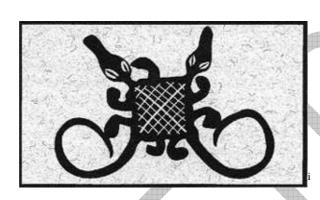


UBUNTU, ZIMBABWE AND THE ETHICS OF INTERVENTION



by **PETA DE JAGER**

research report submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Master of Arts APPLIED ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONALS

(by coursework and research report)

In the Faculty of Humanities
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

February 2010 Supervised by Dr. Brian Penrose **ABSTRACT**

The profound and extensive nature of difficulties in Zimbabwean current affairs raises a moral

dilemma for South Africa: should it intervene in some way, or respect Zimbabwean sovereignty?

Is there a plausible 'middle ground' theory to resolves this dilemma?

This paper argues that there may well be. It further argues that such a 'middle ground' account is

consistent with at least one version of *ubuntu*, an indigenous sub-Saharan African philosophy.

What does ubuntu have to say about the right (or perhaps even the obligation) of the South

African government to have intervened in Zimbabwean affairs? Does it vindicate South Africa

for its failure to intervene? This project, whilst not providing a decisive answer to the question of

whether intervention in Zimbabwe by South Africa is legitimate on this African world-view,

provides one possible approach to evaluating the dilemma from an *ubuntu*-informed perspective.

KEYWORDS: *uBuntu*, Zimbabwe, ethics, intervention, sovereignty, South Africa, philosophy, applied ethics, international relations.

ⁱ FRONTISPIECE: Akan gold weight from "African Voices" depicting the Ghanaian allegory of the two crocodiles who share a stomach, but still fight over food.

SOURCE: African Voices (Mason)