fact that the Jews were treated as second class citizens in the whole of the Arab world and seeing them in charge of their own territory did not sit well with the Palestinians? In the realist theory, state power is imperative because its assumption is that it is only through state power that countries can defend themselves. If that is the case then did the Palestinians have state power or were they forever the oppressed people? All these questions that are pondered upon prove just how complex the Israeli-Palestine conflict is. However the simplistic approach of the realism theory has made it somewhat easier to delve deeper into the issues that are central to this conflict.

Furthermore, Slaughter (2011:1) describes realism as that which, "can understand power in a variety of ways—e.g. militarily, economically, diplomatically—but ultimately emphasizes the distribution of coercive material capacity as the determinant of international politics." This seemed to be the case when Israel became a fully fledged state in 1948 and when she decided to expand her borders in 1967. The country's leaders understood their military capabilities otherwise they would not have chosen to come back to the hostile Middle East. They also understood that diplomatically they had close ties with a fledgling superpower in

the United States of America. Since the formation of the state of Israel, the United States had been its strongest ally. The United States has also been the biggest contributor to Israel's Foreign Direct Investment [FDI]. This shows that the state of Israel had been realistic in terms of understanding its military, economic and diplomatic capabilities.

The realism theory also assists by shedding more light as to what drives South Africa's ethical standards and thereby influences it to make prudent political decisions on various issues including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although it could be said that the ruling ANC is sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, the official government stance is that both parties should resolve their issues and live amicably side-by-side. The posture taken by the ANC is understandable in that the Palestinian People's Liberation Army led by Yasser Arafat was the party's biggest ally during the struggle against apartheid. Therefore, realistically speaking, it would make sense for the ANC to support the friends who were there during its hour of need. The stance might not make sense to pro-Israel lobby groups but in most instances, the oppressed would identify with the other oppressed. To the ANC and other pro-Palestine lobby groups, the Israeli State is viewed as the apartheid state that oppresses the Palestinian people the same way apartheid South Africa oppressed the majority of black people before 1994.

The realism theory also assisted in making things clearer as to what drives SA's foreign interests and how the country benefits from that. As explained above, it would seem that South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine is based not on what South Africa can expect to gain from these two respective states but on what happened during apartheid years. Can it therefore be said that South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine has the hallmarks of realism? In a sense, the South African government has been realistic in its approach to the Israeli-Palestine question in that while it condemns Israel's treatment of Palestinians, it still trades with the state of Israel. This therefore leaves the ruling party and its affiliates (COSATU and the SACP) to make all the right noises in relation to how the Palestinians have been treated by the state of Israel. Could this be viewed as a ploy by the South African government to let its allies do the dirty work of criticising the state of Israel while it takes a diplomatic route? This could prove a masterstroke as the South African government. While it condemns Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, it had opted to be diplomatic, and had called for both parties to find a lasting solution to this impasse. The theory is therefore relevant in the sense that it puts emphasis on national interests. In this case, the South African government has chosen to let its allies in COSATU and the SACP to

do most of the criticism of the Israeli state. Moreover, the country hosts both the Israeli and Palestinian embassies. This could only mean one thing, and that is, the country values its relationship with both countries and is doing its utmost best to contribute in the solving of this never-ending conflict.

This realist approach towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict was never without its problems. This was because the ANC government, as mentioned earlier, insisted on backing old friends who supported the ANC during the struggle and the transition. Some of these friends included the PLO's Yasser Arafat. According to Siko (2014:37), "These friendships sometimes undermined Pretoria's effort to act as an honest broker in negotiations, such as in its efforts to intervene in the Middle East peace process." Therefore, taking a stance of sticking with your friends no matter how tainted they are can be somewhat problematic for the country. It is thus important for the country to be sober-minded whenever it embarks on a stance when it comes to international matters. The proponents of the foreign policy have to ask themselves how a particular stance or position will benefit the country in the long run and how it will affect the outward image of the country.

Ideally, in realist terms, South Africa, Israel and Palestine are small and insignificant countries in the international arena yet they have been so influential and have had the eyes of the world firmly set on them. Nye (2003) argues that in the traditional realist view of international politics, the only significant actors are the states, and only the big states really matter. But this is changing as the number of states has grown enormously in the post-war period. As the number of countries has grown so has the membership of the United Nations. This has resulted to smaller countries having more of a say on world issues.

However, things have not always gone South Africa's way as its efforts to reform global governance institutions and promote conflict resolutions were met with little success during the first few years of the democratic dispensation. Siko (2014) posits that despite Pretoria's efforts to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflagration, Israel showed little interest, viewing South Africa as an unwelcome interloper that viewed the issue through the lenses of apartheid and anti-imperialism. This was probably true given former South African President Thabo Mbeki's stance towards Israel at the time. Mbeki had made it quite clear that he was in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Therefore it was inevitable for Israel to reject South Africa's mediation as it had already taken a stance seen as leaning towards Palestine. Despite its earlier failure South Africa has shown the whole world that it is possible to live in

harmony with your former enemy and oppressor. So, taking on the Israeli-Palestine conflict which has pitted countries against each other, superpowers and small nation-states alike was no easy task.

With regard to the status quo in the Israel-Palestine conflict there seems to be some kind of peace although every now and again the warring parties attack each other.  Nye (2003) observes some recognize that moral obligations exist, but say that order has to come first. He further argues that peace is a moral priority, even if it is an unjust peace and that the disorder of war makes justice difficult. According to him the best way to preserve order is to preserve a balance of power among states. Therefore the relative peace that these respective territories – Israel and Palestine - enjoy at the moment is most welcome.  Although the ordinary people have been displaced and are the worst affected in this conflict which may make this peace unjust, however it is better than nothing at all.

Although South Africa would like to play a major role in the mediation process in the Israel-Palestine conflict, its stance on Israel and possible bias in favour of Palestine does not bring to the country any favours. Have South Africa's foreign policy makers clearly considered the stance that it should take on the Israel-Palestine conflict from the realist point of view? According to Kauppi and Viotti (1990:7), "A realist focuses on actual or potential conflict between state actors and the use of force, examining how international stability is attained or maintained, how it breaks down, the utility of force as a means to resolve disputes, and the prevention of the violation of territorial integrity."Judging from this, South Africa does not seem to have a grasp of how international disputes are resolved, more especially, of such complex issues such as this one. Taking a sentimental stance by siding with Palestine after 1994, did not sit well with Israel.

When it comes to the issue of Israel and Palestine, is South Africa acting in its national interests or is it being altruistic, just putting another state's interests first? Nye (2003) contends that realists say that states have little choice in defining their national interest because of the international system. In other words, the national interest of a state should be defined in terms of balance of power otherwise that state will not survive, just as a company in a perfect market that wants to be altruistic rather than maximize profits will not survive. This is another case of where the fittest states survive. States have to look at their strengths and weaknesses and see how to use this to their advantage and national interest.

In realism, states are the principal actors and non-state actors such as multi-national organisations and other transnational organisations are therefore less important. So in South Africa's case transnational organisations such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) South Africa, who are against the state of Israel, are less important. Kauppi and Viotti (1990) argue that the realist views the state as both unitary and rational. These authors say the state is said to be unitary because any differences of view among political leaders or bureaucracies within the state are ultimately resolved so that the state speaks with one voice. Although the allies of the ANC government who are members of the tripartite alliance, COSATU and the SACP share the same views as BDS South Africa when it comes to Israel but the government has taken a much more moderate stance on this. And according to realists, the word of the government is the last and that's what counts the most.

In Israel and Palestine's case, it is much easier to comprehend the situation of these respective territories in a realist perspective because of the status quo in the Middle East region. This is because in realism, it is actually easier to understand and read the situation when there is less order or lack of stability in a particular region. Nye (2003:49) alludes to this fact when he states: "If an international situation is totally anarchic, if you may be killed by your neighbour tomorrow, then there are limited opportunities for democracy or trade preferences to influence foreign policy. Survival comes first. Realist predictions are more likely to be in the Middle East." Realism has in some ways helped to explain how these two respective countries act the way they do in their on-going conflict. It can never be easy for the Palestinians to have their country partitioned by a group of people who claim to have inherited it from their ancestors a thousand years ago. As for the Israelites, it is also quite a daunting task to be confronted by hostility everywhere you turn in your neighbourhood. Therefore if the Israel-Palestine conflict is looked through the lens of realism, it is much easier to understand why things are the way they are.

However, realism is not without its faults and disadvantages as is the case with everything else in this life. One of the bad things about this theory is its sheer lack of looking out for the interests of others. Perhaps it is a good thing to look for your own interests but this shouldn't be done at all costs and at the detriment of others. Moreover, when pursuing your interests this shouldn't be done in such a way that morals should be thrown out the window. It could be the reason behind South African lobby groups such as the BDS South Africa fighting for the cause of Palestinian people who are internally displaced and refugees in the neighbouring countries. Korab-Karpowicz (2013) avers that the greatest problem with realism in

international relations is that it has a tendency to slip into its extreme version, which accepts any policy that can benefit the state at the expense of other states, no matter how morally problematic the policy is. It can never be moral for a country to accept and apply policies that would be responsible for the displacement of innocent civilians.

To further expatiate on the evils of the realism theory, it would seem that it feeds on the lack of morality. For realists, it is normal for a state to do evil as long as this is justifiable. As Donnelly (2000:25) asserts, "For Machiavelli, the evil and egoistic passions at the core of human nature often can be repressed only by force, and at times only by ferocious cruelty. In Machiavelli's world, even the good must know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity." Therefore the attitude of Israel towards Palestine is therefore not surprising if you take into consideration this darker side of realism theory. So applying this theory, the state of Israel may feel justified to act the way it does towards the Palestinians.

The status quo in the Middle East could serve as some kind of justification for Israel's treatment of Palestine. Instability and being surrounded by hostile neighbours, more especially Iran, might be the reason that Israel has beefed up its security. Kauppi and Viotti (1990) posit that realists argue that the absence of a central authority helps to explain why states rely on power to increase their power positions relative to other states. For one thing, the condition of anarchy is usually accompanied by a lack of trust among states in this environment. It does not take a rocket scientist to note that Middle Eastern countries do not trust each other, even those who have in the past fought together against the state of Israel. It is therefore almost inevitable that the states who find themselves in such an anarchic state would be forced to arm themselves and so that they won't be vulnerable to outside threats. It has been this way for Israel since its formation in 1948.

To further understand this concept of anarchy perhaps it is imperative to emphasize that this state of anarchy does not exist within states but between states. In other words, the Middle East states such as Israel and Palestine may be geographically placed in an anarchic region but within their territories there is still order. Donnelly (2000) argues that within states, human nature usually is tamed by hierarchical political authority and rule. In international relations anarchy not merely allows but encourages the worst aspects of human nature to be expressed. What could this possibly mean about the state of Israel? Are the leaders of this country good and moral people who are simply trying to protect the interests of their country whatever the cost may be? Some supporters of the state of Israel have hailed the country as

the most democratic country in the whole of the Middle East. Some have even justified the killing of innocent Palestinian women and children during the recent war in the Gaza strip, by attributing this attack to Hamas forcing the Palestinians to stay on the street after being warned by the Israeli military of the imminent attack.

In conclusion on this theory, as the name of the theory aptly suggests, it deals with issues as it sees them happen. So, whether it is Thucydides, Machiavelli or Hobbes, they are always going to have some areas where they differ although they propagate the same theory. This can be attributed to different times and political dispensations they were living under. It would be unrealistic to expect of a realist who lived in 16th century Italy to have exactly the same realist observations as the one in the 21st century Middle East. As Kauppi and Viotti (1999:88) assert, "Although realists may find common ground in terms of basic assumptions and key international actors, they also differ in a number of important respects, such as methods they use, levels of analysis they choose....." It is therefore important to consult many sources, especially original sources, in order to be able to do justice to this study. It was hoped that through the realism theory and the understanding of its different earliest proponents, this ideal would be achieved in this dissertation.  Therefore, realism is relevant to this study.

### 3.2.2 Institutionalism

The second theory that was chosen to illuminate our understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict was institutionalism. Although institutionalism shares many of the realist assumptions such as the fact that the international system is anarchic and that states are only looking after their self-interests, however, it believes that co-operation between states is possible. Slaughter (2011:2) posits that, "Institutionalists argue that institutions increase information about State behaviour. Institutionalists note that institutions can greatly increase efficiency. It is costly for States to negotiate with one another on an ad hoc basis." Therefore, international institutions such as the UN, continental institutions such as the AU and regional institutions such the Arab League are important in ensuring that relations among nations are always cordial. These institutions shape the nature of the relations and also sustain them.

There are different types of institutionalism. Each type determines the type of institutionalism that prevails. Included in the list is: historical, political and sociological institutionalism. However, the one that is relevant for this study is political institutionalism.  Amenta and

Ramsey (2010) posit that political institutionalists focus not on convergence in policy across countries, but on long-standing institutional differences across countries. They tend to argue that nation-level political institutions mediate the influence of domestic organized political actors and global processes. As proposed earlier, this theory will assist in the illumination of the role played by the multilateral institutions such as the United Nations in the formulation of the South African foreign policy towards the Middle East.

Institutionalism, it can be argued that it owes its origins to the study of economics as its earlier proponents were all involved in this realm of study. In fact, the term institutionalism was first used to describe the work of Thorstein Veblen. Yonay (1998:51) states that, "Veblen wrote insightful diagnoses of modern society based on his critical observations of the social practises around him but was not involved in empirical investigations, nor did he think that such research was needed." It is therefore apparent that the concept of institutionalism was initially conceived as part of economics. Veblen was merely analysing the American life during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century where there was a deep divide between the privileged elites and the working class. The theory is valuable in that it assists in the understanding of the dynamics at play in major international institutions such as the United Nations, the Arab League and the African Union. It also helps in pointing out the failures of such institutions in resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict.

So far nothing is known about institutionalism except that it is the theory that deals with institutions and the structures within which they operate and the fact that it derives from economics. So what does institutionalism actually entail? According to Cairney (2012), this theory treats institutions as the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating procedures that structure conflict and shape behaviour and outcomes. In essence, this theory helps in looking at how the international institutions function and shape outcomes with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Just like realism, institutionalism as a theory has several philosophers who contributed to its development. One important proponent of this theory is said to be John R. Commons. Yonay (1998:51) argues that Commons' training and career were much more conventional than Veblen's, whose criticism was much less combative. He further posits that although Commons' research method was basically historical studies, he took his students to various organisations to watch economic life in the making. Commons is also known to have encouraged his students to conduct field research so that they could actually experience for

themselves the world as they saw it unfold. Basically he is one man who ensured that there was an evolution of legal institutions of capitalism. Therefore, it can be concluded that international institutions such as the United Nations owe their existence to him as they seem to represent capitalist interests even though they have a varied membership of countries across different regimes of this world.

Delving deeper into the institutionalism theory, it becomes clearer and much possible to comprehend why these international institutions seem to be representing capitalist countries. It could be argued that the biggest institution that is close to representing the world government, the United Nations, only serves the interests of the five nations that are the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations. Without these members, namely; China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – commonly known as the P-5 countries, nothing moves. It is impossible to pass a resolution because if one of these countries decides to veto it then it cannot go through. Since the formation of the United Nations, France, the United Kingdom and the United States were supporters of the state of Israel. So whenever the majority of the members of the United Nations' General Assembly want action to be taken against Israel, these three nations would veto this.

To further give credence to the foregoing paragraph, the influence of the dominant nations is evident. For instance, the three members of the Security Council, namely; France, the United Kingdom and the United States were democratic and capitalistic upon the formation of the United Nations. Consequently, the rest of the world was expected to follow on the footsteps of these nations. Ruggie (1998:57) further expatiates on this, when he points out that some instances of institutionalisation are situation specific: "That is, they are specific to given sets of actors who stand in specific relation to one another in the context of particular issues. It represents agreement that certain aspects of national behaviour, and not others, will be institutionalised internationally." It is therefore quite evident that some certain national behaviour of elite countries in the United Nations is institutionalised internationally by the rest of the world.

Still on the origins of institutionalism theory, it would be not doing justice to the theory if the other earliest proponents of this theory are not mentioned. According to Yonay (1998) Wesley C. Mitchell is credited as the third father of institutionalism. However, what is notable is that although he was a student of Veblen, his work was very different. Moreover,

he is said to be much more responsible for the success of institutionalism than Veblen. It is through people like Mitchell, Commons and Veblen that the theory of institutionalism came into being. Through their contribution in the evolution of the theoretical structure of institutionalism, they in turn helped in the development of economic knowledge.

Are international institutions really effective or influential in the resolving of conflicts between states? Well, to a certain extent these institutions have played a major part in ensuring that innocent lives are sparred in war-torn zones. However, at other instances, like in the Rwanda genocide of 1994, international institutions like the United Nations have failed dismally in protecting citizens. This could be attributed to what was mentioned earlier, and that is the influence of the member nations of the United Nations such as the United States and France. If these nations feel that it is unnecessary for any action to be taken out in order to protect innocent people in war-torn states, then these countries will use their veto right to stop this. As Cairney (2012:91) asserts, "We can regard institutions as sets of incentives used by individuals pursuing their preferences, or structures that influence those preferences. We can treat them as structures that exist in the real world or as constructs that only exist in the minds of policy participants." In essence, international institutions such as the United Nations are at the mercy of the members of the Security Council which is part of the United Nations. Members of the Security Council have a right to veto any resolution taken by the United Nations General Assembly.

The above therefore sheds some light as to why the United Nations has not been able to take any action against Israel despite evidence that it has committed human rights abuses in the Gaza strip. Whether or not the actions of Israel are justified, there should be action taken by the United Nations. However, because of Israel's allies in the Security Council this international institution has not been able to take any action against the state of Israel. Therefore it is quite clear that although the United Nations is supposed to represent world government but it only represents merely a handful of powerful nations. They dictate terms and how the status quo should remain in the world.

Furthermore, some countries have defied the authority of the United Nations even though it is regarded as the world government. Amongst these countries are China, the United States and even the state of Israel. There has been no action or whatsoever taken against the countries that have violated the human rights such as the ones mentioned above. Ruggie (1998:61) contends, "International authority is far more likely to take the form of specific clusters of

obligations and norms of compliance that are incorporated within states and instituted in relations of mutual accountability among states." This international authority is about the willingness and capacity of states to submit to the necessities of cooperative systems. In other words states have to be willing to be governed and submit to the authority of international institutions that stand for international government, such as the United Nations. It is no small wonder that Israel has gone unpunished for the crimes against humanity it has committed in the Gaza strip. This is because in some instances the state of Israel has chosen not to submit to the authority of the United Nations with no repercussions for such inaction.

Institutionalism is also about institutions as ideas influencing action and they exist in terms of how these actors understand them. Cairney (2012:84) further asserts, "Institutions represent established ideas or paradigms which act as cognitive filters or the primary means through which people understand their environment. The agenda of institutionalism is to understand how such ideas are contested, challenged and replaced." Is this true for international institutions such as the United Nations, the Arab League or the African Union? All of these institutions have in one way or another failed to act against states that have broken international law. So, how has the United Nations influenced action as an institution? It is difficult to say this has happened. It's more of the big influential nations who are influencing the United Nations to take action while less influential nations become by-standers.

One of the impediments to the theory of institutionalism is that it can mean so many things to different people or scholars. What complicates things further is that the theory is also found in different realms such as in economics as well as social sciences. Further proof that this theory is associated with social sciences is that it has some similarities to the realism theory. Peters (2000) avers that institutionalism assumes that individual values will not be changed by involvement with the institution however; behaviour is set to change in response to various opportunities and constraints presented by the structure. In other words the values that condition that behaviour will remain unaffected by the institution. This means that the members of the institution take a realistic view of the situation and look at what they will gain from it as opposed to what they will add to it.

As mentioned earlier, institutionalism is divided into three types, namely: historical, political and sociological institutionalism. However there is only one that deals with international institutions or organisations and that is sociological institutionalism. According to Amenta and Ramsey (2010:19), "In sociological institutionalist theory, organizational structures

constitute the hypothesized infrastructures through which normative, cognitive, and dependence mechanisms exert their influence."It is therefore very clear that this type of institutionalism is concerned with international institutions and how these institutions can influence the governance of these states. Although the influence of the United Nations is questionable due to its failure to assert its authority against larger nations such as the United States but it still has some kind of power over smaller nations.

One thing for sure about institutionalism is that it is constant and as a result does not change. This is quite true for an institution like the United Nations, which has had the same structure in the Security Council, since its formation. Peters (2000) observes that one standard critique of institutional theory it is almost inherently static while the world of politics, which it seeks to explain, is almost inherently dynamic. While this critique might seem a bit exaggerated, there is a certain amount of validity in it. It can be argued that it is true about institutionalism not changing, if you look at the composition of the United Nations Security Council that is responsible for taking big and important decisions. For years, third world countries, especially the ones from the African continent, have been advocating for the Security Council to change its composition and add at least one African country to its membership. Who knows, perhaps the decisions taken by the Security Council will be much more favourable to smaller countries if there were to be any changes in this organ of the United Nations.

In essence, it can be said that the institutionalism gives states some form of legitimacy and a sense of belonging. This actually sounds truer in the case of states like China, Israel and Zimbabwe, who have all been condemned for gross violations of human rights. Although these countries have been condemned by the world community for human rights abuses, but they are still members of the United Nations. Amenta and Ramsey (2010) contend that institutionalism treats states and other organized political actors largely like other organizations in that it provides a broad cultural theoretical perspective on organizations and thus politics. These authors further state that the theory focuses on the diffusion of ideas and other cultural forms, as organizations search for legitimacy. It is therefore quite clear that in institutionalism every nation has a home – even those who have been accused of tyranny and have worse human rights violation records.

Although it has been argued throughout this chapter thus far that the United Nations as some form of international authority or government has been ineffective in solving international conflicts, more especially during the Cold War period, however there have been some notable

instances where the institution has been successful. To expatiate on this, Ruggie (1998:104) asserts that, "After years of being riveted by the cold war, the United Nations has been rediscovered to have utility in international conflict management: its fig-leaf role proved useful in Afghanistan, and its decolonisation function aided Namibia." It could also be argued that the success of the United Nations after the cold war era can be attributed to the fact that the Soviet Union had collapsed and the United States was the only superpower left to lead the world. The United States was therefore more influential in the affairs of the United Nations as its biggest nemesis, the Soviet Union, was no longer there. So it is of little wonder that the United States allies such as Israel had gone unpunished by the United Nations for breaking international law and committing crimes against humanity in the Gaza strip openly.

It should be noted that the argument made in the foregoing paragraph is not at all meant to criticise Israel and its policies but it should be noted that there are always many sides to a conflict. For what it is worth, the Jews posit that wherever they went they have been persecuted. This culminated in the Jewish holocaust by the German Nazis under Adolf Hitler. So, their case that Israel is their ancestral land and consequently should be allowed to return to it is valid. Moreover it is not a given that whenever states become members of international institutions they will follow their rules and regulations to the letter. First and foremost, the states look for their own interests and what they will gain from any partnership or relationship. As Cairney (2012:218) aptly puts it, "We can perhaps say that coalition members follow coalition rules, but know less about why they do so and, perhaps more importantly, why members cease to follow those rules." This is not to say that Israel is innocent in all the allegations the country is accused of. However, this serves to explain the nature of states who are members of international institutions. Furthermore, Cairney (2012) argues that people may enter the political system to pursue their beliefs but they still have their own preferences and expectations about how they ought to behave. This could be case with Israel. The country has joined the United Nations yet it still has its own set of beliefs and one of those is that the land of Israel is its ancestral land.

Although most of the time it seems that certain states disregard the international laws and resolutions of the United Nations when they commit human rights violation, however this international institution is still somewhat relevant. This is evident whenever there is a meeting of its National Assembly as almost every nation on earth is in attendance. Even those nations who are regarded as chief culprits when it comes to human rights violations attend and even address the United Nations General Assembly. According to Peters

(2000:14), "Institutions appear volte face to be associated with differences in behaviour of individuals and differences in decision-making outcomes. Institutions also help in reducing variance in political behaviour and therefore help to improve the possibilities of prediction."It can therefore be argued that institutions in some way can inspire countries to strive to be better than what they are. This could also help explain the logic behind the United Nations not suspending membership of most of these countries. It also probably explains why you would have people like Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Yasser Arafat of Palestine addressing the United Nations General Assembly. Arafat even won the Nobel Peace Prize at one point yet still there is no peace to speak of in Palestine and Israel. Perhaps it was the gesture that was applauded.

Although institutionalism is divided into three types, these types can feed off each other in order to have a better understanding of how and why states behave the way they do. This also assists in explaining how world economics and structures operate. According to Amenta and Ramsey (2010) sociological institutionalist scholars interested in explaining transnational convergences might take a cue from historical and political institutionalism and examine how prior global political and economic structures render certain world policies far more palatable to nation-states than others. In essence, the theory of institutionalism makes it clearer for individuals and scholars to comprehend how states operate within institutions and what drives them to behave in a certain way.  Furthermore, it also serves to shed light into relationships between states within an institution.  Therefore, this theory has been quite useful in helping to understand how international institutions have treated the Israel-Palestine conflict over the years. The discussion above makes institutionalism one of the lenses through which we could try to understand the on-going political conflict between Israel and Palestine. This is despite some of the shortfalls enumerated above. Thus, institutionalism remains relevant to this study.


### 3.2.3The human rights theory

It could be argued that one of the motives that drives South Africa's stance towards Israel and Palestine is the issue of human rights. The country wants to see the rights of the Palestinian people respected by the Israelis. Civil rights group such as the BDS also have an influence on the country's foreign policy stance in Palestine.  These groups have ensured that through their constant reports of human rights abuses of Palestinians by the Israeli state, South Africa has

no choice but to be sympathetic to Palestine. Donelly (2007) identifies British philosopher, John Locke as the first person credited with developing a comprehensive theory of human rights. Locke wrote that people form societies, and societies establish governments, in order to assure the enjoyment of natural rights. Furthermore, Besson and Zysset (2012:206) posit that, "an idea central to human rights theory is that human rights are rights we have just by virtue of being human." Therefore this theory was deemed instrumental in understanding the broader issues that are driving the foreign policy agenda of South Africa, in the case of Palestine. This will be done in the subsequent chapters by looking at how the issue of human rights has been imperative in South Africa's stance towards Israel and Palestine.

It is therefore quite clear from the foregoing paragraph that human rights have long been a key issue many years ago during the enlightenment era among leading philosophers of the time. However it has to be argued that it was only after the Second World War that human rights became the centre of the newly formed international institution, the United Nations. This was after over ten million people, including six million Jews, had lost their lives during this Great War. According to Savic (1999:3), "The United Nations General Assembly, in its 183rd session, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was a critical turning point in the long quest for freedom and human dignity, comparable in significance to the Magna Carta." This was despite the fact that not all countries voted for this declaration of human rights as it was not unanimously adopted because some countries abstained but it was a great start after such a devastating war.

One would be forgiven to think that after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 all states would be willing and able to protect human rights, not only for their citizens but foreigners as well. However this is not by any means the dominant contemporary international understanding. As Donnelly (1999:85) aptly puts it, "The Covenants and other international human rights treaties established rights for all individuals. The obligations they create, however are only for states. And states have international human rights obligations only to their own nationals." They are therefore only obligated to provide human rights to foreign nationals in their territory or who are under their control. Donnelly further argues that contemporary international and regional human rights regimes are supervisory mechanisms that monitor relations between states and citizens. These organisations are therefore not alternatives to how states conceptualise the issue of human rights. Therefore, international institutions such as the United Nations only act as monitors of whether or not states are abusing human rights of its citizens and foreigners. It could be the reason why it is

so hard for the United Nations to take action against those states that are guilty of human rights abuses.

In the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, where the state of Israel is creating a Jewish State, the question arises: is it therefore possible to allow other nationalities to thrive inside this state? Given the gross human rights abuses in the form of the Holocaust that the Jews suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany, is it a bad thing to forgive Israel for wanting to create a Jewish state where this race could thrive without fear of being persecuted? Surely in Israel each and every citizen has a right to participate in the political process of this country. As Caney (2005:91) asserts, "By exercising this right, the members of a society are enabled to promote their ideals, and those favoured by members of one political system may very well differ radically from those of another." Although some may disagree but it could be argued that Israel is a democracy and has given each and every citizen within its borders, including Arabs and Christians, the right to exercise their votes. However, this does not take away the fact that it is still very much a Jewish State in its composition and many laws of that country favour the existence of Jews as the majority of that country. In that sense, the country's democratic ethos is put into question.

Before delving any deeper on the human rights theory perhaps it is better to try and understand what human rights are and what they really entail. Like all theories such as institutionalism and realism, the human rights theory is not one dimensional as it consists of different parts. Besson and Zysset (2012) aver that current human rights theories are divided into so-called ethical and political conceptions of human rights. This depends on whether they share the idea that human rights ought to be morally grounded or not and as a result this relates to how they are situated with respect to their political and legal practice. It is then quite evident that human right theories are either ethical or political in nature. With regard to the issue of human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict it can be argued that the human rights theories that are applicable are both ethical and political conceptions. Both Israel and Palestine have been found guilty of violating human rights during their many conflicts. This is in the form of attacking civilians and torturing political prisoners.

Although the United Nations has devoted itself to fighting against human rights violations, especially in countries that are notorious for such activities, there are still concerns regarding the extent to which this goal has been achieved. Through its Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations has investigated and conducted case studies in countries well known for

their human rights abuses, such as Iran and Burma. However the Human Rights Commission was abolished in 2006 and in its place a smaller Human Rights Council was formed. From the start, it has had its work cut out following its criticism for abolishing special human rights special investigators for countries such as Belarus and Cuba without apparent reason. According to Donelly (2007:30), "In addition, the Human Rights Council has perpetuated the discriminatory practice of having a permanent agenda item for only one country, namely, Israel, in relation to the Palestinian situation." Therefore for an international body like the United Nations it could be deemed unacceptable to discriminate against just one country, and that is Israel, when there are so many other countries that are guilty of human rights violations. But at the same time, Israel cannot be given special treatment when other equally guilty countries are ostracised.

History has shown throughout centuries that human beings have always fought for equal rights and treatment. From the French Revolution in the eighteenth-century to the American War of Independence, these proved that people want to be treated fairly and will fight to have equal rights. These revolutions also served to prove that people were no longer going to stand and accept the status quo of being ruled by the monarchs and the church. Evans (2001) argues that the success of these revolutions exposed the old order as oppressive and tyrannical while the new order seemed to be offering conditions for human dignity and personal freedom. The regimes that ruled after this sought to govern the people by natural law and human rights. However human rights have been known to evolve as time goes on. For instance, during the middle ages, slavery was not regarded as a violation of human rights. Therefore, human rights are best understood as a process rather than an endpoint as they constantly evolve over time. This is actually more evident in the acceptance of gay marriages by most countries in the world lately.

The issue of human rights goes hand in hand with that of international law. This is more befitting for the purposes of this study which deals with the examination of the South African foreign policy and the Israel-Palestine conflict. According to Smith (2003:7), "International law has undoubtedly shaped human rights. The legal statement of rights is, in some respects, a codification of the rule of law by lawyers and legal draftsmen. International human rights, however, goes beyond the boundaries of general international law." Each and every state in the world has its own set of laws by which it rules its citizens. Through these laws, the state also ensures that it protects the natural rights of its citizens. However there are also sets of

laws that govern how states interact with one another as set out by the United Nations. Both Israel and Palestine have been found guilty of gross human rights violations.

Jews have been subjected to ill-treatment and have been the victims of gross human rights violations wherever they went. Amongst the perpetrators were the Catholic Church, European states such as Spain, Russia, Italy and Germany as well the Ottoman Empire. Ishay (2004) states that in less industrialized eastern in European countries such as Russia, Jews were confined to less attractive territories and restricted from travelling while facing severe discrimination. Furthermore, in the Ottoman Empire, while the Jews were tolerated and protected by the state, they were still perceived as inferior to Muslims. But why would be the Jews treated as second class citizens wherever they lived? It only makes sense that the Jews would go back to their ancestral land they claim was given to them by their Biblical God and make themselves a home there. And that land is Palestine and the state of Israel is just a portion of it.

Going back to your ancestral land because wherever you go you are subjected to gross violations of your rights, you are treated as a second class citizen. Moreover, you are persecuted because of your race seems to make sense for the Jews. However this has come at a cost since from its establishment, the state of Israel has known little peace because most of its Middle East neighbours are against the existence of this very state. For them, Jews would always remain second class citizens as they were centuries earlier. Apart from this, the Israeli state receives severe criticism from the media and human rights organisations that are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. This is owing to the treatment it metes out to the Palestinians. According to Donnelly (2007) global, regional and national human rights groups have ensured that by the pressures they have created that it is almost impossible today for states to avoid being held accountable publicly for their human rights practices. So for countries like Israel, that have been accused of gross human rights violations, it could prove daunting to shake that image of being a violator of rights of innocent Palestinian civilians.

Although human rights organisations or activists have assisted in bringing to the world's attention human rights violations committed by regimes, this was not the case during the Second World War and at the beginning of the Cold War. This could help explain why despots like Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler got away with murder. The advent of globalisation and the internet has assisted in alerting the world about the atrocities of human rights violations. Besson and Zysset (2012:214) aptly state, "There was no international outcry or

organisation devoted to the slaughter of Indians in the United States, no important transnational NGOs fighting pogroms against Jews in Russia." This proves how important these human rights groups or activists have become in the modern world. Through these groups, the world has come to know the plight of people they otherwise would not have known. Therefore, each and every country is always kept on its toes and careful not to abuse human rights. Perhaps the black slaves in the United States would have secured their freedom earlier and the Jewish Holocaust would have been avoided if the human rights organisations were in existence at that time. So which country would willingly violate the rights of others if there is such scrutiny nowadays? Is the state of Israel violating the human rights of Palestinians or is it forced to retaliate after being attacked?

It is rather hard to answer the above questions as the Israeli-Palestine conflict is a delicate and complex matter. At face value, the logic behind South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine is simple and straightforward. After being subjected to gross human rights violations and treated like second class citizens, the black majority government led by the liberation movement, the African National Congress, saw it necessary to support all those who gave them support during the struggle against the Apartheid government. It was therefore no surprise that the ANC government under President Nelson Mandela's leadership had ties with some questionable leaders who themselves have been found to be violating the rights of the people they are supposed to lead. Leaders such as Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Cuba's Fidel Castro and Palestine's Yasser Arafat were all present during President Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected president. These mentioned leaders, although not saints when it comes to human rights violations they had assisted the ANC financially and even hosted its leaders during the struggle years. On the other hand, the state of Israel had diplomatic relations with apartheid South Africa and both these states were, from some quarters of the world, seen as pariah nations. Therefore viewed from this context, the soft spot that South Africa has towards Palestine should be viewed along these lines. It is more of an emotional rather than a realistic decision.

While still on the matter of Israel-Palestine, the South African government has not cut its ties with the state of Israel as both countries still trade with each other. It could be said that this position is rather confusing. You have the senior leaders of government, the ruling party and the senior leaders of tripartite alliance partners COSATU and the SACP speaking out against Israel and discouraging South African citizens to visit that country. Yet the South African

government is still trading with the state of Israel and has not forbidden its companies to trade with Israel either.  The South African foreign policy has to be one of the most confusing foreign policies in the world. There are so many countries that are guilty of human rights violations yet they are not subjected to this kind of vilification meted to Israel by the South African government. Lamenting this on the Daily Dispatch (November 6, 2013), former deputy editor of the Rand Daily Mail, Benjamin Pogrund, writes, "....the critics keep silent about neighbouring Syria, which is engulfed by violence with murders and refugees on a scale which Israel has never known. Also Egypt, and Tunisia, Yemen, the list goes on. Why always pick on Israel?" This sums up the confusion about the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. With its experience on resolving issues in the African continent, South Africa could play a much more active role in the Israel-Palestine conflict rather than choose to take sides by virtue of the ruling party's tripartite alliance leaders and cabinet ministers making statements that are contrary to the even-handed approach taken by the country.

There seems to be no clear cut position as to what the theory of human rights is and what it entails exactly. This owes to the fact that human rights are not static and therefore forever evolving.  However Perry (2007) has somewhat tried to illuminate what human rights theory should be concerned with and its whole nature. He outlines three major issues that the human rights theory should deal with. The first and most fundamental of the three issues is whether there is a non-religious ground for the morality of human rights.  In other words this issue claims that each and every human being has inherent dignity. The second major issues deals with the relationship between the morality of human rights and the law of human rights. This is about what kind of laws should be enacted to affirm that every human being has inherent dignity. The third and the last major issue is that which deals with the proper role that the courts should play in a liberal democracy, to protect human rights laws that are entrenched in the constitution. It is therefore quite clear that the issue of human rights is complex and cannot just be taken at face value.

As mentioned earlier, the Tripartite Alliance supports the Palestinians. However, this may not be attributed to the ANC's ties with the Palestine Liberation Organisation during apartheid. This could be because both COSATU and the SACP are leftist in their leaning and the United States of America's support for Israel could mean the importation of American capitalism into the Middle East. According to Hughes (2004:163), "both COSATU and the SACP have

conceptually linked the Israeli–Palestinian crisis to perceived American imperialism and its role in the advancement of globalised capitalism, not least in the Middle East." Add this to the fact that Israel had ties with apartheid South Africa during the struggle for liberation as well as the ANC's close relationship with Yasser Arafat's PLO then you have an understanding of why the senior South African leaders are in solidarity with Palestine in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

What about the rights of the victims from both Israel and Palestine? Have both sides taken extra caution when it comes to ensuring that innocent civilians are not injured or killed during attacks? It would seem both Israel and Palestine have been guilty of gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity during the latest Gaza conflict which took place between June and August 2014. According to the Human Rights Council report on the Gaza conflict, the latest round of violence, "resulted in an unprecedented number of casualties, the commission was able to gather substantial information pointing to serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by Israel and by Palestinian armed groups," ([www.ohchr.org](www.ohchr.org)). It is therefore quite clear that when in war those who suffer the most are the innocent civilians. In this case, innocent women and children were severely injured and killed and some were displaced as they lost their homes. If the Human Rights Council of the United Nations has found that both sides in the Israel-Palestine conflict are guilty of gross human rights violation then it would be ill-considered for anyone to pick sides.

The harming of civilians during war is not morally correct as it is tantamount to human rights violations and is a crime against humanity as stated in the foregoing paragraph by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations. So, why would it drive both Israel and Palestine to commit such inhumane acts? Caney (2005:218) gives more clarity on this when he reasons, "Consider a situation where two individuals are in conflict. If one adopts underhand methods then one might argue that in doing so he or she has relinquished their right not to have the same done to them. Accordingly, the other is no longer bound by a duty to honour the rules." The scenario painted by Caney is what actually happens when two states are at war. One state may see that it might be losing the battle and might use underhand tactics to turn things in their favour. In turn, the other state will retaliate by applying the same tactics. This is what could have happened in the latest Israel-Palestine conflict.

What happened in the latest Gaza conflict is not right and cannot be condoned. However, it is understandable that whenever two nations engage in a war the people who suffer the most are the civilians. As the old saying goes, when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers the most. Furthermore, Smith (2003:12) posits "An individual's rights are most likely to be compromised when States engage in armed conflict. Such conflicts are clearly within the discretion of States. However, the exercise of powers of war and peace inevitably impact on individuals within the State." Therefore the onus is on the states that are at war with each other to ensure that their citizens are protected. As per the report of the United Nations Human Rights Council, both Israel and Palestine failed dismally to protect innocent civilians.

While it is clear from the foregoing that the human rights theory has many challenges given what happens in reality, it is equally true that the theory is relevant to this study. There have been evident human rights violations in the political engagements between Israel and Palestine. The international community under the banner of the UN has reacted differently to the countries, particularly being driven by the realist theory. In that sense, the theories discussed above are closely related and complement one another perfectly to illuminate our understanding of the theme of this study.

### 3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the three theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. Realism, institutionalism and human rights theories are all befitting theories for the study. The three theories are also suitable for the study because the Israel-Palestine conflict is such a complex and problematic study which needs to be approached from different angles. These theories allow for that. To get a better understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a multi-pronged approach was needed more especially with regard to the theoretical framework. Although different, these three theories have in some way come together to assist in illuminating out understanding of the issues pertaining to what drives South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the role international institutions have played in solving the conflict and how the two respective states have treated civilian rights when at war with each other.

Realism as a theory talks about honesty with which the states interact with one another. It posits that states look for their own interests first and what they are going to gain from relationships with other states. This theory also states that the international arena is anarchic

and as such states need to develop strong relationships in order to protect themselves from this anarchy. This could perhaps explain the relationship between Israel and the United States, which is a superpower and thus has protected Israel from threat in the Middle East. The theory has also helped in explaining why South Africa seems to be siding with Palestinians in this conflict although it has not suspended its trade ties with Israel.

The chapter also tried to delve deeper into institutionalism as a theory. It explained how international institutions operate as they try to act as international governments. It also touched on how the states join these institutions because they have issues they relate to and that some issues that are just not to their liking. Although states join international institutions such as the United Nations they never really lose their individualism and aspirations. This explains why the United Nations Security Council has failed to pressure Israel into moving out of the occupied territories in Palestine.

Human rights as a theory has been shown to be evolving in the international arena as some issues that used to be regarded as taboo are now topping the agenda in human rights. This chapter therefore assists the study in looking at human rights abuses by both parties in the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has been very interesting to note that there have been gross human rights violations from both parties in this conflict although the rest of the world has been known to single out Israel for human rights abuses. It has also been observed that an individual's right may be compromised during an armed conflict. Both the Israeli and Palestinian states have been found guilty of human rights abuses. Moreover, Israel has also been found to have broken the international law with regard to occupied territories in Palestine. Pressure on Israel to move out of these territories by the United Nations and the international community has not managed to yield any results. The state of Israel claims that the occupied territories are part of its country.

Furthermore, this chapter has discussed the origins of the theory of realism and who its proponents are. It has also discussed the history and the early contributors to the theory of institutionalism and how states behave as members of international institutions. Moreover, the chapter discussed at great length the theory of human rights, what it stands for, how it originated and how both parties in the Israel-Palestine conflict have contributed in the abuse of human rights during wars that these states have engaged in.

The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used to carry out this study. The chapter spells out the methodology that was followed in conducting research for the present study and provides reasons why certain research paradigms and data collection methods were preferred to others. Where applicable, the challenges experienced during the data collection stage are spelt out in the chapter and answers provided as to how some of those challenges were dealt with during the data collection process in order to ensure that study was a success and that it produced useful results.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

## 4.1 Introduction

From a general perspective, methodology is about a set of procedures that the researcher undertakes when conducting a study. It could be the literature researchers opted to read and interviews they chose to conduct. Within this context, the limitations and the scope of the study are also spelt out, stating where the study is going to be confined. According to Ball (2012:43), "Among other questions, the researcher answers the question: will the study be a local case study, regional, continental or cover the world at large?" Ball expatiates further on what the research methodology should be about as follows: "The point is: tell us what you did, but more than that tell us why you did what you did rather than some other thing. What are the strengths and weaknesses of what you did, and how do these pluses and minuses colour your results?"(2012:43). Therefore, it is quite clear that the research methodology is more than explaining what the researcher did during the process of the research project but is also about giving reasons why a certain route was preferred to another.

Research methodology and research method are often confused with each other. On the surface these two terms would appear to mean one and the same thing but in reality they are actually very different from each other. According to Bryman (2004) a research method is simply a technique for collecting data. It can involve a specific instrument, such as a self-completion of a questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watches others. On the other hand, methodology could be described as a justification to use research methods. It is therefore quite clear that the research methodology and research method are two different concepts and the latter falls under the former. The research methods employed in this study involved open-ended interviews which were sent to participants via emails. The other method which was document analysis involved the researcher going through the secondary data and other policy documents to examine South Africa's foreign policy towards the Middle East after 1994, with a specific focus on the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

This chapter spells out the methodology that was followed in conducting the study and provides reasons why certain paradigms and data collections procedures were preferred to others. Furthermore, the chapter also spells out the challenges experienced during the data collection stage and also provides the answers as to how those challenges were dealt with in

order to ensure that the study became a success despite those hurdles. Moreover, the chapter also touches base on the definition of some of the complex methods used in conducting the study and how such methods are relevant to this study.

## 4.2 Research paradigm and data collection methods

The study falls within the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research entails that which deals not with numbers or figurers used in quantitative research but with text or words. Put more profoundly by Bryman, qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (2004). On the other hand, Berg (2001) describes qualitative research as the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, and descriptions of things. In stark contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. It is therefore quite clear that qualitative research only deals with text not figures as is the case with quantitative research.

The qualitative paradigm was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, the study is mostly desk-top based but also draws from the answers solicited from open-ended interviews with purposively selected informants who are knowledgeable about the theme of the present study. Secondly, as mentioned above, the study also draws from document analysis deemed one of the important data collection mechanisms. The documents analyzed in this study include the South African Constitution, foreign policy documents such as the White Papers, Green Papers, Acts of parliament, etc. Thirdly, the study also relied on expert opinions from officials from both Israel and Palestine. The latter decision was prompted by the researcher's determination to provide a balanced account on the issues covered by the study.

As the study is largely qualitative in nature, it is therefore imperative that the chosen methods used to analyse the data are suited to the study. Apart from this, the research should also provide a description of methods and processes undergone to analyse the data. According to Roberts (2004:143), "If your study is qualitative, provide a description of matrices used to display the data and identify the coding processes used to convert the raw data into themes or categories for analysis." This description should also include specific details about how the researcher managed the large amount of data associated with qualitative analysis. As access to government and embassy officials proved to be difficult, official statements and documents through archives were on standby as back-up. Getting all the informants to respond took almost six months, so it was hard waiting for these responses but eventually everything

worked out fine as most of them responded. The research has therefore used the meanings, concepts, definitions and metaphors to try and find the meanings from the answers provided by officials and pro-Israel and Palestine groups.

Doing an analysis on qualitative research is not as simple and straightforward as is the case with quantitative research. This is because a qualitative study consists of so many details. It takes time to ascertain which one to cut out and which one to use. According to Swetnam (2004:86), "Purely descriptive, qualitative data can be tricky to present and to avoid tedium they need careful editing and presenting in blocks which can be profitably broken up with sub-headings." Some of these may not require presenting in full and parts can be relegated to the appendices. Therefore, the data was analyzed thematically and consisted of the coding of themes that emanated from the data.

## 4.3 Justification for the Selected Methodology

As explained above, qualitative research refers to the meanings and descriptions of things as opposed to quantitative research which is concerned with counts and measures of such things. Therefore, this study is all about analyzing text and is in no way dealing with numbers or figures. The research deals with South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the Israel-Palestine conflict, the role played by international institutions such as the United Nations in containing this conflict and how interest groups supporting both Israel and Palestine view this conflict.

Before embarking on a particular study a researcher should ask oneself if the chosen methodology will answer the questions asked in the study and how will it go about in achieving this. So, how does one find out if the chosen methodology is the most appropriate for the study? According to Swetman (2004:31), "At higher levels a complete justification of the approach is required including a survey of possibilities, a rationale for choice and an extensive review of the chosen method and its relation to the variables." Therefore, a minimum requirement is an explanation of the reasons for the approach and its likely advantages and disadvantages.

The present study entails looking at three countries, which are Israel, Palestine and South Africa. This type of research design is known as comparative, cross-cultural and cross-national studies. According to Mouton (2001:154), "Comparative studies focus on the

similarities and differences between groups of units of analysis. Such objects can include individual organizations, cultures, countries, societies, institutions and even individuals." These types of studies are common in the fields of international politics and economics. It is therefore quite befitting that this kind of research methodology is used in this study.

In research, a researcher chooses a particular way to conduct an inquiry, chooses a particular way to present and test the chosen theories or ideas and these pertain to a certain method that is embarked upon by the researcher. It is quite clear that conducting research involves so many things and choices. According to Ball (2012:43), "You read carefully chosen things, carry out certain investigations and not others, ask particular questions of selected people, get responses, categorize them, analyse them, emphasize some things and not others, adopt theoretical positions…." Moreover, a researcher needs to choose analytic techniques, and make a wide range of other informed choices. Most importantly, as a norm and as good practice within the research community, a researcher needs to be honest with how the process of research went, such as mentioning the limitations of the methodology.

Selecting a methodology is not an easy thing as there are several issues that the researcherhas to keep in mind before taking such an important decision. A researcher has to look at the nature of the research and how it would suit the study when choosing a particular methodology. According to Roberts (2004) methodology selection rests primarily on the (1) problem to be investigated, (2) purpose of the study, (3) theory base, and (4) nature of data. Selection may also depend on the research skills of the researcher and those of the researcher's committee members. It is therefore quite clear that for this study the qualitative approach was the most appropriate choice. This is because analyzing and interpreting both the primary and secondary text for the study only involves the qualitative approach.

Research falls into two basic styles which are objective and subjective. However, for the purposes of this study only the subjective style was dealt with in this section. Swetnam (2004:31) states that "Subjective approaches deal with the created social lives of groups and individuals through observation and explanation: both are systematically controlled and empirical and may be used by physical or social scientists." The study aimed to observe and explain the events that are taking place in Israel and Palestine, the response of international institutions to this as well as South Africa's foreign policy towards these two respective states.

As with everything else under the sun, the comparative, cross-cultural and cross-national studies have their own strengths and weaknesses. With regard to their strength, with these studies, according to Mouton (2001:154), "The logic of comparison approximates causal inferences and allows scholars to attempt stronger causal hypotheses. It also allows for comparison of different theoretical viewpoints across different settings." As far as this study is concerned different theoretical viewpoints have been applied. These theories which are realism, institutionalism and human rights theories, have assisted in bringing different theoretical viewpoints and thus provide a clearer understanding as to what is really happening in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is very imperative for a researcher to explain why a particular methodology was employed over the other. This is to ensure that the method chosen was not just picked randomly because it fits the style of the researcher and will give favourable results but was chosen on its merit. Ball (2012:44) avers that, "There's no need to cheat and seek favourable results. A negative outcome for your inquiry is perfectly respectable, and is normally a valuable result itself." Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the methodology used was chosen because it was the most appropriate and would give results that give a true reflection of the tools employed during the study.

It is almost impossible to apply a quantitative paradigm in this study as it deals mostly with text and not figures. Therefore, the most suitable methodology is the qualitative approach as it looks at the nature of something not its quantity. Roberts (2004) points out that what distinguishes qualitative research from quantitative research is theoretical/philosophical rationale. This means that in quantitative research, inquiry begins with a specific plan such as a set of detailed questions and hypotheses. On the other hand, with qualitative research, inquiry begins with broad, general questions about the area under investigation.  Since this study involves conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews and looking at written documents it therefore falls neatly under qualitative paradigm.

Although it is important to mention mostly what methodology has been used and why was it chosen, the researcher is allowed to explain why a certain methodology was not chosen. However, too much time should not be spent on explaining the methodology that was not used. Swetnam (2004) suggests that too much valuable time should not be wasted in complex descriptions of methods that have been not chosen for reasons which are patently obvious. Concentration should be rather on the selected style and the exploration of its potential

advantages and disadvantages as they relate to the study. For instance, stating that open-ended questions were sent to interest groups who are pro-Israel and also those that are pro-Palestine would have been less useful as this would be stating the obvious. It would also be worth mentioning that these open-ended questions were sent to Israel and Palestine representatives in South Africa.

One of the disadvantages of using the qualitative methodology is that purposive sampling can be too small. Palys (2008) describes purposive sampling as a technique in which a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. This type of sampling is virtually synonymous with qualitative research. According to Mouton (2001:155), "There are problems in the selection of appropriate cases for the purposes of selection, i.e. the degree of comparability of cases. In cross-cultural and cross-national studies, there are obvious constraints associated with differences in language, culture, symbols, signs, and so on." This was the case in the initial stages of this study as the researcher has opted to interview about ten participants however this was deemed too small a sample therefore the number of participants was increased to twenty. While it would have been impossible to reach saturation point using this number, the responses obtained from these informants were much better and diverse than would have been the case with only ten informants.

Another great thing about choosing this type of methodology is that it calls the researcher to be transparent and honest about the steps taken when conducting the research. In this case for instance, the researcher has to mention that he had to start by writing other chapters before embarking on the literature review as he awaited the ethical clearance from the university. According to Ball (2012:44), "If you later decide to adapt some of your methods in the light of early work or trials that change your views, then say so and talk about their implications too. All the time, think of it as an exercise in transparency." This is to make sure that other researchers, who may want to build on the conducted research, can be sure that the approach was sound and that the findings are justified.

Another reason that has made the researcher choose the qualitative methodology is that unlike the quantitative methodology it is much more personal and thus has a human touch to it. According to Berg (2001) researchers focus on naturally emerging languages and the meanings individuals assign to experience. These experiences include emotions, motivations, symbols and their meanings, empathy, and other aspects associated with naturally evolving

lives of individuals. Furthermore, these elements prove further that qualitative research is natural because of their experiences and various conditions affecting their natural settings.

It is quite clear by now that qualitative research is indeed natural in its approach as it looks at the nature or character of something. This makes it much more enjoyable and personal to conduct since it deals with text and the interpretation of hidden meaning within the text. Moreover, Roberts (2004:111) provides five reasons for doing qualitative research which are:

1. The conviction of the researcher based on research experience
2. The nature of the research problem
3. To uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known
4. To gain novel and fresh slants on things about which quite a bit is already known
5. To give intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods

Indeed, the aim of this study was to understand what lies behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and gain novel slants on things about which quite a bit is already known.

One thing that makes the qualitative methodology much more interesting is its sense of unpredictability. A researcher just cannot tell how the results will go during the gathering of data. Berg (2001) asserts that even though the virtue of qualitative research is seldom questioned in the abstract, its practice is sometimes criticized for being nonscientific and thus invalid. However, these critics tended to lose sight of the probability factor inherent in quantitative practices. So, with quantitative research the researcher is almost certain what the findings will look like as this type of research deals with figures. On the other hand, the qualitative paradigm is less predictable as it deals with the interpretation of text.

As for the sample size, some experts say that it does not really matter how big or small the sample size is, as the result that might be found could be the same. Instead, they emphasize the point that the sample should be representative of the research population in order for the results to be credible. According to Swetnam (2004:43), ''The smaller the sample, the less is the generalisability of the results. A lot of defective research results from attempting to extrapolate from tiny samples to grand theory. We may be forced by circumstances to use the only sample that can be reached – an opportunity sample.'' However, with regard to this study it would have been difficult to use a smaller sample due to the nature of the study hence the

researcher decided to increase the number of participants from the original ten to twenty. Therefore, there is no definite answer as to what size should a sample be. This means that a researcher has to decide the best suited sample for the study conducted and provide a clear justification for using such a sample.

Choosing the qualitative methodology over the quantitative one was not done because it was easier to conduct research using the former. Instead, it was chosen because it was the most suitable methodology of the two. And besides going over such an extensive amount of data was no easy thing to embark on. According to Roberts (2004) since there are no statistics to be performed in qualitative research, some mistakenly believe it to be easier to conduct than a quantitative study. However, analyzing huge amounts of qualitative data into meaningful themes requires considerable time and effort. Therefore, choosing this type of methodology was not about personal preference and its easiness to conduct but it was more about its suitability for the study. As such, the choice was a rational one.

What also made choosing this type of methodology easier is the usage of open-ended questions which give detailed and varied answers. This could provide useful and valuable information for the study and thus make it richer. It is a basic assumption in much social-science research that if the words used are the same and are communicated in the same manner, they will mean the same thing to numerous people in a sample (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Since the study did not use close-ended questions and structured interviews but used open-ended interviews, the same answers from different people were not anticipated and what came forth were varied and interesting answers.

Furthermore, a good research design should be decided by how it approaches the two issues of comparison and control. According to Bechhofer and Paterson (2000:2), "Designing a piece of empirical research requires the researcher to decide on the best of collecting data in research locales which will permit meaningful and insightful comparisons." This means that at the same time the research design must achieve the control which gives some degree of certainty that the explanations offered are indeed superior to competing explanations. Control is about choosing which method and approach are suitable for the gathering of data. Comparison is about ensuring that the most appropriate and relevant data for the study is chosen.

For a researcher to collect data he or she has to assume different roles during the data collection process. This is because in qualitative research, the person that is the researcher has

a special importance. According to Flick (1998) the main instrument of collecting data as well as comprehension are researchers and their communication skills. Owing to this, researchers cannot afford to take a neutral posture in the field and in their contacts with persons interviewed. This means that they have to take or play certain roles and positions, sometimes unwillingly. This is essential in determining which information the researcher gets access to and gets barred from accessing. This researcher has used his considerable contacts acquired as a media practitioner to gain access to most of the participants that have contributed invaluable information to the study.

Research design refers to particular steps that have to be followed when conducting a research. Through this, the researcher specifies the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis. According to Bless et al (2006) research designs have two essential components and these are; observation and an analysis of the relationships between the variables. The potential of these two essential components may be achieved by manipulating certain variables in order to observe the effect on other variables, or by observing corresponding changes in more than one variable. In the case of this study this was achieved by comparing and interpreting the answers received from different participants who were sent questions in the form of a questionnaire.

There is no set out rule or structure as to how to conduct a qualitative research methodology. However, there has to be valid reasons behind conducting such a study. According to Cresswell (2007) qualitative research is conducted because a problem or issue needs to be explored. Moreover it is conducted because we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue. Qualitative research is also conducted because quantitative measures do not fit the problem. In this study the qualitative methodology was employed because there was a need to explore South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and its handling of the Israel-Palestine conflict. A detailed and complex understanding of the issue of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and the approach to the conflict that involves these two Middle Eastern states was needed and appropriate. Due to the nature of the study, which needed extensive textual analysis, it was almost impossible to use a quantitative approach, hence a qualitative method was used.

It is quite important to note that research is a process and not just one simple event. As such, after choosing the topic the researcher needs to go out there and conduct the research as the study won't research itself. So much goes into researching, writing, analyzing and

interpreting the data obtained during the actual research. As Schmitter (2008:263) puts it, "It is this process of translation from something problematic or puzzling into something on which you can gather valid data about which you can make compelling inferences that constitutes your research design." Choosing this research design was not just a given. However, it was dictated to by the nature of the study as it required vigorous gathering and interpretation of data. Therefore, opting for a qualitative research methodology was not a safe bet but was chosen merely because it would have been impossible to conduct quantitative research for the purposes of this study.

The mere fact that there were no figures to deal with but rather extensive text and answers to open-ended questions to interpret and analyse proves that quantitative research was totally out of question. The qualitative methodology, as with all things, is not without its faults and weaknesses though. As Silverman (2000:9) avers, "In many, quantitatively oriented social science methodology textbooks, qualitative research is often treated as a relatively minor methodology. As such, it is suggested that it should only be contemplated at early or exploratory stages of a study. Therefore, from this perspective, with regards to qualitative research, it can be assumed that it should be used to familiarize oneself with a setting before the serious sampling and counting begins.

Another disadvantage is that its findings at times are so far-fetched from reality that they cannot be used in everyday life. According to Flick (1998) it has also become clear that social science results are rarely perceived and used in everyday life their investigations and findings often remain too far removed from everyday questions and problems. So then what good is the research if it is not going to benefit the public? Fortunately, this study will hopefully benefit the citizens of South Africa and enable them to understand the complex Israel-Palestine conflict and also inform the government to fully apply itself when making foreign policies pertaining to the two respective states.

Furthermore, what works against qualitative methodology is the validity of the explanations that it may offer. This is because the way in which the data is interpreted may appeal to just a few people. Silverman (2000:11) asserts that, "Sometimes one doubts the validity of an explanation because the researcher has clearly made no attempt to deal with contrary cases. Sometimes, the extended immersion in the field, leads to certain preciousness about the validity of the interpretation." Therefore, these advantages have led to quantitative researchers downplaying the value of qualitative research methodology. However, the

quantitative approach also has its disadvantages but for the purposes of this study, these will not be explored as the research approach was not used.

The study sought to answer the following questions with regard to the exploration of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine:

- What drives the South African Foreign Policy towards Israel and Palestine?
- How does South Africa benefit from its current posture towards Israel and Palestine?
- Is the nexus between South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and the ruling ANC government of any assistance to South Africa's international aspirations in the long run?
- How realistic is South Africa's posture towards Israel and Palestine in the modern era of International Relations?
- What role did religious groups and civil society play in the formulation of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?
- To what extent are South Africa's foreign policy imperatives determined by global developments?
- How significant is the tension caused by the position of the ruling ANC on Palestine/Israel which has adopted the BDS campaign and the South African Government, that has formally decided to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

The foregoing has provided the reasoning behind the usage of the qualitative methodology in this study. However, simply arguing and stating why this methodology was chosen is just not enough as the researcher has to demonstrate that he actually fully and clearly understands the type of methodology he opted to go for. According to Henning et al (2004:36), "The way in which a researcher argues the suitability and utility of her choice of methods is thus her methodological reasoning. Methodology is therefore more than a collection of methods but about reasoning what their value in a study is and why they have been chosen." Therefore, the argument about methodology has to be really eloquent as it has to demonstrate that the researcher knows what he or she is looking for and how to go about getting it.

Choosing to use a certain methodology over the other is usually determined by the nature of the study. It therefore cannot be wholly dependent on the researcher to choose which methodology is suitable for the study. Durrheim (1999:43) points out that, "If the research

purpose is to study phenomena as they unfold in real-world situations, without manipulation, to study phenomena as interrelated wholes rather than split up into discreet predetermined variables, then an inductive, qualitative approach is required." All these decisions are taken after considering the purpose of the research and the type of data that is suitable for the study and that will help achieve this purpose. For the purposes of this research the quantitative research methodology was totally out of the action as there were no figures to deal with in order to reach the conclusions. This study only required the literature review, the differing opinions on the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as the justification of the South African foreign policy towards these two states.

## 4.4 Data Collection Procedures

The primary data was obtained through open-ended interviews conducted with the Palestine and Israel embassies as well as groups such as the Jewish Board of Deputies and Pro Palestine Groups such as Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) South Africa. Two informants from the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) were also contacted. The informants were purposively selected based on their knowledge about the subject matter. The aim was to have a sample of twenty informants drawn from civil society, eight from each of the two sides (Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel) and two from DIRCO and one each from the Israeli and Palestinian embassies. In total, the sample was set at seventeen although one respondent's responses were deemed unsatisfactory to use. The sample size was then scaled down to sixteen. Three other informants did not respond at all to questions; however as the response rate was at 80 percent, it was more than enough to work with. Secondary data was generated through books, journal articles, newspapers and internet sources.

Although many studies have been conducted around the Israel-Palestine conflict and South Africa's role in trying to resolve it, but none have sought to examine and question South Africa's foreign policy towards these states, like this study does. This is because it has employed both primary and secondary data in pursuit of the knowledge that was needed and appropriate in conducting such a study. This was especially imperative as this study has so many complex issues around it such as religion, human rights violations, intermittent wars and failure of international institutions to contain the conflict. Therefore, it had to take all the data that the researcher could manage to lay his hands on in order to better understand the

study and interpret the findings in a manner that would help make things clearer. The religious tour that the researcher took to Israel in December 2013 also played a crucial role in making him have a better understanding of this conflict. What puzzled the researcher is that although Israel is a beautiful country but most of its land is a desert. Therefore, it shows that the conflict runs much deeper than just land as most people and commentators assume.

It is rather not easy to determine whether the data and sampling are enough for the study. According to Kelly (1999:380), "A question that often crops up is how many cases is enough? The experienced researcher will have a good intuitive sense of when there has been a comprehensive and in-depth coverage of the main issues at stake." Since the researcher was in tune with this study he realized that the ten respondents would not be adequate for the study so he chose to increase the number to twenty of which seventeen responded. However, one informant's reply was inadequate so the number decreased to sixteen. Therefore these sixteen respondents and secondary data obtained from libraries, government sources and the internet provided suitable answers to the research problem.

The informants who were selected to provide information on the theme of this study ranged from diplomats from South Africa, Israel and Palestine who were quite knowledgeable about the state of affairs in the Middle East as well as the Israel-Palestine conflict. With regard to civil society groups or interest groups, they represented the demographics of South Africa. There was also a diversity of age as different youth organisations were also interviewed, as well as diversity of religion. The respondents did not disappoint as their answers brought about a new light into the Israel-Palestine conflict. Henning et al (2004:52) contend that, "The main aim of interview data is to bring to our attention what individuals think and what they have to say about it in an interview, giving us their subjective reality, which is guided and managed by an interviewer and later integrated into a research report." Therefore, it is very imperative for a researcher to carefully choose his subjects if he anticipates a really meaningful contribution to the study. The respondents chosen were interested partial parties in both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflictand they had some strong views about this issue, as well as South Africa's foreign policy towards these two respective states.

So then how is it possible to determine that the answers provided by a handful of people will be enough to give valid conclusions and also provide answers to the research problem? Can purposive sampling adequately represent the answers that would have been provided by the rest of the population? According to Bless et al (2006:97), "Without doubt, if one wants to

collect accurate information about a group of persons or objects, the best strategy is to examine every single member or element of the group. But it is also possible to reach accurate conclusions by examining only a portion of the total group." As is, this method is proven and is used in the social sciences. Apart from this, it also saves time as it would not make sense to interview everyone when you have the option of purposive sampling.

It can be quite a daunting task to have the responsibility of choosing which part of the population best represents its views and therefore a better choice for the sample. In this study, the researcher saw it fit that the interest and lobby groups from both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict were most suitable for this purpose. It is quite obvious that there are some people in South Africa that support Israel and they thus do not support Palestine. There are also those that support Palestine and denounce Israel. Therefore, these interest and lobby groups were better candidates of purposive sampling that represented the entire population. Howard (1985:50) posits that, "Scientists must be able to assume that a sample is indeed a good representation of the people in the population he or she wishes to come to understand." This basically means that the results obtained from the sample of subjects should represent a good estimation of the results that would have been obtained from studying every subject in the population. Consequently, the twenty informants (with an 80 percent response rate) that were chosen were best suited to provide the answers that would represent the opinion of the rest of the population as they represented both sides in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

There are various ways in which a researcher can collect primary data. However, for this study the researcher only employed just one of these ways, that is, open-ended interviews sent via emails. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:137), "Qualitative researchers typically rely on four primary methods for gathering information: (1) participating in the setting, (2) observing directly, (3) interviewing in depth, and (4) analyzing documents and material culture, with varying emphases." These four methods are the staple diet of the qualitative research methodology. Since the researcher could not employ all four of them as they could not be all suitable for this type of research, he then opted for interviewing in depth. As mentioned earlier these interviews involved about twenty informants from the different sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

It is very important for a researcher to choose a data collection tool that is practical, effective and time saving. Choosing to interview the participants by sending them emailed questions was the best possible way to achieve this. As Matthews and Ross (2010:181) explain further,

"Data collection is a practical activity, one that has to be carried out within time, spatial and resource constraints. It is therefore important to consider how valid social research data can be collected effectively and efficiently within those constraints." Therefore, the questionnaire sent to the twenty informants (with an 80 percent response rate) was the best possible for this study to collect data.

Furthermore, while questionnaires that were sent to respondents with open-ended questions were effective and saved time, they are not without faults. The fact that these questionnaires were sent via email made the interviewing a bit impersonal because these were not face-to-face interviews. Bechhofer and Paterson (2000) argue that there is still an assumption of some distance between the researcher and the interviewer on the one hand, and the respondent on the other, despite the attempt to get the interview or the questionnaire process into the conceptual world of the person being interviewed. This makes this type of data collection a bit problematic as the interviewer may not be able to pose follow-up questions to try and get some more clarity. Although this method was in a way effective however, it also lacked that personal touch to it.

Secondary data were collected through official documents from the South African, Israeli and Palestinian governments, books, journals and the internet. The researcher then took it upon himself to interpret such data by putting them according to themes that would make it easier to understand. Under the qualitative research methodology it is incumbent upon the researcher to make the observation not the instrumentation. According to Durrheim (1999:46), "Rather than using a measurement scale as an instrument of observation, in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument of observation. Data is collected either by interviews or by observing human behaviour in contexts of interaction." The researcher used his personal judgment to select which data to use from the volumes of data that were made available to him during the research process. These methods allowed for a rich and detailed observation of the data collected and also enabled the researcher to have more understanding of phenomena as they emerge in specific contexts.

Finding the right data for the study is simply not enough as the researcher still has the important task of choosing the most important data that will be used for the study. This process of identifying the most appropriate data for usage in the research also forms part of data collection. Henning et al (2004) contend that documents may be analyzed for their historical value, in other words, for what they mean historically as source material. These

documents may then follow the same route through analysis and interpretation. Therefore, South African foreign policy documents had to go through the same process of being analyzed and interpreted so as to provide more clarity on the country's foreign policy posture towards Israel and Palestine. These documents together with the responses from the respondents assisted in illuminating the motive behind what could be termed as South Africa's rather ambiguous foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine.

Another thorny issue about conducting research by poring through documents is that getting them may prove a daunting task. At times a researcher may need to travel very far in order to access the documents. At times there might be just too many red tapes around obtaining the required data that it might take such a long time to get them. According to Creswell (2007:141), "In document research, the issues involve locating materials, at often sites far away, and obtaining permission to use the materials." However, with regard to this study, the researcher did not experience any such problems as the documents were easily accessible and there were no red tapes around obtaining them.

Although gathering information through documents is a non-reactive research strategy and as such entails gathering data without direct interaction with participants, there are, however, some disadvantages associated with this as well. According to Bless et al (2006) the records used may contain institutional biases, may be prone to erratic record collecting and keeping, and another limitation of the record method arises from the secrecy of certain data. This means that the records may be written in a way that is aimed at safeguarding the interests of that particular institution or state as a result this may compromise the authenticity of the document obtained. As for the erratic record collecting and keeping, this might be done to cover up certain facts. With regard to the third limitation, many records are usually not available to researchers because they may be prohibited.

Another form of data collection that was employed in this study is content analysis, whereby data from the media was used to test the opinion on the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as South Africa's foreign policy towards these respective states from the Middle East. According to Howard (1985:222), "Content analysis is an attempt to ascertain the meanings in a body discourse in some systematic and quantifiable way. It involves performing quantitative analyses on novels, newspaper reports, television shows, advertising campaigns, political speeches, or the like." Although some of the newspaper articles were used as data for this study however it was used sparingly as there were other forms of collecting data

employed as well. The reason for its limited usage is that it is usually employed to serve political or economic ends so as to drive home certain points or illuminate stereotypes of some sort.

**4.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis entails the interpretation of the findings of the study and explaining what these findings mean to the research. This section talks in greater detail about the process that the researcher went through in analyzing the data. However, this process is not at all smooth sailing or simple. As Marshall and Rossman (2011:207) aver, "The process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat." At times this process can make the researcher so tortured, confused and even question why he chose this journey in the first place. However, when these feelings of helplessness engulfed the researcher, he had no choice but to soldier on as he had come too far to quit at the last hurdle.

Data analysis in the qualitative research methodology is not as clear-cut as in the quantitative research methodology. This is simply because in quantitative research results are conclusive whereas under the qualitative paradigm the researcher has to look for specific themes as well as general statements. According to Matthews and Ross (2010) the process of data analysis begins as soon as data have been collected because the analysis of qualitative data largely depends on the interpretation of the raw data collected by the researcher from the field. However, in some research projects data collection and analysis go on at the same time, with additional cases being introduced to the analysis. It is therefore clear from this vantage point that in qualitative research, data analysis is not structured and the researcher has to go with the flow.

As stated above, there is no set way in which a researcher can analyse the data since he interprets the data as he sees fit. The analysis is done so that the researcher can detect consistent patterns within the data. According to Bless et al (2006:163), "The data analysis process allows the researcher to generalize the findings from the sample used in the research, to the larger population in which the researcher is interested. The process of data analysis itself takes many different forms." This depends entirely on the nature of the research question, design as well as the nature of the research itself. With qualitative research, the

researcher has to analyse qualitative data with techniques especially designed for this type of data. This makes sense as it is impossible to analyse qualitative data using quantitative methods of analysis.

So what is the process of data analysis? What do its stages usually entail? Well, according to Cresswell (2007) data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in a discussion. This is basically the general process that researchers undergo when conducting data analysis. Naturally, as stated in the foregoing paragraphs these may differ from researcher to researcher. As for this researcher, he started analyzing once he had secured all the data and responses from interviewees who had to answer a list of open-ended questions.

When it comes to data analysis in the qualitative research paradigm, the data need to be coded into different themes. The great advantage of this is that there is no right way to code textual data. One excellent guide to assist the researcher in understanding the coding process is provided by Roberts (2004:143-145). She describes, in eight steps the systematic process to analyze textual data:

1. Get sense of the whole. Read all the transcriptions carefully. Perhaps jot down some ideas as they come to mind.

2. Pick one document- the most interesting one, the shortest, the one on top of the pile. Go through it asking yourself, "What is this about?" Do not think about the "substance" of the information but its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.

3. When you have completed this task for several informants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together similar topics. Form these topics into columns that might be arrayed as major topics, unique topics, and leftovers.

4. Now take this list and go back to your data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Try this preliminary organising scheme to see if new categories and codes emerge.

5. Find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into categories. Look for ways of reducing your total list of categories by grouping topics that relate to each other. Perhaps draw lines between your categories to show interrelationships.

6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.

7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.

8. If necessary, recode your existing data.

Although the above eight steps may not exactly apply to the current study as they are, however they have provided an idea of how the data were analyzed. This is because the study analyzed existing data and interviews. However, these steps were more or less followed when analysing the data. Moreover, it also makes things easier when the researcher starts analysing the data as soon as possible. As Silverman (2000:121) argues, "Data analysis does not come after data gathering. If you only have one interview or recording or set of field-notes, go for it." It really helps a lot to transcribe everything that the researcher sees as he embarks on the study and should review the data according to the research questions.

Although analyzing data for the qualitative researcher is subjective and the interpretation of these results entirely depends on his judgment, there is a set way to follow when analyzing data. This went a long way in assisting the researcher to make sense of the data and interpret it in a clear and cohesive manner. According to Hollway and Jefferson (2000:55), the four core questions that are associated with analyzing any qualitative data are:

- What do we notice?
- Why do we notice what we notice?
- How can we interpret what we notice?
- How can we know that our interpretation is the right one?

Armed with these questions, it made the task of analyzing data much easier for the researcher although it called for a serious pondering and deliberation on the data collected.

Knowing how to interpret data and choosing the most appropriate method has to go hand in hand, otherwise it would be a waste of time. The researcher has to absolutely ensure that the method used is the most appropriate. Flick (1998) contends that the interpretation of data is often the decisive factor in determining what statements can be made about and which conclusions can be drawn from the empirical data irrespective regardless of how it was collected. What is most comforting is that despite all of the procedures and methods

mentioned, no procedure is appropriate in every case. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the researcher to determine the most appropriate method for his or her study.

There are many ways in which a researcher may interpret data in the qualitative paradigm. One way that is mostly used in qualitative research is called content analysis. This means that this researcher actually went for the conventional and straightforward qualitative coding and categorising. According to Henning et al (2004:102), "This means that the data are divided into small units of meaning, which are then systematically named per unit and then grouped together in categories that contain related codes. Each category will therefore contain codes that are semantically related." The researcher had to work really hard in trying to categorise certain themes into related codes in order to make sense of the data interpreted. In doing this, the researcher had to ensure that he went through the data thoroughly so as to carefully select these themes and patterns.

Under qualitative research methodology with regard to data analysis, there is no clear point when data collection stops and where analysis begins. These two processes happen concurrently. Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) argue that at first the researcher is mainly collecting data and towards the end he or is mainly analysing what he or she has collected. Therefore, the key principle here is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding. Furthermore, such description is more than a mere copy of the original phenomenon being studied. The purpose is not to collect bits and pieces or real life, but to place real-life events and phenomena into some kind of perspective. In other words the researcher's job when doing data analysis is to simplify and make sense of the phenomena studied.

Qualitative data is said to take many forms and is mainly unstructured. Therefore, a researcher needs to work extremely hard to convince others that his study is reliable and credible. According to Matthews and Ross (2010:373) to ensure that our analysis is credible and transparent to others we need analytical approaches that are:

- Systematic and comprehensive: the analysis should follow a set of procedures and the same procedures should be applied to all the cases and all the data.
- Grounded: the data collected is usually in its raw state – that is, as it was said or written and we must be able to return to the data in its raw state throughout the analysis;

- Dynamic: the full analysis cannot be planned at the beginning of the process as ideas and themes emerge as part of the working process, so the approach itself must be dynamic and flexible and allow for changes.

- Accessible: the researcher's interpretations and the way these are used to develop the analysis must be open and understandable by others.

What is evident from the above is that the process of analysing data is flexible and thus allows for changes. This actually enabled the researcher to be able to change the course of analysis as he pleased during the process because the analysis itself was not rigid but allowed the researcher room to maneuver with ease.

However, qualitative content analysis, as with everything else, is not without its faults and disadvantages. This type of analysis is mostly chosen by novice researchers because it is easier to access and works on one level of meaning, which is, the content of data texts. Furthermore, according to Henning et al (2004) this method of analysis may unfortunately lead to superficial or unrealistic findings because it captures what is presumed to be the real world in a straight-forward and direct way. In other words the data are not interrogated. Data analysis is more than just a stringent application of the method of coding and categorising. A great deal of intellectual effort goes into data analysis and this researcher had to give it his all in order to get the desired analysis. And it really helped that this form of data analysis is flexible.

Moreover, data analysis involves making sense of the data and delving deeper on the lessons learnt while poring through the massive data when conducting the study. There are several forms to this practice that are in existence such as interpretation based on hunches, insights and intuition. According to Cresswell (2007:154), "Interpretation also might be within a social science construct or idea or a combination of personal views as contrasted with a social science or idea. In the process of interpretation, researchers step back and form larger meanings of what is going in the situations or sites." It is therefore quite apparent that the interpretation of data is a mixture of what the researcher has observed and what is actually occurring within those phenomena. For instance, the researcher had to interpret what the respondents said and compare it with the textual data on the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as the one on South African foreign policy towards these two respective states.

It is almost impossible to conduct a research of this magnitude and have no errors at all. It is also important to note that observations of any kind can never be expressed without some

error. Bless et al (2006) argue that however recognizing this weakness does not mean that one should passively accept these errors but on the contrary it means that every effort should be made to identify and reduce them. This can only be possible if all the possible sources of errors are identified and investigated. It is therefore very imperative to go through the data analysis and carefully read it in order to minimize this.

Interpretation and analysing of data remain a mystery as it is up to the researcher to conduct this task and he can never predict the outcome. Moreover, the raw data have no meaning and consequently it becomes a researcher's duty to bring to life a meaning to those data sets by linking them to the research theme or topic under investigation. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:207), "Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. The final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when and if arrived at." Therefore, it can be said that the process is never a dull one as the researcher may not know what to anticipate when conducting the study. It is simply a very taxing, exciting and interesting process all at the same time.

Conducting data analysis involves a lot of methods and a researcher has to employ as many as possible so as to arrive at a good research argument and thus enhancing the illumination of the research problem. After all the data have been coded and categorized the researcher is then left with an all important task of finishing what he started. According to Henning et al (2004:106), the researcher has to ask himself the following questions:

- What are the relationships in meaning between all these categories?
- What do they say together?
- What do they say about each other?
- What is missing?
- How do they address the research question(s)?
- How do these categories (together) link with what I already know about the topic?
- What has been foregrounded in the analysis?
- What has moved to the background?
- What additional data gathering and/or analysis have to be completed?

Writing up this process is regarded as being part of data analysis and it is expected that a competent researcher will be able to answer these questions. Furthermore, he or she should be able to round off the analysis.

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, a researcher should not rely on one method of analysis in order to enhance the findings of his study. Thematic analysis is known as method that is all about segmentation, categorisation and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation. According to Matthews and Ross (2010:373-374), the contents of a series of documents are arranged alongside to enable us as researchers to:

- Describe the data;
- Get to the meaning of the data for the person who produced it;
- Explore the data for meanings;
- Look for relationships between different parts of the data;
- Explain (tentatively) the similarities and differences and the apparent relationships.

Throughout this process, the researcher needs to check out his own interpretations and understandings against the raw data. The most important and assuring thing about qualitative research is that despite all the interpretations and analysis of the data, the researcher has to remain grounded to the raw data. With regard to this study, while the researcher was analysing the data using thematic analysis, he had to remain grounded to the raw data on South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. He also had to constantly refer to the answers provided by the respondents from the different sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

It is therefore quite clear that the process of data analysis is quite daunting and as a result calls for the researcher to be alert and vigilante at all times when analysing data. The researcher also had to ensure that he used as many data analysis methods as possible in order to arrive at the best possible results with less errors and mistakes. This required going through the answers to the questions posed to the informants as well as analysing data collected from the books, journals, newspapers and the internet.

## 4.6 Limitations of the study

It is quite regrettable that there was no method of analysis that would fit perfectly in this study and thus the researcher had to use various methods to analyse data.  However, the usage of various data analysis methods can be advantageous as it allows for the total illumination of the findings reached.  Since there were open-ended interview questions sent to purposively selected informants, the prospect of not finishing the study within the set time was highly probable. This was a big disadvantage since some of the respondents took their time to respond and this almost affected this study as it created unnecessary anxiety for the researcher. Unfortunately, this is something that the researcher had no control over. As stated earlier all but three informants, responded, however, one response was not suitable for usage. Therefore, the number of responses was at sixteen, thereby putting the response percentage at 80 percent.

Apart from this problem there was also a challenge of going through the massive data that involved Israel, Palestine as well as data on South Africa's foreign policy towards these respective states.  However, since the provision of dividing what was researched into sub-headings was already made, the problem was finally overcome. Another limitation was that the researcher did not travel to Israel and Palestine to conduct research for this study.  It would have been great if he had travelled to both Israel and Palestine and interviewed authorities from both these states.  However, since he travelled to Israel and Palestine in December 2013, this somewhat gave him a perspective on the situation in these Middle Eastern states. Moreover, the fact that both the Israeli and Palestinian ambassadors responded as well as the South African Presidential Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process, was a very useful development.

It would also have been great to have conducted face to face interviews with the respondents so as to have an opportunity to pose follow-up questions and read their facial expressions as they responded to questions. This is something rather impossible with emailed questions as you do not have the luxury of seeing the person that you are interviewing face to face. This, in some way, is not natural and in a way impersonal and therefore limits the chance of interjecting while the interviewee is giving an answer in order to provide some clarity. But, despite these weaknesses, the information solicited from the informants was critical and aided the study by enabling the researcher to reach certain conclusions which will contribute to the country's understanding of the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Most importantly, it is

hoped that the findings of this study will assist those saddled with the responsibility to address the conflict in the Middle East. The gaps enumerated in this study will give pointers to future researchers.

## 4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has spelt out the research methodology that was followed in conducting the study and has provided reasons why certain paradigms and data collection methods were preferred to others. The informants used in the study were introduced and reasons for their selection, as well as the methods used to select them provided with the view to let the reader understand the context within which the study was carried out. The chapter also outlined why the qualitative approach was chosen over other research types such as the quantitative approach and the reasons why this type of research was suitable for this study were provided. Where applicable, the challenges experienced during the data collection stage were spelt out and answers provided as to how those challenges were dealt with by the researcher in order to make the study results reliable and credible. Importantly, this chapter discussed data collection issues both from a theoretical point of view and with specific reference to the present study. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, it was done in order to demonstrate the researcher's understanding of how research methodology is structured. Secondly, it was done in order to help the reader understand how this particular study was conducted so as to be able to appreciate its results and understand them in context.

Having outlined the research methodology used to collect data for this study, the following chapter (Chapter 5) is about presenting the research findings of the study. In this chapter the findings of the study will be presented as a way of contributing to knowledge on the subject of this research. In essence the next chapter will serve to present the findings taken from primary data which are the interviews with twenty respondents as well as secondary data from books, journals, official documents, newspapers and the internet. The next chapter is considered one of the most critical chapters in any research as it is here that the researcher's contribution to knowledge becomes evident.

# CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH RESULTS/FINDINGS

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter Four) discussed the methodology that was followed in conducting the study and provided reasons why certain paradigms and data collection methods were preferred to others. In this chapter the findings of the study will be presented as a way of contributing to knowledge on the subject of this research. In essence, the chapter serves to present the findings taken from primary data which are the interviews with seventeen of the twenty intended respondents as well as secondary data from books, journal articles, official documents, newspapers and the internet. The chapter is considered one of the most critical chapters in any research as it is here that the researcher's contribution to knowledge becomes evident. It is entirely dependent upon the researcher as to how he or she opts to organize the chapter. This is dictated by the amount of data collected. According to Mouton (2001) the organization of the results may also depend on the research objectives, the complexity of the research design and the amount of data collected. For the purpose of this study, the findings are presented in one chapter – with the analysis and discussion done in a separate chapter, i.e. Chapter 6.

The primary data were obtained through open-ended interviews conducted with the Palestine and Israel embassies as well as groups such as the Jewish Board of Deputies and Pro Palestine Groups such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) South Africa. The open-ended interviews were conducted via emails which were sent by the researcher directly to the respondents themselves to solicit their views on the issues at hand. Two informants from the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) or Presidential Special Envoys in the Middle East Peace Process were also contacted via email. However, only one of them managed to respond. But this did in no way affect the outcome of the findings as they were both the Presidential Special Envoys in the Middle East Peace Process and they were more or less going to give the same responses.

The informants were purposively selected based on their knowledge about the subject matter under investigation. The aim was to have a sample of twenty informants drawn from civil society, eight from each of the two sides (Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel) and two from DIRCO and one each from the Israeli and Palestinian embassies. In total, the sample was set at seventeen with eight responses from Pro-Palestinian organizations, six from the Pro-Israeli

side, one from DIRCO, one from the Israeli embassy and one from the Palestinian embassy. One respondent's answers from the Pro-Palestine side were too vague and thereby deemed unusable. Although this sample falls short of the intended twenty informants but it was nevertheless adequate for the researcher to formulate findings. The 80 percentage response rate could be classified as hugely successful because only four people opted not to respond to the questions. The respondents did not provide any reasons for not answering the e-mailed questions despite numerous attempts to send follow-up emails in order to get their attention. Secondary data were generated through consulting books, journal articles, newspapers and internet sources.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the study is about the examination of South Africa's foreign policy on Israel and Palestine after 1994, with a specific focus on the conflict between these two respective countries. As such, it sought to explore some of the questions with regard to South Africa's foreign policy towards both these Middle Eastern states. Some of the questions that were explored were questions such as the following:

-What drives the SA foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

-What roles have religious groups and civil society played in the formulation of SA's foreign policy towards these respective countries?

The question on the significance of the tension caused by the position taken by the ruling ANC on Israel-Palestine conflict, which appears to be at odds with the SA government as it has formally maintained diplomatic relations with Israel on SA's foreign policy towards both these countries, was also explored.

As this study is qualitative in nature and included both the primary and secondary data review, the data had to be summarised using mainly the discourse analysis method. This was done being mindful of the challenges involved in this approach. Some of these challenges include the unpredictability and the incompleteness of the structures given by this approach. According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) discourses are incomplete structures as a result there is always room for struggles over what the structure should look like, what discourses should prevail, and how meaning should be ascribed to the individual signs. Therefore, the researcher has to look at the type of study undertaken and conjure up the most suitable presentation of the results or findings. For the purposes of this chapter, there is only the

presentation of the results. The discussion of these results will be left for the following chapter whose purpose will be to make sense of the results presented in the present chapter.

## 5.2 Presentation of results/findings

As this is not a quantitative study but rather a qualitative one, therefore the results are unlikely to be presented in numerical form at all, nor will there be charts and tables which list the findings numbers or percentages. According to Ball (2012) in many ways, qualitative findings and other more vague outcomes still count as a form of result, consequently deserve reporting with much clarity as a scientist would present quantitative data. Furthermore Swetnam (2004) states that descriptive qualitative data can be tricky to present and therefore need careful editing and presenting in blocks which might include sub-headings. Some data such as questionnaires and interview schedules may not require presenting in full and some parts are relegated to the appendices. Therefore, as conventional practice in the research community, presenting the outcome of the findings of the study entirely rests upon the researcher.

Moreover, the presentation of the data is also more about packaging of the evidence of the researcher. Badenhorst (2008:184) gives an extensive meaning of presenting data where she describes it as reducing and organizing data, interpreting it as well as giving it visual form. Among others, she states the following:

1. Reducing and organising data: Sort by category, theme or concept the data you want your reader to see. This is the evidence which will convince your reader of the findings. These include matrices, tables, maps, networks, flow charts…
2. Interpreting the data: Organising the data is essentially about interpretation. Here you make sense of the data for your reader. If you have group respondents' comments in two different tables, you will explain to the reader why.
3. Visual form: Visual form usually means graphics of some sort, but texts can also be visual. Present a dialogue to show dissenting voices. Write portraits of respondents and profiles of organisations.

Therefore, the essential point is that the reader needs the researcher's message three times, that is in the form of reduction and organisation of data, interpretation of the data and visual form, which is basically a presentation of dissenting voices. This is what the researcher aimed

when dealing with this chapter and dissenting voices among all three embassies, Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine respondents were presented.

Presenting the results required that the researcher had to look through the research problem and objectives which are part of the broader issues investigated by this study. The study looked at the validity of the posture taken by some of the leaders in the South African government and the Tripartite Alliance regarding the complex Israeli-Palestine issue. The study also investigated the impact the so-called South African impartiality and objectivity might have on the Israeli-Palestine question given the similar history of Apartheid South Africa and the so-called Israel Apartheid towards Palestinians. Moreover, the study investigated the role played by the different religions, namely; Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Furthermore, it investigated the extent of the influence multilateral organizations such as the United Nations have had on South Africa's foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. Lastly, the study also investigated the approach of regional groupings such as the African Union and the Arab League towards the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Using the research problem and objectives mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, the researcher managed to create the categories and themes in order to arrive at the findings. Apart from employing five of the eight steps mentioned by Roberts (2004), the researcher also used Badenhorst's method of presenting the results in three different forms, which is in written form, in visual form and an interpretation of visual (Badenhorst,2008). In essence, Roberts' steps, as expanded upon in the previous chapter (Chapter Four), entailed reading all transcriptions carefully, getting the underlying meaning, making a list of all topics or themes and then turn them into categories. Regarding Badenhorst's method of presenting results in visual form, it could be contended that although there were sans visuals in this study as it is qualitative in nature, however since the data were full of differing opinions as well as dissenting voices, this therefore made for crystal clear and colourful visuals. While the researcher was undergoing the process of coding the results he was simultaneously looking at the research problem to see if it fits within these steps.

Combining the research problem, objectives, questions and some sections in the literature review chapter, this resulted in the findings coded into different themes. This resulted in the emergence of themes such as the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa; the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy in

Israel and Palestine; the role and impact of religion in the conflict; the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine; and the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine. In order to make the presentation of results more interesting, the words informant and respondent, were used interchangeably when referring to both Pro-Israel and Palestine civil society groups.

**5.2.1 The historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa**

The common thread that evidently runs throughout the responses of the Pro-Israel group of informants is the acknowledgement that South Africa and Palestine share a common history of suffering and loss of land. One respondent felt that both Israel and Palestine could take a leaf from South Africa's book by applying the same negotiating tactics that former presidents, Nelson Mandela and FW De Klerk undertook when negotiating South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. This respondent believed that the only way for peace is, 'for visionary leaders to be elected at the same time on both sides that are willing to give up some demands and negotiate, similar to what Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk did.' Another respondent believed that just because historically and biblically the land once belonged to the Jewish people that claim can be asserted in a theoretical sense, 'practical realities dictate that it cannot be actively taken up.' In other words, although history seemed to favour Israel on the land issue but as there were people who already inhabited the land when the Jews returned, claiming exclusivity to the land is not practical. What is also noteworthy was the refuting of the assertion that the Israel-Palestine conflict mirrored apartheid by another respondent.

On the other hand, all the Pro-Palestine respondents shared the view that Israel is similar to apartheid South Africa and could be even worse. In fact, almost in unison, the respondents agreed that the atrocities of the state of Israel in Palestine were worse than those of apartheid South Africa. Moreover, another respondent asserted that, 'The way Israel has chopped its original map since its establishment shares similar characteristics with the way in which the South African state that excluded Africans established Bantustans in South Africa where it confined Africans.' Another Pro-Palestine respondent felt that although civil society campaigns against Israel were somewhat effective, they are rather not as effective as campaigns against apartheid South Africa. One other respondent dismissed claims that the

Israeli territory was given to the Jews by God as is sometimes claimed. The respondent stated, 'During apartheid South Africa, Afrikaner nationalism also made the claim that the land was a God given gift to a particular racial group.' Furthermore, another informant stated, 'given that Israel practices a system of apartheid against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinians Territories, the country must be treated in the same way like Apartheid South Africa.' It is therefore quite clear that judging from the Pro-Palestine side and Pro-Israel side, there was no consensus as to whether or not Israel qualifies to be called the apartheid state just like South Africa prior to 1994.

With regard to the Israel and Palestine embassies, as well as the DIRCO or the Presidential Special Envoy, it was quite clear that both Israel and Palestine recognized the history shared by South African and Palestinian liberation movements in fighting for their citizens. Consequently, they welcomed the fact that South Africa supports the two-state solution like the rest of the world. Both Israel and Palestine understood that South Africa's trade relations with these two respective countries are informed by shared history of oppression with Palestine and shared trade relations with Israel. With regard to Israel, the relationship has no political links as is the case with Palestine but is informed strictly by economic interests.

Furthermore, the DIRCO/Presidential Special Envoy also stated that, 'South Africa's policy position on the situation in Palestine is undoubtedly informed by the country's own history of oppression and abuse of human rights.' The Palestinian ambassador to South Africa also shared the same sentiments when he asserted, 'The South African government's policy position on Palestine and Israel is based on echoes of South Africa's own struggle within the Israeli-Palestine conflict, that is, South Africa's history of apartheid, oppression, violation and abuse of human rights.' The Israeli ambassador stated that he believed that increased engagement between his country and South Africa could, 'have a wide impact in the Middle East region,' as it supports a two-state solution.

The literature review revealed that it was quite evident that one of the major reasons that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners will always support the Palestinian cause is that Israel was the only South African ally during apartheid in Southern Africa. Because of the treatment of the indigenous people in their respective countries, in the case of South Africa, black Africans, and in the case of Israel, the Palestinians, these states were seen as international pariahs over time (Bishku, 2010).

These circumstances combined to share economic and military strengths, because they felt isolated. During apartheid, South Africa saw herself as a beacon of hope and the only custodian of European civilization in Africa and so did Israel in the Middle East. Furthermore, Hughes (2004) posited that even though there was deep geographic and cultural chasm between South Africa and Israel/Palestine, the conflict had particular resonance for South Africa and its foreign policy. At the heart of South Africa's foreign policy is the issue of the preservation and protection of human rights. Because of its history, the ruling ANC felt that it was best placed to fight for the course of the oppressed, marginalised and disfranchised the world over.

**5.2.2 The assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy**

South Africa's foreign policy agenda is sometimes misconstrued. There are those who see it as being consistent and unambiguous, especially when the country offers diplomatic assistance to diverse countries in terms of their political orientation. However, there are also those who argue that South Africa's foreign policy is ambiguous and inconsistent. For example, the fact that South Africa sent troops to Lesotho to calm the situation there in 1998 while opting for 'quiet diplomacy' in Zimbabwe seems to give credence to the view that the country's foreign policy is ambiguous. The reality is that at a much broader level there is no ambiguity in South Africa's foreign policy. The country respects the sovereignty of other countries and believes in diplomatic solutions and the use of soft power to problems. Where hard power is used (as was the case in Lesotho), this has to be understood within a broader context. For example, did South Africa take a unilateral decision to send troops to Lesotho or was this a response to the call made by SADC? If the latter is the case, then the decision was not South Africa's but that of SADC. It is for this reason that context is always critical in analyzing South Africa's foreign policy.

The general feeling amongst the Pro-Israel respondents was that although South Africa seemed to be adopting an even handed approach, however it could do more to dispel the notion that it favoured one side over the other. Another feeling was that given South Africa's history of conflict resolution in Africa as well as the successful transition from apartheid to democracy, the country could do more in engaging both the Israelis and Palestinians in an impartial and unbiased manner. One respondent believed that, 'as a country with full diplomatic relations with South Africa, Israel should be treated like every other country that

has full diplomatic relations with South Africa.' Another informant felt that the adoption of extremist views and resolutions will not move parties in this conflict toward a peaceful solution. Moreover, this informant added that she supported, 'a foreign policy that protects life, promotes peace and supports development.' The other respondent wanted South Africa to use the rights and protections guaranteed in its constitution as the basis for a human rights based foreign policy approach that supports other countries that are also democracies and who have the rule of law as the centre of their political life. Another Pro-Israel civil society organization believed that South Africa's undoubted success in creating a society that not only respected religious and cultural diversity but actively created spaces for all groupings to express themselves could 'wean the Palestinians in particular, away from the exclusive, all-or-nothing goals.'

On the other hand, however, the general consensus among the Pro-Palestine respondents was for harsher treatment to be meted out at the State of Israel. Among the proposed actions against Israel were: the reduction of the status of the Embassy in South Africa and also the South African Embassy in Tel-Aviv, complete severing of diplomatic, economic, political, cultural and sporting ties between Israel and South Africa. Furthermore, cutting of all ties with Israel if the values of non-racism, non-sexism, justice and human rights were compromised was also suggested. These were some of the notable responses. Moreover, another suggestion was that South Africa 'must consider the Israeli state as an apartheid state, and relate to it accordingly.' Furthermore, another informant stated that he would want to see the total isolation of the state of Israel. One other respondent said that although he has always believed that the two-state policy would be a solution to this problem but 'even the two-state theory is so much in favour of Israel.' As expected, the responses from Pro-Palestine respondents were in direct contrast with the Pro-Israel groups.

With regard to the Israeli and Palestinian ambassadors, and the Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East, they were all in agreement that South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine is that which supports a two-state solution. According to the Presidential Envoy as part of South Africa's contribution to international diplomatic efforts towards the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, 'President Zuma appointed former Minister Dr. Zola Skweyiya and former Deputy Minister Mr. Aziz Pahad as Special Envoys to the Middle East to convey his grave concern over the then escalating violence, the civilian displacement and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.' Furthermore, what is also noteworthy in the Special Envoy's response is that, 'On 22 August 2012, the South African

Cabinet approved Government Notice 379 pertaining to the labeling of products from the Palestinian Occupied Territories.' The Special Envoy further noted that, 'The Israeli Government was "distressed' by the fact that the entire South African Cabinet had approved the notice requiring the labeling of products emanating from the Occupied Territories.' According to him, Israel felt that there was no real engagement on the matter.

The Israeli ambassador felt that South Africa supports 'a two-state negotiated solution between Israelis and Palestinians like most of the world.' He also believed that, 'increased engagement between Israel and South Africa on a wide range of issues would allow for a wide range of benefits for SA and offer it to have a wider impact in the Middle East region.' He further stated that 'many African countries have taken a different view from South Africa on engaging Israel beyond questions of the Israeli-Palestinian issue.' The ambassador felt that South Africa's domestic development priorities (job creation, innovation, food security, water management, tourism and export potential) will encourage the deepening of SA's bilateral relationship with Israel. He further added, 'SA would gain credibility as a leader internationally (like major BRICS players such as India or China or other leading African countries such as Kenya or Nigeria) with a more nuanced, national-interest based relationship with Israel and the Palestinians.'

On the other hand, the Palestinian ambassador was of the view that the current South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine reiterates the African National Congress's foreign policy vision that was formulated during the administration of Nelson Mandela, which was to support a peaceful existence, the upholding of human rights and respect for international law. He further added, 'it is not only the South African government that reiterates the ANC's foreign policy vision towards Palestine and Israel, but also, the South African civil society, group of solidarity movements and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).' The ambassador also noted that in relation to African countries' foreign policy position towards Israel and Palestine, South Africa was not the only country that supported Palestinian right of self-determination and the establishment of independent state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. He further observed that, 'South Africa as an important member of the AU and other member states have similar policies despite that smaller African countries face continuous pressure from Israel and its allies.' According to the Palestinian ambassador, South Africa being a country with a stronger economy and the most sovereign state in the continent carried more responsibility towards the issue of Palestine and Israel.

When combing through the literature, it became quite clear that South Africa's foreign policy was in line with the ruling ANC's policy that takes into consideration human rights issues and the protection of the marginalized and oppressed. It was also notable that the ANC was unwavering and unrepentant in its support for those countries and organisations that assisted it during the liberation struggle years. Countries and organizations such as Cuba, Libya, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and many others come to mind. Although this position was noble, it came under heavy criticism from some quarters. Le Pere and van Nieuwkerk (2006) noted that the ANC's failure to transcend allegiances developed in the course of its global anti-apartheid crusade the ruling party had been criticised for its unwillingness to distinguish between party-government and party-state interests.

The literature review also pointed out that it could be very difficult to strike a balance between realists and human rights activists as evidenced in South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine. On one hand South Africa had to consider its economic interests as a developmental state and on another it had to ensure that its foreign policy is mindful of human rights issues. Muller (1997) asserted that the South African foreign policy is a tug of war between realists, who are concerned with getting investment, and radicals, who want to take the moral high ground. With regard to Israel, South Africa has maintained its trade relations with the country while simultaneously advocating for better treatment of Palestinians in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

### 5.2.3 The role and impact of religion in the conflict

As expected, divergent and contrasting views were yet again expressed with regards to this theme. However, most respondents agreed that religion was not the cause of the Israel-Palestine conflict while some felt that it only escalated the already pre-existing tensions. In fact, one Pro-Israel informant laid the blame squarely on the Palestinian religious extremists. One respondent observed that the greatest danger that is facing the world today, 'is the ideology of religious extremism – this is the ideology of Hamas – an ideology that is focused on hatred and destruction – Israel's destruction first – then all who do not obey the demands of whichever extremist group is holding the weapons.' Furthermore, another informant stated that in terms of traditional Islamic belief, any land once occupied by Muslims constitutes an alienable Islamic *waqf*, a religious endowment that can never be ceded, even in part, to infidels or non-believers. He further stated, 'This is why Hamas totally rejects peace with

Israel, but is committed – in word and deed – to its total eradication and the restoration of the entire land to Islamic rule. It's never made any secret of this, and such a way of thinking is deep-rooted in Palestinian society.'

Moreover, another Pro-Israel respondent felt that the tensions that exist now because of religion were purely from the Muslim side and that Israel and Jerusalem were the birth places of many religions and Israel respected and preserved them all. According to this informant, 'It is the Muslims that do not want to preserve any religion but their own…Israel has hundreds of mosques however there is not one Jewish synagogue in any of the Palestinian territories, the number of Christians in Muslim countries declines every year.' Furthermore, another respondent identified the problem as being, 'extremist ideologies that use religious discourse for their own ends'. He argued that 'Examples are Hamas, Hezbollah and Isis.' The last informant identified the highest birthrate of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish and Muslim Israel-Arab communities, both of which read the Bible and Koran literally and received the least Western education in Israel, as the cause of the escalation of tensions in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Some Pro-Palestinian informants have also blamed the religious Jewish extremists for the escalation of tensions in the Israel-Palestine conflict. One respondent stated the following, 'Jewish and Christian Zionist fundamentalism must accept blame as the primary catalysts for the occupation and the legitimate resistance against them as illegal occupiers and aggressors.' He further added that religion did not have to amplify the tension because under Islamic rule Christianity thrived in Jerusalem and Jews were given refuge from the persecutions in Europe. Another respondent downplayed the role of religion in the conflict but acknowledged that, 'there are some Jewish religious extremists that are trying to take over the Al-Aqsa mosque and Judaize Jerusalem.' Moreover, another one informant blamed the state of Israel and its allies for wanting to portray the conflict as being a religious conflict by linking it to religious extremism in order to gain sympathy from states and countries that have genuine problems with religious extremism.

Furthermore, one other respondent believed that religion had been used in many instances to oppress indigenous peoples by countries claiming to have been given land by God such as South Africa (SA) and the United States of America (USA). He stated that, 'It is not a secret that the United States, that states on its Dollar "In God we trust" has murdered thousands of people across the world to capture their resources.' Another informant further added that

although religion has played a very great part in the violence between the two countries but it should not be separated from the commercial and imperialist interests from the USA. Another respondent disputed the fact that the conflict is religious. He observed, 'although it may have some religious inflections, but is centred on the unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory and the oppression and discrimination of Palestinians. The most important distinction must be drawn is between the biblical land of Israel and the modern state of Israel created in 1948.' The last informant pointed out that Jerusalem is holy to the Jews, Christians and Muslims and therefore religion could not have any major impact on the Israel-Palestine conflict because all these three religions co-exist peacefully with one another. He further added, 'religion is not the major issue. It is a matter of human rights, justice and equality.'

With regard to the response from the South African Special Envoy to the Middle East, he felt that the Israel-Palestine conflict is a non-religious issue as, 'all religious faiths and other sectors of society including the ANC led Alliance support the legitimate right of the Palestine people.' The Palestinian Embassy seemed to be in agreement with the Special Envoy when he observed that, 'It is not only the South African government that reiterates the ANC's foreign policy vision towards Palestine and Israel, but also, the South African civil society...' However, the Israeli Embassy appeared to be giving a more detailed response with regard to the question of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict when he stated that most South Africans, whose majority are Christians; see Israel as a friendly partner for South Africa. He cited a poll conducted by the Anti Defamation League (ADL), an American NGO, founded in 2014, which stated, that '49% of South Africans had a favourable view of Israel compared to 37% with a negative view.' It therefore seemed like the governments of Israel, Palestine and South Africa did not have much to say about the role of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict. However, as mentioned earlier and as reiterated in the next two chapters, religion is one factor whose role has been underestimated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unless it is factored in by those who are trying to resolve the impasse, there will be no solution to the problem.

What could be read from the literature review regarding the role and impact of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict is that it could not be ignored as it has played a major role in the conflict. Despite what the informants said earlier, there was clear evidence that religion might not be the sole cause of the conflict but had indeed contributed immensely. It was important since the city of Jerusalem which was being fought over by both Jews and Muslims was equally important to both these religions as well as the Christian religion. What could be

observed from the literature was that the issue of religion tended to be problematic due to the fact that it pitted these three religions against one another. This would have been inevitable as the Middle East, Jerusalem in Israel/Palestine to be exact, was the epicentre where these religions originate. Philo and Berry (2004) identified Jerusalem (which became a major point of conflict) as the religious centre for both Muslims and Jews. The city is equally as important to Christians as it owes its existence from Judaism.

What complicated this issue even more is that both Islam and Judaism religions agree that the land of Israel/Palestine is the Holy Land and should therefore be occupied. On one hand, Judaism argues that the land was first inhabited by its patriarch, Abraham. According to Reiter (2011:239), "From a Jewish perspective, it is even a religious duty to settle in all parts of the land. The concept of the holiness of the land in its entirety derives from two parallel processes – a traditional one and a modern one."On the other hand, the Muslims posited that this land was conquered by Muhammad and his followers and therefore they cannot just forfeit it. Furthermore, Reiter (2011) posited that the radical Palestinian interpretation also regards all of the Land of Israel/Palestine as holy. They asserted that since the land of Palestine was captured by the Muslim army it became Muslim land and was therefore supposed to remain in Muslim hands.

Besides these evidently differing Jewish and Muslim positions, there were also divergent Christian positions which did not do any justice to the situation and the innocent people who were and still are being killed as a result of this on-going conflict.As Smith (2010:11) asserted, "It merely contributes to the polarisation of Christian opinion, making consensus quite impossible. Meanwhile, overly negative or pejorative Christian portrayals of Israel make sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the Jewish people incredibly difficult." Consequently, this once more serves as proof that the Israel-Palestine conflict is very complex and religion further complicates this matter even more. Furthermore, the interpretation of the Bible or the misinterpretation thereof regarding the Holy Land of Israel/Palestine could be attributed to differing Christian views when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Munayer (2010:18) argues, "There is the Christian Zionist camp, adhering to one form or another of Dispensational Theology, and the Social Justice Camp, comprising a number of different positions but finding strongest expression in Palestinian Liberation Theology." What might have contributed to these divergent Christian voices could be the fact that the Holy Bible itself, regarded by Christians as a Holy Book inspired by God Himself, is not easy to read if a person were to take an academic approach. While the Christian Zionists

and the Social Justice camp are still arguing as to what was the best interpretation of the Bible regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict innocent people continue to suffer in both Israel and Palestine.

It was quite clear that there are fundamental differences among the believers of Christianity, Islam and Judaism hence it had been impossible to end the Israel-Palestine conflict. The late Jihadist, Osama bin Laden once asserted that, "To push the enemy – greatest *kufr* (unbelief) – out of the country is a prime duty," (Lawrence, 2006:178). On the other hand, when Rabbi Amos Sharki was asked whether they have a religious duty to defend the State of Israel from enemies that surround it and to recapture Gaza and Sinai, he simply replied by stating that there is a religious duty to conquer all of greater Israel (Reiter, 2011). Furthermore, John Hagee (2007:4), a Christian fundamentalist asserted, "The problem is the rejection of Israel's right to exist. The problem is radical Islam's bloodthirsty embrace of a theocratic dictatorship that believes they have a mandate from God to kill." This served as a clear indication that these religions are divided when it came to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

With regard to South African Christians, they were quite vocal in the fight against apartheid. Christian organisations such as the South African Council of Churches led the fight against apartheid while on the other hand some churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church supported this evil regime. As former deputy health minister, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, (Madlala-Routledge, 2007:227), aptly asserted, "Religion was used to justify apartheid and to justify dividing the people of South Africa on racial lines. But religion was used in opposition to apartheid. The faith communities formed opposition groups to apartheid." It is Munroe (2006) who rightly pointed out that religion motivated the killing of millions of people in such horrific events as the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, segregation, racial discrimination, and other oppressive practices. Instead of being a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, religion proved to be more divisive.

Furthermore, the Book of Revelation in the Bible seemed to have foretold the current state of affairs in the Middle East, more especially the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Book talks about the dragon and the beast that began to take over the rule of the nations of the world in the 18th century Europe. South African Bible scholar and renowned historian, Dr Elan Janson asserts (1999:353), "Lawless, non-Christian majorities already rule large sections of the earth and are now threatening the core of Christianity. We just have to look at what is happening in Jerusalem – the city God loves. According to Revelation all this started when the 'dragon'

was cast down to earth." The devastating Second World War, in which around six million Jews were annihilated, was the culmination of this desire for men to rule themselves.

### 5.2.4 The Efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's Foreign Policy towards Israel and Palestine

This is another section where once again contrasting views among informants were expressed. The Pro-Israel informant, as expected, denied the efficacy of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign in influencing South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine. One respondent stated that the BDS Campaign had achieved very little despite enormous resources as Israel has diplomatic relations with more countries than any other time in its history. He further stated, 'a great deal of BDS' focus has been on promoting an academic boycott, but while here and there one finds individual academics refusing to engage with Israeli institutions, no university that traditionally cooperated with its Israeli counterparts has formally resolved to ban future interaction.' Another informant argued that the BDS Campaign has been 'utterly useless' as it has no interest in solving the Israel-Palestine conflict but only in creating hate towards Jews. He further stated, 'They have achieved nothing, trade between Israel and SA has increased, when they boycotted Woolworths their stocks rose by 30%, Israel's economy has grown every single year since BDS started.' One other respondent also reiterated that the BDS Campaign had been entirely ineffective as trade between Israel and South Africa increased every single year that BDS has been in existence. He observed that other countries such as the United Kingdom, United States and Canada have started banning BDS activities. He further added, 'The only effect BDS has had worldwide has been to fuel anti-Semitism, in South Africa, BDS supporters have sang "shoot the Jew" and placed pig heads in the kosher section of the supermarkets among many incidents.'

Furthermore, another Pro-Israel informant pointed out that the BDS Campaign had been more effective in Europe, where in some cases it persuaded academic institutions and pension funds institutions to divest or boycott Israel. In the United States, however, he said that it had not made much of a dent. With regard to South Africa, the respondent stated, 'the BDS movement has infiltrated elements of the ANC, where it had substantial influence. However, if you look at the amount of trade that is actually taking place between Israel and South Africa, the BDS movement has not made much of a dent.' He added, 'what BDS has succeeded in doing is turning the subject of Israel into one that people want to avoid, as it

leads to discomfort, conflict or controversy.' Another respondent stated that they did not support sanctions against Israel or even Palestine. The last respondent cited Israeli technology and expertise in other industries as reasons for not supporting any boycott against Israel.

On the Pro-Palestine side it was a whole different story. According to one informant, 'the BDS campaign has been very effective as companies maintain the Zionist occupation have been bearing the brunt of the BDS onslaught. In February 2010, a leading Israeli think-tank, the Reut Institute, referred to BDS as a strategic threat.' He further stated, 'In response to the growing BDS Movement, in July2011 the Knesset passed the Bill for Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel Through Boycott – 2011. The passing of the anti-BDS legislation in Israel is an indication of the success of the BDS Movement.' Another respondent felt that the campaign had scored some notable victories not only in South Africa but also around the world. However, there was an acknowledgement of the fact that it was far from being effective as much as the international campaigns against apartheid South Africa were concerned.

Moreover, this respondent also noted some shortcomings of the BDS Campaign in the country. He pointed out its close proximity to the ruling African National Congress that is under immense pressure on other fronts and therefore has little or no time to focus on the Palestinian/Israel conflict. He added, 'the ruling party's double speak on the issue also draws skepticism, from activists, about its sincerity in expressing solidarity with the Palestinians.' The next respondent thought that the BDS Campaign can be improved as South Africa still imports goods and knowledge from Israel despite the government's recognition of the Palestinian struggle. He added that, 'We have to expand the BDS Campaign beyond Muslim communities. COSATU and the SACP are part of the BDS but I believe more still need to be done.'

Moreover, the next informant felt that if Hillary Clinton, who he argued is pro-Zionist, called for the silencing of BDS, and then it certainly meant that the BDS Campaign was working. He further argued, 'The effect of BDS like the Anti-Apartheid movement is not that they win victories of divestment or sanctions at every turn advocating and winning the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens who understand the simple concept of enjoining good and forbidding evil.' Another respondent believed that many governments were afraid of pushing for full blown sanctions against Israel because of the power that the economic forces that support Israel wielded in international affairs. Furthermore, he stated that, 'already it (the

BDS Campaign) has some notable and symbolic impact in countries like South Africa. South Africa has taken the stance that all the goods that are produced from Palestinian territories that are occupied by Israel must be clearly labeled as such.'

The next respondent also noted that the BDS Campaign was fast becoming one of the most effective tools in holding Israel accountable for its violations of international law. He stated that 'in 2011 the University of Johannesburg Senate terminated its links with Ben Gurion University in Israel.' The last Pro-Palestine informant stated that, 'in December 2015 over 200 South African academics signed a petition declaring that they refrain from accepting invites to any Israeli university.' He further added that in the last year or so Israel had resorted to a strategic threat and had also shifted the responsibility for fighting BDS from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

When it came to the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine not much was given by the embassies from all governments in question. The South African Special Envoy to the Middle East said that support from all social formations including religious, political, sporting, academic, trade union and cultural groups had to be consolidated and strengthened. He felt that, 'the Israel lobby is very powerful in many countries.' The Israeli Embassy in South Africa felt that the vast majority of South Africans see Israel as a friendly partner for South Africa and would like to see the country take advantage of those ties for priorities here.  The Palestinian Embassy in South Africa was of the view that the group of solidarity movements including the BDS, 'reiterate the ANC's  foreign policy vision in supporting the Palestinian struggle for freedom from occupation and racial oppression and have repeatedly identified Israel's racist and apartheid style policies against the Palestinians.' He further added that it was evident that these groups had influence in South Africa's foreign policy in the case of Palestine and Israel.

Regarding the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine, the literature review revealed some interesting facts.  For instance, it revealed that since 1994 trade with Israel had increased despite objections and misgivings from the Pro-Palestine lobby groups such as BDS.  As evidenced in the research conducted by one of the affiliates of the BDS, the Stop the Wall Campaign, trade has been growing on average at a steady 5% per annum through the post-apartheid era. In 2003, Israel was the biggest Middle East destination for South African exports (www.stopthewall.org). According

to this literature, South Africa was still among the biggest trading partners with Israel in Africa despite being totally against the policies pursued by Israel in Palestinian settlements.

### 5.2.5 The influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine

The response on the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy was not as animated and passionate as the researcher would have expected from both the Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine respondents. The first Pro-Israel respondent appeared to be unhappy with the stance of the United Nations when it came to Israel. He stated, 'I fight for Israel not because I support everything that the government does but because I do not feel Israel should be held to a standard greater than any other nation – which the UN seems to think is okay.' He further added that the continuation of the Israel-Palestine conflict is in the interest of some individuals who are benefiting financially from this conflict. He added, 'The conflict is worth billions of dollars. The Gaza strip, a strip of land far smaller than Johannesburg receives more funding in aid than any other place in the world. The Palestinian Authority, Hamas and other leaders of the Palestinian struggle live a life of struggle at the expense of their people.' He further cited the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as one other reason this conflict had not ended. The respondent accused this agency of not wanting to end the conflict as this would mean the end of jobs for its workers who are paid very well.

Another informant stated that given South Africa's history of conflict resolution in Africa and the world at large, it could play a much more meaningful role in resolving this impasse. The next respondent felt that the world owed the Jews for allowing the Holocaust which saw six million of them killed during the Second World War. He stated, 'it had to pay reparations to the Jewish people. The ultimate reparation was the creation of a Jewish state, in addition to financial and military support.' Another informant felt that Jews, like Arabs and all other humans, had a right to live in a piece of land, hence they advocated for a two-state solution as per the United Nations resolution. The next Pro-Israel respondent felt that regional and international institutions are not treating the Israel-Palestine conflict in an even-handed manner. She stated: 'while the challenges facing Palestinians people are placed front and centre locally and globally, the challenges Israeli people are facing are invariably ignored or even dismissed.' The last informant felt that South Africa's prestige in Africa and the rest of the world, as a country that performed a miraculous transition from apartheid to democracy,

and that advocated for peaceful co-existence among diverse people, could be utilized by world bodies to find common ground in this conflict.

The first Pro-Palestine respondent felt that due to Israel's ill-treatment of Palestine, regional and international institutions should mete out the harshest treatment against Israel. She stated that, 'given that Israel practices a system of apartheid against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; the country must be treated in the same way as Apartheid South Africa.' The second informant felt that it was best that a platform be created by international institutions for Israel and Palestine to sit around and explore possible solutions. He further stated, 'it is only after they have found a just and lasting solution that we, as activists and the international community, can lend our support for the implementation and success of that solution.' The third respondent argued that some powerful countries and international commercial interests had been influential in the way Israel was treated by the international community. He stated, 'commercial interests and imperialist dominance in particular form the USA have been playing a major role. Remember that many Jews who are business people are based in America. You can imagine their influence in the American politics which encourages domination of the weaker by the powerful.'

On the response about the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy, the fourth informant did not say much but the little that he uttered was quite telling. He stated, 'a recent fact from a UNICEF report is that there is no substantial Jewish historical claim on the Temple Mount despite their claims.' This was in reference to Israel's claims to the much contended piece of land which is regarded as holy to both Jews and Muslims. UNICEF, whose acronym stands for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, is one of the United Nations agencies. The fifth respondent felt that the Israel-Palestine conflict was the conflict between the unequal, the oppressor, Israel, which had the backing of most European powers and the United States, and the oppressed, the Palestinian people. According to informants six and seven, 'a United Nations report attributed BDS as a key factor in a 46 percent drop in direct investment in 2014.' Although both respondents had not said much regarding the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy but the usage of the United Nations report is telling.

The South African Special Envoy to the Middle East gave substantive responses on the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy. He stated

that South Africa had pledged one million US dollars towards humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the funds were transferred to theUNRWA. He further stated, 'South Africa continues to support international efforts to assist the people of Palestine and Israel to find lasting peace. The Palestinian Authority, backed by the League of Arab States, has stated its intention to seek UN membership for the state of Palestine. South Africa fully supports this position.' Moreover, the Special Envoy believed that since 1994, the international community looked to South Africa to play a leading role in championing values of human rights, democracy, reconciliation and the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment. He said 'South Africa has risen to the challenge and plays a meaningful role in the region, on the continent and globally.' He concluded by reiterating that the African Union had many resolutions supporting the struggle for the legitimate rights of the Palestine people and supports all United Nations resolutions.

The Israeli Embassy's response with regard to the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy was, as expected, different from the one offered by the South African Special Envoy to the Middle East. The ambassador contended that it was important to note that many countries have "de-hyphenated" their relationships with Israel and the Palestinians. He gave examples about countries like India, China, Kenya and Rwanda, whom he regarded as having excellent relations with both Israel and the Palestinians. He stated, 'All of them have positions on the conflict and its resolution and separate positions regarding relationships on all other spheres with both sides and on a range of other Middle East region issues.' He cited many other countries as having significant and meaningful relations with Israel including Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Lesotho, Botswana and many others.

The Palestinian Embassy's response was unsurprisingly in agreement with that of the South African Special Envoy to the Middle East. The Palestinian ambassador stated that South Africa had supported every resolution in favour of Palestine tabled at the United Nations organs such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Human Rights' Council (UNHRC) while putting pressure on Israel at a bilateral and multilateral level to find a just and lasting solution. Furthermore, he stated, 'in relation to Southern African countries foreign policy towards Palestine and Israel, South Africa is not the only African country that supports Palestinian right of self-determination and the establishment of independent state with East Jerusalem as

its Capital.' He further reiterated that the African Union had issued statements that support Palestinian people and condemning the Israeli occupation.

The literature review did not paint a very good picture about the international and regional institutions that were dealt with. These institutions are the United Nations, the Arab League and the African Union. With regard to the influence of international and regional institutions on South Africa's foreign policy, the literature review revealed that the United Nations had not covered itself in glory when dealing with the Israel-Palestine conflict. For instance, it had been too weak to force the warring parties to ceasefire shortly after the civil war broke out following the recognition of the state of Israel in 1948. Furthermore, following the withdrawal of the British Mandate Government in Palestine there was no proper transfer of administrative authority to anybody – which served as one of the catalysts to the war that broke out immediately after Israel's announcement of independence.

Moreover, the United Nations, which was tasked with ensuring world peace after the destructive Second World War, also failed to handle the situation properly. According to Hertzog (1982:46), "Unsuccessful appeals were made to the British to postpone their departure, and events in Palestine moved forward inexorably to their inevitable conclusion." The inevitable conclusion was the resultant attack on the newly formed state of Israel by its Arab neighbours. Although subsequent wars have since ended, the Israel-Palestine conflict rages on and the United Nations seems unable to arrest it.

Furthermore, even the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, agreed that the world body had lost its way in that it failed to protect the human rights of the most vulnerable people in the society. Annan (2012:135) asserted, "…the United Nations had drifted toward becoming an institution focused, above all, on self-preservation. In so doing, we had in many respects lost our way-forgetting the first words of the Charter: 'We the Peoples'." It is really evident that from the get go, in its establishment, the United Nations was meant to cater for the needs of the people who found themselves vulnerable in times of conflict. However it would seem that the needs of the vulnerable people in the Israel-Palestine conflict have taken a back seat. Instead, it is the individual states that are taking centre stage.

On the other hand, there are those that felt the criticism aimed at the United Nations was not fair although some of it contained the core of the truth. One of the defenders of the UN is Luard (1979:3), who argued that, "It merely assembles together the multiplicity of individual national states with all their imperfections….If the world is one of rich/poor confrontation (as

today), so will the UN be also….If the world is beset with nationalism, so too must the UN be." In light of the Israel-Palestine conflict it can therefore be concluded that the United Nations is a reflection of the current state of affairs in the world. It also mirrors the image of all its member states, from the powerful to the weak, the rich and the poor; they are all represented in this world body.

Moving further to the next regional institution, it was clear that the exclusion of regional powers had however in some way contributed in the weakening and ineffectiveness of the Arab League.  It is rather unimaginable that the United Nations would function without the influential members of the Security Council, such as the United States, China, Russia and others.  That would be like an African Union without the powerful Nigeria or South Africa. According to Pinfari (2009:) , "It excludes from its membership a crucial regional player lying in the heart of the Middle East – the state of Israel; it also excludes two other 'regional powers' namely Iran and Turkey, which are often considered as parts of the 'wider Middle East'." It is therefore not hard to see why the Arab League has not made a meaningful impact in dealing with the conflict between Israel and Palestine as Israel which is part of this conflict is also excluded.

Moreover, just like the United Nations, the Arab League should share some of the blame for the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. After the UN had proposed the partition of Palestine into two separate states, the League (which represented the Arab countries) vehemently opposed this.  According to Kissinger (2014:130), "…they believed themselves in a position to triumph militarily and claim the entire territory.  Failure of the attempt to extinguish the newly declared State of Israel did not lead to a political settlement and the opening of state-to-state relations…." It seems that the league made an error of judgment which would prove too costly to fellow Arabs, the Palestinians.  Even to this day they are still paying dearly for that decision. What makes matters worse is that innocent people are the most affected.

On a somewhat positive note, although the Arab League has had minimal success in bringing peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict, however it has been a bit influential in trying to bring together regional powers that might broker this elusive peace.  This was evidenced in the 2010 Summit hosted by US president Barack Obama at the White House with Mohammed Abbas of Palestine, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, Abdullah II of Jordan and Hoshni Mubarak of Egypt.  According to Gerges (2012:125), "…by gaining the backing of the Arab League, Obama sought to shift the burden of brokering a peace a peace settlement to the

regional states…that have a direct stake in the conflict resolution and could provide security guarantees to Israel if and when the a Palestinian state is established." Therefore, this in a way shows that the Arab League has tried to bring peace in the Israel-Palestine situation but this did not happen as there were disagreements between Israel and Palestine as to how to solve the issue of refugees.

Regarding the African Union, it is no different from the other two institutions when it comes to dealing with the Israel-Palestine conflict. For instance, it had to take the intervention of 'outside forces' to quell the Libyan conflict between government and protesting citizens who were dissatisfied with the arrest of the human rights activist. Those 'outside forces' were in the form of the United Nations passing Resolution 1973 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enforcing this resolution. The resolution, simply put, was aimed at implementing a no-fly zone over Libya which would ensure that the Muammar Gaddafi led government and the opposition reached a cease-fire. The intervention of NATO by way of implementing Resolution 1973 dealt a great blow to Africa's ability to solve its own problems on its own. According to Dersso (2012:41) "….it robbed Africa of its role of pursuing the solutions it proposed to the crisis and in so doing it marginalised AU's admittedly weak voice. In the process, it undermined the…AU's political principle of 'African solutions to African problems'."It is quite clear that whenever African conflicts threaten the interests of major powers, as has been illustrated in the Libyan conflict, the ability of African states to deal with these conflicts independently is compromised. In fact, the implementation of the resolution also revealed the powerlessness of regional institutions such as the AU and the Arab League.

With regard to Israel's relationship with Africa, the country had enjoyed cordial relations with many African states prior to the 1967 Six-Day War. However, the cooling of relations was further exacerbated by the relations between Israel and apartheid South Africa. As Southall (2006:228) argues, "African states had by now indicated that while they would adopt a principled stance regarding Palestinian self-determination, their relations with the Arab states themselves would be determined by considerations of pragmatic self-interest." The African states had realized that they had been taken for a ride by the Arab states which had pretended that they wanted to have nothing to do with apartheid South Africa yet some of these states were trading with both South Africa and Israel, thereby closely guarding their own interests.

There are some positives for the African Union as well. The continental body has made some strides that have even surpassed those of the United Nations in the early 2000s. This was achieved by enshrining the principle that any member state caught seizing power through a coup d'état or any other unconstitutional means would be kicked out of the AU. As Annan ((2012:182) aptly puts it, "A coup meant you would be immediately kicked out as a matter of course. I hoped and expected the UN to follow the AU's lead but that has yet to happen." This was quite progressive as this African regional body showed intolerance for misrule and dictatorship that is always associated with some African states by stamping its authority in dealing with such measures. Henceforth, there have been several coups in Africa such as in Mauritania, Madagascar and Mali. Consequently, these countries were suspended from the organization and thus suffered diplomatic isolation as well as other sanctions. In that sense, it is fair to argue that the AU has lived by its decision.

## 5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and interpreted the findings of the study. The findings were extracted from primary data which consisted of the interviews conducted with seventeen of the twenty intended respondents. However one informant had to be cast away as the responses provided were deemed insufficient for the study, thus keeping the figure at 16. The secondary data was interpreted from books, journals, official documents, newspapers and the internet. The chapter combined the research problem, objectives, questions and some sections of the literature review chapter. Consequently, this led to the coding of findings into different themes. About five themes came from using this method of interpretation. Themes such as the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa, the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the role and impact of religion in the conflict, the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine and the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine were then presented.

Under the historical context theme, the results were presented to show how the Israel-Palestine conflict started and how it affected South Africa. With regard to the assessment and validity of the SA foreign policy in Israel and Palestine, the results of the primary and secondary data were presented and interpreted to ascertain how valid SA's foreign policy is towards these two respective states. Furthermore, on the role and impact of religion, the often

taken granted impact of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict was revealed citing concrete examples. Moreover, the effectiveness of the BDS Campaign was looked at in order to ascertain its impact on influencing SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. Lastly, the influence of international as well as regional institutions such as the United Nations, the Arab League and the African Union was interpreted and presented using the relevant methods. In so doing it was hoped that these themes would have managed to elucidate the findings in a clear and concise manner.

Now that the results of this study have been presented, in the next chapter [Chapter 6], which is a precursor to the last and concluding chapter, the findings as presented in this chapter will be discussed in detail with the view to give them more meaning and context. In addition, the results will be linked to the study in many ways such as reflecting on the key research questions and research objectives as presented in Chapter 1. Only once this has been done will the dissertation present the concluding chapter whose purpose will be to pull the entire study together and reflect on the findings before mapping the way forward in the form of making practical recommendations.

# CHAPTER 6

# ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

## 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter (Chapter Five) the findings of the study were presented and interpreted. The present chapter builds on Chapter 5. It provides an analysis of the results presented in the foregoing chapter, giving them meaning in the broader context of the study. Furthermore, the findings are discussed in order to give meaning to them in line with the research objectives and the research questions of the study as outlined in Chapter 1. As stated in the foregoing chapter, the data collected included both primary and secondary data. The primary data were in the form of open-ended questions which were emailed to twenty interviewees – with a response rate of 80 percent. This could be deemed as a successful response rate. The secondary data were in the form of books, journals, official documents, newspapers and internet sources.

There is a general consensus in the literature on research that when undertaking an imperative task such as the data analysis it is of utmost importance for the researcher to become immersed in them. Brink et al (2012) describe data analysis as entailing categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarizing the data, and describing them in meaningful terms. These authors further state that during the whole process of analysis, the researcher makes reflective remarks and marginal remarks as meaning comes to the fore. Moreover, the researcher wants to understand what is happening in the study being carried out – the richer the data, the better the researcher can do this.

The analysis in a qualitative study such as this one looks for the themes and meanings that usually emerge from the observation and evaluation of a situation or context. There is a carefully considered approach when it comes to the analysis of data. According to Jacobsen (2012:91), "The analysis of qualitative data usually involves coding and classifying observations and deriving major and minor themes from the groups of observations. Reports of the findings of qualitative studies often incorporate quotations that express participants' perspectives and experiences in their own words." This is what the previous chapter (Chapter Five) sought to achieve when the responses from various respondents were quoted, codified into different themes and then presented. In addition, the same treatment was given to the secondary data from the literature.

Furthermore, analysing data involves looking for events, meaning, connections, context and chronologies relevant to the study. Moreover, the researcher should identify keywords and phrases that are significant, similar or different. Badenhorst (2008:181) further states that, "Discard irrelevant information. Keep extracting, simplifying and reducing until you have a set of codes that makes sense. This set of codes will be the close findings. Check your codes by applying them back into sets of data." Basically this is about pulling together the codes and extracting some more meanings from them, searching for bigger patterns and connections as well as relating these findings back to the literature.

This chapter is indeed a demanding one as the researcher has to take cognisance of all the data that have been gathered and make sense of them in a simplified and easy to read manner. In addition to this, the researcher has to display his or her research insights and analytical prowess. According to Ball (2012:47), "It should be possible for a reader – or at least one who is familiar with your subject area – to jump straight into your discussion without having first read any other part of the dissertation and yet still make general sense of it." Thus, as is conventional practice, this chapter serves as a vital link between the objectives of the research and its conclusion so it ought to make sense in every way.

## 6.2 Thematic Discussion of the results

In analysing and making sense of the data collected, the researcher used the steps provided by Roberts (2004) to analyse and arrange the data into different codes. These steps are expatiated upon in chapter four of this study and therefore for the sake of time and space shall be mentioned briefly here. Some of these steps included reading all transcriptions carefully, getting the underlying meaning, making a list of all topics or themes and then turning them into categories. In addition to this, the researcher further used other systems of analysis such as comparing, triangulation, observations, theoretical notes and process of analysis (Badenhorst, 2008).

Moreover, one more method that the researcher had to solicit assistance from was that of asking himself questions such as:

-What are the relationships in meaning between all these categories?

-What do they say about each other?

-What is missing that needs to be included?

-How do they address the research question(s)?

-How do they link with what is already known about the topic and what additional data analysis has to be completed? (Henning et al, 2004).

The last method used was the thematic analysis which is known for segmentation, categorisation and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This method is in some way similar to the one mentioned in this paragraph as it also deals with describing the data, getting to the meaning of the data for the person who produced it, exploring the data for meanings, looking for relationships between different parts of the data and explaining the similarities and differences as well as the apparent relationships. Therefore, by using these combined strategies, the researcher hoped to explore all the possible angles and meanings of the collected data and minimize any margin of error before arriving at any conclusions.

Furthermore, using the research problem, objectives, questions, response from the open-ended questions and some sections in the literature review chapter, resulted in the findings being coded into different themes. Themes such as the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa, the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy in Israel and Palestine and the role and impact of religion in the conflict, emerged from the study. Moreover, the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine and the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine, were also explored as themes. Below is the discussion of the results in each of these themes.

### 6.2.1 The historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa

Throughout the history of the world, nations have fought one another over land. The victors enjoy benefits such as acquiring more land and ruling over the peoples that they have just conquered. For the losers however, it is a whole different scenario as they have to live under the subjugation and mercy of their victors. The Israel-Palestine conflict is no different from this scenario. South Africa, which is arguably the most influential country in Africa, was formed on more or less this similar pattern of fighting over land and dispossessing the

original inhabitants of their land. Therefore, the common thread that is prevalent throughout the responses of the Pro-Israel group of informants that South Africa and Palestine share a common history of suffering and loss of land is not far from the truth.

However, the similarity ends right there. For instance, there is no evidence that supported apartheid South Africa's racist policies that perpetuated the marginalization and oppression of the black majority. On the other hand, with regard to the Israel-Palestine there is strong Biblical evidence which suggests that ancient Israel was given to the descendants of Abraham by their God. This is not to dismiss the claims of the Palestinians to the land as they have lived there for almost two thousand years. Therefore, as one respondent rightly observed, although the Bible gives ample evidence that Israel once inhabited the disputed land, it is but impossible to implement this theory into practice in the present reality.

This acknowledgement in the foregoing paragraph is not aimed at bringing the religious argument under this section but it is to give a historical perspective to the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa. Proponents of apartheid South Africa had no basis for asserting that the country was given to them by God as they were His chosen people. Therefore the similarity between apartheid South Africa and the current state of affairs in the Israel-Palestine conflict could look and sound similar but it is far from this. The similarity is further deemed null and void in that those who seem to have the upper-hand in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Israelis, had inhabited the land before, whereas the proponents of apartheid were settlers who had never been in South Africa before.

One informant felt that both Israel and Palestine could learn from South Africa's example of negotiating from apartheid to democracy as per the leadership of both Presidents Nelson Mandela and FW De Klerk. He felt that both sides need visionary leaders such as Mandela and De Klerk. While this statement is profound, whether or not it is valid is not that imperative in this conflict as the conflict is far more complex than just the leadership from both sides. Part of the reason apartheid ended in South Africa was because the apartheid leadership saw that they were losing support of their international allies such as the United States and Britain after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. With regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel still enjoys the support of most of the Western countries, albeit for the time being and for different reasons. These countries are still feeling guilty for their lack of action in preventing the Jewish holocaust in the Second World War. Mandela and De Klerk had no choice but to work hand in hand in order to reach an amicable solution that

would be beneficial for the country and even hinder the civil war that was lurking in the background.

The Pro-Palestine group of informants agrees almost in unison that the atrocities of the state of Israel in Palestine are worse than those of apartheid. Israel, according to one informant, had chopped its original map since its establishment and as such shares similar characteristics with the way in which apartheid South Africa excluded Africans and established Bantustans or Homelands where it confined Africans. As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, South Africa had no basis for exclusively claiming South Africa and in the process exclude and oppress the indigenous and majority population. While not condoning Israeli's atrocities in Palestine, however, any individual who would leave their home and come back after a while only to find his neighbour occupying his home would feel aggrieved. Of course this is not to say that Israel's behaviour is justified because this state is not just any individual but is the one that went away for almost two thousand years. Does this justify the forceful and violent removal of a neighbour who has occupied your place for all these years? This goes back to the earlier point that throughout history nations have fought one another over land hence this Israel-Palestine conflict is not different from the common trend.

One more glaring point from Pro-Palestine respondents is that they seem to deny the role played by the Bible in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict. One informant dismissed this claim by mentioning that Afrikaner nationalism also put forward a similar argument that the South African land was given to them as a particular group. However, as mentioned in earlier paragraphs, there is no Biblical basis for this claim. Only Jews can claim this as the Book of Genesis is quite clear on this where the Lord speaks to Abraham, who is the father of the Jews.

History also links apartheid South Africa and Israel when it comes to civil society campaigns as they have been in some way effective in fighting against marginalization in both these countries. In South Africa for instance, it is the civil society movements, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), that were most vocal against the apartheid state. However one Pro-Palestine respondent felt that civil society campaigns against Israel were not as effective as campaigns against apartheid South Africa. Could this be attributed to the fact that the majority of the people in the country are Christians and in some way take Israel as their spiritual home? Could it perhaps be that it has to do with the fact that not all civil society movements support the Palestinian cause? This came to the fore when different civil

organisations and political parties came out in full support of both Israel and Palestine during the height of the Gaza war in 2014. This also begs the question why is it that a significant number of South Africans are not supporting Palestine if Israel deserves to be treated as an apartheid state as one pro-Palestine respondent had suggested?

The Israeli and Palestinian embassies as well as the South African Presidential Envoy to the Middle East all recognize the shared history of liberation movements between South Africa and Palestine. What can be gauged from the Israeli ambassador's response is that they grudgingly accept this reality although they still feel that more engagement on the side of South Africa could help bring a solution in the Israel-Palestine conflict.  However, this seems like a pipe dream as South Africa's even handed approach and its support for a two-state solution could be at times interpreted as just lip service.  This is partly because there has been no high level engagement between both Israel and South Africa's leadership.  No sitting Israeli Prime Minister or President has ever set foot in democratic South Africa. Similarly, no sitting South African President has done the same. On the other hand, South Africa has hosted Palestinian Authority, President Mahmood Abbas on several occasions and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has also hosted leaders of the ruling Hamas. Another point which is worth noting is that several top cabinet ministers and leaders of the ANC-led tripartite alliance have spoken out against Israel's aggression in Palestine and discouraged South Africans from visiting Israel.  There is no denying the role played by liberation movements such as the ANC and many others in the emancipation of oppressed blacks. However, caution should be exercised when making pronouncements on foreign policy matters because these pertain to all of South African citizens regardless of people's political affiliation.

Despite the above mentioned misgivings, South Africa's trade with Israel and Palestine is informed by the shared history of oppression in the case of Palestine and in the case of Israel it is informed by economic interests.  It is therefore quite interesting that South Africa's history of oppression has played some part in its foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. It is also worth noting that the country has continued its trade with Israel despite this shared history of oppression with Palestine.  Moreover, South Africa's continued trade with Israel despite this shared history with Palestine makes some pro-Palestine lobbyists uncomfortable. This is putting the South African state in an awkward position of trying to balance scales.  On one hand South Africa has to ensure that it takes a policy position that is informed by its own history of oppression and abuse of human rights that appeases Palestine. On the other hand, it

has to put its economic interests first and consequently has to continue its trade with the Israeli state.

The literature review also confirms that the ANC and its alliance partners, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) support the Palestinian cause because apartheid South Africa was Israel's only ally in the Southern African region. Because of their treatment of the indigenous people within their borders, both Israel and apartheid South Africa were seen as international pariah states. As a result of this they found solace in each other and traded economically and even shared military expertise – at times even defying international agreements and protocols. For some inexplicable reason both Israel and apartheid South Africa thought of themselves beacons of hope and as custodians of European civilization in the Middle East and Africa. However, to its credit though, the state of Israel would in the latter years curtail its dealings with apartheid South Africa but it was a little too late as this would proceed to haunt Israel's relationship with democratic South Africa.

The underlying factor here, is that any country that was deemed hostile to the liberation cause of the ANC and its allies is viewed with suspicion. Although Israel still enjoys healthy trade relations with South Africa, because of its past history with apartheid South Africa there will always be that sense of uneasiness when these respective countries are dealing with each other. It is no surprise that no head of state from both sides has ever embarked on an official state visit. South Africa has to be commended for taking a realist approach when dealing with Israel in that while decrying Israel's human rights abuses in Palestine, it is still trading with the Middle Eastern state.

**6.2.2 The assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy**

Although the Pro-Israel group of informants generally feels that South Africa is adopting an even handed approach foreign policy stance when dealing with both Israel and Palestine, more could be done to lay to rest rumblings that it favours one side over the other. The notion that it favours one side over the other could be attributed to the statements against Israel that have been made by some cabinet members and some leaders in the Tripartite Alliance led by the ruling ANC. It is therefore no surprise that in April 2015 Israel denied Higher Education Minister a visa to enter Palestine on an official visit. It can therefore be argued that although South Africa's official policy towards Israel and Palestine seems to be treating both states fairly, some pronouncements made by senior cabinet members and leaders of the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance are making relations between Israel and South Africa a bit awkward. This goes against the feeling amongst Pro-Israel respondents that given South Africa's history of conflict resolution in Africa and its successful transition from apartheid to democracy, the country could do more by engaging both the Israelis and Palestinians in an impartial, dispassionate and unbiased manner.

However, this seems a bit farfetched given South Africa's history of liberation struggle and commitment to ensuring that human rights of the most vulnerable people are protected. This therefore nullifies the statement by one respondent from the Pro-Israel side that Israel should be treated like every other country that has full diplomatic relations with South Africa. The question becomes: How can members of the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance be expected to be impartial in their utterances when they hear of atrocities done to innocent Palestinian children and women? Moreover, why did Israel not grant Minister Nzimande a visa to enter Palestine? It would seem that the Jewish state had something to hide. The fact that Israel has authority to issue visas for persons it deemed fit to enter Palestine seems unfair although it might be for security reasons. But what harm could Minister Nzimande have caused by visiting Palestine? Perhaps this refusal of entry was due to what one Pro-Israel informant felt was the adoption of extremist resolutions that would not move parties toward a peaceful solution.

Looking further into the responses of the Pro-Israel informants, it seemed that they want a foreign policy that protects life, promotes peace and supports developments. Another respondent wanted South Africa to use the rights and protections in the constitution as the basis for a human rights based foreign policy approach that supports other countries that are

also democracies. While this wish list sounds noble, sincere and genuine, it is hard to fathom how South Africa can be expected to just turn a blind eye to what is happening in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Lives have been lost during this never-ending conflict and Palestine seems to be the one experiencing more casualties. Furthermore, another informant believed that South Africa's undoubted success in creating a society that not only respects religious and cultural diversity but actively encourages all groupings to express themselves could assist in weaning the Palestinians away from the 'exclusive all or nothing' approach. This seems to be asking too much of South Africa given that it is, in the international arena, just a medium African power that happened to achieve so much when the whole world least expected it. While at face value the Israel-Palestine conflict seems similar to the South African struggle for liberation from apartheid, the former is far more complex and would take a humongous miracle to resolve.

The Pro-Palestine respondents wanted a harsher treatment to be meted out to Israel. Suggestions included: reduction of the status of the Israeli embassy in South Africa; complete severing of diplomatic, economic, political, cultural and sporting ties between Israel and South Africa; as well cutting of all ties with Israel if South Africa's values of non-racialism, non-sexism, justice and human rights are compromised. These responses were expected especially from the sympathizers of the Palestinian cause however, just like some of the responses from the Pro-Israel informants, they seem unrealistic and unfair to South Africa. While South Africa seems to have taken an even-handed approach with regard to its foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the reality is that it is much more sympathetic to Palestine for obvious reasons. Therefore anything more than this would be stretching it a bit too far. South Africa on the other hand has to take a realist approach of balancing economic interests while at the same time taking a strong stance against human rights abuses.

Moreover, other informants suggested that South Africa should consider Israel as an apartheid state and relate to it accordingly. Another informant wanted to see the total isolation of the state of Israel. One more respondent felt that although the two-state policy would be an ideal solution, it is still much in favour of Israel. Judging from these responses it seems that even the Pro-Palestine group of informants is not entirely satisfied with South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine although it seems to be favouring Palestine. There have been calls by civil society for South Africa to deal harshly with Israel. However, this is highly unlikely as already some of the cabinet members and Tripartite Alliance leaders are already playing this part.

According to the response from the Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East, as part of South Africa's contribution to international diplomatic efforts towards the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, President Jacob Zuma appointed former Minister Dr. Zola Skweyiya and former Deputy Minister Mr. Aziz Pahad as his Special Envoys to the Middle East. This was to convey his grave concern over the then escalating violence, the civilian displacement and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. This proves once more that South Africa is deeply concerned with human rights abuses and civilian displacements that affect the most vulnerable sections of society such as women and children in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. The above statement also denotes one other thing that since the Gaza Strip is in Palestine, the South African government is more concerned about the loss of Palestinian lives in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

According to the Human Rights Council Report on the Gaza conflict, the latest round of violence, that is the 2014 Gaza-Israel War, resulted in an unprecedented number of casualties. The commission was able to gather substantial information pointing to serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by Israel and by Palestinian armed groups. However, South Africa seems to be caring more about the loss of Palestinian lives since more people have died there than from the Israel side.

Furthermore, the Presidential Special Envoys to the Middle East noted that the Israeli Government was distressed by the fact that the entire South African Cabinet approved the notice requiring the labeling of products emanating from the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Israel seemed dismayed by the lack of real engagement on the matter before this decision was taken on 22 August in 2012. The Special Envoy further reiterated that South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine is that which supports a two-state solution. The foregoing pronouncements by the Special Envoy illustrate that South Africa is so committed to achieving peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict that it would explore every method available to force Israel to halt further occupation of the Palestinian territories. However, this seems to be achieving the opposite as the Special Envoy has noted that the Israeli Government was distressed by the decision. With regard to the two-state solution, it would seem that the South African government is not making progress as Palestine feels the two-state solution favours Israel still.

The Israeli ambassador to South Africa believed that increased engagement between Israel and South Africa on a wide range of issues would allow a range benefits for South Africa and

offer it to have a wider impact in the Middle East region. Perhaps this could be true but knowing South Africa's stance on human rights, it is left with a harder choice of trying to strike a balance between human rights imperatives and national economic interests. He also felt that many African countries have taken a different view from South Africa on engaging Israel beyond questions of the Israel-Palestinian issue. This also rings truer, more especially for Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia who in 2016 were visited by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Perhaps it is in order to provide the broader context of this visit. Kenya has, in the past, collaborated with Israel in trying to fight the Muslim extremist organisation, Al-Shabaab in Somalia which has launched a series of violent attacks on the East African country after it had collaborated with the Somalian military to fight this Islamic group. Moreover, the Israeli ambassador to South Africa posited that South Africa would gain credibility as a leader internationally, like major BRICS players such as India and China or other emerging African economic giants such as Kenya or Nigeria, which have a more nuanced, national-interest based relationship with Israel and the Palestinians. While this statement might have hit the bull's eye, however yet again South Africa's foreign policy which has humanism or *ubuntu* as one its tenets would not allow it to totally separate national interests from the ethos of human rights.

On the other hand, the Palestinian ambassador viewed the current South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine as the one that reiterated the African National Congress's (ANC) foreign policy vision that was formulated during the administration of Nelson Mandela – the one that supports a peaceful existence, the upholding of human rights and respect for international law. He further added that the South African civil society, group of solidarity movements and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) also support this foreign policy vision. While this is true, there is no guarantee that this policy will remain static as governments come and go. An example is what happened in the 3 August 2016 Local Government Elections [LGE] in South Africa. Moreover, the response of the Pro-Israel respondents also bears testimony as to how divided South Africans are when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The Palestinian ambassador to South Africa also noted that South Africa is not the only African country that supports the Palestinian right of self-determination and the establishment

of an independent state. He further observed that South Africa, as an important member of the AU and other member states, has similar policies despite that smaller African countries face continuous pressure from Israel and its allies. While this is also true, some other African states as alluded to earlier, have taken a foreign policy approach that differs from South Africa's, the one that is more nuanced and national-interest based. The Palestinian ambassador to South Africa also stated that as South Africa is a stronger economy and the most sovereign state in the continent it carries more responsibility towards the issue of Palestine and Israel. This statement is not far from the truth because according to the South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East, South Africa has pledged U$1 million towards humanitarian assistance in Palestine. However, as noble as this gesture appears to be, it seems to be putting more pressure on South Africa's already stretched resources, which could be used towards funding free tertiary education.

When combing through the literature, it is quite clear that South Africa's foreign policy is in line with the ruling ANC's policy that takes into serious consideration human rights issues and the protection of the marginalized and oppressed. It is also notable that the ANC is unwavering and unrepentant in its support of those countries and organisations that assisted it during the liberation struggle years. This position is in line with what was stated by the South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East. Although this position is noble, it seems like the ANC has failed to distinguish between party-government and party-state interests. The literature review also points out that it can be very difficult to strike a balance between realists and human rights activists as evidenced in South Africa's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine. The South African foreign policy is a tug of war between realists, who are concerned with getting investment, and radicals, who want to take the moral high ground. With regard to Israel, South Africa has maintained its trade relations with the country while simultaneously advocating for better treatment of Palestinians in this Israel-Palestine conflict.

### 6.2.3 The role and impact of religion in the conflict

This point is arguably the rallying point in the discussion in this dissertation. The argument made in this study is that while it is true that religion is not solely responsible for causing the Israel-Palestine conflict, any attempt to understand both the causes and possible solutions would be incomplete without factoring in the religious element. This submission is predicated on the fact that at times both sides invoke religion when justifying their arguments about ownership of the contested land. As discussed earlier, the three main religions associated with the conflict in the Middle East [Judaism, Islam and Christianity] are deeply rooted in the contested land.

Within this context, pro-Israel informants felt that while religion did not cause the Israel-Palestine conflict, it had in some way escalated the tensions. One Pro-Israel respondent laid the blame squarely on the Palestinian religious extremists. Another respondent observed that the ideology of religious extremism perpetuated by Hamas, aimed at Israel's destruction first, then all those who do not obey demands of whichever extremist group that is holding weapons. It is quite clear that religion plays a significant part in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. If there exists religious extremism such as the one propagated by Hamas, then there is clearly no chance of reaching an amicable solution in this conflict. This is made worse by the further assertion of one of the Pro-Israel informants that in terms of traditional Islamic belief, any land once occupied by Muslims constitutes a religious endowment that can never be ceded to non-believers. Because of this religious endowment, also known as the Islamic *waqf,* it seems highly unlikely that the Israel-Palestine conflict will cease as Israel's opponents are hell-bent on restoring the entire land to Islamic rule.

Furthermore, another Pro-Israel informant felt that religious tensions that exist are purely from the Muslim side as Israel respects and preserves all three monotheistic religions that were birthed in Jerusalem. Extremist ideologies that use religious discourse for their own ends were also identified as the problem and chief culprits were identified as being Hamas, Hezbollah and Isis. The highest birthrate of ultra-Orthodox Jewish and Muslim Israel-Arab communities, both of which read the Bible and Quran literally, also contributes to the escalation of the conflict. As long as there is religious extremism, whether it is Christian, Jewish and Muslim, there will be no end to the Israel-Palestine conflict. With the highest birthrates among the ultra-Orthodox Jewish Israel-Arab communities it is a scary prospect to fathom what would happen once the population figures grow in a way that is difficult to

manage or monitor. Furthermore, the allegation that the Israeli government had tried to control the birthrate of African Jews of Ethiopian descent through illegal sterilization, it is a scary thought to fathom that perhaps the same mishap might befell these fast growing population groups.

On an equal footing, some Pro-Palestinian informants also blamed the religious Jewish extremists for the escalation of tensions in the Israel-Palestine conflict. One respondent stated that Jewish and Christian Zionist fundamentalism should accept blame as the catalysts for the occupation and the legitimate resistance against them as illegal occupiers. He further added that religion did not have to amplify the tensions as under Islamic rule Christianity thrived in Jerusalem and Jews were given refuge from the persecutions in Europe. It is quite clear that religion is the biggest stumbling block to the achievement of peace in this Israel-Palestine conflict. If there is no side that is willing to back down from its claims to the land of Palestine on religious grounds, then the conflict might never be resolved in this lifetime.

Another informant blamed some Jewish religious extremists that are trying to take over the Al-Aqsa mosque and Judaize Jerusalem. Furthermore, another respondent accused Israel of portraying the conflict as a religious conflict by linking it to religious extremism in order to gain sympathy from countries that have genuine problems with religious extremism. What can be read from the above observations is that Jerusalem is the centre where religions such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity originated. Therefore Jerusalem is the most strategic city for both Judaism and Islam religions hence some of the clashes have occurred in this Holy city. With regard to Israel portraying the conflict as a religious conflict, it could only be assumed that the informant is referring to the United States of America (USA), who like the State of Israel, has battled to contain the threat posed by religious extremism and is also a big ally of Israel. It could also be argued that the accusation that Israel's portrayal of this conflict as a religious conflict by linking it to religious extremism is seeking sympathy from other states is bordering on exaggeration. There are so many countries in the world that are battling to fight terrorism perpetuated by religious extremists.

Furthermore, one Pro-Palestine informant believed that religion had been used in many instances to oppress indigenous people by countries claiming to have been given land by God, such as South Africa and the USA. This is a fair point because religion had been used to oppress and dispossess people of their land by people falsely claiming to be God's chosen people. However, regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict the scene for religious conflict was

set long ago. The inhabitants who were given the land by their God had to leave the land as a punishment for their disobedience, only to come back and find another people already occupying their space. One other respondent added that although religion has played a very great part in the Israel-Palestine conflict, it should not be separated from the commercial and imperialist interests from the USA.

Moreover, some Pro-Palestine respondents have argued that some people are gaining from this ongoing conflict as the war is a lucrative business for those who supply arms to warring parties. Although this sounds like a legitimate point, it is difficult to fathom the USA gaining anything materially or in any form from this Israel-Palestine conflict. However, it should be acknowledged that there is a powerful Jewish lobby in that country advancing Israel's case in that country's foreign policy. Another informant disputed that the conflict is religious, saying the most important distinction should be drawn between the biblical land of Israel and the modern state of Israel in 1948. In fact, according to the Bible, the modern state should not be where it currently is as this land is currently smaller than the one originally given to Israel by God. The last respondent posited that religion cannot have any major impact on the Israel-Palestine conflict because all three religions co-exist peacefully with one another. This is very far from the truth as these three religions do not co-exist peacefully with one another in some parts of the world (where Christians, Jews and Muslims have been attacked for their faith) and even in Israel. The disputed city of Jerusalem is a classic example because it is a centre where many important holy sites of both Islam and Judaism are situated. Important Christian sites are also found in Jerusalem as well.

Regarding the responses from SA Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East and the Palestinian Ambassador to South Africa, they totally disagreed with the position that the Israel-Palestine conflict is a religious issue. Instead they tended to take an all-inclusive stance, whereby they reiterated that all religious faiths and other sectors are in support of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people. Indeed, with regard to South Africa there is a diversity of religions, races and civil society that support the Palestinian cause. Even some prominent South African Jews, whom it could be assumed would be naturally inclined to support the state of Israel, on the contrary they support Palestine. However, the role of religion cannot be understated in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This point will be expatiated in the latter paragraphs of this section.

Furthermore, the Israeli Ambassador to South Africa stated that most South African citizens, whose majority are Christians, see Israel as a friendly partner for South Africa. He even cited a poll to this effect, which was conducted in 2014.This poll, found inter alia that 49 percent of South Africans had a favourable view of Israel compared to 37 percent who had a negative view. So, can it therefore be genuinely said that some of the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance leaders and some cabinet ministers are really representing the majority of South Africans when they utter statements that condemn Israel and even discourage citizens, majority of whom are Christians, from visiting Israel? This remains an intriguing question. However, the fact remains that religion is a key factor in this conflict and its importance can never be ignored.

The literature review revealed that religion might not be the sole cause of the Israel-Palestine conflict but it has indeed made its significant contribution and even played a critical role in sustaining this endemic problem. What can also be observed from the literature is that religion is problematic as it has pitted Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions against one another. This would have been inevitable as the Middle East is the epicentre where these religions originate. When the leaders of the Zionist Movement responsible for returning to Israel in 1948 were still negotiating with the leaders of the then superpower, Britain, for resettlement in then Palestine, their cause was assisted by the fact that British leaders understood and knew their Bible very well. Therefore, whether it has been used for the greater good or the opposite, the fact remains that religion has indeed over the years contributed immensely to this Israel-Palestine conflict with both sides invoking it to buttress their assertions and claims.

Furthermore, both Islamic and Jewish religions agree that the land of Israel/Palestine is the Holy Land and should therefore be occupied. From a Muslim perspective, this land was conquered by Prophet Muhammad and his followers. Within this context, it cannot just be forfeited easily or relinquished to the other camp. They further assert that since the land of Palestine was captured by the Muslim army, it became Muslim land and should therefore remain in Muslim hands. While according to the Jewish perspective, the Holy Land was first inhabited by its patriarch, Abraham, and it is a religious duty to settle in all parts of the land. They further argue that the concept of the holiness of the land in its entirety derives from two parallel processes, namely: a traditional one and a modern one. This, coupled with the fact that there is a growing population of radical extremist from both Jewish and Muslim in some

parts of Jerusalem and Israel, is rather chilling as these two religious communities seem to be heading towards a collision course.

Moreover, what makes matters worse on top of these Jewish and Muslim positions is the fact that there are divergent Christian positions which do not do any justice to the situation. In the process of these concomitant squabbles innocent people are killed on a daily basis as a result of this on-going conflict. These differing views, which are the Christian Zionist Camp and the Social Justice Camp, contribute to the polarization of Christian opinion thus making consensus impossible. The Christian Zionist Camp is the one that favours the state of Israel and the Social Justice Camp sides with the Palestinian state. While it is a noble thing for a Christian to side with the poor and marginalised and the oppressed, to assist them where you can, it does not serve the Kingdom of God if this divides the very representative of God against one another. While the Bible is not an easy Book to read and understand if that person is not led by the Holy Spirit, the difference in interpretations should not be so much that it defeats the original purpose. In other words, while trying to find Biblical verses and reasons for supporting whichever side, these Christian camps should keep in mind that innocent people continue to suffer in both Israel and Palestine. After all, it is the Bible which says that 'a house divided against itself will fall.'

Furthermore, despite these differing opinions among Christians there are also fundamental differences among these three monotheistic religions themselves which serve as a great hindrance and stumbling block to ending the Israel-Palestine conflict. One radical Islamic Jihadist view is that an enemy or the greatest *kufr* (non-belief) should be pushed out of the country. On the other hand, the extremist Jewish view is that it is the religious duty to conquer all of greater Israel. The Christian fundamentalist view is blaming radical Islam's bloodthirsty embrace of a theocratic dictatorship which believes that they have a mandate from God to kill. This is a rather sad state of affairs because these radical views, blame game and name calling are not helping the situation but instead assist in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The above posited positions by these religions are a clear indication that these religions are divided and the gulf is wider than imagined.

The divisions among Christians are not only confined to Israel-Palestine conflict as they were also experienced even in South Africa during the liberation struggle against apartheid. South African Christians were also quite vocal in the fight against apartheid. Christian organisations such as the South African Council of Churches led the fight against apartheid while on the

other hand some churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church supported this evil regime. Therefore religion was used to justify apartheid and to justify dividing the people of South Africa on racial lines. On the other hand, religion was also used in opposition to apartheid. It is therefore quite clear that if used incorrectly and foolishly, religion can motivate the killing of millions of people as experienced in such horrific events as the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, segregation, racial discrimination, and other oppressive practices.

As mentioned earlier, the Book of Revelation in the Bible seems to have foretold what the current state of affairs in the Middle East, more especially the Israel-Palestine conflict would turn out to be. The Book talks about the dragon and the beast that began to take over the rule of the nations of the world in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Bible scholars interpret this as being lawless, non-Christian majorities who are already ruling large sections of the earth, who are now threatening the core of Christianity. They make an example about what is happening in Jerusalem – the city God loves. According to Revelation all this started when the 'dragon' was cast down to earth. The devastating Second World War, in which around six million Jews were annihilated, was the culmination of this desire for men to rule themselves. Would the Second World War have happened if religion were used correctly by its chief architect, Adolf Hitler, who is said to have been a member of the Catholic Church?

The evil in this world escalates when people use religion to save their own egoistic ends. The Second World War helped in escalating the establishment of the state of Israel as Western powers felt guilty about the Jewish Holocaust that wiped out around six million Jews. This section puts it beyond any doubt that trying to understand the Israel-Palestine conflict without factoring in the religious element would be a futile exercise. While religion is not the sole cause, it is surely an important player in the crises.

**6.2.4 The Efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's Foreign Policy towards Israel and Palestine**

Again, under this section there are differing opinions among respondents who are Pro-Israel and those who are Pro-Palestine as to whether the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign has been effective in influencing South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. What can be noted from the Pro-Israel group of informants is that the BDS Campaign has been largely ineffective. For example, it failed to paralyze the earnings of Woolworths through its robust campaigns against the store; its academic boycott has been a dismal failure; it has been unable to influence South Africa against trading with Israel as trade has increased every single year that BDS has been in existence and its activities have been banned in countries such as the United Kingdom, United States and Canada. Based on these facts, it is hard to believe that the Campaign has achieved its original goal, which is to cripple Israel's economic activities in South Africa and beyond.

Conversely, Pro-Israel respondents pointed out that the BDS Campaign has enjoyed minimal success in Europe where it has persuaded academic institutions and pension funds institutions to divest or boycott Israel while in the United States, it has not made much of a dent. When it comes to South Africa, the respondents stated that the BDS movement has infiltrated elements of the ANC, where it has substantial influence. They further added that what BDS has succeeded in doing is turning the subject of Israel into one that people want to avoid, as it leads to discomfort, conflict or controversy. With regard to universities, the respondents stated that while there are individual academics refusing to engage with Israeli institutions, no university that traditionally cooperated with its Israeli counterparts has formally resolved to ban future interaction, nor discontinued preexisting cooperation.

What can be read from the above summary of what the Pro-Israel group of informants has articulated regarding the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine is that it has not made much of a breakthrough. The failure to get American singer, Pharrell Williams, off the Woolworths campaign during his concert in Cape Town in September 2015 could be cited as an example of the failure of the BDS Campaign. However, the views in the foregoing paragraph are expressed by Pro-Israel informants; therefore they would dispute anything that is against Israel. Consequently, it should be expected that they would dismiss the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine.

With regard to the Pro-Palestine group of informants it is a whole different story as they felt that the BDS Campaign has been very effective in South Africa, Israel as well as in other countries. They further state that the Israeli parliament, Knesset, had to pass a bill aimed at preventing damage to the state of Israel through boycott in 2011due to pressure passed by the BDS Campaign. They also stated that although the campaign had enjoyed success, however, it has not been as successful as the international campaigns against apartheid South Africa. Some of the respondents pointed out that the close proximity of the BDS Campaign to the ruling ANC, which is currently under pressure from many fronts and this therefore leaves both these parties with little time to focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Another respondent thought that the BDS Campaign could be improved upon as South Africa still trades with the state of Israel.

Furthermore, they believe that many governments are afraid to push for full blown sanctions against Israel because of the power the economic forces that support Israel wield in international affairs and that South Africa has taken the stance that all the goods that are produced from Palestinian territories that are occupied by Israel must be clearly labeled as such. The respondents also noted in 2011 that the University of Johannesburg Senate terminated its links with Ben Gurion University in Israel and in December 2015 over 200 South African academics signed a petition declaring that they would henceforth refrain from accepting invites to any Israeli university.

The summary of the Pro-Palestine group of informants shows that although they felt that the BDS campaign has enjoyed major success in South Africa, Israel and other countries, however, there is still room for improvement. As anticipated, the Pro-Palestine respondents offered different views from the Pro-Israel respondents. The most notable differing view is that of the University of Johannesburg terminating its links with the Ben Gurion University in Israel and over 200 hundred South African academics signing a petition declaring that they would refrain from working with any Israeli university. However, the Pro-Israel respondents stated that no university that traditionally cooperated with its Israeli counterparts has formally resolved to ban future interaction. This is quite tricky and somewhat confusing because it is difficult to discern which side is being truthful and not less economical with the truth.

When it comes to the embassies regarding this matter, the South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East stated that support from all social formations, including the BDS Campaign, should be consolidated and strengthened. The Israeli Ambassador felt that the

vast majority of South Africans see Israel as a friendly partner for South Africa. On the other hand the Palestinian Ambassador felt that solidarity movements such as the BDS Campaign reiterate the ANC's foreign policy agenda in supporting the Palestinian struggle for freedom from occupation and racial oppression. He also felt that it is evident that these groups have influence in South Africa's foreign policy in the case of Palestine and Israel.

Looking at the aforementioned comments from the respective embassies, it is quite clear that South Africa and Palestine are in support of the BDS Campaign and that they feel that it needs to be strengthened to force Israel's hand. Israel, on the other hand, thinks that the majority of South Africans see Israel as a friendly partner. As to how the Israeli ambassador arrived at such a conclusion is really hard to comprehend as apart from the survey that was alluded to earlier, it is really hard to gauge the views of the populace of a country as diverse as South Africa.

When examining the literature, the evidence suggests that since 1994 trade with Israel has increased despite objections from the BDS Campaign. Research conducted by the BDS affiliate, Stop the Wall Campaign (SWC), has revealed that trade has been growing on average at 5 percent per year throughout the post-apartheid era. Judging by this information, it seems that the South African government has just been paying lip-service when it spoke against Israel's atrocities in Palestine when it demanded the labeling of products from occupied territories and when discouraging its citizens from visiting Israel. Perhaps the SA government is trying to balance its human rights moral imperative with its economic interests. Furthermore, Woolworths has argued that it imports less than one percent of its stock from Israel. Judging from the evidence above, the SA government is the one that is having more dealings with Israel.

### 6.2.5 The influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine

Under this section, the Pro-Israel group of informants was not happy with the way in which the United Nations dealt with Israel. They felt that regional and international institutions were not treating the Israel-Palestine conflict in an even-handed manner as challenges of Palestinians are placed in the fore while Israel's problems are dismissed. These informants further stated that the continued fighting in the Israel-Palestine conflict benefited some individuals because it is worth billions of rands. It could be true that indeed the United

Nations is dealing rather harshly with Israel when it comes to the issue of the Palestinian struggle for liberation.  In fact, it could be argued that had it not been for the support of the superpower, the United States, Israel would have long been wiped out of the earth.  With regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict benefitting some individuals as it is worth billions of rands, this might seem far-fetched but that is what most Jewish people think.  It's more like the Muslim Arabs refusing to accept the existence of Israel. It is what each side believes and is willing to live with as long as it propels them towards achieving the desired goal. In this case, the goal of the Jews is to guarantee Israel's security and existence.  It is also true that war is a lucrative business in that while innocent people are suffering and dying, some people are gaining in monetary terms, e.g. through the sale of arms and ammunition.

Moreover, the group of Pro-Israel informants stated that the world owed the Jews for allowing the Holocaust which saw six million of them killed by Hitler in the Second World War.  There is a sense of entitlement if not subtle arrogance in this statement.  Although it is not disputed that Jews were killed in their millions during the Second World War, however, without the risk of sounding insensitive, there is nothing unique in the mass killings of people as throughout the annals of history millions of people were murdered for their faith and skin pigmentation and perceived inferiority, namely, Christians and black people.  There are just too many instances where people have been murdered in droves and there seemed to be no recourse and punishment for this evil and inhumane deed.

So, the question becomes: what makes the Jews so special that they would think the world owed them for allowing the Holocaust?  According to the Bible, the Jews are God's chosen people.  Whether this is fair or not for God to choose a certain group of people to be His special people is neither here nor there.  What matters is that an increasing number of the world's inhabitants do not believe in what is written in the Bible and they cannot comprehend this issue of God's chosen people.  All they see is a nation of hard-hearted people who are hell-bent on preserving their nationality wherever they are.  In the Palestine territory they found a place they could call home since everywhere they went they were persecuted and at times not allowed to practice their faith.  Therefore, as hard as it might be for some to accept, it would seem that the Jews are indeed God's chosen people and the Holocaust was their master's way of punishing them for rejecting Him and to use the world's sympathy in order to establish the state of Israel in 1948.

Furthermore, these Pro-Israel respondents voiced their support for a two-state solution as contained in the United Nations resolution. This is what the moderate Jewish people are advocating and some have even voiced their disapproval of the usage of excessive and unnecessary violence by Israeli soldiers when dealing with Palestinian women and children during some of the confrontations. However, the radical Jews want nothing more than the whole territory of Palestine hence some of them have built their houses in Palestinian land without any authorization. The respondents also hoped South Africa's prestige in Africa and the world could be used by world bodies to find common ground in this conflict. Moreover, they thought that South Africa's history of conflict resolution in Africa and the world could play a meaningful role in resolving this impasse.

While the aforementioned is flattering, it could be argued that while South Africa has had some success while mediating in many countries across the African continent, the country is hardly in a position to play any meaningful role in the Israel-Palestine conflict. With all its successes in many countries across Africa and elsewhere in the world, South Africa has barely managed to deal with an issue closer to home, the Zimbabwean crisis. Consequently, citizens of that country are entering South Africa in droves. With all due respect to the Zimbabwean issue, what is happening in that country north of South Africa is devastating but it is man-made and can be easily avoided if African leaders were to take bold steps and speak in one voice.

On the other hand, the Israel-Palestine conflict is centuries old and has many layers connected to it. While this might not sound neighbourly, South Africa is battling to cater for its citizens and having more people, some of them who are in the country illegally, is putting a strain on the country's public purse and its ability to adequately provide services for its own populace. It is really hard to fathom how South Africa can contribute meaningfully to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict when it cannot properly deal with issues closer to home though the issues are not the same but the Zimbabwean crises can be resolved easier with bold African leadership.

The Pro-Palestine group of informants wanted regional and international institutions to deal harshly with Israel due to that state's ill-treatment of Palestinians. Moreover, the informants cited a UNICEF report that stated that there is no substantial Jewish historical claim on the Temple Mount despite claims by the state of Israel. With regard to this, it is only a matter of

time before these institutions deal even more harshly with Israel. Judging by the resolutions taken by both the United Nations and the African Union, it is quite clear that it is only a matter of time before the whole world turns up the heat on Israel. The UNICEF report is also quite telling as it goes against the Biblical claims. Furthermore, they felt that it was best for international institutions to create a platform for both Israel and Palestine in order to explore possible solutions. As stated earlier in the paragraph, for now there seems to be a platform in the United Nations where both sides can actually voice their concerns. However, the UN's Independent Commission of Inquiry has condemned both Israel and Palestine for the 2014 atrocities in Palestine. The Commission stopped short of accusing them of possible war crimes.

Moreover, the Pro-Palestine respondents felt that some powerful countries and international commercial interests have been influential in the way Israel is treated by the international community. This statement is similar to that made by the Pro-Israel respondent who felt that there are some individuals benefitting from the Israel-Palestine conflict. In a complex conflict such as this one, accusations would always fly around and it is absolutely complicated to ascertain which of these statements have substance. However, observing that both sides are raising the same issue, it should be conceded that there exist some powerful people who have found a lucrative business in this conflict.

Another informant stated that the Israel-Palestine conflict is the one between the oppressor (Israel) who has the backing of most European powers and the United States, and the oppressed, the Palestinians. While this might have been true at the beginning of the conflict, the tide is slowly shifting in favour of Palestine if the BDS Campaign's successes in Europe are anything to go by. The Pro-Palestine respondents further cited a United Nations report that attributed BDS as a key factor in a 46 percent drop in direct investment in 2014 in Israel. This is in direct contrast to what the Pro-Israel respondents stated earlier. The only proof of this is to look at the figures of Israel's trade with other countries. However, since the study is dealing with South Africa and these two respective states, the information about SA's trade with Israel will suffice.

According to the South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East, South Africa has been influential in trying to assist in the Israel-Palestine conflict through the United Nations. One of its efforts, include pledging one million US dollars towards assistance in

Gaza. The funds were transferred to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). While South Africa is doing a commendable job by assisting the Palestinian Refugees, however nothing is said about whether the money is really used to benefit those needy people. Moreover, without sounding as if one is against this benevolent act, already the UNRWA has an annual budget of billions and billions of rands and SA's assistance seems like a drop in the ocean. At times, one is forced to agree with those skeptics who feel that for a middle power, South Africa is punching far above its weight. However, from a broader perspective, by making its modest contribution, South Africa is positioning itself as a global player.

The South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East further stated that SA supports the Palestinian Authority, which is also backed by the League of Arab States, in its intention to seek United Nations membership for the state of Palestine. He concluded by stating that the African Union has many resolutions supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and that it also supports all United Nations resolutions. SA's support for the Palestinian people is understandable given their history of fighting what could be arguably regarded as common enemies, in Israel and apartheid South Africa. Similarly, the fact that the resolutions taken by the AU and the Arab League are the same as those of the UN is not surprising, as both these respective regional powers are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

The Israeli Ambassador to South Africa contended that some countries have 'de-hyphenated' their relationships with Israel and Palestine. He gave examples of countries like India, China, Kenya and Rwanda, whom he regarded as having excellent relations with both Israel and the Palestinians. It is rather difficult for South Africa to follow the examples of the countries mentioned above as their history is not similar to that of South Africa. These countries attained independence long before South Africa and they never had their oppressors or colonisers striking trade relations with Israel. Although they might be sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians, however their voices are not as loud as those of the South African state. In all fairness, South Africa has tried to strike a balance by continuing to trade with Israel while condemning it for its part in the Palestinian atrocities.

The Palestinian ambassador to South Africa stated that SA had supported every resolution in favour of Palestine tabled at the United Nations while putting pressure on Israel at a bilateral and multilateral level to find a just and lasting solution. This is quite true and alludes to what

was stated in the foregoing paragraph. South Africa has been unshaken in its support for Palestine. He further reiterated that the African Union has issued statements that support Palestinian people and condemning the Israeli occupation. While this is true, not all African countries are as zealous as South Africa in the pursuit of justice for the Palestinians. As stated earlier, these countries are interested in pursuing economic interests with the Israeli state.

When combing through the literature, it dawned to the researcher that the international and regional institutions (i.e. the Unite Nations, the Arab League and the African Union) had minimal success in arresting the Israel-Palestine conflict. The literature review reveals that the biggest international institution of the three, the United Nations (UN) was too weak to force the Israel and Palestine into a ceasefire shortly after the civil war broke out following its recognition of the state of Israel in 1948. As a world body, the UN failed to properly transfer administrative authority to relevant structures following the withdrawal of the British Mandate Government in Palestine. As a result, it was a free for all as the war inevitably followed immediately after Israel's announcement of independence. The fact that the United Nations, a world institution tasked with ensuring world peace after the devastating Second World War, could not ensure that the British postponed their departure from Palestine, speaks volumes about its effectiveness and foresight in handling conflicts of such complexity.

Furthermore, even the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, agrees that the institution has lost its way and failed to protect the most vulnerable people in the society. However, Annan's statement is a bit problematic since it talks of the UN losing its way in the most recent times when, in fact, this started from its inception. For instance, it has been too weak to force its most powerful members in the Security Council, such as China, France and the United States, to detest from violating human rights in weaker countries. It is therefore not surprising at all that the Israel-Palestine conflict has raged on without ceasing the trampling over of the human rights of the most vulnerable. However, on the other hand some feel that the criticism leveled against the UN is not fair because its job is not easy; it has to assemble a multiplicity of individual national states with all their imperfections. In other words, this world body has to put itself in the shoes of each and every individual country. This is not an easy task as countries, just like people, are very diverse.

In light of the Israel-Palestine conflict it can therefore be concluded that it is a reflection of the modern world. Some countries are poorer than others, some richer, some weaker and

some more powerful. Consequently, their problems are determined by their standing in the world system. In reality, it is the survival of the fittest; it is about how the Israel-Palestine conflict affects the most powerful states, and once they decide to respond decisively those fateful decisions could plunge the world into another world war as countries have divergent views on this conflict.

With regard to the League of the Arab Nations or the Arab League, it is quite clear that part of its failure to contribute meaningfully in resolving the Israel-Palestine is the fact that its membership is problematic. It is a regional body yet it excludes regional giants such as Iran and Turkey as well as the state of Israel, which is directly involved in this conflict. It is really hard to comprehend the logic behind the omission of these crucial regional players. Perhaps with regard to Israel, it could be due to its aspirations of being an exclusively Jewish state. However, what about the other two, Iran and Turkey? It is therefore not too hard to see the reason why the Arab League has failed to make inroads in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Furthermore, another reason why the Arab League should share the blame with the UN for the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict is that when the UN proposed the partition of Palestine into two separate states, the League vehemently opposed this. The Arab League, which represented the Arab countries, believed they were in a better position to triumph militarily and claim the entire Palestinian territory. But it was not to be as even today both Israel and Palestine are still paying dearly for that error of judgment. However, not all is bad for the Arab League as it has had some measure of success in trying to bring peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In a 2010 Summit hosted by US president Barack Obama, leaders of Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Egypt met in an initiative by both the US and the Arab League. The meeting almost achieved its goal of brokering a peace settlement and providing security guarantees to Israel if and when a Palestinian state was established. However, this peace initiative by the League did not succeed due to disagreements between Israel and Palestine as to how to solve the issue of refugees. Managing to bring all affected parties to the negotiating table, which is quite a daunting task, could be regarded as a success of some sort. Without this minor disagreement the initiative by the Arab League almost succeeded but as the English saying goes, almost does not count.

Regarding the African Union, it also seems to be on par with the other bodies, albeit in terms of success or lack thereof, when dealing with the Israel-Palestine conflict. In fact, this African body seems to be out of its depth, out of sorts and found wanting when dealing with

issues pertaining to its continental issues. For instance, it had to take the intervention of 'outside forces' to quell the Libyan conflict between government and protesting citizens who were dissatisfied with the arrest of a human rights activist. The intervention of NATO by way of implementing Resolution 1973 of the UN dealt a great blow to Africa's ability to solve its own problems on its own. It also robbed Africa of its role of pursuing the solutions it proposed to the crisis and in so doing it marginalised AU's weak voice and undermined AU's political principle of African solutions to African problems. This further proves how unequal and unfair the international arena is because if that were the case the Libyan conflict would have been dealt with by the African Union, not NATO. Moreover, the Libyan conflict illustrated that whenever African conflicts threaten the interests of major powers the ability of African states to deal with these conflicts independently is compromised. It would seem a bit unfair to expect the AU to deal effectively with the Israel-Palestine conflict when it cannot deal with its own affairs. Charity should begin at home.

Moreover, although the African Union has taken some resolutions that are in line with the UN resolutions regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, it has no control over how its member states interact with Israel and the Arab states. The latter is said to have enjoyed cordial relations with African countries before the 1967 Six-Day War and thereafter the relations cooled off because of their sympathy to the Palestinian cause. Another reason for the cooling off of relations being the realization that the African states have been taken for a ride by the Arab League, who had pretended to want nothing to do with apartheid South Africa, yet some of the Arab League members were trading with both Israel and South Africa. The African countries decided henceforth that they would adopt a principled stance regarding Palestinian self-determination and that their interactions with the Arab states would be determined by considerations of pragmatic self-interest. It is therefore quite imperative for any given state to make pragmatic decisions which are informed by a realist approach whenever dealing with other states.

It is not all negative for the African Union as it has enjoyed some success in some of its progressive decisions it has taken since the dawn of the new millennium. This was achieved by enshrining the principle that any member state caught seizing power through a coup d'état or any other unconstitutional means would be kicked out of the AU. This decision was so progressive such that even the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, 'hoped and expected the UN to follow the AU's lead'. The AU proved that it was simply not paying lip

service and playing to the gallery when adopting such a principle by suspending countries like Mauritania, Madagascar and Mali after coup d'états were experienced in these respective states. In fact, on top of the suspension of their AU membership these countries had sanctions imposed on them. This earned the AU respect from the likes of Annan and proved that despite its imperfections and failures it still had teeth that bite. Moreover, to its defense, it could be argued that in its failure to implement its resolutions, the AU is sabotaged by the more powerful Western powers as seen in the Libyan crisis. To compound the problem, at times African leaders do not speak in one voice, thus making it possible for outsiders to encroach.

## 6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has reflected upon, discussed and given meaning to the results presented in the previous chapter [Chapter 5]. Furthermore, these findings were discussed in order to give meaning to them in line with the research objectives and research questions of the study as outlined in Chapter 1.This was achieved by using the study's stated research problem, objectives, questions and responses from the open-ended questions. In addition to this, the combing of some sections in the literature review chapter resulted in the findings being coded into different themes. These themes were discussed within the broader context gauged from the reviewed literature.

Themes such as the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa, the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, the role and impact of religion in the conflict, the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine emerged from the study. These themes were then discussed further in order to make sense of them and at the same time putting them into context in relation to the study.

Now that the study's findings have been discussed and given meaning and context, the next chapter, which is the concluding chapter, will pull the study together. It will achieve this by reiterating key points which have been made in the study. The chapter will also reflect on the study's research question and objectives with the view to establish the extent to which the

questions have been addressed and the objectives achieved. Limitations of the study will be highlighted and recommendations made on future research on a related theme.

# CHAPTER 7

# SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter (Chapter Six) the findings of the study were discussed in order to give meaning to them in line with the research objectives and research questions listed in Chapter One. This chapter provides a summary of the key points from the entire study and draws important conclusions from the data presented in the foregoing chapters. This is the most important part of this research because it presents the end product of this endeavour. Furthermore, this chapter pulls the study together by spelling out its contribution to knowledge on the chosen theme. It achieves this by reiterating key points which have emerged from the research. The limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations are made on future research on a related theme.

At this point of the process the researcher has some measure of authority since more of his personal perspective is what is mostly expected. This is where the researcher shifts from being an objective reporter to becoming an informed authority and commentator (Roberts, 2004). This is simply because the researcher is more close to the focus of the study, its progress, and its data. Consequently, the researcher is now armed with ammunition to deliver closing arguments and to make recommendations that are coherent. Furthermore, analytical skills and demonstration of scholarship by way of engaging the data are essential prerequisites at this level. Therefore, it goes without saying that this last part of the study is a reflection on what has been discussed thus far and serves as the researcher's attempt to spell out the study's contribution to knowledge.

As a norm, the concluding chapter needs to answer the research question and also try to reflect on the study objectives as outlined at the beginning of the study to see if they were met. Should this not be the case, it is essential for the researcher to provide an explanation (Ball, 2012). Moreover, the chapter should show how the results and conclusions relate to the literature and theory which guided the study from the onset. This is achieved by demonstrating the connections between the results and the literature that has been reviewed. To achieve this goal, the researcher divided the chapter into different sub-headings where each relevant point pertaining to the study was discussed further.

## 7.2 Summary of the Study

Although so much has been written about the South African foreign policy towards the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine question, no literature has sought to look deeper at this issue in a balanced manner. Most literature that looks at the Israeli-Palestine conflict is arguably often biased in favour of Palestine. Moreover, some of it seeks to undermine the very foundations that both the Israelis and Palestinians owe their existence to, their religions, i.e. Judaism and Islam, respectively. The existing literature also tends to be in favour of South Africa's foreign policy that is friendly towards Palestine and hostile towards Israel. This is due to the fact that the ANC-led government felt that the state of Israel sided with the National Party government during the height of apartheid while Palestine sided with the liberation movement. So, this study examined all the angles regarding South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. It looked at the role religion has played in the conflict, the extent of the influence of apartheid in determining South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine as well as the influence of international institutions in the determination of South Africa's foreign in the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Another pressing issue was that of the foreign policy posture taken by the African states before the democratization of South Africa. During apartheid, Israel was South Africa's only ally in the Southern African region. This is not hard to fathom as both these countries were regarded as pariah states. However, since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has since changed its tune, opting to take an even-handed approach towards Israel and Palestine. Moreover, the ruling African National Congress has opted to side with the Palestinians and has even invited its leaders to the country. Since there is still something of a gap in terms of deeper analysis regarding the foreign policy frameworks within the African and especially the South African context and what drives such foreign policy positions, this study sought to address these issues and looked to delve deeper into their crux.

Furthermore, Jews are said to be the most successful people wherever they reside in the world. Film industries, business as well as the music industry are some of the areas where Jews dominate. They are also, apart from blacks, the most persecuted people in the world. On the other hand you have the Palestinian People who since 1948 have been subjected to all sorts of oppression in their own land by the Jewish state. Therefore at face value it would seem that the state of Israel is ill-treating the Palestinian people the same way apartheid South Africa treated its black populace from whom they stole the land. However, there is contention

that black people also stole the land from the early settlers, the Khoisan.  On the other hand, the Jewish State has the Bible to back it up. But the ill-treatment of defenseless women and children can never be justified by any Holy Book –including the Bible.

Moreover, apart from that, both the Jews and Palestinians are Semitic people and they have a common ancestor in Abraham.  So, is South Africa best placed to take sides in a conflict that seems to run so deep in the family? This study investigated these issues as a way of contributing to knowledge about the Israel-Palestine Conflict. This was done in the hope that perhaps it would assist the South African state in making better foreign policy decisions that would be useful for all parties involved in the conflict. Furthermore, although South Africa is a middle power state, this study might provide some solutions that would enable role-players to seriously engage the Israelis and Palestinians and hopefully allow for peaceful existence as South Africa managed to do after 1994.

The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate the validity of the posture taken by some of the leaders in the South African government and the Tripartite Alliance regarding the complex Israeli-Palestine Issue.
- To investigate the impact the South African impartiality and objectivity might have on the Israeli-Palestine question given the similar history of Apartheid South Africa and the so-called Israel Apartheid towards the Palestinians.
- To investigate the role played by the different religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) in the escalation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict.
- To investigate the extent of the influence multilateral organizations such as the United Nations have had on South Africa's foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict and
- To investigate the approach of continental and regional groupings such as the Arab League and the African Union,(of which South Africa is a member) towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

The study aimed to address the following questions:

**Key Questions:**

- What drives South African Foreign Policy towards Israel and Palestine?
- Is the nexus between SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine and the ruling ANC government of any assistance to South Africa's international aspirations in the long run?
- What role have religious groups and civil society played in the formulation of SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

**Sub Questions:**

- How realistic is SA's posture towards Israel and Palestine in the modern era of International Relations?
- How does South Africa benefit from its current posture towards Israel and Palestine?
- To what extent are South Africa's foreign policy imperatives determined by global developments?
- How significant is the tension caused by the position of the ruling ANC on Palestine/Israel which has adopted the BDS campaign and the SA Government, that has formally decided to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel on SA's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine?

The study is qualitative in nature and therefore primary data were obtained through the administering of questionnaires. These were sent via e-mail to the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the Israeli and Palestinian embassies in South Africa and Pro-Israeli and Pro-Palestinian interest groups based in South Africa. Initially the questionnaires targeted twenty respondents. However, with a total of sixteen respondents this could be regarded as a successful response rate. The informants were drawn from civil society, eight from each of the two sides (Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel), two from DIRCO and one each from the Israeli and Palestinian embassies. In total, there were seven responses from Pro-Palestinian organizations, six from the Pro-Israeli side, one from DIRCO, one from the Israeli embassy and one from the Palestinian embassy. Secondary data were generated through consulting books, journal articles, newspapers and internet sources. This process entailed collecting information from libraries in and around the City of eThekwini such as the

one at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College as well as one Municipality Library located at the eThekwini Central Business District (CBD).

Content analysis, thematic analysis and discourse analysis methods were all used to summarise and analyse the collected data. Content analysis is mainly used by novice researchers as it is easier to understand and use. In other words, the researcher had to go for the conventional and straightforward qualitative coding and categorizing of data. For a better analysis, the researcher had to also use thematic analysis owing to its ability to segment, categorise and re-link certain aspects of the data prior to final interpretation. Another method that was also employed was discourse analysis. This type of analysis deals with understanding the world in a particular way and it came in handy because the study dealt with three countries, namely; South Africa, Israel and Palestine, and several international institutions. Furthermore, according to Jorgensen and Phillips discourse analysis can be used as a framework for analysis of national identity (2002). However, this approach is not without its challenges and these include the unpredictability and the incompleteness of the structures given by this approach. Therefore the reasons to use all these three forms of analysis are justified as they all complement each other since they are far from perfection.

After exploring the research problem, objectives and research questions, the responses of the sixteen informants as well as the literature review, the findings were coded into five different themes. These themes were the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa, the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy in Israel and Palestine, the role and impact of religion in the conflict, the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine and the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine.

With regard to the theme on the historical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its relevance to South Africa, the study found that Israel has a legitimate claim to the whole Palestinian land as it has the Bible to back it. However, applying this into practice is quite a daunting task as the land has been inhabited by the Palestinians for over two thousand years. The study also found that Israel and apartheid South Africa both came into existence in 1948 and they have arguably oppressed, marginalised and segregated the 'indigenous people'. It is for this reason that after 1994 the ruling African National Congress found it hard to deal with the state of Israel. While South Africa as a state has kept its trade relations with Israel, it has also been unwavering in its support for the Palestinian people with the ANC and its tripartite

partners condemning Israel for its atrocities in Gaza every chance they get. Moreover, the proponents of apartheid South Africa have used the Bible to oppress the majority of black people as they, like the Jews, are of the view that they are God's chosen people. This is further from the truth and is the worst form of white supremacy as the only God's chosen people in the Bible are the Jews. Jewish people are certainly a heterogeneous nationality as they have different skin pigmentations, of which some of them are dark-skinned, just like the South African black majority.

On the assessment and validity of the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, it can be argued that although the country's foreign policy towards both Israel and Palestine is even-handed and supports a two-state solution. However, pronouncements made by some senior members of the cabinet and some leaders of the ANC-led tripartite alliance paint a different picture. This has agitated and made the state of Israel uncomfortable to such an extent that in April 2015 it denied SA Higher Education Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande a VISA to enter Palestine. Moreover, no sitting South African president has ever visited Israel except former president and founding father of SA's democracy, Dr Nelson Mandela, who it could be pointed out, that at the time he was no longer president. With regard to Israeli Prime Ministers it is also the same story, as none have ever visited South Africa in their official capacity, while Palestinian president, Mahmood Abbas, has visited the country in the same manner that the late Yasser Arafat did. The ruling ANC has also invited and hosted leaders of the liberation movement, Hamas, which the Israeli government regards as a terrorist organisation.

Given the unsavoury historical links between apartheid South Africa and the state of Israel as well as solidarity formed between the ANC and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) during SA's struggle for liberation, it can be argued that there is little fault, if any, in the country's foreign policy towards these respective states. While condemning the state of Israel for its treatment of innocent Palestinians, the SA government has continued to trade with Israel. The voices of disapproval that are seemingly against Israel, it could be argued, serve as a balancing act. South Africa is not advocating for the total annihilation of the Israeli State, as some of the countries in the Middle East do. Conversely, it acknowledges its existence and favours the two-state solution. This could be done by any sensible state taking into consideration the realist view of the world. Israel might be making strides in the technology and agricultural sectors with its world class innovations, but it is hardly an economic superpower in the same class as say, the United States and China.

Regarding the theme about the role and impact of religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict it is quite evident that the role and impact of religion can neither be denied nor ignored. Religious extremism and fundamentalism were cited as major stumbling blocks to peace. It was argued that they have assisted in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. It can also be noted that religious extremism is said to be used by one party in this conflict to get sympathy from countries battling this sort of threat. Furthermore, the one area that is a bone of contention for the Israelis and Palestinians, that is Jerusalem, is said to be the epicentre where all three major monotheistic religions originated. These religions are Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They have all in some way played a part in this conflict. Christianity is divided into two; there are Christian Zionists who favour Israel and Social Justice Advocates who support Palestine. What influences this division among Christians is that the Christians who live in Palestine are also affected by the Israel-Palestine conflict. Islamic religion believers are fully behind the Palestinian cause and they do not recognize the existence of the state of Israel. With regard to Judaism, there are those who support the two-state solution and condemn the killing of innocent people while there are those who want Israel to occupy more land from the Palestinian side.

Furthermore, it would seem that both Muslim and Jewish faiths are heading for a collision course as they both share strong views when it comes to the land of Israel/Palestine or whatever way each side would want to call it. This is because according to Muslim belief, once the land has been occupied by Muslims it never ceases to be under their control. On the other hand, Judaism propagates that since this holy land was first inhabited by its patriarch, Abraham it is their religious duty to occupy all the territory of Israel/Palestine. With such extremely opposing views it is therefore not an overstatement that a much more devastating war to be joined by other countries sympathetic both to the Israelis and Palestinians is looming and almost inevitable.

What is also more intriguing is the fact that the Book of Revelation predicted the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Book talks about the dragon and the beast that began to take over the rule of the nations of the world in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Bible scholars interpret this as being lawless, non-Christian majorities who are already ruling large sections of the earth; who are now threatening the core of Christianity. This is exactly what is happening in the Israel-Palestine conflict where Christians who are supposed to be serving the God of love are taking extremely opposing views on such a sensitive matter. The posture taken by the Christian Zionists and Social Justice advocates is not representative of what God stands for, which is

love, peace and compassion. It rather puts fuel into the already lit fire that is the Israel-Palestine conflict. As ambassadors of God on this planet, Christians have failed Him miserably on a number of issues, including this one.

Moreover, this division within Christianity is not all confined to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Similarly, during the apartheid era, there were those churches that supported apartheid and also those who fought against it. The Dutch Reformed Church supported the apartheid government while on the other hand Christian organisations such as the South African Council of Churches were strongly opposed to the apartheid system. It is rather disconcerting that the very custodians of love and compassion were preaching hatred and sowing divisions among God's people. The fact that the Dutch Reformed Church supported apartheid proponents is part of the reason that some elements within the tripartite alliance support the Palestinian cause. Unfortunately that was a gross misrepresentation of Christianity and what it stands for. This has played some role in how some South Africans who are against Israel have advanced the Palestinian cause. This, coupled with the religious fundamentalism from both Islam and Judaism religions, proves beyond doubt that religion has played a much bigger role in the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

With regard to the theme about the efficacy of the BDS Campaign in influencing SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine, it would seem that opposing sides are claiming victories. Israel's supporters and the Israeli embassy view the BDS Campaign in South Africa as a total failure while the Palestinian support base and the Palestinian embassy are of a different view in that they feel that the BDS Campaign has been a success. Some of the successes include certain academics signing a petition that they will no longer accept invites from the Israeli universities as well as the 2011 decision by the University of Johannesburg to server ties with Israel's Ben Gurion University. While there is no denying that the BDS Campaign has had some success in winning over some sections of the South African population, the fact that trade between South Africa and Israel has continued to grow since 1994 shows that it has not succeeded in convincing the government to ditch Israel as the trading partner.

The last theme which deals with the influence of international and regional institutions on SA's foreign policy in Israel and Palestine has shown that while the international and regional institutions have had some measure of success in dealing with issues pertaining to other states, they have not been quite as successful on the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is owing to

the fact that although the United Nations has many member states that are supposedly equal, they are not really equal in the true sense of the word. For years, African and other third world countries have been advocating for the change of status in the Security Council of the United Nations. In this council therein sit five powerful states, which are: Britain, China, France, the United States and Russia. The fate of other states rests on the voting of any of these nations. Since Britain, France and the United States are seen as sympathetic to Israel it is therefore impossible to have them pass resolutions that would hold Israel to account for some of the atrocities committed during the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. The mere fact that Palestine is not a full member of the United Nations but just an observer state says a lot about inequalities in this institution.

With regard to the other two regional institutions discussed in this study, namely, the Arab League of Nations and the African Union, they have also not come to the party when it comes to resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is because they are more or less the prototypes of the United Nations. It is really hard to fathom how they could manage a breakthrough in this impasse. Moreover, the Arab League, which consists mainly of Arab nations, is in close proximity to Israel yet owing to nationality the Jewish state finds itself excluded. What is also peculiar is that even Turkey is also not a member of the League as both these nations (Israel and Turkey) are members of the European Union. This is confusion at its best! Due to its geographical location, the African Union is also not best placed to provide any meaningful contribution towards resolving the conflict. The worst part is that at times the African Union has found itself undermined by the Western nations when trying to resolve its own conflicts. The Libyan crisis is a good point of reference. This shows that whenever the interests of the West are threatened western countries do not hesitate to intervene, even if such intervention undermines other states. It further proves that the world is unequal and is ruled by a fewer powerful states. For their survival, smaller states have to align themselves with any of those so-called powerful states.

## 7.3 Findings related to the literature and theory

### 7.3.1 Literature

Most literature concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict tends to downplay the role played by religion in this conflict. Unfortunately available evidence shows that the significance of religion in this perennial conflict cannot be ignored. To separate the imperativeness of

religion in the Israel-Palestine conflict would be tantamount to separating oxygen from a living being. Religion makes this conflict live. It defines and sustains it. Without religion as the key causal factor the conflict would cease to exist. When the remnants of the Second World War (the Holocaust) 'officially' settled on the land of Palestine in 1948 it was not just a coincidence. Initially, the Jews had chosen to settle in Argentina but that did not materialize and then they opted for Uganda but even that was unsuccessful. When the Jews finally settled in Palestine it meant direct conflict with the Palestinians who had lived in that land for over two thousand years.

Therefore the land meant different things to the Israelis and Palestinians. According to Hinn (2009), to the Arabs, it was illegally seized from them by pro-Israel international governing bodies and to the Jewish people it has always been rightfully theirs and was given to them by the Almighty God Himself. According to the Bible, God told the patriarch of both the Jews and Arabs, Abraham, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates," (Genesis 15:18). This verse is like sweet music to the ears of the Israelis but to the Palestinians it is a bitter pill to swallow.

The most intriguing factor is that although the Biblical Palestine or Israel is regarded as the land of milk and honey, the area was not as attractive when the Jewish Zionists went there to determine if they could settle there. According to Bregman (2000) the area (Palestine/Israel) was a barren, rocky, neglected and inhospitable land with malaria-infested swamps. What is also of particular interest is the transformation of the Palestinians from regarding themselves as some smaller part of the Arab nation in the Middle East into nationalists who wanted self-determination. Prior to the arrival of the Jews there was little attention paid to the social-structural and political changes that might be necessary for Palestine to develop, (Lesch & Tessler, 1989). This is rather surprising as Hagee (2007) posits that the Palestinians have never existed as an autonomous society, and the land of Israel never belonged to them. It can therefore be argued that the Palestinians saw the development of this barren, neglected and inhospitable land into a success story. Consequently, they no longer wanted to share it with these strangers (Jews) who had fled the devastating Holocaust.

It is quite clear that the Israel-Palestine conflict was inevitable as there were already people residing in Palestine. Adams and Mayhew (1975) argue that the already settled Palestinian population could hardly be expected to consent to the early Zionists settling in their land as this would have meant a choice between exile and submission to the rule of the newcomers.

Patai (1986) further posits that after being kept in subjection by Islam for thirteen centuries, the Jew became within a few decades metamorphosed into a figure seen as a threat to the Arabs. The Arabs were not going to just lie down, play dead and let the Jews just take what was rightfully theirs as they had lived there for centuries. On the other hand the Jews had no choice but to return to the land of their ancestors as Herzl (1969) asserts that, before settling in Palestine the Jews were an endangered species because wherever they lived they were more or less persecuted.

However, there are those who subscribe to the school of thought which says that although the Jewish people have been given the land by God they should remain exiled until the present day (Dadoo & Osman, 2013). This means that until such time that God speaks audibly to everyone on earth that the Jews should return from exile, for them to settle in Israel is in direct violation of God's command. This view is also shared by an organised body of strictly observant Orthodox Jews, called Neturei Karta which is vehemently opposed to Zionism and its creation of the state of Israel. According to this organisation the ingathering of the Jews to the ancient Jewish homeland is to be consequent upon the coming of the Messiah, sent by God to the Jewish people, who have meanwhile forfeited the land because of their non-adherence to God's commandments (Gee, 1998). The Neturei Karta believes that by creating the state of Israel the Zionists are blasphemous, went against God's design and are trying to replace the role of the Messiah. This is a rather interesting view as God speaks in different ways to different people and there have been many prophecies about the return of the Jews to modern Israel.

It could be argued that the most reliable source that can prove the existence of ancient Israel and consequently ascertain that Israel has valid claims to the Palestinian territory is the Holy Bible. However, even the validity of the Bible has been put to question by most people who do not believe in the existence of a higher being or a deity. Among such people is Israeli historian, Professor Shlomo Sand, who has questioned the reliability of the Old Testament which shakes the very foundations on which the claims of the Israelites of the Holy Land are built. Sand (2009) has cast doubts about the exact dates of the early events in the books such as Kings and Chronicles that narrate the stories of Israeli kings, David and Solomon.

On the other hand, however, Professor Martin Noth (1959), an expert in the Old Testament, differs as he posits that Israel was a historical reality with its own historical period, during which it was intimately involved in the multifarious life of the surrounding world. If this

Israel-Palestine conflict rages on even in the world of academia where the most learned of people are fighting to have their opinions heard on this matter, the implications of the ideological and religious fight between the Israelis and the Palestinians is dire. Sadly, its consequences are experienced by the whole world.

Further significance of religion is the fact that all three monotheistic religions, namely: Christianity, Judaism and Islam all originated in Jerusalem. For Jews, it is the capital of David and Solomon's kingdom and the site of the Western Wailing Wall; for Muslims, it is the site from where Muhammad ascended to heaven on his famous night journey and as for Christians, it is the site for the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Gelvin, 2005). The fact that three of the world's biggest religions originate from this site which is the setting of the Israel-Palestine conflict should be opening up the eyes of the whole world about the significance of religion in this conflict. Billions and billions of people from around the world are members of these three religions, more especially Christianity and Islam.

The Israel-Palestine conflict would not have gone on for this long had Christianity, Islam and Judaism put aside their differences and worked together for the common good. Although these religions might never be serving the same God, their basic tenets and values are believed to be the same and that is to love your neighbour as you love yourself as well as putting others before yourself. This is possible because both Christianity and Islam are inspired by the Bible which was written by the Jews, (Hayes, 1971). However, the mixture of religion and nationalism has proved to be dangerously combustible as all these religions are not willing to compromise. Landau (2007) suggests that on a more pragmatic level, two nations in a dispute over land claimed by both should be able to compromise and share the territory. However, trouble starts when God's will is invoked to absolutise one or the other claim and thus leading to religious extremism which in turn generates grotesque ideologies of domination, death and destruction.

Furthermore, Muslims, Christians and Jews who believe in taking another's life are compromising the word of God and therefore acting against God's will. According to Charcour (2007) God is the first victim and is insulted by these three religions and their extremist groups. Religion can be dangerous if used carelessly and for one's selfish ends. Munroe (2006) posits that religion has motivated the massacre of millions over the years in such horrific events as the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, segregation, racial discrimination, and other oppressive practices. Religion is blamed for

many atrocities in the world and this is part of the reason so many people no longer believe in the existence of God or a higher being in control of the universe. The apartheid government used religion to oppress black people.

According to Hagee (2007), Adolf Hitler was said to be a member of the Roman Catholic Church and the havoc he caused was inspired by the wrong interpretation of the Bible. Presently, some terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram invoke religion when carrying out their destructive activities. It is therefore quite clear that religion in the hands of dangerous people can help perpetuate a conflict instead of providing a solution as has been the case in the Israel-Palestine conflict. There is no doubt that if the people were to really follow God's word then the world would truly change and become a better place to live in.

Available literature has shown that the influence of the European powers in the Israel-Palestine conflict is enormous. Just like they did in the scramble for Africa in the 19th century, they also had a say in the land of Palestine. According to Muslih (1988) the mighty British Empire was there to divide, rule, and subjugate. The disastrous way in which Britain handled the Palestine Mandate matter resembled that of Nigeria where more than 450 ethnic groups were put under one artificial boundary – this had the hallmarks of dividing, ruling and subjugating. To this day Nigeria is still suffering the side-effects of this deliberate plan to divide what remains Africa's most populous state.

With respect to the Israel-Palestine conflict, this divide and rule British agenda definitely served as setting for the confrontation between the emerging Palestinian Nationalism and the Jewish Zionism. Moreover, the late colonial competition after the First World War right up to the end of the Second World over who should gain control over the former Ottoman territories (including Palestine) further complicated and served to fuel this conflict (Jahn, 2015, Cohen, 1987). It would seem that each and every conflict in the world has the European powers as its sources. The Israel-Palestine conflict is no exception as just like in Nigeria, these powers put artificial boundaries around people who would not normally associate with one another.

When it comes to South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine it is quite clear from the literature that it came full circle in 1994. Before 1994 the apartheid government had somewhat strong relations with the Israeli state but it had no relations whatsoever with Palestine. However, all of that changed as the ANC-led government had special relations

with the Palestinian state. According to Benjamin (2001) in 1994 Mandela reportedly told Hanan Ashrawi, one of the leading Palestinian negotiators, that they were the first to stand by the South African liberation movements and supported their struggle. It was evident that the status quo had changed.

Some writers such as Payne (1990) have downplayed the similarities between apartheid South Africa and Israel, saying the conflict with Palestinians, as opposed to the white-black confrontation in South Africa, is not an internal problem but connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole and unlike South Africa, Israel does not deny basic human rights to the Palestinians. Some, like Benjamin (2001), have even gone to emphasize that the Israeli state was eventually forced to acknowledge the depth of international opprobrium directed at South Africa's racist policies that in 1987 Israel imposed sanctions on South Africa. It would seem that Israel had a conscience after all. However, this gesture would amount to nothing as the Israel-Palestine conflict still rages on and some senior government ministers and leaders of the ANC-led tripartite alliance still view Israel with suspicion.

**7.3.2 Theory**

The three theories that underpinned this study are: realism, institutionalism and human rights theories. They were chosen due to their relevance to the research. Owing to their varied nature, it was hoped that these theories would assist in providing more clarity in this study. The realism theory deals with the central problem of international politics which is war and the use of force with the central actor being the state (Nye, 2003). The other theory, which is institutionalism, is concerned with how international organisations exact authority and maintain peace among their member states. According to Ruggie (1998), institutionalism includes the principal actors and characteristics of world politics. The third and last theory, the human rights theory, focuses upon international law, methods of implementation and the source, justification and meaning of rights, (Evans, 2001). These three theories have gone a long way in assisting with the illumination of some difficult concepts of this study, such as, the nature of the relationship among the states of South Africa, Israel and Palestine, the effectiveness of international institutions in arresting the Israel-Palestine conflict, as well as the usage of human rights in the formulation of the South African foreign policy in Israel and Palestine.

**7.4 Implications for Action**

It is hoped that this study will assist the South African government to carefully and thoroughly apply its mind whenever formulating its foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) and leader of the Tripartite Alliance consisting of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), is at times referred to as the broad church. This means that it has a multiplicity of voices within itself and as such these divergent voices would come out in the public sphere expressing different opinions on one issue. Locally, it might get away with this but when it comes to matters of national interest, speaking in unison is of utmost importance. When South Africa voted for the United Nations Security Council's resolution 1973 in 2011, which effectively gave permission for the West to bomb Libya and thus oust the controversial but yet revered leader, Muammar Gaddafi, the ANC Youth League condemned the decision to vote against Libya. Although in a democratic country like South Africa voicing a differing opinion is allowed, at times in matters of national security it is best to speak in unison. To this day, there is no satisfactory answer for that disastrous decision to bomb a fellow African country.

Furthermore, the Libyan scenario in the foregoing paragraph serves to paint a similar picture regarding South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. Although South Africa has taken an even-handed approach towards Israel despite its misgivings about how the Jewish state treats the Palestinians, the utterances of some of its cabinet members and alliance members have resulted in the sending of different messages. At times delicate matters that involve cordial relations with other countries should not be spoken publicly by just anybody who is not authorized to do so until consensus has been reached because this might negatively affect the country's standing in the international arena.

At some point in July 2013, Zimbabwean President Robert called then President Jacob Zuma's international relations advisor, Lindiwe Zulu, a street woman after speaking out of turn regarding Zimbabwean elections. With a Master's Degree in International Relations, there is no doubt that Zulu is an accomplished diplomat. If Minister Zulu can at times be found wanting in matters of statecraft, imagine a person who is not well-versed on such issues. Therefore, it is quite clear as daylight that the ruling party and its alliance partners need to speak in one united voice on matters of statecraft, especially those as delicate as the Israel-Palestine conflict, where nothing is as clear cut as it seems.

South Africa has a vibrant democracy and it is often referred to as rainbow nation because of its diverse population and different religions. According to the 2001 census the overwhelming majority of South Africans, or 79.8%, are Christian. Census 2011 did not include any questions about religion ([www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com](www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com)). The ruling party and government need to take these facts into cognisance whenever they embark on this tedious task such as the formulation of foreign policy. It is also doubtful that the cabinet ministers who publicly discouraged South African citizens from travelling to Israel took these facts into consideration. There is a fine line between a state and a government. As a precaution, government should be mindful of the fact that it represents a diverse group of people who, although being a Christian majority but also subscribe to other religions.

Therefore, the South African state, although controlled and ruled by the ANC government, its population consists of a population which might not necessarily share the same views when it comes to Israel and Palestine. Moreover, in 2014, during the height of the Israeli-Gaza war, different political parties and civil society groups marched on the streets of South Africa, either showing solidarity with Israel or Palestine.

Furthermore, there is no denying the significant part that religion has played in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Taking only the political and pragmatic approach on this matter is bordering on carelessness. The majority of Israeli citizens are Jews; the majority of Palestinians are Muslim Arabs. Within both these territories are Christian minorities. In South Africa, the majority of the populace subscribes to Christianity, while Muslims and Jews constitute a minority. In 1994 South Africa impressed the whole world when it avoided the imminent civil war and instead managed a successful transition from apartheid when it was least expected. Although it is a middle power country appearing to be punching above its weight, South Africa still has a meaningful role to play in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This, it could achieve by gathering all the influential leaders of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic religions and appeal to their conscience. There is no doubt that the Presidential Special Envoys to the Middle East are doing a great job where they are deployed but wishing away religion as an inconsequential factor in the Israel-Palestine conflict is missing out on an opportunity to broker a ceasefire in this conflict.

**7.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

The study was conducted mainly through desktop research as even the interviews with informants were kept to the bare minimum using the purposive sampling strategy. Moreover, the interview questions were sent out via email. Perhaps another researcher could pursue this study further by engaging in personal interviews with a wide range of people from both sides of the divide (Israel and Palestine sides) where there is a chance of asking a follow-up question for some more clarity and elaboration. Other than this, other researchers could even travel to both Israel and Palestine to ascertain for themselves what they are researching through direct observation. Although this researcher once paid a visit to Israel, such a trip was not part of the study. The study was conceptualized long after the trip had been undertaken. As such, direct observation was not consciously and deliberately used as a methodological approach in this study. Moreover, the research could be taken further by engaging more religious leaders from all three monotheistic religions that originated from Jerusalem, namely, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This would be done in the hope that as it is now quite evident that this Israel-Palestine conflict has strong religious inclinations, further research on religion would be needed.

Moreover, this research could be taken further by engaging more with the religious elements within the ruling African National Congress. Other political parties such as the main opposition, the Democratic Alliance, which seems to be supporting the Israeli state in the Israel-Palestine conflict, could also be consulted to gauge its views on the matter. Furthermore, the Nazareth Baptist Church, which is one of the biggest churches in southern Africa, could also be interviewed as it was one of the pro-Israel marchers in the height of the Israel-Gaza war of 2014. Other than this church, many other Christian, Islamic and Judaism groupings could be engaged as well. The think tanks, university experts on Middle-Eastern issues as well as those prominent Jews who are against Israel's occupation of Palestine should also be engaged. Professor Steven Friedman and former Intelligence Minister, Ronnie Kasrils are some of these Jews who reside in South Africa.

Further research could also be taken up with other fellow African countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya who have excellent relations with both Israel and Palestine to see how they have managed to engage Israel beyond its conflict with Palestine. More understanding could also be sought from South Africa's fellow BRICS members such as China and India. Both these countries have excellent relations with Israel

and Palestine and they have taken advantage of opportunities that Israel has to offer, more especially in agriculture. Israel, just like South Africa, is a semi-desert place and South Africa could learn a lot from the Jewish state in terms of its cutting edge agricultural technology. Therefore research that would serve as a catalyst to open the eyes of the South African state is of paramount importance as many job opportunities could be created if the interests of the country are put first. In a nutshell, there is potential in pursuing this study further. One of the successes of the present dissertation was to demonstrate the role of religion in the conflict and to provide a balanced account of why the conflict has been sustained. This is a huge contribution in terms of influencing South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. The gaps highlighted above give pointers on the way forward.

## 7.6 Conclusion

Initially, while struggling to come up with the title of the study and eventually settling on the current one, it looked as if the results of the study were going to condemn South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. However, to the researcher's pleasant surprise nothing was far from the truth. Contrary to the researcher's initial belief the findings were not at all condemning but instead proved to be educational. Although conducting this study was at times daunting and challenging, it has been worth a journey as it is hoped that it will assist the formulators of South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine in understanding the broader historical and political context of the conflict.

In actual fact, there is nothing wrong per se with South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine. However, it is the pronouncements made by some members of the cabinet and leaders of the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance that are unbecoming. Israeli supporters in the country have been left confused as to why there seems to be an agenda against Israel when there are other countries in the Middle East which have committed gross human rights violations almost in the same (if not worse) manner as Israel has done. However, the cardinal sin that the Jewish state has committed is touching a country whose liberation movements such as the People's Liberation Organisation and Hamas were active supporters of the ANC during the struggle against apartheid. It does not matter whether the country or individual is accused of serious atrocities against human rights but if that country assisted the ruling party during the struggle against apartheid, it is guaranteed ANC's support no matter what. To some, this might be a serious concern.

Furthermore, the stance taken by the ruling ANC and its alliance partners is not representative of the South African majority who are Christians. For the majority who grew up reading the Bible and all of a sudden hearing that the country that is written about in the Holy Book is actually real and they are discouraged to visit is actually discouraging. For the majority who are devout Christians and who know their Bible inside out, and in particular, the part which states that, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you," is totally unnerving and disturbing. This is because these words were said by God to His chosen people, Israel. However, as South Africa's official foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine actually supports a two-state solution, comfort can therefore be taken from this. What is also encouraging is that South Africa's trade with Israel has grown since the advent of democracy.

When looking at the historical context of this study, it is evident that the apartheid government used the Bible to copy the state of Israel and in the process to oppress the black people because in the apartheid government's eyes they were sub-human. This has led to the supporters of the Palestinian cause accusing the Israeli state of using tactics similar to the apartheid government and even calling it apartheid Israel. Given the atrocities that have been committed since 1948 and that are still continuing, it is really hard not to agree with such insinuation. However, the Bible makes it clear that there is only one nation that belongs to God, and those are the descendants of Abraham, the Hebrews or Jews. The apartheid government was driven by its evil desires and superiority complex which led it to subjugate the black majority in a country they also rightfully belonged to. On the other hand, Israel's atrocities are to be condemned at all costs, however they have a legitimate claim to Palestine due to ample Biblical evidence. It should be admitted though, that had it not been for Holocaust, it's unlikely that the world's community would have sympathized with the Jews and accepted the formation of the state of Israel.

With regard to the South African foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine, it is clear that it is a tug of war between realists, who are concerned with getting investment, and radicals, who want to take the moral high ground. The South African state has taken an even-handed approach by maintaining its trade relations with the Israeli state while simultaneously advocating for better treatment of Palestinians in this Israel-Palestine conflict. Unfortunately for those who have chosen to take a moral high ground, and thus advocating for a policy that makes human rights the only priority, South Africa's stance is both realist and humanistic in

its approach. So far it seems to be working well, despite the voices from some quarters, condemning Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. The critics are justified and are within their rights. However, South Africa is not an island, hence it has to make some tough decisions at times.

In essence, it is absolutely apparent that from the beginning religion was always a major part of the Israel-Palestine conflict and it continues to divide the world on religious grounds. Extremists on both the Muslim and Jewish sides are not willing to compromise on this matter as they have taken an all or nothing approach. In terms of traditional Islamic belief, any land once occupied by Muslims constitutes a religious endowment that can never be ceded to non-believers. Because of this religious fundamentalism, also known as Islamic *waqf,* it seems highly unlikely that the Israel-Palestine conflict will cease as Israel's opponents are hell-bent on restoring the entire land to Islamic rule. On the other hand, another quite unsettling thought is the extremist Jewish view that dictates it is their religious duty to conquer all of greater Israel. This coupled with the fact that there is the highest birthrate of ultra-Orthodox Jewish and Muslim Israel-Arab communities, both of which read the Bible and Quran literally, has without any shadow of doubt contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

While most informants dismissed the position that the Israel-Palestine conflict is a religious one, what is most telling is that even the Pro-Israel respondents downplayed the role of religion. Some even argued that the Zionist did not use any Biblical argument when settling in Palestine but were just desperate people who wanted a safe place to stay. They noted that the majority of the Israeli population is secular. This left the researcher in the state of confusion. The position taken by the South African Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East and the Palestinian Ambassador to South Africa, as well other Pro-Palestine respondents that the Israel-Palestine conflict is a religious issue is acceptable. This is arguably owing to the fact that the SA Presidential Special Envoy, the Palestinian Ambassador to SA and the most Pro-Palestine informants are Muslims and hence subscribe to the Islamic religious endowment, known as Islamic *waqf* mentioned in foregoing paragraph.

While in that state of confusion it then suddenly dawned on the researcher that The Book of Revelation in the Bible seems to have foretold the current state of affairs in the Middle East, more especially the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Book talks about the dragon and the beast that began to take over the rule of the nations of the world in 18th century Europe. Bible scholars interpret this as being lawless, non-Christian majorities who are already ruling large

sections of the earth, who are now threatening the core of Christianity. They make an example about what is happening in Jerusalem – the city God loves. Although Judaism gave Christians the Bible, it is written in that same Bible that they rejected their God and He forsook them.  Their God hardened their hearts and closed their spiritual eyes.  The fact that most of the Israeli populace is secular means that it views itself as an occupier of the Palestinian territory without any valid grounds except to say that they needed a place where they would feel safe.  However, to a Bible reader, the return of Israel to her ancestral land was not just fate, it was ordained by God as predicted in the Bible.  Therefore, religion cannot be divorced from the events of the Middle East, more especially the Israel-Palestine conflict, as well as the rest of the world.  A Higher Being is in control of every event in this world, whether the world agrees or not, it is of little significance.

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