



**An assessment of China-South Africa  
relations: Insights from Zuma's  
Administration**

**RK Chipape**



**orcid.org 0000-0002-5735-8041**

Dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree *Master of Social Sciences in International  
Relations* at the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof L Amusan

Co-supervisor: Dr B Rapanyane

Graduation: May 2026

## Declaration

I, Ronny Kenny Chipape, hereby declare that the dissertation titled: ***An assessment of China-South Africa Relations: Insights from Zuma's Administration*** for the Master of Social Science in International Relations, which is being submitted to the North West University, has not been previously submitted for any degree at any other university. I also declare that this work is wholly original, and all materials and sources employed have been properly credited.

## **Acknowledgements**

The blessings of the God of Mount Zion have given me the strength and perseverance to complete my dissertation, and for that I am eternally grateful. "Lord Almighty, you are ruler of all the earth; you are much greater than all the God," the Bible states in Psalm 97:9. A great deal of hard work and devotion went into finishing this dissertation. For that reason, I feel obligated to thank the people whose help I have relied on so much in my academic journey and who have made the completion of this research possible.

Professor Lere Amusan, who has been an incredible mentor and supporter of my studies, has my profoundest gratitude. The success of the study was dependent on his priceless guidance. Dr. Benjamin Rapanyane, my co-supervisor, was an incredible adviser for me during my research, and I am eternally grateful to him. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Samuel Chukwudi Agunyai, whose invaluable support and substantial input were crucial to the fruitful completion of this study.

I am deeply grateful to my parents, Mr. M.A. Chipape and Mrs. T.J Chipape, as well as my two loving sisters, M.B. Maboya and M. Ramokgele. Thanks to your unending patience, love, and sacrifices; I have made it through this difficult path. You have been there for me through thick and thin, supporting me with words of encouragement, bearing with my study habits, and inspiring me to give it my all. To my younger brother, T. Chipape, and my nephews, K. Ramokgele and R. Ramokgele, you have been my rock, my strength, and the foundation upon which my success is built. I am eternally grateful. Throughout my academic path, I am grateful for the patience and encouragement shown by your prayers.

While enrolled at North-West University, I had the honour of working at the North-West University Writing Centre, and I am incredibly grateful to everyone there. I would not have been able to finish my master's degree without the moral and financial support you provided. I want to express my deepest appreciation for the support, empathy, and camaraderie you extended to me during this ordeal. Inspiring me, mentoring me, and creating an environment where I could succeed intellectually and personally your gift went above and beyond financial help.

## **Dedication**

In honour of my late grandmother Maria Mankarata Chipape, whose unending prayers and boundless love have helped me navigate life without her, I devote this dissertation to her memory. Her wisdom and perseverance are the most valuable gifts she gave me. Even though she could not be present to see me succeed, I feel her guidance even now. Her impact on my life has been profound, and this work is dedicated to her.

## Abbreviations

ABB	Asca Brown Boveri
ACFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ANC	African National Congress
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATDC	Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centres
AU	African Union
BASSREC	Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazile Russia India China South Africa
CAAIC	China-Africa Agricultural Investment
CAD	China-Africa Development Fund
CDB	China Development Bank
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEXIM	Export-Import Bank of China
CNADGC	China National Agriculture Development Group Corporation
CNBC	Consumer News and Business Channel
CNNC	China National Nuclear Corporation
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CPC	Communist Party of China
CRB	China Resources Breweries
CRE	China Resources Enterprise
CSP	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo

DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTP	Dube Tradeport
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
G20	Group of Twenty
GCI	Global Civilisation Initiative
GDI	Global Development Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBSA	Germany, India Brazil and South Africa
GSI	Global Security Initiative
HTIDZ	High Tech Industrial Development
IBSA	India Brazile South Africa
ICBC	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Assistance
IDCPC	International Department Communist Party of China
IDZ	Industrial Development Zone
IPAP	Industrial Policy Action Plan
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MOFCOM	Chinese Ministry of Commerce
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MZ	Manufacturing Zones
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDP	National Development Bank
NEPAD	New Partnership Africa's Development
NGC	National General Council
NGP	New Growth Path
NIP	National Infrastructure Plan
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPP	New Patriotic Party

PBI	Product Based Investment
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ROC	Republic of China
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SAA	South African Airways
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Community Party.
SACU	Southern African Custom Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAEMB	African Energy Metallurgical Base
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SMR	Small Modular Reactors
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SSC	South South Cooperation
TZ	Tourism Zones
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United State
UPC	Union Des Population
USSR	Union Of Soviet Socialist Republic
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZTE	Zhongxing Telecommunication Equipment

## **Abstract**

This study examined China-South Africa relations with insights from Zuma administration. The study looked at the factors that contributed to the shift from a Western-oriented foreign policy to the Look East national policy objective, which facilitated the development of the Beijing-Pretoria partnership. Using desktop research, the study used secondary data from scholarly articles, policy documents, government reports, and media publications related to China-South Africa relations during Zuma tenure. Further, Social constructivism theory utilised to explain how social interaction between the two countries gave significance to their alliance and reshaped South Africa's domestic and foreign policy. Under Zuma's leadership, Pretoria's relations with Beijing shifted, resulting in a significant decline in diplomatic and commercial relations with Western countries. The enhanced diplomatic engagement between Beijing and Pretoria significantly influenced political dynamics, particularly through interaction between the African National Congress (ANC) and Communist Party of China (CPC), which deepened ideological ties. Economic challenges in South Africa and shared ideological outlook with China further shaped political interactions, particularly concerning the Dalai Lama and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The study revealed that the Pretoria-Beijing relations was reinforced by China's development model, which South Africa, under Zuma, sought to emulate in addressing its socio-economic issues. The adoption of China's development model significantly enhanced China-South Africa relations, leading to increased political, and economic exchanges. The Look East strategy of the Zuma administration was driven by significant economic development in China, as Beijing promoted a development model encouraging Pretoria to embrace a comprehensive model accessible to the Global South. The partnership between Beijing and South Africa is strengthened by shared ideological foundations and close political alignment.

**Keywords:** Beijing-South Africa relations, Africa, foreign policy, Zuma Administration, Look East policy, West disintegration, development partnership, economic drivers, political relations.

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Dedication .....	iii
Abbreviations .....	iv
Abstract .....	vii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
Orientation of the study .....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Rationale for the study .....	4
1.3 Research problem.....	5
1.4 Research question .....	7
1.4.1 Research questions.....	7
1.5 Research aim and objectives .....	7
1.5.1 Research aim .....	7
1.5.2 Main research Objective.....	7
1.5.3 Specific Research objectives.....	7
1.6 Unit of analysis.....	8
1.7 PROVISIONAL CHAPTER LAYOUT .....	8
CHAPTER TWO .....	9
Literature review and Theoretical Framework .....	9
2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Literature review .....	9
2.2.1 The dynamic evolution of South Africa’s foreign policy from Mandela to Zuma Administration.....	9
2.2.2 Bilateral relations between China and South Africa.....	12
2.2.3 Contending issues in Beijing-Pretoria Relations under Zuma’s Administration.....	14
2.2.4 Summary of gaps in literature.....	24
2.3 Theoretical framework .....	27
2.3.1 Social Constructivism theory .....	27
2.3.2 Criticism of Social Constructivism .....	28
2.3.3 Relevance of the theory.....	30
2.4 Conclusion.....	31

CHAPTER THREE .....	32
Research methodology .....	32
3.1. Introduction .....	32
3.2. Research Methodology .....	32
3.2.1. Research Design .....	32
3.2.2. Data collection .....	33
3.2.3. Data analysis .....	36
3.2.4. Ethical Consideration .....	37
3.2.5. Conclusion .....	38
CHAPTER FOUR .....	39
An examination of the dynamics of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma’s administration .....	39
4.1. Introduction .....	39
4.2. Zuma’s Foreign Policy Re-orientation and Objectives .....	39
4.3. South Africa disintegration with the West: declining political and economic ties .....	41
4.4. Politics around South Africa participation in BRICS framework .....	44
4.5. Beijing-Pretoria development partnership under Zuma’s presidency .....	47
4.5.1. Special Economic Zone (SEZ) .....	47
4.5.2. Socio-economic outcomes of Zuma’s Developmental Approach .....	52
4.6. Conclusion .....	56
CHAPTER FIVE .....	57
An exploration of how politico-socio-economic developments in China have influenced the relationship between South Africa and China .....	57
5.1. Introduction .....	57
5.2. Chinese finance as the centerpiece of Zuma’s Look East Strategy .....	57
5.3. China-South Africa relations on multilateral engagement .....	59
5.4. Economic drivers of China-South Africa relations .....	63
5.5. Conclusion .....	70
CHAPTER SIX .....	72
An evaluation of China-South Africa diplomatic relations and their influence on political relations .....	72
6.1. Introduction .....	72
6.2. Evolution of Beijing-Pretoria relations .....	72
6.3. Diplomatic partnership between Beijing and Pretoria .....	73
6.3.1. Beijing-Pretoria inter party relations .....	73

6.4.	Beijing-Pretoria political dynamic and their implications.....	77
6.4.1.	China-South Africa political controversies under UNSC .....	77
6.4.2.	Dalai Lama.....	82
6.4.3.	One China Policy .....	86
6.5.	Beijing security dilemma in Africa and its political relations with South Africa 87	
6.6.	Conclusion .....	89
CHAPTER SEVEN .....		91
Conclusion .....		91
7.1.	Introduction .....	91
7.2.	Summary of findings .....	91
7.2.1.	Reflection of Zuma foreign policy.....	91
7.2.2.	China’s development drives political and economic engagement with South Africa .....	92
7.2.3.	Diplomatic relations and their influence on political relations .....	93
7.3.	Recommendations .....	95
7.3.1.	Recommendations.....	95
7.3.2.	Scene for incoming researcher .....	96
7.3.3.	Summary of the study policy implications .....	97
8.	Referencing list.....	99

## CHAPTER ONE

### Orientation of the study

#### 1.1 Introduction

Before the year 1994, South Africa did not maintain any relations with China (Maphaka, 2022). However, with the transition from apartheid to democratic regime in 1994, the government led by Nelson-Mandela (First democratically elected President of South Africa) established and maintained diplomatic relations with China and ensured that South Africa's foreign policy focussed less on the West (Maphaka, 2022). This move by Mandela, was welcomed by many African countries, with the hope to reintegrate South Africa into the wider international community and in growing and diversifying the economy after years of isolation triggered by the apartheid legislation (Yu, 2018). The shift in South Africa's foreign policy from the West paved the way for the Zuma's regime to tap into the benefits of booming economies of India and China. Jacob Zuma (Former President of South Africa) interest to embark on developmental agenda increasingly looked towards China for support. China emerged as a potential partner for resource-rich countries in the Third World. Consequently, South Africa gradually began to "Look East" for economic recovery (Kotze 2012; Alden & Wu 2014; Leso 2017).

The Look East policy was a strategic decision made by the South African government during Zuma's administration, as countries like China and India possess burgeoning markets capable of absorbing South Africa's exports. Additionally, these countries offered substantial trade prospects that appeared to provide a feasible solution to South Africa's various economic challenges. Mabaso (2023:35), assert that:

Zuma's government sought out trade opportunities presented by those countries. Over time trade with Asia grew to R760 billion.

This growth may have influenced DIRCO to assert that these countries are vital for South Africa to enhance trade and investment, foster technical cooperation, and create opportunities for skills development (DIRCO, 2016). This indicates that during Zuma's term, South Africa increasingly orientated itself towards the EAST, with a growing focus on commerce with other BRICS countries (Qobo and Dube 2015; Neethling 2017). In this regard, the study concentrates on Zuma's foreign policy to understand the dynamics of

China-South Africa relations, as his administration offers a more distinct case study of China's rising influence in South Africa during a significant transitional period in their bilateral relations. For instance, the strategic partnership between South Africa and China was elevated to include substantial infrastructure agreements and an increase in Chinese investments in South Africa's energy and industrial sectors (Wasserman, 2012; Alden, 2018). Thus, Zuma's tenure enables a more thorough examination of the crucial moments that have shaped modern China-South Africa relations.

It is important to highlight that the relations between China and South Africa during Zuma's tenure has sparked considerable speculation regarding their bilateral relations. This speculation may stem from the negative experiences associated with China's engagements in other African countries, particularly its contentious human rights record (Breslin, 2011). Likewise, South Africa is facing criticism for allegedly prioritising realpolitik over human rights, which has traditionally been a key element of its foreign policy. An illustrative example is South Africa's decision to abstain from voting in the UNSC on a resolution aimed at holding North Korea accountable in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its extensive human rights violations (Carmody, 2017).

South Africa is from the continent labelled with negative connotations. The combination of Du Toit (2015), Monareng (2016), and Tutu (2018) argue that China's investment in South Africa hardly benefit the ordinary citizens, resulting in the emergence of a group of oligarchies who primarily capitalise on China's investment. It is crucial to highlight that the trade of Africa's natural resources such as arable land, raw materials, crude oil, gold, and among others has been the foundation for China's investment. Bryman (2012); Fantahum (2013); Alden and Wu (2014); Sithole (2015); Thulare (2015); Shoba (2018); and Maphaka (2020, 2022) further recognise South Africa as Africa's leading economy and a market that aligns with and advances China's hegemonic interests in the global arena. Alden and Wu (2014); and Thulare (2015) asserts that China sees South Africa as open doors to the rest of Africa for its own interest.

South Africa has, in contrast, received support from China, particularly in vital sectors such as textiles, the automotive industry, agriculture, mineral resources, metals, and energy (Condon, 2012; & Gumede, 2014). On a bilateral level, China and South Africa collaboratively pursue shared strategic interests and investments (Bradley, 2016). South

Africa has reaped substantial advantages from loans funded by the Chinese state, investments, and infrastructure projects (Duggan, 2023). For example, China utilised its financial resources to help the South African government in rescuing Eskom<sup>1</sup> (Ani *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, a Chinese consortium led by the mining giant Jinchuan secured a 45% stake in Wesizwe Platinum's Bakubung mine in 2013 through a US\$650 million loan, injecting direct capital into South Africa's mining sector via the China Development Bank (CDB) (Bradley, 2016). In response to allegations that Chinese investments are primarily mercantilist and exploitative, Jinchuan has chosen to collaborate with local investors and has committed to utilising domestic expertise instead of bringing in workers from China (Bradley, 2016).

Another notable Chinese investment in South Africa involved a \$75 million deal for the establishment of ASA Mineral, focused on chrome mining, in collaboration with the Limpopo Province Development Corporation. Jisco, a manufacturer of steel from China, has also made investments in the Northwest province related to Chromium (Shelton, 2021). Likewise, South Africa has invested over \$400 million in various Chinese projects. Companies like SAB Miller, the MIH Group, and Landpac are among the key corporate investors from South Africa in China (Shelton, 2021). Shelton (2021), further highlights that since 1994; SAB Miller has invested in China by partnering with the China Resources Enterprises (CRE) Group to create China Resources Breweries (CRB) as a joint venture. Over the years, CRB has seen significant growth, becoming one of China's most profitable beer companies and the second largest brewing company in the country.

It is against this backdrop that, during an interview with CNBC Africa on February 27, 2014, Zuma stated that China views South Africa as an equal business partner, in contrast to the West, which often behaves as masters or superiors when doing business with South Africa. Zuma characterised the relations between China and South Africa as one of mutually beneficial equal partnership, rather than the directive-based relations (Matambo, 2014). Thus, according to Matambo (2014), the relations between China and South Africa are navigating pathways that lead to economic development for both countries. Shoba and Mtapuri (2024) note that the China-South Africa relations on a global scale encompasses a

---

<sup>1</sup> is South Africa's state-owned and dominant power utility, is responsible for generating approximately 95 percent of the nation's electricity

range of crucial issues, such as global security, climate change, food security, and notably, reform and global governance within BRICS framework. Mhaka and Jeke (2018) emphasise that South Africa worked in collaboration with China within the UNSC to promote peace in Africa especially in addressing the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, which were influenced by Western powers.

Therefore, the study assesses China-South Africa relations with insights from Zuma's administration, with particular emphasis on political and socio-economic developments, as well as the impact of diplomatic relations on their political interactions. The study evaluates prior governance to elucidate the significant relations between China and South Africa. Further, in making sense of China-South Africa relations, the study therefore holds great significance as it exposes the evolving terrain of global politics in Africa, especially regarding China's ascent to prominence. All these factors, no doubt, can raise tendency of doubts and suspicion about the China-South Africa relations. To address these doubts, there is a need for well researched study that would assess the relations, pointing out its inherent challenges and lessons that can be learned by South Africa and other African countries. In this regard, the foregoing means the need to critically analyse the Beijing-Pretoria relations.

The study expands knowledge on the dimension of China-South Africa relations. This study reveals the South African important position as a critical partner in growing its footprint in Africa because it is one of the members in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) alliance and has a great deal of economic power, which is typified by its sophisticated infrastructure and varied resources (Shoba, 2023). The study yields vital insights that policymakers in South Africa, China, and other African countries can utilise to navigate the complex nature of their relations. Finally, demonstrates the strategic rationale and wider implications of this alliance for both China and South Africa as well as Africa at large. It is in this context that assessment of China-South Africa relations functions as a model of Chinese foreign policy in Africa. In this regard, the study utilises social constructivism theory to analyse China-South Africa relations with insights from Zuma's administration.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

The study rationale gives the readers a prominent idea of the research's significance and goal (Krashen, 1985). A study's rationale is the driving force behind it (MacMillan &

Schumacher, 1993). The objective of the study is to contribute to the discussion surrounding the relationship between China and South Africa, focusing on how South Africa can strengthen its ties with Beijing to enhance its socioeconomic development, support the African agenda, and promote sustainable development throughout Africa via comprehensive global governance reforms. The research provides solutions for addressing South Africa's developmental challenges. It examines the relationship between Beijing and Pretoria, concentrating on political and socio-economic development, which affects the interaction between China and South Africa, specifically regarding political and economic exchanges that facilitate their integration into the global economy for sustainable development. It was noted that there has not been extensive discourse analysing South Africa's approach in shifting towards alignment with the East and distancing itself from Western ideologies during Zuma's presidency.

This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the evolving discourse between Beijing and South Africa, emphasising the significance of their strengthening ties and the solidification of political and economic alignment between China and South Africa to enhance their partnership within the global South. It sheds light on the origins, dynamics, and implications of China-South Africa relations, highlighting the importance of addressing socio-economic development issues. The study underscores the need for South Africa to prioritise an integrated-market policy, presenting an innovative perspective that enriches African studies by analysing development challenges and evaluating whether these interactions possess dominant, distinctive, and lasting characteristics. Furthermore, the study identifies potential sectors where China can assist Pretoria or Africa in exploration or improvement, and offers valuable insights for China to extend positive, instrumental collaboration to other African states.

### **1.3 Research problem**

China's presence in South Africa according to Pirie (2020); Munoriyarwa and Chibuwe (2022) serve as economic saviour, providing essential financial investments, employment prospect, and infrastructure development. This development aid from China is clearly needed, especially given the current socio-economic challenges facing South Africa (Mlambo *et al.*, 2016). Politically, China also relies on South Africa's support for its One China policy (Muekalia, 2004). South Africa also serves as China's central hub for essential resources necessary to support China's growth, while China provide value-added products

to bolster its ascending economic stature (Alden, 2005; Rotberg, 2009; and Melber, 2013). Dzigbede (2024) indicates that there has been a significant outflow of value from South Africa due to the growing imbalanced economic exchange. For example, April (2009) observes that China's advanced stage beneficiation of chrome extracted from South Africa are based on cutting-edge technologies for information, hydraulic sensing, electronic management, old and hot rolling processing, and modern steel smelting.

Further, Soko and Qobo (2016) points out that China's activities in South Africa have serious implications for the country, particularly in the manufacturing sector. For example, Maphaka (2022) indicates that the decline of the South African steel manufacturers has been overshadowed by a surge of Chinese Steel companies, aggravating the challenges local steel producers face. A case at hand was Evraz Highveld and Vanadium that were bailed out, while Tata Steel's Operation in Richards Bay was auctioned. It further led to the liquidation of Alert Steel and Duro Pressings steel companies (Maphaka, 2022). As the result, this has led to significant joblessness in South Africa. Evidence of this can be seen in the South African economic decline, with unemployment rate rising from 75, 000 to 85,000 making 25% job loss in the manufacturing sector alone during Zuma's presidency (Maphaka, 2022).

According to the literature, the relations between China and South Africa has generated mixed reactions in intellectual discussions and debates. Some groups argue that Beijing has consistently supported Pretoria through economic and infrastructural initiatives. However, others contend that China has gradually solidified its hegemonic presence in Africa through its ties with Pretoria (Sandrey and Edinger, 2009; Gimbernat Girgas, 2017; and Mnyandu, 2021). Although China-South Africa relations have generated attention and commendation, it has also raised serious doubts about the motive, utility, and sustainability of such a relations, considering China's ambiguous loan policy in South Africa. This study intends to bridge the identified gap, by specifically inquiring what exactly the motive, usefulness, and sustainability of Beijing-Pretoria relations? What impact does this relationship have on South Africa in general? The results of this study answer these questions. The study expands understanding of how South Africa should define their relations with China. Importantly, the findings expands discussions on the dynamics and intrigues defining China-South Africa relations. Further, the results of this study provide adequate and useful information on how South Africa can navigate the elusive stance of

China in Africa.

## **1.4 Research question**

A research question is an inquiry that the study aims to address (Manthata, 1991). It simplifies the research goal to a specific, investigate-able question that will direct the study's methodology and evaluation (Macdonald, 1988).

### **1.4.1 Research questions**

The study guided by the following research questions:

- i. How has the nature of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma's administration?
- ii. How politico-socio-economic developments in China did influence the relationship between the two states?
- iii. Why do China-South Africa diplomatic relations influence their political relations, and in what ways do these diplomatic interactions shape their political dynamics?

## **1.5 Research aim and objectives**

### **1.5.1 Research aim**

The research aim is a generic statement outlining the study's overall goals (Mooko, 1993; Riya, 2023). The aim of this study is to assess China-South Africa relations with specific focus on Zuma's administration. This is done to ascertain, if any, factors that aided the shift from the West to the Look East policy that led to the Beijing-Pretoria relations.

### **1.5.2 Main research Objective**

Objectives simply connote specific, measurable, smart, and concise purposes drawn or deductible from the broad goals of the study (Nagel, 1993). The overarching research objective for this study is to assess the contending struggle to surmount (a difficulty) issues or factors that influenced Beijing-Pretoria relations under Zuma's administration.

### **1.5.3 Specific Research objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To examine the dynamics of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma's administration.
- ii. To explore China's politico-socio-economic development between the two states.
- iii. To evaluate China-South Africa diplomatic relations and how it influences their political relations.

## **1.6 Unit of analysis**

According to Wessels and Pauw (2009) a unit of analysis is described as a means of reducing the amount of pertinent data so that the researcher can concentrate the investigation on the subjects that correspond with research objectives. The unit of analysis of this study is the assessment of various factors that aided the Beijing-Pretoria relations under Zuma's administration.

## **1.7 PROVISIONAL CHAPTER LAYOUT**

**Chapter one:** In this chapter the study presents a preliminary overview of the study, encompassing its background and problem statement. The statement outlines the study's objectives and inquiries about the study.

**Chapter two:** This chapter provides a thorough evaluation of the existing literature and presents an analysis of the theory, assessing its contribution to the study.

**Chapter three:** An account of the research methods used to conduct this study will be provided in this chapter.

**Chapter four:** This chapter examine the dynamics of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma's administration.

**Chapter five:** This chapter explores how politico-socio-economic development in China have influenced the relationship between China and South Africa.

**Chapter six:** This chapter provide an evaluation of China-South Africa diplomatic relations and their influence on political relations.

**Chapter seven:** This chapter provides an executive summary of the research, subsequently a thorough outcome that summarises the key findings. In addition, the research outcomes are used to make recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section explores the contributions and literature produced by other researchers relevant to the topic. The researcher reviewed the existing academic work pertaining to the contending issues regarding the Beijing-Pretoria relations during Zuma's time in office, as well as the challenges and advantages associated with these ties. The reviewed literature from other scholars is reviewed to provide new scientific insights. The literature review was conducted to pinpoint gaps in the existing research.

#### **2.2 Literature review**

##### **2.2.1 The dynamic evolution of South Africa's foreign policy from Mandela to Zuma Administration**

The exchanges between China and South Africa have historically exhibited both challenges and opportunities. The evolution of South Africa's foreign policy towards China has undergone various phases of engagement, reflecting a complex historical backdrop. To reflect back from the past two administration; the following is observed regarding the China-South Africa relations. Under Mandela's presidency, South Africa confronted the complexities of maintaining dual recognition of China, navigating a delicate political landscape. The Mandela administration determined to reintegrate South Africa into the global community after years of isolation, actively pursued a relationship with China; an endeavour that underscored the South Africa evolving identity. South Africa aimed to cultivate ties with both the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Following the transition in 1994, the ROC sought to solidify its relations with South Africa by offering a substantial grant of 500000 USD for the Albert Luthuli Memorial Trust, aimed at supporting ANC students studying abroad. This move was part of the ROC broader strategy to enhance its diplomatic footprint and maintain relevance on the international stage. Meanwhile, the PRC made a compelling case for closer ties by providing substantial aid to the ANC, including two million USD allocated for essential supplies for ANC members in Tanzania. Moreover, the PRC extended five million USD in credit for purchasing Chinese goods, demonstrating its commitment to fostering a robust partnership with South Africa

(Williams & Hurst, 2018).

In November 1996 under then President Mandela, South Africa formally recognised the PRC as the sole government representing China, a strategic decision that reflected a shift in the international landscape. The decision was inherently tied to the United Nations (UN) recognition of the PRC, which had consistently exerted itself on the global stage with its immense population and phenomenal economic growth, positioning itself as a major player in international politics (Youla, 2009). This acknowledgement further marginalised Taiwan, which struggled to maintain its diplomatic relations amid increasing international pressure. The Mandela administration undertook the formidable task of transforming apartheid era institutions into a functioning democratic governance mode, crucial for fostering South Africa's credibility and influence in international diplomacy. Mandela's foreign policy emphasised the strengthening of diplomatic ties not only with China but also neighbouring countries across Southern Africa, asserting South Africa's role as a primary leader in regional affairs. Following Mandela, the Thabo Mbeki (Former President of South Africa) administration reinforced this foundation by advocating for an African renaissance, a vision aimed at revitalising the continent through progressive economic and social initiatives. Mbeki's administration focused on fostering intra-African cooperation and championing political solidarity, further positioning South Africa as a leader in driving transformative change across Africa (Maposa, 2022).

In the period of Zuma's leadership, South Africa's foreign policy underwent a transformation in alliance and power relations among the various groups that influence its foreign policy principles, reflecting a complex pursuit of identity. It is suggested that Zuma's emphasis on the lasting effects of apartheid policies and the historical experience of western colonialism and contemporary dictatorship of Western powers is the rationale behind the shift in alliance from the West to East, while also continuing the collective development of the foreign policy established by Mandela and Mbeki. This evolving South Africa was manifested in global affairs through the focus on multiple multinational frameworks aimed at governance and enhancing structures that support development across the continent and in a globalised context. As a result, Zuma's reintegration of South Africa into the international community was observed through its diplomatic political, and economic interactions with various nations across Africa and beyond (Pheta & Zondi, 2021).

Under Zuma's leadership South Africa actively pursued a role in global economic platforms. A significant milestone for the country was its admission to BRICS in 2011, after which Zuma's administration aimed to advocate for South Africa's interests through continental and global participation, concentrating on four key areas: the African agenda, South-South Cooperation, North-South Dialogue, and both multilateral and bilateral relations with individual nations (Islamia, 2017). This realignment of Zuma's foreign policy emphasised stronger engagement with Asian nations than with Western countries. Consequently, the researcher recognised the need to investigate the factors that contributed to South Africa's shift in foreign policy during Zuma's presidency, particularly looking at the implementation of the Look East policy. The importance of analysing the contending issues or factors that shaped the Look East policy, which emphasised relations between Beijing and Pretoria during Zuma's administration, lies in assessing whether this marked a positive turning point for South Africa's development and if it remains relevant under the current administration.

The literature highlights the relations between China and South Africa, emphasising the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership that addresses areas like investment, trade and political exchanges on a global scale. Additionally, the literature notes that Pretoria have turned to the East in search of alternative funding partners. However, this analysis is limited in its examination of the relationship between Beijing and Pretoria. Consequently, the prioritisation of the Look East policy by Zuma is not thoroughly analysed to capture the dynamics influencing this relationship beyond the historical identities of the two countries. This evaluation offers important insights into the future research, especially to identify if there is a shift in the current administration's foreign policy regarding engagement with both East and West.

The subsequent section of the literature examines China's economic trajectory to its development. In light of this Chinese development, the coverage of how the Look East policy during Zuma's presidency was driven by Chinese progress is narrow, with much discussion focussing on the benefits of China-South Africa relations and the development of unequal exchanges, while the Chinese strategic development affecting the relationship between China and South Africa are not extensively addressed in the discourse on their relations. Consequently, this is discussed in chapter five, which examines how China's political involvement has influenced economic relations between China and South Africa. Additionally, the chapter explores the dynamics of the Global South, considering South

Africa's commitment to African interests. The study subsection in the discussion of findings has analysed whether the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is sustainable for South Africa's economy. It has also, explored how Beijing's development model via the BRI and the global South has impacted Sino-South African relations, particularly regarding the Chinese agreements established within South Africa. While recognising that China's foreign policy is extensive and primarily focussed on development.

### **2.2.2 Bilateral relations between China and South Africa**

South Africa has become the most important trading partner for China, with a robust bilateral trade relations that has evolved into a strategic comprehensive partnership (Bradley, 2016; and Alden, 2018). As noted by Mnyandu (2021) China is aiding South Africa by prioritising industrial and infrastructure development. With the support from the China Development Bank (CDB), South African State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), such as Transnet, secured significant loans to fund their largest recapitalisation initiatives, which involve projects valued at 50 billion to finance 1,064 locomotives (Msibi, 2024). According to Yan *et al.* (2024), the partnership between China and South Africa is characterised by a series of agreements; for example, in 2023, both countries jointly held the New Energy Investment Cooperation Conference to reinforce their commitment to fostering renewable energy development. This collaborative effort has been pivotal in addressing South Africa's energy challenges while also supporting over 170 Chinese businesses in enhancing partnerships for renewable energy investments (Yan, *et al.*, 2024).

The relations between China and South Africa, however, faces its own set of challenges. Masango (2024) contends that Chinese investment meant to support infrastructure development in South Africa are primarily serving as a gateway at advancing their own commercial interests. Bond (2024) notes that China, as a trade driven industrial power, is integrated into the global system while replicating the exploitative policies of developed nations. Benyi (2017) views China's trade policy instruments as part of its soft power strategy, where trade policy over the past thirty years has evolved into China's overarching strategy that promotes the extensive use of soft power to achieve its political and economic objectives. By contrast, in the study carried out by Igwe (2022), it is indicated that China and South Africa perceive their relations as a collaborative partnership aligned with developmental goals. South Africa has become a significant supplier of minerals, metals,

and mining products. China relies heavily on South Africa's mining industry to satisfy its demand for metals and minerals; between 2006 and 2017, over 60 percent of South Africa's extractive product exports were directed to China (Singh, 2022).

Additionally, South Africa-China relations has been reinforced through their collaborative efforts in Forum like South-South Cooperation (SCC), which aim to promote unity among developing nations by focussing on enhancing infrastructure, human resource development, industrialisation, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Yandong, 2017). The relations between China and South Africa can be characterised by several key aspects: both countries significant role in combating colonialism; their strategic partnership in addressing global issues; and China- South Africa commitment to supporting each other's development (April, 2021). However, Huan and Deng (2021) contend that China has extensively engaged in country diplomacy to forge a new identity within the global governance framework, whilst South Africa's sovereignty has faced challenges, evidenced by Tibet issue involving the Dalai Lama<sup>2</sup> (Former spiritual and political leader of Tibetan Buddhism), which underscores China's significant influence over South Africa.

According to Benyi (2017) China foresees South Africa as merely a stop along China's path to greatness, as Beijing has grown as a strategic partner and gained a presence on the African continent. Carpintero, Murray and Bellver (2016); Carmody (2017); Power and Mohan (2020) argue that Chinese relations with South Africa and the rest of the continent has to be understood in the context of the larger contemporary scramble for Africa, that employs development assistance to encourage its relations with Africa. Alden and Alves (2015) assert that Chinese assistance in Africa is linked to issues of transparency, corruption, and the risk of a debt trap. However, Bautman and Yan (2009) contend that such claims are unjustified because Africa has not managed to convert these infrastructure loans into achieving its socioeconomic goals; for example, Angola could not effectively use the US\$2 billion it received from China for infrastructure development. Based on the above evidence, one can reasonably argue that China relations aim to forge alliance with South Africa to further its market-oriented policy all while striking a balance with infrastructure assistance to South Africa and to the rest of the African continent. This view is unreasonably

---

<sup>2</sup> is a political exile who has consistently participated in actions undermining China's sovereignty and integrity, often disguised as religious pursuits.

justified as mutually reciprocal relations between the two countries which sustain their longstanding relations. It is imperative that the relations between Beijing and Pretoria be rigorously analysed, especially considering the merits it provides to South Africa. The subsection that follows builds on this discussion by providing a more focussed analysis of the contending issues in Beijing-Pretoria relations under Zuma's administrations, offering deeper insights into how these challenges shaped the trajectory and outcome of the bilateral partnership.

### **2.2.3 Contending issues in Beijing-Pretoria Relations under Zuma's Administration**

#### **2.2.3.1 Trade issues in Beijing-Pretoria Relations**

In the global context, South Africa is recognised as the gateway to Africa. The country engages with several powerful economies worldwide including China, the United States (US), Germany, and Russia. Bilateral trade between China and South Africa has grown significantly, with strengthened political ties leading to accelerated economic cooperation. This comes after their diplomatic relations were elevated to a Strategic Comprehensive Partnership (SCP) during Zuma's tenure. South Africa stands as a major economy within Southern African Development Community (SADC) and, with its membership in BRICS, is well positioned to play a crucial role as an economic leader in the region. The enhanced relations with China present an opportunity for South Africa to secure development model especially through acceleration in trade relations (Guijin, 2014; Mhaka & Jeke, 2018; Mdunge, 2018; Mpako & Moosa, 2022).

According to Singh (2022), the trade between China and South Africa is mutually advantageous, benefiting both countries in their interaction. The ties between South Africa and China have historical roots dating back to precolonial times. China provided support to South Africa in its struggle against imperialism. As a result, the nature of their relations has evolved into one focussed on economic collaboration. China has become a trading partner for South Africa, acquiring minerals such as diamonds, gold, bauxite, cobalt, chromite, and platinum. South Africa has also looked to China for assistance in advancing its mining sector within the extractive industry. China have stimulated their domestic industries to establish agreements in South Africa's mining sector, a process driven by the Two Resources, Two

market policy<sup>3</sup>. As a result, the policy has bolstered China's export-driven economy, while South Africa's export of raw materials to China including minerals, ores, and metals has increased significantly. These mining products have further strengthened the trade between China and South Africa.

Research by Igwe (2022) on China's trade policy toward South Africa reveals that the bilateral relationship has had an adverse impact on South Africa's economic growth, primarily due to the influx of Chinese goods. For instance, increased imports of Chinese textiles have led to the closure of over 800 businesses and the loss of approximately 60 000 jobs. Furthermore, South Africa's economic emphasis on exporting raw materials has contributed to a persistent trade deficit. The impact of Chinese trade varies across sectors. While raw-material exports to China have not significantly advanced South Africa's industrial development, imports from China have been particularly detrimental to labour-intensive industries. According to Gordhan (2016) (The former finance Minister of South Africa), export imbalances are largely attributable to a current account deficit caused by low commodity prices and high borrowing costs. In the budget speech Gordhan (2016) noted that trade figures for 2015 were substantially higher than those for 2016. This indicated a decline in South Africa's trade, reflecting a reduction in growth concerning trade. Chabalala (2016) explains that these imbalances arise because China protects its economy by promoting demand for high-technology products, which restricts South Africa's access to the Chinese market.

Gimbernat Girgas (2017) and Mdunge, (2018) agree that trade between China and South Africa is marked by negative imbalance with South Africa primarily exporting minerals, metals, stones, timber, and agricultural products. Nonetheless, there have been effort to address these imbalances through the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) initiated by Beijing. Unfortunately, this had the potential to negatively impact South African partners within the Southern African Custom Union (SACU). SACU represents an inclusive economic partnership among South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Eswatini (Formerly Swaziland) (Mlipha, 2021). Despite these challenges, trade relations between China and South Africa have been deepened, driven by increased investment and aid initiatives.

---

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the framework launched by China in 2006, primarily aimed to mobilise resources for its domestic industries.

Gimbernat Girgas (2017) highlight that another key factor facilitating trade growth is the aid provided by China in the form of grant, zero interest loans debt relief, and concessional loans, which are promoted through institutions such as the Export-Import Bank of China (CEXIM) or Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) to expand their influence in South Africa and across Africa. While there has been a growth in relations through investment, an overdependence on raw material trade makes the relations unsustainable for South Africa in the long term. Consequently, this situation not only reduces domestic savings but also negatively impacts South Africa's economic strength, as the burden of imports from China affects its economy. Alden and Yushan (2014) argues that the imbalances between the countries have escalated as Chinese companies focus their investment efforts primarily on the extractive sector; this is evident with companies like Zijin Mining Group and Sinosteel, which receive backing from the Chinese government. As a result, this expansion, which restrict the import of value-added goods, leads to an imbalance in other sectors within South Africa

In support, Ngundu (2025) contends that since the inception of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), there has been a significant trade imbalance resulting in an accumulated cash outflow of US\$114.83 billion from South Africa to China. Since 2014, South Africa's imports from China have nearly doubled the value of its export. The view point can be interpreted to suggest that South Africa trade relations with China is poised to persist in a state of deficit, raising concerns about its ability to offer meaningful solutions to the pressing challenges of underdevelopment. This dynamic may compel South Africa to open its market to Chinese enterprises, inviting them to explore and expand within its borders. While such engagement could pave the way for critical infrastructural development, it begs the question if will it truly alleviate the scourge of unemployment or significantly elevate the nation's development in the long run? The future of South Africa's economy hinges on finding a balance that fosters growth while addressing its deeply rooted challenges.

This analysis underscores South Africa's economic dependence on China, which allows China to shape its relations with South Africa given its greater negotiating power. It is against this backdrop that the current study examined the evolving relations between China and South Africa by analysing the complex dynamics between Beijing and Pretoria. Although extensive literature discusses the advantages and challenges of trade between the two countries, many scholars highlight persistent imbalances, exemplified by South Africa's

increasing trade deficit. This study seeks to expand on existing literature by investigating how South Africa engagement with China affects South Africa's development. Despite frequent criticism from Western scholars, the deepening relationship with China remains central to South Africa's economic growth, even amid changes in government leadership. Through a detailed analysis of the outcomes of these bilateral interactions, this research evaluates whether the Look East policy during Zuma era represented a substantiative shift towards sustainable development and economic progress.

### **2.2.3.2 Investment relations between Beijing and Pretoria**

The diplomatic relations between China and South Africa have fostered increased engagement and strengthened economic cooperation across a range of shared interests. Considering the partnership between China and South Africa; one cannot characterise this relation as one based directive partnership because both countries have gained advantages from it. To a significant degree, these partnerships between China and South Africa bolster their alliance both regionally and globally through SCC reflecting the goals of the developing world, also reflect though integration within FOCAC, the Group of Twenty (G20) and in BRICS platform (Guijin, 2014; Sofia, 2022). This relations with China afford South Africa important economic and political leverage on the international stage, particularly given China's global predominance and its veto power in the UNSC. South Africa has played a vital role in Africa, especially concerning infrastructure projects in both Southern and East Africa (Monyae & Bend, 2018).

Research conducted by Thompson (2019) indicates that Chinese investments in South Africa which solidified through the FOCAC partnership during the 2016-2018 action plan, identified in SEZs as a key focus for economic growth, playing a vital role in the South African economy are recognised by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The SEZ has not only been about primary Product-Based Investments (PBI) but also emphasises a diversification of investments aimed at enhancing development of this partnership. DTI has implemented a skills development program aimed at advancing SEZs. Monyae and Bend (2018) highlight that companies such as Investec have made investment in China, indicating that South Africa is not just a receiver of foreign aid but an active investor and participant in the global market. Alden and Yushan (2014) highlight that Chinese investment has contributed to local beneficiation initiatives, such as the Steel Plant in Phalaborwa.

Thompson (2019) further explain that China and South Africa signed several Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), detailing investment agreement pertaining to collaborative ventures in infrastructure and industrial development projects in South Africa and across Africa. This involved the agreement between China Construction Bank Corporation (CCB) and the International Development Assistance (IDA). There is also an MoU focused on strategic cooperation between Eskom Holdings and State Corporation of China, aimed at enhancing collaboration in the energy sector, supported by loan agreement worth \$500 million dedicated to bolstering Eskom's infrastructure development. Additionally, a cooperation agreement Sinosure and Transnet, valued at \$2.5 billion relates to the acquisition of equipment and electrical products, as well as full sets of equipment from Chinese firms for projects in South Africa (Thompson, 2019).

Gouvea and Kapelianis (2020) emphasise that in each phase of its business model, China strengthens its relations with South Africa by encouraging Chinese owned enterprises to invest and engage in the South African market. While also fostering the relations through state level interaction in major infrastructure projects related to transport, energy, real estate. These efforts manifest in various forms, including loans and grants, foreign direct investment (FDI), contracted initiatives, and equity funds.

Baker and Chen (2017) note that Chinese investment in South Africa energy sector include a subsidiary of Sinopec, a state-owned Chinese producer of oil, gas, and petrochemical, acquiring 75 percent of Chevron's South African assets. China-South Africa partnership also involved collaborations between ESKOM and Chinese multinational ICT firm Huawei to promote digital transformation within the power industry. This partnership also involved the development of smart grid technologies, enhancing Eskom's distribution and transmission capabilities to integrate renewable energy sources. These efforts have positioned South Africa as leader in renewable and sustainable energy production in Africa by 2018, attracting over 180 large, profit-oriented Chinese companies to invest in South Africa. Maritz (2017) lists several examples, including FAW, which established a truck manufacturing plant in South Africa, along with other firms such as Huawei, Sunshine Group, StarTimes, Hisense, Babu Africa, Tecno, and Twyford that have expanded their operation in South Africa and other African countries. Torrens (2018) points out that these are privately owned Chinese companies working towards their own profit objectives. Moreover, the ICBC acquired a 20% stake in Standard Bank of South Africa.

The above highlights the significant extent of Chinese investment in South Africa. In this context, the researcher poses the question, if this substantial investment contributes to South Africa's development, or does South Africa struggle to effectively utilise this investment to its economy? While previous scholarly work has explored and demonstrated the increase of Chinese investment in South Africa, the researcher aims to determine whether this leads South Africa to transition towards an Eastward focus, moving away from Western influences. The study intends to analyse the consequences of this shift in foreign policy. The researcher notes that much of the discourse centres on examining the Chinese expansion in South Africa and Africa as continuation of colonial legacies (Power and Mohan, 2020; Carmody, 2017; Carpintero *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, the researcher observes that discussion regarding how China's political, social, and economic development has influenced the relations between the two countries, which in turn has shaped Zuma's vision for transitioning from Western ties to fostering Eastward engagement have been overlooked.

Sun (2016) asserts that the Zuma administration, in an effort to diversify its influence away from Europe and the West, strengthened ties with Beijing in order to avoid being used by Western powers. This shift in foreign policy was characterised by a focus on establishing relations with East Asia. This shift has persuaded China to successfully position itself as a technology supplier and an investment contributor in South Africa. Sun (2016) also emphasises that companies such as Huawei and ZTE benefit from financial backing by the China Development Bank (CDB) and the Export-Import Bank of China. These firms have managed to compete with European companies such as Nokia and Ericsson by implementing a unique business model because capital expenditure does not pose a significant barrier for them as they utilise pricing strategies to penetrate the market. This demonstrates that the dominance of Chinese companies in South Africa position the country as hub for technologies and enable it to become an importer of these innovations. It is reasonable to be concerned about what South Africa should do to adopt these technologies, as the country has limited technological resources and should seize opportunities to ensure that these Multinational Companies (MNCs) play a crucial role in transferring technical skills.

However, there has been a rise in criticism regarding ineffective regulatory policies, which may stem from insufficient capacity and a lack of motivation to prioritise and reorganise ICT policy; the mandate for ICT development and technology transfer is often overlooked (Sun, 2016). Sithole (2014), Alden and Wu (2014) asserts that China- South Africa partnership

looks more like an attempt to fulfil China's development drive of reforming her economy. The significant investment in South Africa and Africa as a whole has sparked considerable debate, particularly regarding the decline of the job market, as evidence indicates that this Chinese company tend to employ primarily Chinese nationals, especially in leadership role, which does not enhance the skill development of the local workforce (Xiaoyang, 2016). Another concern regarding the rising Chinese investment in South Africa and other African countries is the lack of transparency in the investment agreements, which hampers efforts to foster good governance. Baker and Shen (2017) argue that Chinese investment in South Africa have not been transparent, with instances of malpractice and corruption surfacing related to Eskom's choice to grant a contract to China's state-owned enterprise Dongfang for boilers supplies for a coal fired power plant in Mpumalanga<sup>4</sup>. It has been claimed that Eskom awarded the contract despite clear evidence showing that Dongfang's bid was considerably more expensive than those of its competitor. This deal has been associated with scandals of state capture that Eskom has faced, leading Johannesburg High Court to mandate a cessation of the contract's implementation (Baker & Shen, 2017).

The investment by China in South Africa and the broader African continent takes place within the larger framework of Beijing's Go Global commercial initiative, which aims to expand Chinese investment and commercial influence abroad. This is being carried out by aligning the operational models of firms with Beijing geopolitical strategies, as the majority of China's economic engagement in Africa reflects (Thrall, 2015). Additionally, China leverages the China-Africa Development Fund (CAD), an equity investment vehicle focussed on African investments, enhancing China's global image by promoting significant financial commitments in Africa (United Nations, 2020). Tamunowariye (2021) observes that the CAD serves as a crucial motivator for Chinese enterprises to operate in Africa designated to establish and uphold business networks throughout Africa. Li (2020) emphasises that the main driving forces behind the CAD fund's investment is a mix of state objectives and market dynamic rather than purely African development. This raises the question of why the CAD fund tends to yield lower returns on agricultural investment in Africa, especially when contrasted with the mining sector, given that agriculture could serves as a catalyst for growth

---

<sup>4</sup> is the second smallest of South Africa's nine provinces and encompasses about half of the country's high-potential arable land. Mpumalanga province is a key contributor to South Africa's coal supply, with more than 60% of its surface area under mining rights.

in Africa. A representative from the China-Africa Agricultural Investment Co., Ltd (CAAIC) stated that:

We are not focused on Africa's agricultural resources/ products, as we, along with our top leaders, understand that Chinese food security must be internally managed, and food security challenges will need to be addressed domestically (Li, 2020:18).

Given that CAD is influenced by both market dynamics and state interests in Africa, it does not significantly contribute to development incentives but rather serves to reconcile Chinese interests with development's needs. Despite this, CAD fund identifies agricultural opportunities by utilising various investment models to gain advantages through investment in both new and existing farms. They have adopted a model of investment combined with loans in partnerships with domestic banks in China, such as the CDB and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC). For instance, China state farm, a subsidiary of the state-owned China National Agriculture Development Group Corporation (CNADGC), commenced operations at its Johnken Farm in Zambia and a sisal farm in Tanzania. Both of these farms have encountered numerous operational challenges since their inception. In 2010, the CAD Fund and the CNADGC established a joint venture named China-Africa Agriculture Investment (CAAIC). The CAD fund holds a 45% stake in the joint venture and has invested in both farms. With a funding of 1 billion RMB (approximately US\$161 million), the CAAIC was designed to serve as a platform for advancing China's agricultural sectors, including farming, fishing, animal husbandry, livestock, and Agro processing, while also facilitating investment marketing in Africa (Li, 2020).

He (2023) claims that Chinese backed overseas investments are influenced by political factors. China utilises the FOCAC to shape its political agenda within the framework of its engagement model, but economic considerations such as loans and investment programs, also play a significant role. Thus, the political gains, economic interests and bureaucratic benefits for China derived from FOCAC financing further clarify why country adheres to this bilateral approach. This seems like China establish more wealth through expansion of investment and this result in South Africa including Africa development being overshadowed by China's Global Going Out Policy (Maphaka, 2022; 2020b; Sithole, 2014).

### **2.2.3.3 Chinese-South Africa market competition and challenges to development**

Daniel and Virk (2014) notes that South Africa competes with China for market influence in Africa, a key challenge is how it can effectively navigate its interest while strengthening bilateral engagement with China. Jenkins and Edwards (2015) observe that the market share of South African manufactured imports has dwindled in landlocked neighbouring countries like Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, this decline has not been seen in Zimbabwe and the DRC. Jenkins and Edwards (2015) demonstrate that, in Zimbabwe, 40% of product exported from South Africa encountered competition from China in 2010 while in other African nations market share decline had doubled by 80% in Nigeria, followed by Kenya and Ghana with around 70% in products decline. This demonstrates that China's expansion into Africa has overtaken South Africa as major contributor to critical economic sectors.

Kastner and Pearson (2021) studied market competition between China and South Africa, highlighted that China is one of the fastest-growing economies, leading to South Africa's increasing economic reliance on China. This dependency makes South Africa more susceptible to Beijing's influence, as China can set standards and influence markets. South Africa has been a major investor in Africa. For instance, from 2017-2018 South African companies from 14 different sectors, including telecommunication, chemicals, banking, industrial goods, retail, construction materials, travel and leisure, health care, and real estate, were operating in Ghana, Namibia, and Zambia. In 2016, South Africa was the fifth largest investor in Africa, accounting for 3% of total investment (Kastner & Pearson, 2021). Kastner and Pearson (2021) notes that the rise of Chinese investors caused South Africa's investment share to decline significantly from 2011-2016. During this time, China increased its FDI in Africa from \$23 billion in 2011 to \$53 billion in 2016, while South Africa's FDI grew by only \$1 billion. In support of the viewpoint, Ramkolowan, Craig and Munro (2018) argue that the increased competition has undermined South Africa's traditional role as a supplier of manufactured goods and regional distribution hub for the rest of Africa. According to Uzodike (2016) China-South Africa relations raise concerns for South Africa's lack of market competitiveness in its economic exchange with China (Uzodike, 2016). With South Africa being a less developed nation and China being a significant player in the global economy, the two countries economic ties reveal a complicated dynamic of interdependence, confined progress, and influence (Maphaka & Shai, 2021). South Africa's sovereignty could be greatly

compromised if it becomes dependent on any political donor, especially one that is an authoritarian economic powerhouse (Bradley, 2016).

Some critics argue that South Africa's current position in engagement with China is narrow-minded and overly focussed on ideology, with a created scepticism towards the West, this approach has resulted in an unstable connection with European Union (EU) and a tendency to favour non-European perspectives (Neethling, 2017). The intricate interplay between China and South Africa, as they seek to expand their commercial footprint in Africa, has prompted thinkers like Alden and Wu (2014b) to assert that China's developmental strategy on the continent of Africa resonates with South Africa's commitment to regional infrastructure development. This partnership presents deeper nuances that could influence its future, as both countries.

This strategic decision to dominate Africa's market pinpoint construction of their partnership accurately reflects their positions in regional forum. Insights (2015) examines that Beijing has more leverage considering her financial capability shape developmental agenda. Beijing utilises the FOCAC as a platform designed to promote Chinese expansion. Beijing, through FOCAC, represents its wider global engagement. This raises concerns about South Africa's role and objectives within FOCAC. As a result, it becomes challenging to determine if South Africa can leverage FOCAC to achieve its goals in the global economic governance. Simonaviciute (2020) posits that China uses FOCAC to advance its diplomatic and economic agenda, which significantly shapes Sino-South African political relations. In all of its agreement with South Africa, China explicitly states that upholding the One China policy which prohibits political or other forms of interaction with Taiwan is a prerequisite for partnership. This maintains long standing relations, to illustrate, Zuma administration supported this prerequisite as the starting point of partnership between China and South Africa when Zuma in the State of the Nation address (SONA) in 2017 pointed out that South Africa "values relationship with PRC as one of South Africa's most important and key strategic partners and South Africa recognise the PRC as the sole government and authority representing the whole of China" (Zuma, 2017:online).

Therefore, according to Masango (2024) this resembles that China replicates the tendency of the West by handing policy direction in South Africa. Nevertheless, both countries recognise the importance of exchanges in terms of trade and investment within the context

of the International Political Economy (IPE). It is crucial to understand that their shared agreement on bilateral relations represents a partnership that offers mutual advantages, although these benefits are predominately skewed in favour of China. Therefore, the above suggests that Pretoria's engagement with Beijing translates into political influence. China accelerates South Africa's development by providing substantial investment, which in the long run opens doors for Chinese companies to increase their operations in South Africa and in Africa and expand their market presence.

Pretoria finds it challenging to directly counter Beijing due to existing disparities across various fields. This raises concerns among scholars like Munuriyawra and Chibuwe (2022) who argue that China is economically colonising South Africa. Therefore, increased diplomatic relations between Chinese involvement in South Africa serve as tool for its own survival in the interaction and mechanism to foster a favourable public perception (Insights, 2015). This increased perception from Eurocentric and American studies asserts that China's unconditional aid to African nations has positioned Beijing at the forefront of Africa's agenda, reinforcing their long-standing relations (Sithole, 2015). Therefore, this underscores how the diplomatic ties between China and South Africa influence political relations as Kastner and Pearson (2021) assert that economically weaker partner in alliance with China, such as South Africa may occasionally feel compelled to accommodate China's preferences. South Africa has encountered challenges in effectively influencing developmental projects within Africa. Mpondo (2024) asserts that South Africa as regional powerhouse in Africa had inconsistent foreign policy. Unfortunately, South Africa grapples with domestic pressures, which ultimately undermines its ability to foster meaningful interaction with the global community. Further questions on how South Africa asserts itself as prominent champion of Africa's development while suffers from urgent issues such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality. This undermines its ability to foster meaningful interaction with the global community.

#### **2.2.4 Summary of gaps in literature**

There is a significant amount of scholarly research focussed on China's involvement in South Africa and Africa more broadly, which often characterises China's approach as a modern-day scramble for Africa that leverage development assistance in exchange for access to natural resources to fuel its economic expansion (Power and Mohan, 2020; Carmody, 2017; Carpintero *et al.*, 2016). Other scholars, including Singh (2022), Thompson

(2019); Monyae and Bend (2018) highlight the positive aspects of Chinese investment, arguing that such investment sustains longstanding bilateral relations. Conversely, some researchers assert that this engagement serves as a tool for China to shape political agendas within the context of its engagement model. Scholars such as Simonaviciute (2020); Insights (2015); He (2023) note that economic factors such as loans and investment initiatives also play a crucial role. Igwe (2022); Gimbernat Girgas (2017); Mdunge (2018); Ngundu (2025) indicate that trade between China and South Africa reflects a trade deficit within the South African economy, which, overtime negatively impacts South Africa's economy. Initiatives aimed at resolving this trade imbalance, such as FTA between two countries, have the potential to adversely affect intra-African trade, particularly concerning the SACU membership.

The relations between China and South Africa have become contentious in discussion. Since South Africa established diplomatic ties with China and as two countries enhanced their comprehensive strategic partnership, various scholarly articles have examined the potential threats following South Africa's invitation to join BRICS framework. However, there are also benefits that indicate this invitation has bolstered South Africa's economic status as a regional leader in Africa (Guijin, 2014; Mpako & Moosa, 2022; Mhake & Jeke, 2018, Lan & Tan). While many scholars have analysed the relations between China and South Africa and/or Africa through the lenses of realism and liberalism that emphasise material power. There is also considerable scholarly discourse that highlights important debates, particularly those from an Afrocentric point of view. Those would include scholars such as Rapanyane (2023); Nkoana and Legodi (2021); Maphaka and Shai (2021) tend to share a common perspective that African discourse has often been examined from a Eurocentric viewpoint. Drawing on Asante's concept of Afrocentrism, they argue that African issues should be understood through the lens of those from this culture, although they do not dismiss the contribution of Eurocentrism. Much of their discourse focuses on reporting the unreported and exposing any practise/activity that seeks to contribute to the colonialism of Africa.

For instance, Maphaka and Shai (2021) attests that China uses South Africa as a base to advance its narrow self-serving interests. Meanwhile Rapanyane and Shai (2019) underscores that China's involvement in Africa mainly revolves around natural resources and development expansion, and both provide references to FOCAC as a platform where Africa's natural resources are extracted to China through multiple FOCAC economic deals.

Nicol (2022) also perceives FOCAC as a forum through which Chinese investment and infrastructure initiatives are extensively disseminated in Africa. Nkoana and Legodi (2021) contend that investments in Africa have consistently been motivated by commercial interests and strategic political factors. This is apparent in certain policies implemented by China regarding its interaction with other nations, such as the Going Out policy introduced in 2001. This initiative was designed to encourage Chinese SOEs to expand their operations internationally, thereby securing additional profit avenues and further establishing the Chinese brand on the global stage. Ani *et al.* (2018) contribute to this literature by asserting that China's actions in Africa closely resembles those of European countries during the colonial period. Consequently, this suggests that China's involvement in Africa remains connected to the enduring legacy of pervasive imperialism.

Thus, it is crucial to highlight that literature addressing China-South Africa relations primarily reflect the negative aspects of Chinese presence. Scholarly research on Beijing's interactions with South Africa often focusses on how Chinese engagement in Africa tends to weaken economic influence in the manufacturing sector. While some studies have highlighted positive relations between these two countries, like those conducted by Singh (2022); Mlambo *et al.* (2016) which examined the historical context of China-South Africa relations, it prompts the necessity to investigate the relations specifically looking at the period of the Zuma's administration. Utilising social constructivism as an alternative theoretical lens is significant because many studies frequently rely on realism, liberalism and Afrocentrism approaches to analyse China-South Africa relations.

There are limitations in employing social constructivism to assess China relations with South Africa in Zuma's era. In this regard, the study explores the contentious issues or factors that have affected Beijing-Pretoria relations during the Zuma administration. The intension behind using this theory is not to diminish the view of other scholars who employed different frameworks but rather to provide a guideline that offers a new perspective within the discourse on China-South Africa relations.

In this context, the study highlights that the interests arising from identities develop through social interaction, significantly influencing the foreign policy decisions of China and South Africa. As diplomatic relations between the two countries have strengthened through high level state visits, a growing commitment to South Africa cooperation, and joint ventures in

BRICS and FOCAC, China has portrayed itself as a sympathetic partner focussed on mutual development, non-interference, and respect for national sovereignty. Consequently, in examining this engagement between two countries, the study seeks to present an innovative perspective, particularly regarding how South Africa can leverage its advantages in the relations with China. When analysing the relations between China and South Africa, the study considers the factors that facilitated the shift from Western reliance to the Look East policies, resulting in improved Beijing-Pretoria relations. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to African studies by analysing development challenges and assessing whether they are viewed as exhibiting dominant, distinctive, and enduring features in their interaction. This research has the potential to identify areas where China could assist Pretoria or Africa in exploring or enhancing their capabilities. Therefore, the study accomplishes this by investigating the political and socio-economic development between the two countries and evaluating how their relations shape their political interactions, as well as how the dynamics of China-South Africa relations have developed under the Zuma administration.

## **2.3 Theoretical framework**

The research is based on the theory of social constructivism, proving a robust theoretical framework. Thus, grasping this theory is essential for creating a strong basis and linking established ideas with pertinent concepts and empirical evidence.

### **2.3.1 Social Constructivism theory**

Onuf (2013) contends that social constructivism encompasses a world compromised of rules and human existence, manifested as a political society, where these rules, when significant serve as categories that direct human behaviour and impose social significance. Adler (1997) posits that constructivism holds the perspective that the way the material world is influenced by human action and interaction is dependent on the dynamic normative and epistemic aspects of that material reality. Constructivism illustrates that even our most persistent institutions are rooted in collective understanding; they are solidified structures that originated from human thought.

Wendt (1999) argues that social constructivism focusses on the social identities of actors to explain their interests and how structure influences the behaviour of both social and political

entities. Constructivists maintain that normative or ideational structures are equally as significant as material ones. There are two reasons for emphasising the significance of these structures. Wendt (1995) asserts that material resources derive their meaning for human action through shared knowledge framework in which they are situated. Social structures reinforce the shared knowledge that enables states to trust one another to settle dispute peacefully.

Agius (2013) further asserts that constructivism identifies three ontological positions. First, it asserts that normative or ideational structures hold importance and are as impactful as material ones, positioning ideas at the forefront. The second ontological assertion of constructivism is that identities are crucial. Identities provide actors with interests, which reveal insights about their behaviour and objectives, indicating that actors cannot function without an identity. Third, agents and structures are mutually constitutive. This focusses on the interaction between how actors influence the world, in turn, influences actors signify human relations are fundamentally social, enabling us to create the environment we inhabit.

Checkel (2023) characterise identity as the collective beliefs within a group and its membership, seldom constructed in isolation, and cultivated by institutions, public discourse and power struggle, while simultaneously influenced by everyday social practices. Searle (1995) asserts that social realities are constructed indicating a potential for collective intentionality, which entails not only participating in cooperative behaviour but also sharing intentional states such as beliefs, desires, and intentions. On the one hand, Guzzini (2000) argues that material forces such as power form a core aspect of knowledge construction and social order. Power, therefore, can be understood as a socially constructed form of knowledge that plays a crucial role in shaping social dynamics. Zeli (2024) posits that constructivism views war and peace not primarily through the lens of material power like realist paradigm but rather through the lens of ideational power. Reality, according to this perspective, is a multifaceted social construct shaped by ideas. As realities emerge from intersubjective meaning, constructivists examine it as a collection of ideas and interpretations that significantly influence the behaviour of social actors by defining roles, assigning meanings, and ultimately shaping identities.

### **2.3.2 Criticism of Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism has faced significant criticism within academic circles. Scholars such

as Ashley (1984) argue that the identities of state actors indicate that the international environment is shaped by a complex interrelationship of rules and expectations that influence their interests. This perspective suggests a deeper concept that survival functions as a form of self-realisation, which characterise a regime centred on the balance of power. Consequently, it challenges the importance of social power and the constitutive roles of states and their interests. Furthermore, Palan (2000) asserts that, considering the intricate nature of the international system, material factors and interests supersede the influence of ideas in determining order and change. In this framework, normatively constituted practices are often overshadowed by the tangible realities of power and material interest dynamics. Philips (2007:65) highlights that the criticisms of constructivism concerning its alleged neglect of agency have become less persuasive as the theory has evolved. While early constructivists underscored the vital link between established norms or identities and a state's subsequent action, they faced scrutiny for their perceived failure to engage seriously with questions of intentionality and the active decision-making processes of social agents. Furthermore, the earlier concerns about constructivists' difficulty in precisely defining ideational phenomena have faded over time. Critics initially contended that the rich tapestry of diverse norms and identities in social contexts allowed constructivists to craft explanations for nearly any outcome by simply referencing a corresponding norm or identity, which risked rendering their arguments unfalsifiable (Kowert & Legro, 1996:486). This evolution in the debate signifies a maturation of constructivist thought, indicating that it has grown more robust in addressing these challenges.

Hofferberth and Weber (2015) argue that constructivism fundamentally challenges the notion that norms are established intersubjectively and questions the principle that agency and structure exist in a mutually constitutive relationship. Yet constructivism is not without its flaws. It often reveals a structuralist bias that views norms as independent variables, relegating individual actors, most notably states to the status of mere conduits for cultural pressures arising from the international system. This approach is particularly problematic as it overlooks the vital interpretative performances of human actors in shaping the dynamics of norms and actions. Moreover, Mariyani-Squire (1999) sheds light on several critiques of social constructivism. The study posits that social constructivism must assert that its doctrine is not simply a conceptual framework relative to the social relations that give rise to it. However, this assertion becomes precarious; the doctrine risks falling into self-contradiction,

as can be rendered untrue or irrelevant when the social system advocates a materialist perspective that stands in stark opposition to the tenets of constructivism.

Sterling-Folker (2002) asserts that constructivism provides a crucial framework for understanding not only the limitations of social possibilities but also the ways in which biology can impose constraints. From a constructivist's perspective, there is a valuable opportunity for rational discourse and potentially productive collaboration with realism. This viewpoint rejects a simplistic dichotomy between biology and society, instead acknowledging their intricate interrelationship; one that is historically relevant to both the biological makeup of human beings and the ongoing construction of our social reality.

### **2.3.3 Relevance of the theory**

In examining the relations between China and South Africa, social constructivism is pertinent to this study, particularly in clarifying the research objectives that aim to explore the various challenges and factors that impacted the Beijing-Pretoria connection during Zuma's administration. This theoretical framework is significant for the study because it provides basis for understanding the interactions between China and South Africa, as articulated by Onuf (2013) who emphasises that the world operates under the rules that states benefit from by either complying with or influencing these rules. South Africa's strategic move to enhance its relations with China during Zuma's era exemplifies the significance of ideological alignment. The East Look policy implemented under Zuma served as a mechanism to reshape South Africa's global identity, positioning it as a collaborative partner with emerging powers rather than a participant in Western dominated entities.

While China has greatly profited from initiative such as BRICS, FOCAC, BRI, these platforms resonated with South Africa's development aspirations. Even though South Africa was not in a position to equally influence the rules, its engagement during Zuma's administration provided it with advantages in economic and diplomatic advantage. The identities shaped by social constructivism provide actors with interests, which in turn inform us about their behaviour and objectives. Social constructivist posits that state interests are largely influenced by social identities. It argues that shared norms and understanding determine the foundational rules governing state interactions. China's rising global influence, its state-led development model, and its South-South cooperation initiatives resonated with Zuma's interests for economic change and autonomy from western dominance.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

The research provided a thorough analysis, with a particular focus on the relationship between China and South Africa. In this regard, it examined the various factors and issues that contributed to the partnership. This study specifically concentrated on how the Beijing-Pretoria relationship evolved during Zuma's presidency. The review assessed the political and economic landscapes of the commitment between China and South Africa to their strong partnership. The analysis also emphasized the dynamics between China and South Africa, particularly regarding Chinese investments and trade, highlighting their increasingly close relations and commitment to supporting each other's development. The study employed social constructivism as a theoretical framework to evaluate China's relations with South Africa during Zuma's time in office. Within this framework, the research investigated the contentious issues and factors involved.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodologies that the study implemented, as well as how the study executed the approaches to research in order to provide satisfactory response to the research question on:

- i. How has the nature of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma's administration?
- ii. How politico-socio-economic developments in China did influence the relationship between the two states?
- iii. Why do China-South Africa diplomatic relations influence their political relations, and in what ways do these diplomatic interactions shape their political dynamics?

The study was structured in accordance with the research objectives outlined in chapter one. Chapter two examined the literature review, exploring the contributions and works produced by other researchers pertinent to the topic concerning the relations between China and South Africa during Zuma's presidency. This chapter addressed various themes, including the research methodology and design employed in the study, the methods of data collection, the procedures followed during data gathering, and the instruments used for data collection.

#### **3.2. Research Methodology**

Research methodology is concerned with the research techniques and takes into consideration the reasoning that lies behind the method that we employ (Bhattacharyya, 2006). This section provides an overview of the research methodologies that are utilised by the study, as well as the way the study implements the research procedures.

##### **3.2.1. Research Design**

The research design encompasses the strategies and techniques for conducting research, ranging from overarching assumptions to specific methodologies for data collection and analysis. The chosen research design is determined by the specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, all of which should be aligned with the research

problem at hand (Cresswell, 2009:3). Qualitative and quantitative research design are two approaches that exist; qualitative study is an approach for a project that includes the development of a research topic and subjects. When crafting qualitative research, it is essential to consider the theoretical and methodological objectives of the study (Flick, 2022). The qualitative method serves to gather comprehensive insights on a specific subject (Rahi, 2017). Cox (2019) states that a quantitative research design employs numerical data and statistical analysis to understand and describe a phenomenon, behaviour, or issue.

#### **3.2.1.1. Exploratory qualitative research**

This study utilised an exploratory qualitative research design to evaluate the relations between Beijing and Pretoria. This study aimed to critically examine the foundational theories that support the research problem at hand. The research utilised an exploratory design, aligning with qualitative methodologies, as noted by Wyk (2015), who asserts that this approach is the most effective and suitable strategy for investigation. The selection of this research design was driven by the study's questions and issues, aimed at ensuring a robust data analysis strategy. The chosen research design for this study is pertinent due to its primary aim of uncovering the essential elements necessary to thoroughly explore the topic, as guided by the study objectives. The study at hand employed an exploratory framework, reflecting the essence of the research inquiries that necessitate an unbiased evaluation of perspectives, convictions, and behaviours within the specified context. The application of the exploratory qualitative approach assists researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the relations between Beijing and Pretoria.

#### **3.2.2. Data collection**

The techniques employed in data collection are crucial, as they influence the application of the information and the inferences that can be made. We can meticulously gather insights regarding our research subjects and the contexts in which they occur through systematic data collection methods (Paradis *et al.*, 2016). Data collection requires a systematic approach (Chaleunvong, 2009). The process of data collection involves the systematic gathering of information on pertinent variables (Jameel & Majid, 2018). This research primarily relied on data gathered from secondary sources through document analysis, employing thematic analysis due to the qualitative exploratory nature of the study. This is elucidated by Flick (2025:190), who offers insights into the methodology of document analysis. The forthcoming sub-section provides a comprehensive procedure for data

collection.

### **3.2.1.2. Procedure study used to collect data**

The research utilised documents associated with the developed variable of the study topic, aligning with the objectives by emphasising or underlining text. This approach allowed the researcher to identify and highlight the pertinent information relevant to the study topic. The research draws extensively on secondary sources, including direct quotations from officials of state, scholars, analysts, and media reports. The analysis draws upon the official statements and communiqués regarding the developments in relations stemming from visits by the presidents, and ministers. The study meticulously focused on the diplomatic relations between China and South Africa, documenting their exchanges through specific speeches or statements that articulate their agreements, objectives, commitments, and proposed programs. Certain announcements or declarations are introduced by joint statements that detail the advancements achieved concerning prior commitments and the pursuit of the next phase in the relations.

Thus, the research gathered information by utilising officially recognised and scrutinised declarations, statements, and media comments, as well as presidential addresses, policies from international organisations, reports from regional organisation summits, state department documents, and records from official functions, conferences, and workshops.

This involves the retrieval of data from various sources, including the Department of Trade and Industry Policy, the Attorney for Climate and Environmental Sustainability, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the Summit on BRICS and FOCAC, the 2016 Budget Speech, the International Department, the Central Committee of the CPC (2024), and National Science and Technology. The study utilised data from News 24, World Nuclear News, analysis of the Ninth BRICS summit, remarks delivered by the former South African Presidents (Zuma and Mbeki) and current President of South Africa (Ramaphosa) during the China-South Africa business forum in conjunction with the state visit to the People's Republic of China. This included Zuma speech at the 10th Anniversary of the South African National Defence Force's involvement in Peace Support Operations, remarks by President Ramaphosa at the Shenzhen business roundtable on the occasion of the state visit to the People's Republic of China, and other speeches in the Presidents Nations addresses, White Paper on South Africa's International Relations, UN Charter

published documents, the budget speech delivered by Pravin Gordhan in 2016.

While some of these documents may appear contrived, as they reflect the narratives that governments aimed to project rather than an accurate depiction of their true motives and objectives, they compensate for this by ensuring that what is publicly disclosed is subject to accountability. Consequently, the research utilised peer-reviewed academic books, reputable published magazine articles, journal papers, university theses, and dissertations from researchers across various institutions of higher education, all sourced from diverse databases to ensure the reliability of accurate data.

### **3.2.1.3. Databases utilised:**

#### **Elservier Journal and Books**

This represents a sophisticated inquiry and academic endeavour within the largest, peer-reviewed, comprehensive scientific database available globally.

#### **JSTOR**

JSTOR provides a robust, interdisciplinary repository designed to enhance academic research and education. The collection encompasses archives from more than 1,000 prominent scholarly journals spanning the humanities, social sciences, and additional resources essential for academic research.

#### **EBSCO Open Dissertations**

These offers dissertations have been published in scholarly journals.

#### **Sabinet's African Archives**

Sabinet African Archives serves as an expanding online repository, providing a comprehensive index of numerous African archives and special collections. This includes a diverse array of materials such as manuscripts, newspaper clippings, photographs, and articles, catering to researchers focused on the African continent.

#### **Academic Search Complete**

This database stands as the most valuable and extensive scholarly resource available, featuring over 8,500 full-text entries and more than 7,300 peer-reviewed journals across

multiple disciplines.

### **Africa Portal**

The Africa Portal serves as a comprehensive research repository and a center for expert analysis on matters concerning the African continent.

### **Africa Studies Source**

This is a comprehensive full-text database featuring academic publications focused on the history, politics, and current research pertaining to Africa. It incorporates a diverse range of regional and international perspectives, providing significant insights rooted in African experiences and crafted by specialists from throughout the continent.

### **Africa- Wide Information**

Africa-Wide Information, developed by NISC South Africa, integrates a global bibliographic database to provide comprehensive and in-depth coverage of various aspects of Africa and African Studies.

### **Carney Africana collection**

This database offers eBooks of different disciplines

### **3.2.3. Data analysis**

Data analysis is an ongoing process that involves a systematic approach to validating and examining data to identify developing trends, emphasising areas that require more investigation, and actively questioning the implications of the collected information. The objective of this engagement process through text analysis is to enhance comprehension of its principles and underlying significances (Grbich, 2012). The research employed qualitative document analysis. Qualitative document analysis methodically examines written or textual data to discern themes, patterns, and meanings pertinent to the study issue. The analysis of the document necessitates the examination and interpretation of data to extract meaning, enhance understanding, and cultivate empirical knowledge (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013).

Document analysis is a methodical process for examining or assessing both printed and electronic information. This encompasses documents including reports, drafts, letters, expert opinions, newspaper articles, government reports, policy papers, annual

publications, legal documents, and visual materials considered as documents. It includes official records of various types of organisational and governmental documents intended as records of actions and activities, such as extensive data sets and public records (Flick, 2025).

The study employed qualitative document analysis to evaluate China-South Africa relations, incorporating insights from Zuma through a methodical examination of the documents specified in the data collecting process. This primarily entailed thematic analysis. The thematic analysis encompassed a compilation of principal themes generated from the subject matter. The study identified major themes and analysed their relationship to the research question. Researchers associate each research question with pertinent important themes related to the inquiries. For instance, in the question how has the nature of relations between China and South Africa developed during Zuma's administration? Researchers concentrated on subjects pertaining to Beijing-Pretoria developmental relations, foreign policy orientations, and the BRICS framework within this study.

This study evaluated the contentious topics or elements that influenced the Beijing-Pretoria relations during Zuma's presidency. It was essential to analyse this data using themes that corresponded with the research objectives established in the first chapter of this study. The sources visited are assessed to ascertain their qualitative nature and the quality of knowledge they provide for study. Researchers consistently inquired about the fundamental objective of the research. What methods do prior studies employed to gather data during research? Following the confirmation of qualitative data through investigation, it has been imperative to further explicate and interpret these findings, concentrating on the terminology crucial to achieving the research objectives.

#### **3.2.4. Ethical Consideration**

Study's ethics are a set of guidelines that direct how data are collected (Xolani, 2021). In this study, all scholars' referenced works utilised by the study have been appropriately acknowledged, and the integrity of their works has been maintained. The following documents have been obtained from the North West University (NWU) BASSREC informed consent forms, a confidentiality agreement, and a code of conduct for researchers, a BASSREC checklist, and an ethics training certificate confirming the study's adherence to ethical standards.

### **3.2.5. Conclusion**

This study employed a desktop-based research methodology, relying solely on secondary sources to collect and evaluate material pertinent to the research objectives. Data were meticulously gathered from a diverse array of trustworthy sources, including thesis, dissertations from higher education institutions, government reports, summit proceedings, state documents, presidential addresses, scholarly publications, academic books and other credible sources of information. The study clarified an exploratory qualitative research approach to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of findings. The study recognised the need to maintain academic integrity. This was done to assure the study's validity and reliability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **An examination of the dynamics of the relations between China and South Africa evolved under Zuma's administration**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The relations between China and South Africa transformed into a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership under Zuma's presidency. This partnership was based on economic interests, a shared view of global affairs, and Beijing's desire to enhance interaction and development between the two countries (Alden & Wu, 2018). The evolving partnership between China and South Africa transcends mere bilateral relations, reaching into realm of multilateral engagement. The relations between China and South Africa are complex and multifaceted, highlighting the importance of BRICS and the urgent need to reform international multilateral political, economic and financial system to align with contemporary global realities. As the economic and political ties between Beijing and Pretoria have strengthened; South Africa has experienced decrease in diplomatic and trade with Western countries, especially the US. Tension between the U.S and South Africa began in 2015 when Barack Obama (Former President of the US) threatened to revoke South Africa's duty-free access for certain exports to the US market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). This development took place after South Africa implemented anti-dumping duties on U.S chicken in an effort to safeguard its domestic markets (SAIIA, 2018).

In this chapter, the researcher examines the nature and dynamics of China-South Africa relations under Zuma's tenure. Focussing on the development exchanges between China and South Africa, this chapter examines how the foreign policy of Zuma administration influenced South Africa's decision to strengthen its relations with China. It also investigated how Beijing has been able to use its influence in the interaction with Pretoria, particularly to keep their footing in the BRICS framework and advance the goal of promoting strategic and mutually beneficial cooperation.

#### **4.2. Zuma's Foreign Policy Re-orientation and Objectives**

Indeed, 2009 in South Africa signified a pivotal moment stemming from efforts to pursue a more targeted and effective foreign policy. The renaming of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)

signified South Africa's commitment to fostering deeper and broader relations, utilising these partnerships to promote the nation's interests. This strategy sought to enhance foreign policy coherence with South Africa's domestic and developmental objectives (White paper, 2011). During this period, South Africa faced triple socio-economic challenges namely inequality, poverty and unemployment. Zuma's foreign policy, which aimed to enhance relations with other emerging powers, was perceived as economically advantageous and aligned with China's long-standing goal of improving world governance (William & Papa, 2020). The researcher finds out that Zuma foreign policy was informed by the research and reports outlined in the 2011 White paper on South Africa's foreign policy, the presidency's annual report for 2009, the National Planning report, and the DIRCO Annual report for 2008-2009. These documents highlighted the direction Zuma administration had to take. To highlight in the DIRCO report (2008/9), the executive summary of then Director General Ayanda Ntsaluba emphasised that South Africa is experiencing both political and economic consolidation and growth in its relations with Global South countries, particularly through enhanced interaction with PRC, marked by exchanges in terms of people-to-people connections.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) was founded in May 2010 to devise a vision and national development strategy. The diagnostic assessment issued by the NPC indicated that South Africa's failure to attain significant progress after 1994 resulted from inadequate policy design and insufficient collaborative partnerships. The National Development Plan (NDP) was launched concurrently with measures including the New Growth Path (NGP), National Infrastructure Plan (NIP), and Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP). These essential strategies were formulated to direct economic development, stimulate investment and competitiveness, as well substantially oversee infrastructure deployment to improve quality of life and promote economic growth (National Science and Technology). This marked a pivotal moment for Zuma's administration, as it interacted with the national development strategy, which included the advocacy of the NDP that outlines South Africa's development objectives. During Zuma's tenure, the NDP sought to emulate East Asian nations to address unfavourable socio-economic situation (Khambule, 2025).

The alteration in foreign policy during Zuma's presidency was shaped by multiple causes notably South Africa's objective to reform the global governance framework and its ambition to secure a permanent seat on the UNSC as elaborated in chapter six. The alteration was

motivated by the notion that South Africa ought to express its challenges internationally, with the Zuma administration contending that enhanced interaction with Western nations constrained South Africa's developmental role, potentially jeopardising its capacity to effectively advocate for the global South (Langa & Shai, 2020). Zuma's administration shifted South Africa's foreign policy from the West to the East to align with shared interests in distancing the nation from Western oppression thereby strengthening relations with China, which resulted from over a decade of engagement focussed on fostering equitable partnerships. The subsequent part examines South Africa's fragmentation from the West, highlighting a notable decline in economic relations with Western countries.

#### **4.3. South Africa disintegration with the West: declining political and economic ties**

Zuma dismissed the idea that Chinese involvement in South Africa was merely about resource exploitation, viewing the partnership between South Africa and China as a strategic response to counter Western influence. The impetus for this shift stemmed from the understanding that South Africa needed to express its challenges on an international platform. The Zuma government argued that more engagement with Western countries limited South Africa's role in development and may have weakened its position as a voice and advocate for the Global South (Langa and Shai, 2020). The Zuma administration moved away from this concept of a globally interconnected landscape with Western countries. Zuma down played relations with the West in favour of strengthening relations with China, a move described by Qobo (2020:89&96) as motivated by both geostrategic factors and specific commercial interests. The strong embrace of foreign policy by Zuma characterised by exclusively close relations with Beijing has led to criticism from Qobo (2020). Qobo (2020) described the significance of the interaction between Beijing and Pretoria as lacking in strategic calculation and as insufficient in the concerted pursuit of economic diplomatic goals. Nonetheless, Zuma's approach to foreign relations, particularly the alignment with the Look East policy, was shaped by the pursuit of a significant overarching struggle aimed at realising transformative economic objectives domestically, alongside an anti-imperialist agenda on the international stage.

While Zuma's Look East policy provided advantages for South Africa, it has also represented a challenge in its relations with Western countries. The challenges associated with the Asian development model during Zuma's administration, which weakened relations with Western

countries, established China as crucial to South Africa's progress. For instance, the implementation of the Look East during the Zuma administration significantly affected South Africa's trade relations with countries such as the US within the AGOA framework. This policy plays a crucial role in the US's trade approach towards Southern Africa, emphasising shared objectives for stable and sustainable economic growth and development across Africa. Following Zuma's pivot towards the Look East policy, there was a noticeable decrease in trade between South Africa and US under AGOA (April, 2024). This may clarify the reasons behind South Africa's struggling currency and unfavourable IMF credit rating, which impeded foreign investment and resulted in economic stagnation, ultimately making Chinese investment appear advantageous for the countries' economy. This holds significant importance as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) functions as a financial support system established by Western countries to address and stabilise their financial crisis (Mchenry, 2021).

The position of Pretoria regarding the IMF is that developing countries, especially those in Africa, are inadequately represented. Consequently, Pretoria has pushed for a reposition of the third chair on the IMF Executive Board specifically for Sub-Saharan Africa. The proposal was intended to enhance oversight and coordination to identify crisis as they arise, while also ensuring that the IMF is better equipped to fulfil its systemic support responsibilities. South Africa has established its stance in contrast to the developed North, specifically the EU and the US (Qobo & Dube, 2015).

William and Papa (2020) assert that the dynamic at play have led to less pronounced realignment of alliances, especially in relations to international organisations (IOs) influenced by the West, highlighting the capacity to shift from a power-centric approach to one grounded in established rules. This transition under Zuma moving away from Western engagement, is evident in the 2010 Strategic Dialogue Agreement between the US and South Africa, which lacks any stipulation for the alignment of external policies. The Joint Action Plan of the South Africa-EU strategic partnership addresses the shared interests and values between the EU and South Africa, along with the necessity for policy alignment. While the economic relations between the two continues to thrive, challenges have arisen in organising high-level discussions between senior officials from the EU and South Africa, suggesting underlying political strains between these partners. Furthermore, the coordination of policy has faced challenges due to differing perspectives on several matters,

including the persistent instability in Zimbabwe (William and Papa, 2020).

Zuma emphasised South Africa's dedication to the objectives of the global South by pursuing alternative avenues rather than depending exclusively on conventional Western interactions. This stance conflicted with the ANC during Zuma's tenure, as it sought to pursue a gradual approach to create a one-party state (Matthee, 2016). While Beijing shares common experiences with Pretoria, its diversification in outward policy towards African countries has been targeted at addressing the challenges associated with deglobalisation, particularly in the context of the relations between the US and Europe concerning Chinese MNCs engaging with entities from those regions. For instance, the recent restriction imposed by the US on electronic component exports have effectively extended special regulations that were once limited to Huawei (Chinese MMC). Countries such as Canada and Australia have implemented limitations on Chinese enterprise in multiple industries, encompassing metals and energy production. This has presented obstacles for the international growth plans of Chinese companies (Zamborsky *et al.*, 2023).

The competitive landscape among the US, and Europe exerts significant pressure on Chinese companies operating internationally. In response China has advanced its Go Out Policy a national strategy aimed at fostering economic development to meet the needs of its population and generate opportunities for its citizen. It is important to highlight those numerous African countries, along with countries from the global South, have emerged as central to China's strategy for securing its interests in this area. By adhering to a principle of non-interference, Beijing has strengthened its relations with countries in the global South. The foreign policy of South Africa, particularly during the Zuma administration, has been influenced by the notion that the country should assert its diplomatic power in alignment with its strategic objectives. The South African growing economic relations with China, as the largest trading partner, has propelled a vigorous economic diplomacy between Beijing and Pretoria. This period has been marked by financial turbulence, promoting efforts to strengthen exchanges between Pretoria and Beijing. Politically and diplomatically these ties strived to foster mutual development and address shared challenges, while also contributing to the international arena in response to the evolving landscape of the global economy. The following subsequent part examines how the two strengthened their involvement and looking closely at Beijing influence within the BRICS as alternative mechanism that holds a significant role in global politics.

#### **4.4. Politics around South Africa participation in BRICS framework**

In 2010, Beijing extended an invitation to South Africa to join the bloc, thereby transforming BRIC into BRICS. South Africa's invitation to join the alliance is widely recognised as a significant development, highlighting its role as an important country in Africa. It had positively influenced the benefits for BRICS members by facilitating cooperation between them and African countries, given its considerable influence, particularly in the Southern region of Africa. The financial crisis of 2008-2009 has been shown to have significantly influenced the growth trajectories of the BRICS countries. Due to the financial crisis impacting the South African economy as well, Zuma held the view that the country's participation in BRICS was enhancing as it increased its international competitiveness, as the mechanism in place facilitated investment from other countries into South Africa (Yanshuo, 2011).

The fifth BRICS summit, convened on 26-27 March 2013 in Durban<sup>5</sup>, South Africa, highlighted that the involvement of BRICS contributes to economic transformation of Africa. Their increasing presence is underscored by the rapidly expanding trade and investment flows, along with a range of economic cooperation activities across various sectors. However, even on that essential contribution, it is undisputed that South Africa faces challenges regarding its trade relations with other members which is dominated by low value-added products (Zuma, 2013). Consequently, the research reveals that while Zuma has managed to maintain a stable position in Africa through recognition as an active member of BRICS, it is argued that South Africa does not derive direct benefits from this membership alone. Instead, the advantages stem from its active involvement in BRICS, which has facilitated progress that strengthens South Africa's position at the regional level.

This involvement enhances the African agenda and promotes sustainable development across Africa, with a particular focus on infrastructure development programs aimed at pursuing reforms in global governance. The policy of looking East marked a significant

---

<sup>5</sup> is the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, a province on the east coast of South Africa. Durban Harbour is not only a popular tourist location and beach destination, but it is also home to the continent's largest container terminal and one of Africa's major ports.

milestone for South Africa, aiming to reduce isolation and avoid economic dependence while resisting the conditions imposed by Western dominance. During the Ninth BRICS summit, Zuma emphasised the importance of strengthening the strategic partnership among BRICS countries. Zuma advocated advancing the construction of mechanisms, enhancing connection with other emerging market economies and developing countries, and pursuing shared development goals. During the same summit, Xi Jinping (President of China) articulated that BRICS countries must understand the international order as more just and equitable. Jinping underscores the dedication to multilateralism and the fundamental principles that guide international relations, aiming to foster a new framework for global interaction. This involves BRICS promoting reforms in global economic governance, enhancing the representation and influence of emerging markets revitalising efforts to bridge the development divide between the North and South, ultimately contributing to global economic growth (Ninth BRICS summit, 2017).

Additionally, Beijing has maintained its commitment to multilateralism, a principle it has long upheld, even prior to South Africa's accession to BRICS. This context has solidified Zuma's approach, which understands international relations as a shifting from appealing to Western countries to fostering stronger trade and economic relations with emerging partners in Asia and Latin America. The approach emphasised the need for South Africa to realign its global economic strategy, shifting focus from conventional partners in the US and EU. The ongoing and dynamic evolution, as illustrated in the ANC's discourse on international relations, has led to critiques of Western policies. Nonetheless, the realignment of priorities during the Zuma administration in the realm of international relations fell short in terms of developing the necessary capabilities for implementation that align with the economic policy changes of that period. This is evident in the fact that the DTI did not establish fully operational units adequately staffed to engage in commercial diplomacy with the newly prioritised economies, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and various other emerging markets. Furthermore, it is deficient in a specialised research capability to guide South Africa's approaches in interacting with emerging economic actors (Qobo & Dube, 2015).

Both Beijing and Pretoria exhibit a capacity to enhance alignment and promote regional initiatives. However, it is noted that Beijing utilises the BRICS framework to accelerate its expansion abroad, reinforcing its assertion of being a responsible and solidarity-driven player. Beijing formulates a distinctive strategy to align with developing countries pursuing

governance reform, fostering a sense of interdependence. While Pretoria aimed to represent Africa in global fora, Beijing made a concerted effort to bring South Africa into the grouping, a move that reflects China's strong interest in Africa and its perception of South Africa as a gateway to the rest of the continent of Africa. This term, gateway to Africa, in this research is interpreted to signify the accessible pathways utilised by Beijing, positioning South Africa as a facilitator to bolster Beijing's initiatives, as both entities benefit from their presence in the same forum. This is exemplified by the US\$125 million fund, the China Lusophone Africa Development Fund, designed to assist Chinese companies in penetrating the Portuguese speaking markets in Africa, particularly aimed at construction firms operating in countries such as Angola and Mozambique (Abdenur, 2014).

South Africa plays several crucial roles for investors from BRICS and this, along with the significance of the trade relations, has reshaped regional geopolitics. Prinsloo (2022) attests that following South Africa's entry into BRICS, trade has witnessed significant acceleration, with China leading the way in market growth increasing its share of global imports from 3.9% to 10.2% in 2015. India experienced a market growth 2.4%, rising from 0.8% during the same period, while Russia's growth increased by 1.1% from 0.7%. Brazil's share rose from 0.1% to 1%, and South Africa saw the least growth, moving from 0.4% to 0.5%. Nevertheless, while South Africa experienced this surge in trade relations with BRICS partners has not effectively addressed her domestic issues, including unemployment, poverty, and inequality. South Africa struggles with trade relations within BRICS primarily because the country exports mainly low value raw materials rather than finished goods particularly from China, which negatively impacts its manufacturing sector.

However, these trade challenges not only affect South Africa but also have broader implication for many BRICS members, given the geographic economic, and cultural diversity within the group. Key constraints to enhanced trade and investments include logical issues, trade regulations, a lack of information and language barriers. Xinhua (2017) assert that the expansion of Chinese trade reaches beyond the BRICS framework, as China has maintained a significant trade surplus compared to its foreign trade with the EU, which increased by 14.1% year on year. There is a perspective that South Africa's inclusion in BRICS, particularly its deepening ties with China, signifies a transition from a focus on ethical consideration in international relations to a more pragmatic approach. This is exemplified by South Africa's decision to abstain in the 2014 UN vote regarding the referral of North

Korea to the international Criminal Court (ICC). Beijing engagement in placing Africa on the BRICS agenda was not driven by affection for the Africa but rather influenced by its unique resources (Carmody, 2017).

#### **4.5. Beijing-Pretoria development partnership under Zuma's presidency**

##### **4.5.1. Special Economic Zone (SEZ)**

In South Africa, the drive to redefine the country's role in the global economy led to the establishment of the Industrial Development Zone programme (IDZ) in 2000. The primary focus of the programme was on employing persuasive strategies to draw in FDI and promote the export of value-added goods. This is now designated as a SEZ. This program underwent a comprehensive review in 2007, aiming to synchronise national economic strategies and framework, including the Industrial Policy Framework and the NGP, while also considering shifts in the global economic landscape, notably the establishment of BRICS. The evaluation of the IDZ was conducted with an emphasis on tackling economic issues, including the absence of integrated planning, inadequate governance guidance, reliance on government funding, insufficient targeted investment promotion strategies, and poor marketing along with a lack of coordination among government agencies, all of which have been recognised as significant barriers to the programme's success.

Pretoria has implemented a SEZ to establish a clear policy framework regarding the development, operations and management of SEZ, while also addressing the challenges associated with the IDZ program (DTI, 2012). SEZ is recognised as a mechanism for enhancing trade capacity, aimed at fostering swift economic growth through the implementation of tax and business incentives designated to draw in foreign investment and technology. Pretoria has established and emulated a parallel zone in an effort to mirror the achievement of China. Research conducted by Nel and Rogerson (2013) indicates that Africa's SEZ as a collective entity, have not succeeded in mirroring the performance of their more successful counterparts due to various factors, including capacity issues, institutional challenges, political dynamics, investor misconception, and inadequate power infrastructure. Beijing has developed its capabilities through overseas investment, making it appealing across various sectors. Launching a program aimed at promoting the establishment of overseas industrial zones by Chinese companies, where groups of these firms can more readily invest, may be interpreted as a pragmatic economic approach,

characteristic of a development state (Brautigam & Xiaoyang, 2012). The dynamic force of change in Beijing's development has been influenced by particular conditions within the country, the key players involved and their proficient management of the process, as well as their capacity to extract policy lessons from it. The model of industrialisation in China emerged from external strategies that were rooted in the gradual liberalisation of its internal economy, developing within the political framework established by Deng Xiaoping's (Former legendary figure in political history of modern China from 1904-1997) policies of opening and reform (Alves & Alden, 2024).

Beijing's presence in South Africa significantly influences development strategies and redefine the country as a pivotal gateway to the African continent. The relations between the two countries have increasingly acquired strategic and global importance. China serves as a dependable and productive ally to South Africa. The relations between the China and South Africa have developed into a complex and comprehensive framework of cooperation. The relations between China and South Africa have emerged as a paradigm for China's collaborative efforts with other countries in the developing world. The development cooperation between the two, especially regarding FDI, is primarily concentrated on SEZ. The FOCAC Action Plan from 2016 to 2018 highlights SEZ as a mechanism for fostering cooperation aimed at facilitating technology transfer to the continent (Thompson, 2019).

In 2017, Shenzhen Hoi Mor, a Hong Kong company, was designated as the operator of the SEZ in the Shenzhen Zone. The organisation currently functions under the designation of South African Energy Metallurgical Base (SAEMB) and asserts that it has allocated US\$3.8 billion in investments. In Musina, South Africa, the SEZ in the Vhembe Biosphere, exists as SEZ plant, alongside the Vele Coal mine. This mine, which was initially under the ownership of Rio Tinto, transitioned to MC Mining in 2012. This created additional job opportunities for the communities in Musina (Garcia *et al.*, 2025). This industrial development, which includes Chinese investor and operator, is governed by the framework established in FOCAC. Beijing and Pretoria part of framework agreement focussed on production capacity (Attorneys for Climate and Environmental Justice, 2025).

The researcher notes that the establishment of this SEZ primarily served as the short-term interests for South Africa's economy. There is a lack of collaboration between South Africa and the investors, which hinders the equitable sharing of skills and the inclusion of the local

labour force. According to Brautigam and Xiaoyang (2011) the lack of effective implementation in the zones results in isolated Chinese enclaves. These enclaves do not hire Africans or only employ them at the lowest levels, resulting in failure to transfer or share technology and know-how including effective marketing strategies for the Zone with local population, attract industries that are more hazardous, adopt lower worker safety standards than those outside the zones, or serve as economically unviable prestige projects offered merely in exchange for other benefits, such as access to resources, raising concerns about potential exploitation by Chinese entities.

Farole and Sharp (2017) analysed the focus on SEZ as a crucial spatial industrial policy tool aimed at fostering job creation in South Africa. Their analysis highlighted that the several SEZ that have been established in South Africa, which includes Dube Tradeport (DTP), which was launched in 2012; the Gauteng IDZ at OR Tambo International Airport, and the IDZs at Saldanha Bay and Harrismith (Maluti-A-Phofung did not yielded significant result in the contribution of the development in South Africa. Research conducted by Farole and Winkler (2014) shows that in South Africa there is a deficiency in the capacity to implement the IDZ. The study indicates that to foster greater growth in the implementation of the IDZ, it is crucial to recognise the significance of supply chain linkages in creating employment which may carry substantial spatial implication for SEZ in the country.

That being said, Beijing's focus on fostering political mutual trust, friendship, and cooperation with Pretoria suggests that soft power may play a significant role in its strategy. This is facilitated by China's capacity to represent itself both as a developing country and as a key role model (Rohne, 2013). The researcher notes that Beijing's growing presence in South Africa enables it to achieve its interests through enhanced industrial capacity, technological innovation, and FDI. Conversely, it must be recognised that the successful implementation of SEZ is not guaranteed; rather, it hinges on the establishment of essential conditions regarding both political and technical leadership.

The researcher noted that even after Zuma signed the SEZ Act into law in May 2014, it underscored the government's dedication to bolstering and expanding the manufacturing sector as a foundation for sustainable economic growth and development. The policy of SEZ in South Africa regarding the implementation of SEZ presented potential opportunities for quality employment and upward progression for qualified workers. However, it appears to

derive its competitiveness edge from the exploitation of low-wage labour while failing to prioritise environmental sustainability (Nyakabawo, 2014).

The researcher indicates that South Africa, particularly during Zuma administration, has largely failed to effectively utilise the IDZ for the industrialisation. It has, to a significant degree, not succeeded in leveraging loans from Beijing to enhance Eskom, as well as Transnet, the SOEs responsible for railway infrastructure (Garcia, 2025). The reality is that government oversight of SEZ development can be more pronounced than that of industrial clusters; however, this does not imply that SEZ are inherently easier to establish, as numerous SEZ initiatives have encountered failure. The effectiveness of SEZ hinges on a competent government and a robust market system, particularly within the designated zone or park. It is evident that in China, market forces typically play a crucial role in the development of industrial cluster (Zeng, 2010). Therefore, government support is instrumental, as it facilitates these clusters through various means, such as establishing industrial parks based on existing clusters. It is essential to emphasise that FDI and the Chinese diaspora have significantly contributed to the development of SEZs by drawing in capital investment, advanced technologies, and management expertise. This has facilitated knowledge transfer and spillover effects, ultimately aiding in the enhancement of local manufacturing capabilities (Zeng, 2010).

In South Africa, the positioning of the six SEZs (Dube Tradeport, Coega, ELIDZ, Atlantis, and Saldanha Bay) offered a significant opportunity for decision-makers to weave these zones into their surrounding areas as growth hubs. The approach of Eastern Asia towards SEZs has proven advantageous for exports and has significantly bolstered domestic market by fostering local value chains. Additionally, it served as effective mechanism for enhancing coastal regional integration. While this has provided South Africa with a substantial opportunity to transition from a commodity-based industrialisation model, specifically the mineral-energy complex that has historically supported the growth of towns and cities, which offer much greater potential for swift industrialisation due to their advantageous geographical position near global markets and their closeness to major urban centers. The IDZ located in the coastal area, specifically Coega, EIDZ, and RIDZ, have not met their anticipated outcomes. All three IDZs which are projected to transition into SEZ have faced challenges due to unclear industrial and Spatial policies, sufficient support system for industrial development, and deficit in essential infrastructure and research and development

institutions (Farole and Sharp 2017).

Consequently, the evidence indicates the administration under Zuma did not succeed in securing areas with potential, as highlighted in the SEZs, to foster industrialisation focussed on the beneficiation of these commodities. This approach was not adopted to promote industrialisation effectively. The research reveals that a significant factor in the Zuma administration's inability to fulfil domestic priorities for enhanced growth and development is associated with leadership characterised by a complex network of corrupt relationships wherein political leaders and private entities conspired to exploit state resources and institutions. For example, the affluent Gupta family demonstrated that their influence over crucial government and SOEs extended beyond mere economic interests, infiltrating the political sphere. The ability to appoint individuals aligned with their interests to prominent roles allowed the Guptas to influence decision-making process thereby enabling a network of corrupt activities (Riar, 2024). Special Investigating Unit (2022: online) reveals that:

Former Director of Eskom Koketso Choma (Step daughter to former CEO of Eskom Matshela Koko) faced arrest on corruption charges associated with a multimillion-dollar contract involving a Swiss engineering firm, Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). Koketso Choma were awarded contracts and were non-compliant with Eskom procurement process. Mr Matshela Koko (Former CEO of Eskom) played a vital role in the awarding of contracts to Impulse International, ABB and other sub-contractors. When contracts were awarded to impulse his stepdaughter became a Director at Impulse, and she later resigned her directorship in Impulse and opened Mokoni Trust (Special Investigating Unit, 2022: online).

The arrest is related to money laundering and fraud. The accusation stem from the Kusile power station located near Johannesburg, which reportedly awarded an \$111 million contract under questionable circumstances to the Swiss engineering firm Asca Brown Boveri (ABB) (Willey & Sons, 2022). The researcher notes that the irresponsible leadership during the Zuma presidency has further contributed to the ongoing deindustrialisation. The research revealed that the diversification of Zones in Malaysia and China has significantly contributed to the growth of various economic sectors. These specialised zones encompass High Tech Industrial Development Zones (HTIDZ), Tourism Zones (TZ), Manufacturing Zones (MZ), among others. Moreover, while the central governments engagement was

notably pronounced across all three nations, the participation of local government in South Africa was markedly minimal (Mdlalose & Taylor, 2019). The research additionally revealed that although the infrastructure in SEZ is deemed satisfactory in South Africa, there is a notably lack of scientific and technological infrastructure within the SEZ. That being said, the reproduction of the Zuma approach to engaging with Eastern countries without economic strategies to support interaction with Beijing reveals that China's involvement in South Africa is predatory.

#### **4.5.2. Socio-economic outcomes of Zuma's Developmental Approach**

During the Zuma administration, Beijing has strengthened its relations with South Africa, elevating their partnerships from strategic bilateral ties to a comprehensive partnership, signifying the highest level of collaboration. South Africa emerged as China's foremost trading partner, and two years later, in 2011, it attained membership in BRICS. The relations between China and South Africa clearly transcended mere historical gestures, manifesting in a robust symbolic alliance that signifies their status as the newest strategic partner (Mpungose, 2018). Nonetheless, the trajectory of development in South Africa warrants greater attention. The enhanced relations between the two countries did not align with South Africa's developmental results. This raises concerns and promoted the researcher to question whether the relations between Beijing and Pretoria contributes to South Africa's domestic economy, despite the significant role that China plays in South Africa, particularly in the industrialisation of mining. The researcher describes Beijing's actions in the mining sector as a concealed opportunity, enabling China to strategically position itself as a significant power with mobilised resources in South Africa. There is a consensus that Zuma's Look East policy marked a pivotal moment for South Africa, facilitating the development of new partnerships and growth with China. It is clear that the South African economy does not align with the potential achievements anticipated from the state visit exchanges between Beijing and Pretoria. It had not utilised South Africa to achieve greater development. This raises significant concerns regarding the progress of South Africa.

The results of these diplomatic exchanges between Pretoria and Beijing appear to be focussed on short-term, medium-term tactical approaches. The current approach to industrialisation fails to adequately address the manufacturing sector of South Africa's

economy. Consequently, the South Africa depends on external loans from China for the efficient operation of its state, which in turn creates a dependency that allows for increased borrowing within the South African economy. The implications of borrowing costs ultimately surpass the domestic savings of South Africa necessary for economic operation. South Africa is turning to China in search of economic incentives, viewing these as temporary measures for the development of its economy. The SEZ associated with the BRI in South Africa have proven to be unsustainable for the South African economy, as elaborated in the preceding section. The development initiatives from Beijing have significantly influenced the relations between South Africa and China, resulting in China securing a greater number of agreements. This dynamic is underscored by a comprehensive approach to international relations, which is largely propelled by development cooperation, private sector interests, and the strategic alignment of capital accumulation and growth (Xabadiya & Hu, 2019).

It is important to note that the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) has set up Business-run Chinese Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centres (ATDCs) throughout Africa, as a key component of its flagship agricultural development cooperation initiative (Tugendhat & Alemu 2016). It is evident that China's position as a formidable nation has influenced other economies, including South Africa, to embrace the Chinese development model. For this reason, the direct strategy of South Africa adopting the Chinese development model often grants China the upper hand in shaping the agenda during these engagements. The research finding aligns with the idea that Beijing significantly influences interactions among these countries, given its status as a developing country that largely seeks to improve exchanges with South Africa through various frameworks that aim to represent the interests of the global South.

Nevertheless, the researcher notes that many analyses have failed to address the broader shortcomings in Zuma's governance. His leadership was marked by inadequate guidance and attempts to manage the industrialisation of firms from China, resulting in a scenario where South Africa fails to gain from the presence of Chinese companies operating within its borders. This is largely due to illicit agreements aimed at personal gain rather than fostering economic development. To illustrate how Zuma exploited SOEs for personal gain, the absence of ethical governance led to the decline of SOEs, exacerbated by heightened political interference in their daily operations and management. That's why, corruption emerged as a pressing issue within organisations like Eskom, Denel, SABC, South African

Airways (SAA), and numerous other entities that have faced bankruptcy due to the actions of corrupt officials and board members (Khambule, 2025). In South Africa, state institutions serve as vital mechanisms for assisting the government in generating job opportunities and fostering the economic growth necessary to alleviate the significant levels of poverty. However, the mismanagement of funds during the Zuma administration has hindered the country's ability to strengthen its economic ties with external partners, particularly with China. This underscores the notion that internal issues in South Africa impede the potential for beneficial external relations. It is evident that the advancement of a nation must be paired with the integration of state enterprises to enhance progress (Khambule, 2025). The researcher notes that this situation has made South Africa vulnerable, leading it to depend on Chinese funding as an external strategic partner from the Eastern Asian giant, with a focus on enhancing infrastructure.

Zuma's pivot in international relations from the West to the East was a strategic choice by his administration, aimed at aligning with shared interests to distance South Africa from Western dominance. This shift significantly strengthened ties with China, resulting from more than ten years of engagement focussed on cultivating a partnership grounded in equitable exchanges. China leveraged its strengths in infrastructure development and light industry, thus supporting Pretoria in its efforts for structural transformation (Naidu, 2009). The persistent allure of the Chinese model for South Africa has strengthened the ties between the two countries, with resource and financial exchanges serving as a conduit for fresh economic development. This offered ample evidence as to why Zuma's inclination to broaden investment and trade sources was directed towards China. In light of the above, the researcher framed the relations between Beijing and Pretoria as devoid of neo-colonial implications. This perspective is reinforced by Zuma, who dismissed the idea that Chinese involvement in South Africa was merely about resource exploitation. Instead, he viewed the partnership between South Africa and China as a strategic response to the West, aimed at dismantling what he perceived as lingering remnants of neo-colonialism impacting South Africa.

Mnyandu (2021) indicates that South Africa's relations with China have made efforts to address certain limitations in the expansion of imports during its engagement with Beijing. Thus, examining the Zuma administration reveals significant pressure and criticism regarding its establishment of relations with China. Zuma's tenure concentrated on

advancing South Africa's economic strategy amidst a multitude of domestic and international pressures, alongside the often-restrictive interests that shaped the selection and execution of policies. The researcher emphasises that diplomatic relations have influenced South Africa's policy orientations linked to Beijing, aiming for political and economic alignment to tackle the country's persistent developmental challenges. The deepening of diplomatic connections has influenced relations, reflecting actions that South Africa should undertake to meet various developmental goals that remain largely unmet. Despite significant potential, widespread discontent has led to both organised and spontaneous demonstrations on a range of issues, all of which pertain to development and the state's insufficient speed in delivering services.

In 2015, during the FOCAC held in Johannesburg, South Africa entered into an MoU with China that facilitated the export of table grapes from South Africa to China. Additionally, another MoU was established for South Africa to supply beef to China (Mchenry, 2021). The exchanges between Xi Jinping<sup>6</sup> and Zuma are significantly influenced by China's reforms and technological advancements, presenting an opportunity for South Africa to learn and adapt as needed. While the diplomatic relations between the two countries have reached unprecedented heights, it is evident that South Africa has yet to realise its full potential in this enhancement.

This led to enhanced integration between Beijing and Pretoria, whose longstanding relations, is often interpreted as a manifestation of SSC and renegotiation of policy autonomy. This provides South Africa with the necessary space to fulfil its developmental goals through a diversified array of partners, making closer relations unavoidable. A notable shift in global dynamics influencing the pace and character of South Africa-China relations has also been evident on the multilateral stage within organisations such as the BRICS and FOCAC, where both China and South Africa have emerged as significant participants. Given China's recent economic achievements, it has emerged as a significant force in the evolving global landscape, where vital trade partnerships and sources of FDI have been key components for developmental advancement. This has progressively positioned China as a mentor for South African policymakers who seek to learn and adopt development best

---

<sup>6</sup> He is the most powerful Chinese leader, having been CCP General Secretary since 2012 and President of the People's Republic of China since 2013. His broad and assertive policies have transformed China's domestic and foreign policy.

practices from Beijing (Mnyandu, 2021).

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

A notable partnership emerged with the strengthening ties between Pretoria and Beijing. The deterioration in Zuma's engagement with the US was evident, reflecting an increasing estrangement from Western powers. Zuma allied with the influential Asian tiger (China). Zuma's approach sought to enhance ties with Beijing, reflecting a significant partnership from the Global South. The tone was set within the BRICS framework, as South Africa's involvement in the forum resulted in the incorporation of Africa into BRICS's agenda, positioning South Africa as a conduit to the continent. Strategic factors have significantly influenced Beijing's choice to strengthen diplomatic relations with South Africa through its inclusion in the BRICS coalition. The aim of this development was to support countries in the Global South to transform their governance structures, enabling them to respond effectively to the shifting landscape of global power relations. Nonetheless, in comparison to its BRICS counterpart, Pretoria's trade has been relatively limited.

The analysis reveals that South Africa's role on the global stage, especially within the African context, has been bolstered by its proactive engagement in multiple bodies that extend beyond mere trade considerations. However, Zuma adopted a limited approach to international relations, placing greater emphasis on the East rather than the West. This has impacted trade advantages related to AGOA, which have weakened considerably as a result of Zuma's commitment to alliances with Eastern countries. Although the Pretoria SEZs presented certain advantages, the researcher observes that these were fleeting, and Zuma failed to ensure the zones provided lasting benefits for South Africa, hindering the country's capacity to address its threefold challenges. Evidence of this can be observed in the IDZ, particularly within COEGA, EIDZ, and RIDZ, all of which have failed to deliver the expected outcomes. Meanwhile, China stands as a dependable and successful partner for South Africa. Over the years, the partnership between China and South Africa has evolved into a strong structure of cooperation. A framework for collaboration between China and other African countries has been established through the partnership between China and South Africa.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **An exploration of how politico-socio-economic developments in China have influenced the relationship between South Africa and China**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The Chinese are forging new avenues for their resurgence and cultivating advantageous conditions for their populace (Wisseman, 2015). The ascent of China's economy as a dominant force in production unfolds along a distinctive path, significantly moulded by the political and social institutions that have impacted its national development trajectory. This remarkable achievement in development diverges from the conventional framework favoured by the West, instead showcasing a uniquely Chinese narrative. China's complex development approach encompasses strategies that reflect a legacy of centralised planning, a stable government supported by an extensive bureaucracy, substantial heavy industry infrastructure, capital-intensive sectors that replace imports, elevated domestic saving rates, and a corporatist societal framework (Arestis *et al.*, 2021). This chapter analyses Zuma's strategic perspective on viewing China as an essential ally in bolstering South Africa's growth potential. It examines the impact of China's developmental practices on Zuma's efforts to enhance relations with China in contrast to Western countries. This chapter delves into the ways in which China's socio-economic and political evolution has influenced the dynamics between China and South Africa, examining the motivations behind Zuma's pivot in foreign policy from the West towards an Eastern alignment.

#### **5.2. Chinese finance as the centerpiece of Zuma's Look East Strategy**

The catalyst for South Africa's focus on the Look East policy was its active involvement in the BRICS initiative. This strategic partnership between South Africa and BRIC countries, particularly Russia and China, was perceived as a diplomatic rebuke to the US Congress as it was broadly investigated in chapter four (Soule *et al.*, 2024). Zuma's shift in alliance shaped by dissatisfaction from how the West does business with South Africa. Zuma in financial times interview has warned Western companies by highlighting that:

Western companies they must change their old colonial approach to Africa or risk

losing out even more to the accelerating competition from China and other developing powers (Zuma quoted by Russell, 2013:online).

This reflects shift that shape Zuma's decision in his era to focus less on Western partnerships, while looking toward China. In 2010, the shift in strategy and enhanced ties with the Asian giant, have defined the Zuma presidency, occurring during a time marked by financial turmoil affecting European economies (Wisseman, 2015).

During that same era, China's economy surged, amplifying its influence in South Africa, where it became a viable alternative for infrastructure financing. For instance, the De Aar Wind Farm<sup>7</sup> has changed South Africa's energy landscape. As the first wind power project financed, constructed and operated by a Chinese company in Africa, it supplies 760 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually, meeting the electricity needs of 300,000 households. The farm has contributed to closing the gap caused by unstable clean energy and addressing the electricity shortage in South Africa (FOCAC, 2024). It is true that Beijing uses its strong economy to promote closer ties with South Africa. This alternative model of financing serves as Chinese political power to influence relations with South Africa while sustaining Chinese domestic economy. China promotes low capital risk compared to traditional Western investor. The Chinese model of financing does accommodate long term needs of the developing countries, for instance, concessional loans have a long-term maturity with no interest paid, normally the interest rates are subsidised by MOFCOM, which allows the bank to lend at lower rates, but the loans are effectively reimbursed by the Chinese state (Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2019).

Garcia *et al.* (2025) posit that in South Africa, Chinese financial flows have come mainly from the CDB. It has provided loans in the form of project finance to Chinese companies as well as to South Africa SOEs. In South Africa, a great part of Chinese loans is part of Official Development Assistance (ODA), that is, non-repayable. South Africa gets access to Chinese loans which come in the form of IDC, which is offered in two ways through bilateral agreements between Chinese SOEs/private companies or through Chinese banks offering low interest to African countries. For example, of the biggest loans made to South African SOEs by China are Eskom and Transnet. But there is notable criticism that, in South Africa,

---

<sup>7</sup> This is a 244.5MW onshore wind power project. It is located in Northern Cape, South Africa.

the specific nature of IDC support, whether as an investment, a loan, or another form of aid is frequently not disclosed to the public. Additionally, China's IDC narrative describes its diplomatic and economic relations with South Africa as part of the realignment of the Global South (Thompson, 2020). China claims to be a former colony and currently a developing state, and as such its dominant role makes it the leader of the new Global South.

The Chinese government's influence throughout Africa has been enhanced by its close relationship with the African National Congress (ANC). Through strong bilateral relations, China has gradually reshaped how the African continent prioritises joint development initiatives in international and regional platforms. For example, under the influence of China's foreign policy, the AU and the SADC have reorganised the Africa agenda to include joint development initiatives with China (Thompson, 2020). Thus, the growing economic relations between China and South Africa has changed the nature and ideational content of South Africa's foreign policy on the African continent. While ideals of Pan-Africanism still abound, now they are framed through the lens of SSC, which prioritises extra continental interests over dreams of continental community and evolving historical continuity. South Africa focussed more on ensuring that national and continental priorities are not diluted. This narrative influenced Zuma's interaction with China were primarily shaped by a non-imposing stance, which made China's development model more attractive. Therefore, the implementation of the Look East policy enhance relations with China represents a significant shift in the globalised economy, serving as an alternative to the prevailing Washington consensus.

### **5.3. China-South Africa relations on multilateral engagement**

The economic footprint of South Africa in its engagement with China is expanding, influenced by a rising number of partnerships. The engagement between South Africa and China is far from being a limited perspective. South Africa acknowledges China's prominent position on the international stage and recognises the contributions made by Chinese initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI), and Global Security Initiative (GSI). These initiatives are designed to enhance global peace and security, foster socio-economic development, and support the reform of global governance. In light of China's significant role in global governance, South Africa has conveyed its confidence that China will advance this initiative, acknowledging the

importance of the UN and AU, as well as the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Agenda 2063. South Africa's interest in strengthening its economy and its dedication to fostering regional stability in the realm of security are pivotal in shaping the country's expansion of engagement with China. This cooperation aims to address bilateral and global issues of mutual concern (DIRCO, 2024).

The framework established by China regarding its doctrine of common prosperity, alongside South Africa's advocacy for its NDP and Economic Reconstruction and Development Plan (ERDP), serves to strengthen the ties between the two countries. Cyril Ramaphosa (President of South Africa) emphasised that:

We are encouraged by China's ongoing commitment to supporting African countries in achieving the aspirations outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063, as well as the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (cited in SA News, 2023:online).

The engagement with Chinese initiatives in project expansion serves to enhance the relations with South Africa. This perspective emphasises that China has played a crucial role in assisting South Africa in initiating and spearheading international collaborative initiatives, including the FOCAC and the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). The active involvement in co-chairing FOCAC alongside South Africa reinforces the legitimacy that China has established, highlighting its declared intention to further the long-term objectives of China-Africa relations and development. The establishment of FOCAC serves as evidence not only of a more extensive relations between China and South Africa but also of China's increasing capacity to leverage this partnership to fulfil its strategic objectives in Africa. It is clear that China, through its financial strategies, can effectively shape the narrative and influence the perception of its actions in South Africa. For example, China invested over \$167 billion annually through a combination of loans and direct aid primarily focussed on South Africa (Schmidt, 2023).

China has undertaken considerable initiatives to maintain its growing international influence and share its developmental experiences with the Global South. This reflects China's worldwide impact, its potential to motivate, and its capability to influence global standards. For example, the expansion of the BRI is perceived as a framework of connectivity politics

that highlights China's relations with countries in the Global South. The expansion of the BRI Chinese framework is closely linked to motives that reflect the Global South, serving as a mirror to China's long-term relations. These relations are expressed through political values, institutional similarities, and are further reinforced by diplomatic practices and symbolism. This enhances engagement among nations in the Global South, enabling Chinese facilitation to exercise a proactive role in shaping agendas and linking these countries to China (Kohlenberg & Godehardt, 2021).

The unconditional financing from China has sparked heightened engagement among the countries of the Global South. The BRI emerged as a framework that promotes the extensive lending and service offerings by China. The establishment of the Chinese BRI initiative reflects an effort to connect with developing countries through enhanced economic interaction. This economic integration initiative has the potential to shape political dynamics across various levels of governance. The BRI extend its reach beyond merely seeking new markets abroad; it also aims to enhance Chinese capital and influence. Additionally, it serves as a framework for China to garner support from the Global South in the reconfiguration of the global governance architecture (Carmody *et al.*, 2022).

The economic interactions with China that promote a novel form of relations among the Global South aim to establish a global community with a collective future for humanity. The economic trajectory of China is shaping the Global South, providing valuable lessons for its community. In light of China's significant growth, the Global South seeks to establish a foundation through political and economic exchanges that will enhance their integration into the globalised economy for sustainable development. The interplay of integration and the vulnerabilities faced by nations in the Global South has fostered a narrative that emphasises the advantages of collaborative global development, particularly under the auspices of Chinese leadership.

This involvement in the BRI aimed to foster economic interactions and enhance exchanges with nations in the Global South, showcasing the effectiveness of China's unique approach that blends state-led, adaptable, and experimental economic development with stringent political oversight of society representing a counter-hegemonic perspective on the relations between state, economy, and society. A component of its approach includes the establishment of alternative financial entities, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment

Bank (AIIB). These alternative frameworks seek to create a global perspective centered around China by means of parallel institutions, innovative initiatives, and the redefinition of global standards (Feigenbaum, 2018). This is achieved through the engagement of FOCAC in establishing a modernisation strategy that collectively influences Africa's development trajectory. The Chinese approach leverages the principles of effective governance as a means to foster peace and security while simultaneously advancing infrastructure development. The commitment of China to the AU is evident in its serious approach to aligning the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with deeper integration into Africa. This is achieved through the promotion of the BRI, which, in turn, supports the objectives outlined in the AU's 2063 (Mwaniki, 2025).

This aligned with Zuma's vision for an agenda that extends from Pretoria, emphasising the Pretoria pivotal role in Africa and highlighting its renewed dedication to fostering peace, stability, and development throughout the Africa (Naidu, 2009). In 2009, Zuma articulated at the 10th anniversary of South African peacekeeping in Africa that:

We will continue to collaborate with multilateral organisations such as the African Union and the United Nations in the pursuit of peace. South Africa fosters an atmosphere that promotes reconstruction and development within our region, as well as the potential for accelerated economic growth (Zuma, 2009:online).

South Africa's dedication to advocating for African interests and its efforts to mitigate stabilising risks, along with its persistent emphasis on Africa's developmental challenges in multilateral processes, exemplified Zuma's focus on Africa as a means to reinforce South Africa's position as a dominant force in Africa (Landsberg, 2014). For example, Zuma in Sudan has dedicated significant political capital to address the ongoing political and security instability, which serves as a clear indication of efforts aimed at fostering peace in the region. Zuma dedicated his efforts to Africa through an inclusive governance approach, which was a key aspect of his administration's agenda. His involvement in supporting former Mozambique president Joachim Chissano, who was appointed by SADC as a mediator to address the crisis in Madagascar, is also noteworthy (Zondi, 2012). To reestablish order in Madagascar, Pretoria endorsed Chissano's initiative for an inclusive government, which involved both the ousted President Ravalomanana and his successor, Rajoelina, in the governance process. Both individuals were to be permitted to compete in a new presidential

election following the transitional phase (Zondi, 2012). In this respect, South Africa's strong currency has been utilised, to a certain degree, to mitigate instabilities, strengthen democracy and governance, enhance job creation, diversify industrialisation, promote intra-regional trade, and draw in greater foreign investment. Moreover, this enhanced Africa's position in an evolving global landscape and allowed for improved negotiation of its relations with other entities compared to the present situation.

It is evident that South Africa is constrained by its resources, limiting its ability to drive change independently. Consequently, enhanced engagement with China, which has demonstrated a keen interest in Africa, serves as a collaborative partnership that is crucial for facilitating South Africa's integration into a dominant role within Africa. South Africa's dedication to expressing a collection of ideas that prioritise consensus over individual interests has strengthened its relations with SADC nations (Qobo & Dube, 2015). South Africa engages with China as part of its strategy to expand global relations, particularly in trade and strengthening its role as a leading economy in Southern Africa. This growing focus on Africa is closely linked to its partnership with China.

#### **5.4. Economic drivers of China-South Africa relations**

The economic relations between China and South Africa serves as a clear metric for analysing the dynamics of investment and influence. Economic contributions from China, including personal, trade, and diplomatic efforts, play crucial roles in enhancing Chinese dominance in South Africa. This underscores that a significant motivation for South Africa's growing engagement with China is its pursuit of new avenues for investment and foreign trade. South Africa, facing infrastructural deficiencies, sees its pursuit of a Look East policy as a strategic opportunity to attract new investments and capital essential for financing its infrastructure projects. Moreover, South Africa views China as a valuable bilateral ally, largely due to the China-Africa policy that emphasises a commitment to respecting the sovereignty of other nations through a doctrine of non-interference. Through its engagement in South Africa, Beijing is positioned to safeguard its essential interests, thereby propelling its economic growth and development (Shoba & Mtapuri, 2024).

This represents a significant transition in international relations from the era of apartheid to the present, highlighting South Africa's commitment to fostering connections with developing nations, particularly those within the African continent. The initiative to adopt a Look East

policy during the Zuma administration highlighted the importance of engaging with the emerging markets of Asia, all within the context of Global South Cooperation. This approach aimed to lay the groundwork for advocating reforms in international governance institutions. The shift in policy under Zuma towards the East has significantly enhanced the relations between China and South Africa.

This study seeks to enrich the discourse on development by examining the sectors where South Africa can make improvements. It is crucial to extend our engagement with the current administration (Ramaphosa administration) to better understand whether the factors that influenced Zuma's policy are still pertinent to the ongoing contributions shaping South Africa's growth and development under the present leadership. The interactions with the current administration are crucial in shaping the trajectory of South Africa's bilateral relations, highlighted by two significant engagements between Pretoria and Beijing that underscore the continuity of progress in this area.

This research also examines that the interactions between China and South Africa, highlighting the 27 years of relations since the establishment of formal bilateral ties. On one side, it reveals China's commitment to supporting South Africa's growth through investment. Meanwhile, the developments surrounding the expansion of a comprehensive strategic partnership during the Zuma administration raise questions about why South Africa does not achieve an optimal level that would create more opportunities for its citizens. Given the numerous initiatives that China has implemented in South Africa, it appears that the country could have experienced significant growth in certain sectors where Chinese investments have been made. This offers insight into the notion that the rapid increase in Chinese investment may either be inefficiently utilised or misdirected, particularly in terms of linking the extraction sector to the manufacturing sector for the translation of finished goods. Consequently, the dynamics of trade in this context reveal an imbalanced exchange, where one party (China) reaps greater advantages that contribute to its own development, while simultaneously, South Africa is being drained of resources through the rapid intensification of bilateral trade relations.

As relations between South Africa and China evolve, both countries are committed to enhancing each other's development through supportive measures that highlight the opportunities available for both countries. Despite the considerable effort reflected in

extensive bilateral relations, South Africa appears to continue facing challenges in its geopolitical and economic exchanges. It is evident that South Africa should maintain its strategic partnership with Beijing, given their alliance within the BRICS forum and their shared vision for SSC. South Africa plays a crucial role as an integral part of Africa, contributing significantly to the economic prosperity of Africa. Consequently, as a prominent nation on the Africa, South Africa seeks to enhance vital sectors like renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure, increasingly turning to China to observe the success of these initiatives, with a significant dependence on Chinese investment. Given the financial support it offers for renewable energy initiatives in South Africa, China holds a dominant position in its relations with South Africa.

As reported by the Jozi advertiser (2025), South Africa is grappling with significant challenges related to electricity supply shortages. In light of this, the visit to China by the Kgosientsho Ramokgopa (Minister of Electricity in South Africa), on April 8, 2025, resulted in the signing of an MoU between South Africa's Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA) and the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). The focus of this agreement is on collaboration in nuclear technology, encompassing the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), advanced clean technologies, intelligent microgrid systems, and the integration of renewable energy. Given the challenges South Africa faces with ongoing blackouts and an outdated power infrastructure, the collaboration with China aims to enhance and expand the nation's nuclear energy capabilities, thereby bolstering energy security and fostering economic growth. The involvement of China in the nuclear sector is closely tied to its broader ambitions for continental expansion in Africa. For example, in Namibia, the Chinese General Nuclear Power Group holds a majority stake in the Husab Uranium mine, recognised as one of the largest in the world, which has made a substantial impact on Namibia's economy and job creation (Jozi advertiser, 2025).

China is advancing its strategic initiatives to boost its global nuclear technology exports while simultaneously addressing the energy requirements of African countries. Therefore, significant initiatives like energy projects aimed at tackling the energy crisis have led China to adopt a proactive approach in influencing South Africa, fostering a state that aligns with Chinese interests and shaping the cooperative policy direction between the two countries. The structure of the FOCAC significantly influences this policy. At the FOCAC 2024 summit in Beijing, Xi Jinping unveiled a substantial commitment of \$51 billion in financial assistance

to Africa over the next three years, with the objective of enhancing infrastructure and generating a minimum of one million jobs. Considering all these factors, it is evident that China wields significant influence. Its status, economic prestige, ideological stance, and strong ties have created an appealing opportunity for South Africa to follow suit. This underscores that China has emerged as a developmental leader for South Africa to emulate. The Chinese have established a cohesive framework aimed at promoting their development through the strategic allocation of resources and the enhancement of institutions necessary for achieving their developmental goals. By prioritising energy-related development, China has established and initiated relevant, legitimate, and feasible institutional arrangements that have facilitated economic growth and inclusive social development.

As we observe the growing importance of the relations between China and South Africa in the realm of renewable energy initiatives, it is essential to highlight that South Africa appears to be failing to fully capitalise on the advantages of this partnership. The imbalance in focus can be attributed to the overwhelming influence of China. However, this situation should be examined from the perspective of South Africa's governance challenges, which can be traced back to the Zuma administration. For example, in his time, the partnerships that emerged appeared to solidify the existing relations between the state and business elites, ultimately favouring the elite while undermining the government's objectives of realising widespread Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). Conversely, China has established a mechanism that promotes development through collaboration with its private entities. In 2010, a plan was put forward to establish nuclear power in the Southwestern inland Sichuan province of China, involving a collaboration between the CNNC and the provincial authorities. The Chinese authorities assigned the CNNC the task of carrying out initial preparations for the nuclear power project in the province, aligning with their broader nuclear power strategy and development objectives. The report indicates that a key aspect of the agreement stipulates that CNNC will maintain a controlling interest in any nuclear power facility it establishes in Sichuan (World Nuclear News, 2010).

In 2015, a strategic cooperation framework agreement was established between CNNC and Sichuan province in China, focussing on the construction of nuclear power plants and the advancement of the nuclear industry. The agreement encompassed objectives to expedite the integration of scientific and technological advancements into practical applications; particularly in large-scale commercial nuclear power reactors, renewable energy generation,

the manufacturing of nuclear power equipment, and the establishment of nuclear technology and innovation platforms (World Nuclear News, 2015). The increased collaboration between the Chinese government and private entities is what drives the exploration of sustainable development in China. The support from China fosters a favourable environment for domestic businesses. It is clear that when entities like CNNC possess a controlling interest in any nuclear power plant constructed in Sichuan, it leads to a monopoly in the industry. Such a business, when it extends beyond the state level, becomes crucial to China's expansion. As a result, this allows Chinese energy and mining companies to acquire significant stakes in resource extraction. For this reason, there is a push from China to foster stronger ties with South Africa by developing strategic policy tools aimed at enhancing constructive engagement (Obiorah, 2006).

This development enables China to secure greater advantages with South Africa. This development clearly indicates China's intentions to create pathways for its businesses to secure markets overseas. South Africa, recognising the necessity of such services, welcomes this engagement through the signing of an MoU between NECSA and CNNC and the agreement was confirmed by Ramokgopa during his visit to China to strengthening South Africa's energy capacity in response to declining energy security and to advance South Africa's transition to a more reliable and sustainable energy system (Nozulela, 2025). It can be contended that the rapidly increasing demand to secure new avenues has led to a proactive strategy by the Chinese in pursuit of their strategic objectives on the global stage.

This represents a diplomatic strategy aimed at enhancing China's position as a pivotal ally with the African continent, where financial support is focussed on fostering integration between Chinese and African interests. This can be seen as a significant increase in engagement with Africa through the concept of partnership. In that regard, a similar approach is applied to each African country. South Africa has been diminished or displaced from the critical sectors of the Africa's economies where it previously held significant influence. This reflects the impact of China's expansion in Africa, influencing policies via various initiatives. The increased investment from China to South Africa undeniably influences the future direction of the relations between the two countries. Thus, the growing economic presence of China in South Africa is clear, particularly through its investments in infrastructure, technology, and renewable energy (Panchia, 2024). It is important to emphasise that during the visits of heads of state, the two countries consistently make

commitments regarding the alignment of South Africa's objectives to diversify its economy and address its trade deficit.

The research contends that the dynamics between China and South Africa are intricate, with China's strategic pivot towards sustainable development influencing the nature of their relations. The intricacies of the inter-relations are evident at various levels. South Africa's interaction with China is focussed on utilising investment opportunities to enhance local manufacturing and stimulate job creation. Additionally, enhance market access and promote technology transfer that could significantly benefit South Africa by strengthening industries and generating employment opportunities. This rise has demonstrated a lack of sustainability for South Africa over time, particularly in instances where the labour force is regarded as being at a lower level. Indeed, the case that the Chinese companies are supported by top experts, particularly in the transfer sector, while South Africa faces a notable shortage of skilled labour that could effectively enhance the contributions made by the Chinese in Africa. This has impacted the workforce in South Africa, as the results do not consistently enhance the economy along the manufacturing value chain. The deficiency in training within these sectors creates a significant gap in South Africa. Rendering investment trivial in enhancing the skills of the workforce, despite South Africa reaping benefits from the establishment of businesses.

Despite this, it results in a significant gap that fails to provide opportunities for domestic industries to advance into manufacturing sectors and expand internationally. This is the outcome of inadequate policies that South Africa currently faces. South Africa's economy is hindered by a lack of diverse industries beyond its extractive sectors, leading to significant challenges. Even so, South Africa's trade with China has increased dramatically, but this growth is characterised by a persistent trade imbalance that favours China. Between 2000 and 2023, bilateral trade increased from US\$1.34 billion to US\$34.18 billion, with South Africa primarily exporting raw materials to China and importing mainly manufactured products. This increase was fueled by strategic partnerships, complementary economic needs, and policies implemented through FOCAC and BRICS (Ngundu, 2025). Despite ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration in governance, green technologies, and digital transformation, the significance of mutual learning and technological exchange remains paramount. This is executed in a way that permits Chinese entities to establish a favourable environment for their operations within South Africa.

The growing openness of South Africa's economy presents significant challenges. This transition may appear to aim at modernising the economy and advancing sustainable development; however, it ultimately undermines domestic sectors in South Africa. This does not suggest that Chinese enterprises should refrain from engaging in critical sectors in South Africa but rather emphasise the importance of learning from Chinese experiences, particularly in the industrial domain. The focus should be on how South Africa can progress from merely exporting raw materials to producing fully finished goods and services. Consequently, the absence of industrialisation in South Africa prompts apprehensions that China's deepening ties with South Africa are driven by a desire to obtain natural resources to enhance its own domestic growth. The persistent allure of the Chinese model for South Africa has strengthened the ties between the two countries, with resource and financial exchanges serving as a conduit for fresh economic development.

It is clear that South Africa's ongoing state of underdevelopment is beyond repair, accompanied by alarmingly high levels of unemployment. It is reasonable to pose inquiries regarding who stands to gain from the collaboration between China and South Africa. These agreements undeniably showcase a significant opportunity, emphasising South Africa's commitment to advancing sustainable development. For example, during the state visit on 2 September 2024 of Ramaphosa to Beijing, the engagement sought to enhance these bilateral relations to an All Round Strategic Cooperative Partnership in a New Era. This strengthened collaboration embodies a mutual aspiration to cultivate a vibrant community with a collective future, focussing on transformative economic development and equitable trade practices (Ramaphosa, 2024a).

During the same state visit in 2024, Ramaphosa (2024a) emphasised the significance of a dedicated approach to an inclusive energy transition that seeks to prioritise climate change considerations. Panchia (2024) assert that it is important for Chinese firms like BYD and CATL in investing within South Africa's growing green economy, capitalising on its rich renewable energy resources and strategic minerals for increased South Africa development. This stems from the view that South Africa strategic initiatives have not effectively promoted socio-economic growth in South Africa.

The engagement between China and South Africa is influenced by China's dedication to assisting South Africa in sectors that signify potential for its development. The financial

opportunities presented by China to South Africa significantly shape the dynamics of their bilateral relations. For example, in 2024 during Ramaphosa's visit to China to a business roundtable in Shenzhen, Ramaphosa (2024b), expressed admiration for the city's swift transformation into a global center of technology and innovation. Ramaphosa (2024b) highlighted the opportunity for South Africa to draw insights from Shenzhen's development approach, especially in sectors such as digital supply chains and sustainable technology. South Africa consistently welcomes opportunities for Chinese engagement in its economy, which serves to enhance the nation's economic landscape and tackle the pressing issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Ramaphosa (2024b) further extended an invitation to Chinese businesses to visit South Africa, highlighting that the political leadership of Guangdong Province could spearhead a business delegation to investigate investment opportunities. These interactions are poised to forge new avenues for collaboration, illustrating the established and harmonious relations between the two countries (Ramaphosa, 2024b).

It is unfortunate that such dedication does not correspond with the economic success of South Africa; rather, it highlights the ongoing challenges South Africa faces in addressing its economic development and generating job opportunities for its citizens. The Chinese approach to policy has undeniably fostered a model of development marked by a focus on export-led growth and significant infrastructure investment. This strategy has influenced relations with South Africa, culminating in a new agreement that leverages their collective strengths in development, with Chinese support aiding South Africa in its structural transformation initiatives. It is evident that China's involvement in South Africa is strategic, focussing on methods to sustain positive relations with South Africa. This is achieved by supporting South Africa in its structural transformation initiatives, which appear to create new opportunities for bilateral relations between the two countries, thereby strengthening their partnership. This form of development persuasion is crucial for fostering strategic and mutually beneficial collaboration. This enhanced relations between China and South Africa illustrates a partnership that leverages their collective strengths in development.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

The Chinese exploration model represents a developmental strategy grounded in promoting relations with South Africa. This model focusses on assisting South Africa with infrastructural

development. Along with Zuma's approach to foreign policy focussed on establishing relations with China and fostering strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships. However, analysis reveals that South Africa struggles to prioritise initiatives that foster export-oriented industrial growth to its benefit. The Look East policy has proven advantageous by opening up alternative funding avenues. Nonetheless, this focus has heightened Chinese influence in South Africa. China employs BRI to harness resources and shape relations with South Africa. This approach enables China to maintain a strong position when negotiating benefits with South Africa. On the other hand, China focusses on fostering a multipolar global order and aligning with the global South agenda. This focus resonated with Zuma's foreign policy. The alignment emphasises South Africa's pursuit of opportunities in global engagement. The diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria significantly influence their international roles, as both countries strive to establish a world order that reflects the current geopolitical landscape.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **An evaluation of China-South Africa diplomatic relations and their influence on political relations**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

1998 signifies an important moment in the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and South Africa. The relations between the two countries have expanded swiftly, evolving into close partnerships. The relations between Beijing and Pretoria have focussed on a shared commitment to strengthening diplomatic and political ties, which is essential for fostering deeper economic cooperation. This chapter evaluates diplomatic relations between China and South Africa on their political relations. Particular attention has been given to party-to-party relations, the political dynamics between Beijing and Pretoria, and their broader implications. The analysis further evaluated the political controversies involving China and South Africa, particularly regarding the UNSC, the Dalai Lama issue and the adherence to the One China policy. The study concludes by evaluating Beijing's security interest in Africa, and its political relations with South Africa.

#### **6.2. Evolution of Beijing-Pretoria relations**

In April 2000, political relations were established in the Pretoria Declaration, signed by Jiang Zemin (Former President of China) and Mbeki. The declaration affirmed the dedication of both China and South Africa to fostering a spirit of collaboration and constructive dialogue. Additionally, the declaration emphasised the development for African countries to enhance their capacity for cooperation and mutual support within the global framework (Le Pere & Shelton, 2007). The sentiments expressed were subsequently reflected in the 2004 decision to establish a partnership centred on growth and development, with the goal of promoting a more equitable bilateral relations (Mpungose, 2018). In 2010 signing of the Beijing declaration by Jacob Zuma and Hu Jintao (Former President of China), committed both countries to establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) grounded in principles of equality, mutual benefits, and shared development (DIRCO, 2010).

The significance placed by both countries in their developing relations is highlighted by the regularity of high-level visits conducted by state leaders since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Premier Wen Jiabao in 2006, then vice-president Hu Jintao in 1999,

and the current president Xi Jinping in 2010. Leaders from South Africa have made significant visits to China, including then President Mandela in 1999, former president Thabo Mbeki in 2001, and former president Jacob Zuma in 2010. During these visits, they established 38 bilateral cooperation agreements, committing to collaborating on political dialogue, trade, investment, mineral exploration, agriculture, and within the frameworks of the United Nations (UN) and FOCAC (News24, 2010).

The diplomatic relations have been bolstered by a Binational Commission (BNC) established in 2001, which convenes regularly to guide and facilitate relations between China and South Africa (Beeson *et al.*, 2011). Xi Jinping underscored the necessity for a fresh accord that would leverage their collective capabilities in development (Xi Jinping, 2013). The enduring relations between China and South Africa is sustained by mutual diplomatic support, which extends to fostering peace and development across Africa. This engagement promoted countries in the Global South to reconsider the Western development frameworks that have been imposed upon them, advocating for alternatives that align more closely with China's own approach. The partnership between China and South Africa emerged as a significant factor in the development agenda during Zuma's presidency, with resources allocated to tackle South Africa's domestic challenges (Naidu, 2009). The political relations between China and South Africa have been influenced by social interactions aimed at achieving shared interests. As a result, the social interactions between the Beijing and Pretoria influenced their respective interests. Research findings align with the idea that Beijing significantly influences interactions through diplomatic efforts.

### **6.3. Diplomatic partnership between Beijing and Pretoria**

#### **6.3.1. Beijing-Pretoria inter party relations**

The evolution of party-to-party relations is documented in the historical context of South Africa's fight against apartheid, notably in 1963 when Oliver Tambo (Former ANC president) travelled to China to engage with the Communist Party of China (CPC). Additionally, the South Africa Communist Party (SACP) established a strong connection with the CPC. The formation of these relations emerged amidst the profound ideological rifts between China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The relations established between the CPC and SACP via their party-to-party framework have reinforced the ties between Beijing

and Pretoria. The relations between CPC, SACP and the ANC have facilitated extensive exchanges between South Africa and China, culminating in the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1998. This development strengthens traditional diplomatic processes, ultimately benefiting both countries in the long run (Guijin, 2014).

Before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Pretoria and Beijing, South Africa had ties with Taiwan. These relations were further complicated by the bold diplomatic efforts of Nelson Mandela, who sought to encourage dual recognition of both Beijing and Taipei, prompting Beijing to adopt a more pragmatic stance. The strategy employed by Beijing to foster strong ties with South Africa, utilising subtle persuasion alongside developmental aid, ultimately led Pretoria to strengthen its relations with Beijing. This shift is underscored by South Africa's acknowledgment of Beijing in 1996 (Alden, 2005). China and South Africa relations have been strengthened by political relations, particularly through the FOCAC, which supports the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Consequently, this led to the free trade agreements between SACU members and China. This enhanced connection fostered deeper engagement in South-South collaboration, acknowledging their role as significant contributors in the evolving global landscape, with South Africa also reaffirming its commitment to the One China policy (Moinogu, 2015).

The diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria have strengthened political relations through party-to-party relations, especially the diplomatic links established since 2010, which were highlighted at the 2015 National General Council (NGC) of the ruling party (ANC) (Sinclair, 2019). Anthony (2016:2) stated that:

At the policy conference, a discussion document highlighted a new Cold War, in which the exemplary role of the collective leadership of the CPC should serve as a guiding lodestar for our own struggle (Anthony, 2016:2).

The conference provided political training opportunities for ANC members at the China Executive Leadership Academy in Shanghai, where CPC members and international guests partake in courses on evolutionary traditions, media management, and cadre development (Findlay, 2014). The political relations between Beijing and Pretoria are evident, Paul Mashatile (Deputy President of South Africa) visited Beijing for political insights. Meanwhile, the ANC has been strengthening its ties with the CPC to gain knowledge on governance

and discipline, particularly in light of internal challenges facing the ANC. This approach strengthened the ties between the ANC and the CPC, facilitating a valuable exchange of experiences and viewpoints on issues of global governance (Mantashe quoted in Van der Westthuisen, 2016: online).



**Source: (International Department of Central Committee of CPC, 2024).**

The above illustrates the political interactions between Beijing and Pretoria regarding ANC and CPC connections on August 1, 2024. President Ramaphosa emphasised that:

The visit of the CPC delegation to South Africa, during this significant moment, illustrates the steadfast support from the Chinese side for the ANC and the nation as a whole. The South African government intends to maintain its current policies regarding China and remains dedicated to fostering the growth of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between South Africa and China (IDCPC News, 2024:online).

Ramaphosa cited in IDCPC News (2024) emphasised that the leadership of the CPC has been instrumental in enabling China to achieve its current developmental milestones, and these accomplishments have also served as an inspiration for the ANC. The two parties demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining relations that solidified the foreign policy of the new South African government, ensuring that it will remain unchanged. Ramaphosa cited in IDCPC New (2024) further highlighted that South Africa continues to uphold the One-China principle and consistently support China's stance on matters pertaining to its core interests, particularly regarding the Taiwan issue. This underscores the depth of

diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria, which influence their political dynamics through the close ties between the ANC and CPC.

Benabdallah (2020) notes that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria has provided Beijing with an opportunity to strengthen the CPC party structure, facilitating robust networking possibilities between the two countries. The approach taken by Beijing in its international relations involves leveraging the structure of the CPC to enhance partnerships with South Africa and various other countries across the African continent. Eisenman (2023) asserts that Beijing has not only cultivated its relations with the ANC but has also strengthened ties with other political entities. For example, the CPC maintains ties with over 600 political parties across over 160 countries globally. Deych Tatiana (2023) presents evidence indicating that, as of 2020, there were 20 foreign partner parties engaged in bilateral exchanges with the CPC. To mention few, Felix-Roland Moumie from the Union Des Population (UPC) made a trip to China. In Ghana, two prominent political entities, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), maintain productive relations with the CPC.

The diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria have significantly influenced their political dynamics, bolstered by a shared ideological framework and complementary approaches in their international strategies. Meanwhile, through the relations established between the ANC and CPC, Beijing has fostered amicable working relations. For instance, in 2009, Ramaphosa, led a delegation to Beijing, demonstrated a readiness to gain insights from the CPC. Ramaphosa quoted in IDCPC News (2024:online) noted that:

The ANC's journey as a ruling party is relatively recent, whereas the CPC has maintained its position for six decades, amassing considerable experience.

It is a fact that the aspirations of the ANC and its foreign policy are ideologically aligned with those of the CPC. Beijing consolidates its power and influence through the channels of partnering with various political parties. With Pretoria, China bolsters its interaction through CPC and ANC links to enhance the diplomatic initiatives of the government. This relations is profound, as Beijing's close connections with ANC through the CPC enhance its broader diplomatic and economic engagement. The diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria are underscored by party-level politics, as evidenced by the intensified efforts of

political leaders to secure Chinese investment and diplomatic backing upon taking office (Makundi, 2025).

The diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria significantly shaped their political relations. The ideological interconnectedness and complementarity in their foreign policy are reinforced through their ongoing political exchanges. The ANC's strategy to implement a range of socialist policies emerged from a context of deep interconnections within political leadership and party training alongside the CPC, which were tailored to tackle numerous social and economic challenges confronting the South Africa (Herman, 2020). Beijing has actively engaged in advocating its development model in South Africa, highlighted by an MoU signed in 2008 between the ANC and CPC, which focusses on China's commitment to training ANC members in China.

The political influence of the CPC in South Africa is undeniable, particularly in its backing of the ANC's party development. However, this can be interpreted as a solidification of its ideological sway within the ANC, reflecting Beijing's political management strategy and control aimed at exclusively enhancing diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria (Eisenman *et al.*, 2012). Pretoria faces criticism for compromising South Africa's human rights principles in favour of political ties between the ANC and the CPC, with allegations that Beijing is financing parties like the ANC. This is regarded as a significant factor in shaping domestic government policies. The advancements in prominent political dialogues and seminar initiatives, South Africa's organisation of the sixth FOCAC in 2015, the incorporation of Mandarin into educational programs, and the broader Look East narrative alongside the fascination with the China model are viewed as indicators of China's growing influence within South African governance (Park, 2020).

#### **6.4. Beijing-Pretoria political dynamic and their implications.**

##### **6.4.1. China-South Africa political controversies under UNSC**

South Africa aspires to secure a permanent seat on the UNSC (Alden 2005). Beijing expressed reservations regarding the expansion of the UNSC, particularly in relations to Japan and India, both of which seek to enhance their regional influence and dominance. Beijing's scepticism became apparent when it withheld its support as a veto power in the council for a 1997 UNSC reform motion proposed by then Un Secretary-General Kofi Annan,

aimed to reform the institutional design of the UNSC. The delay in China's approach to reforming the UNSC can be attributed to its lack of a clearly articulated preferred model for the council. While it appears that Beijing prioritises support for African countries; there is still a noticeable reluctance to alter the existing structure of the permanent five by offering permanent seats and veto power to emerging and developing countries (Maseng & Mothibinyane, 2023).

Before formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the Beijing and Pretoria. The pivotal moment for China and South Africa occurred when both officially acknowledged their engagement. In the international landscape, especially within the UNSC, there is mutual support for a more comprehensive representation of the Global South. Since establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1998, South Africa has significantly enhanced its ties with China. This strengthening of relations is evident in South Africa's voting alignment with China at the UN, which has further solidified the partnership between the two countries and brought South Africa closer to its goal of joining BRIC. It is significant that South Africa joined BRIC, (which changed the bloc into BRICS) at a time when Indonesia was anticipated to be the next addition to the group, alongside Turkey and Mexico, who were also eager to become members. South Africa views this as a solid foundation for its case advocating for African recognition and inclusion as a permanent member of the UNSC (Du Plessis, 2013).

South Africa primarily concentrated on preserving its influence in Africa, while also engaging in international relations to promote its own interests and those of the Africa, particularly through its role as a non-permanent member of the UNSC (Smith, 2016). South Africa was elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the terms 2007-2008, 2011-2012, and most recently from 2019 to 2020, serving in all these capacities as a non-permanent member. South Africa highlighted the importance of multilateral efforts in Africa concerning peace and advocated for the reform of the council (De Carvalho, 2018). South Africa faces challenges stemming from a deficiency in institutional memory and the complexities of geopolitical rivalries among the five permanent members of the UNSC. Its close ties with Beijing have notably shaped its engagement within the UNSC.

It is important to emphasise the collaborative efforts between South Africa and China in addressing the worsening humanitarian crisis in Sudan, a situation exacerbated by years of underdevelopment and conflict, which has been a significant focus on the UNSC's agenda.

The mission proposed by the AU to the UNSC aimed to tackle issues related to Western involvement while supporting Africa's efforts in addressing the situation in Darfur<sup>8</sup>(Moerane, 2019).

Furthermore, the resolution encompassed the possibility of prolonging sanctions against Khartoum should it fail to adhere to the mission's requirements. South Africa, serving as a non-permanent member of the UNSC and chairing the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), along with its role as a troop contributor to the African Mission, has engaged with the United Kingdom (UK) and the US. This engagement occurred despite the encouragement of sanctions, even after Al-Bashir agreed to the establishment of an UN-AU hybrid operation in Darfur. The political backing between Beijing and Pretoria, as demonstrated in their condemnation of the UK and the US regarding their bureaucratic concerns over intervention in Darfur, raises significant questions about the underlying interests and interpretations of the situation in Sudan (Moerane, 2019).

South Africa and China, as partners, hold aligned perspectives within the UNSC. Both countries in the UNSC opposed a draft resolution concerning Myanmar during the period of 2007-2008, underscoring the interconnectedness of their political relations in the international arena. However, these concerns raised by Western media interpreted the situation as a reflection of South Africa's contentious approach to international relations, particularly given its foundation in condemning human rights violations. In the same vein, South Africa found it necessary to address the criticism it faced after voting with China and Russia against a resolution that condemned Myanmar<sup>9</sup> for human rights violations by actively seeking independent foreign policy decisions. The implementation of R2P in Libya underscores this point, as South Africa, together with Nigeria and Gabon, the other two African countries on the UNSC, cast their votes in favour of resolution 1973, which established the legal foundation for Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya (Iyi, 2014).

---

<sup>8</sup> Referred to as a region in Western Sudan, bordered by Libya to the North, Chad to the West, Central Africa Republic and Bahralal Ghazl of South Sudan to the South, and the Kordufan region of Sudan to the East. Was the Fur sultanate before 1916, when it joined the Anglo–Egyptian condominium.

<sup>9</sup> Formerly referred to as Burma, is located in the northwesternmost region of mainland Southeast Asia. A significant nation in this region, shares its borders with five other countries: India, Bangladesh, China, Thailand, and Laos. Gained independence from Britain in 1948; however, its subsequent history has been marked by turmoil and conflict, involving enduring battles for ethnic and sub-national self-determination

Nonetheless, the backing of this resolution was accompanied by the domestic turmoil that followed NATO's airstrikes in Libya aimed at enforcing the no-fly zone. South Africa shifted its stance by condemning the NATO bombings and alleging that the West was exploiting resolution 1973, which was intended to protect civilians and civilian populated areas, to seek regime change in Libya. While its allies in BRICS, IBSA, and GIBSA chose to abstain. Neither Nigeria nor South Africa, despite their backing of the resolution, took the necessary steps to galvanise support for a negotiated and peaceful resolution to the conflict within the framework of the AU. South Africa and the entire AU Ad Hoc Committee faced criticism for their perceived lack of political will and commitment of essential material and human resources needed to implement the proposed roadmap aimed at addressing the crisis in Libya. This criticism originated from the NATO P3 members on the UNSC; namely the UK, US, and France (Iyi, 2014).

This matter has been prioritised by the US to occupy a prominent position on the UN agenda. Steinberg (2007) notes that the absence of clearly stated objections to the US's assertion that Myanmar posed a threat to international peace and security resulted in a lack of acceptance from China and Russia, as the situation did not fulfil the necessary criteria for such a determination. However, it was more about the internal political influence of the US agenda than the anticipation of approval. The situation was perceived by China as an internal matter, whereas South Africa's decision, reflecting similar concerns to those of China, prompted accusations that Pretoria was merely attempting to align itself with the emerging superpower while distancing itself from Western influences.

The support from South Africa for alignment with China was largely influenced by its role as a representative of the Global South in the context of Myanmar, emphasising the importance of strict compliance with the UN Charter and urging Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to take the initiative in determining whether the situation poses a threat to international peace and security. South Africa positioned itself as a means to help counteract unilateral actions by the US and the misuse of the UNSC for American interests. Pretoria believed its moral legitimacy was absolute and would allow it to effectively navigate US interests (Mbetse, 2018). In 2014, in New York, Zuma addressed the UN General Assembly, emphasising South Africa's efforts to reform the UNSC and advocating for a permanent seat for Africa on the council (SA News, 2014). It is not surprising that Zuma has chosen to align with China, as it stands out as the sole developing and Global South nation among the

remaining veto power countries of the UNSC. This alignment is anticipated to enhance its role in articulating the collective views and interests of the developing world. South Africa's role highlights Africa's marginal position in international relations and serves as a crucial partner. The bilateral co-existence and closer links reflect a broader political dimension within the significant institutional framework of the UNSC.

Beijing acknowledges South Africa as a significant partner, with the dynamics of international relations serving to enhance this alliance. Within the framework of the UNSC, both countries maintain a shared perspective that the principle of non-interference in domestic matters serves as the foundation of their relations (United Nations, 1945, Article 2). In 2008, amidst the violence and political repression in Zimbabwe, the US mission in New York put forth a draft following the general election that took place in March of that year. The issue was brought before the UNSC, where a draft resolution concerning Zimbabwe (resolution/2008/447) aimed to impose sanctions on the Mugabe administration (Ploch, 2008). Both China and South Africa expressed a unified stance on the situation in Zimbabwe and cast their votes against the resolution. China, alongside Russia, Vietnam and Libya, upheld their stance by asserting that the circumstances in Zimbabwe constituted an internal issue. Further justified that any resolution would undermine the mediation efforts of AU, SADC and disrupt the dialogue and negotiation process between Zimbabwean government and the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (Farley, 2008; Xinhua, 2008).

Moerane (2019) explains that South Africa, to vote against resolution was driven by the understanding that the issue pertains to regional interests, the political crisis in Zimbabwe, falls under the purview of SADC and AU. Thus, South Africa adhered decision taken in AU assembly of heads of state which has reached a consensus emphasising the need for caution among AU countries regarding Zimbabwe political unrest not to jeopardise actions of AU to maintain peace. For this reason, South Africa was required to adhere to the decisions made by both the AU and SADC.

Following Taiwan's 2016 election, the US heightened political and military commitment to Taiwan has intensified concerns regarding external interference in the face of a possible military conflict. These circumstances prompted Beijing to closely monitor US actions. This is the same period during which Zuma was deeply engaged in redefining the norms of the UN. Zuma believed that the US, particularly under the Trump administration (President of

US), greatly neglected African issues, with the agenda of the AU not being prioritised. While Pretoria expresses confidence in China's global standing, it aimed to collaborate closely with South Africa and other nations to foster international cooperation within the UNSC (Wu, 2025). Beijing and Pretoria are committed to collaborating on upholding the principles of the UN Charter that advocate for an international order governed by international law. They aim to defend multilateralism and foster economic globalisation. Additionally, they will jointly support development initiatives in Africa, including the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Lastly, they seek to advance comprehensive reform of the UNSC to enhance its authority, efficiency, and representation (Tella, 2019).

#### **6.4.2. Dalai Lama**

The year 1959 signifies a period of profound tragedy for Tibet<sup>10</sup>, as it was the time when the Chinese communist forces invaded and occupied the region. The Dalai Lama (Former Head of State and the spiritual leader of Tibet) took on complete political authority while China suppressed the Tibetan uprising in 1959. The Dalai Lama sought refuge in India, where he founded a government in exile dedicated to advocating for Tibetan freedom and supporting the welfare of Tibetan refugees. In 1963, the Dalai Lama introduced a constitution for a democratic Tibet, which Tibetans view as an independent state currently under unlawful Chinese occupation. They assert that neither China's military invasion nor the ongoing presence of the People's Liberation Army has altered Tibet's sovereignty, which they believe remains distinct from China (Van der Westhuizen & van Wyk, 2016). The assertion by China regarding Tibet as an integral part of its territory is met with significant dissent from many Tibetans, who argue that Chinese governance infringes upon their religious freedoms and autonomy. Beijing asserts that the Dalai Lama is advocating for Tibetan independence and inciting anti-Chinese demonstrations among the Tibetan population (Dugger *et al.*, 2009).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue that norms significantly shape state behaviour and play a crucial role in state interactions. Pretoria's relations with Beijing have evolved, transcending conventional diplomatic practices to establish a strategic partnership grounded in solidarity. It is not surprising that South Africa has denied the Dalai Lama a visa to visit on

---

<sup>10</sup> Tibet Autonomous Region, also known as Xizang, is a plateau region in Central Asia. It encompasses the majority of Qinghai, the Western half of Sichuan, a small portion of Gansu in the People's Republic of China, Bhutan, and the Indian regions of Sikkim and Ladakh.

various occasions. Initially, South Africa refuted claims that China had swayed its choice to prevent the Dalai Lama from entering the country, asserting that his presence would distract both the country and the global community from the 2010 FIFA World Cup. It was subsequently acknowledged that the interests of South Africa would be more effectively advanced by safeguarding its relations with China (Van der Westhuizen, 2014). The second instance occurred in 2011 when the Dalai Lama was declined a visa to accept the invitation from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu to celebrate Tutu's 80th birthday. The diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria have faced scrutiny, with critics suggesting that Chinese actions significantly sway South Africa's decisions. This speculation arose early on, particularly regarding claims that the South African government yielded to Chinese pressure by denying the Dalai Lama entry into the country (Thipanyane, 2011).

In 2014, Dalai Lama denied a visa to participate in the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates held in Cape Town, which was intended to honour the 20th anniversary of the end of apartheid and to celebrate the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela. The South African government emphasised that the application remains under review and is considered a closed matter. Conversely, Nangsa Choedon (Former Secretary of the Central Tibetan Administration) stated that the South African government had asked the Dalai Lama to retract his visa application, citing concerns that granting the visa would "disturb" relations between South Africa and China (Van der Westhuizen & Van Wyk, 2016).

This recognises the complex dimensions of national identity and its significance in the realm of global politics. The interactions between countries are significantly shaped by the identities of the participants engaged in these dynamics. Entities that view one another as partners are more inclined to establish advantageous connections, whereas those that assign antagonistic identities to each other are less likely to achieve such outcomes. Consequently, partners are inclined to refrain from establishing contentious matters like democracy and human rights as prerequisites for their interactions (Wendt, 1999:327). The economic challenges faced by South Africa, along with a common ideological alignment between Beijing and Pretoria, have significantly shaped their political dynamics, particularly regarding the situation involving the Dalai Lama. Despite Beijing's advocacy for non-interference, the situation regarding the Dalai Lama illustrates that granting him a visa in South Africa could strain their diplomatic relations.

The issue regarding the Dalai Lama parallels the approach taken with Taiwan, where Mandela chose to establish formal relations with both Taiwan and Beijing. During that period, South Africa's national interests had to contend with and coexist alongside material realities and necessities. South Africa cultivated its relations with Beijing, recognising the opportunities presented by an annual government expenditure increase of 12%. This funding was allocated to implement programs under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), aimed at addressing the material consequences of historical neglect. Thus, when examining this situation in relations to the Dalai Lama, it is evident that despite Beijing's commitment to a non-interference policy, it still exerts influence through its material capabilities. Beijing demonstrates its capability as a state that values diplomacy as a means of engagement to fulfil its interests. This serves as evidence of China's significant partnership, which inevitably influences or indirectly interferes with internal dynamics, as illustrated by South Africa's decision to prevent the Dalai Lama from visiting (Matambo, 2020).

Beijing is ready to sever ties with any country that engage with the Dalai Lama, as stated by Qin Gang (Former spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry). It is important to note that France continues to face significant diplomatic repercussions, which may lead to commercial ramifications, stemming from President Nicolas Sarkozy's choice to engage with the Dalai Lama. In response, China promptly annulled a scheduled summit with the EU. The increasing diplomatic clout and assertiveness of Beijing have played a significant role in the decision that led to the denial of a visa for the Dalai Lama in South Africa. It is essential to recognise that Beijing serves as a significant economic partner, having invested approximately \$6 million into the South African economy (Karon, 2009).

The political influences are clear, as evidenced by Zuma's defence of the government's decision, asserting that it aligned with the actions of other nations facing pressure from China, particularly citing France. This demonstrates that the diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria have impacted South Africa's foreign policy, particularly through financial politics within the nation's domestic matters. South Africa struggled with denying a visa to the Dalai Lama, amidst conflicting statements regarding a peace conference to which he and other Nobel Laureates were invited. The government has raised concerns that permitting the Dalai Lama to attend could politicise the event, overshadowing the focus on sport. As the argument lost its validity, the government asserted that the Dalai Lama had

never submitted a visa application. This has been thoroughly disproved. It also asserted that the Tibetan leader had not been invited. However, the other Nobel Peace laureates in the nation highlighted that they had individually extended the invitation, which the Dalai Lama accepted on 08 November. The organisers of the 2010 World Cup aimed to convene a peace conference to explore strategies for leveraging the sporting event as a means to combat racism and xenophobia. The administration ultimately acknowledged that it prevented the Dalai Lama's visit to avoid straining relations with its trading ally, China (Archbishop, 2009).

The Dalai Lama illustrates the extent of political influence in relations, highlighting that Beijing's economic role inevitably enhances its diplomatic sway. These dynamic shapes of political interactions and self-interests that are cultivated through diplomatic connections, which are not easily compromised. This underscores that Beijing's influence on South Africa strategic orientation, which is informed by the distinctive opportunities arising from their diplomatic interactions. In response to significant criticism from opposition political parties, media outlets, human rights organisations, and civil society figures regarding the repeated denial of visas to the Tibetan spiritual leader, Maite Nkoana Mashabane (Former Minister of DIRCO) addressed the concerns surrounding South Africa's actions and motivations in this matter. The Minister suggested that engaging with the Dalai Lama would essentially breach the nation's one China policy (Lama, 2014).

Beijing and South Africa following the extensive criticism, it has been noted that their diplomatic ties have been solidified on 28 September 2011 during the visit of Kgalema Motlanthe (Former deputy President of South Africa) to China. During the visits countries entered into agreements concerning geology and mineral resources as well as financial cooperation (Tibet Magazine, 2011). At the signing ceremony held in the Great Hall of the People, Chinese Vice President at a time Xi Jinping was noted for expressing gratitude towards South Africa for its significant backing regarding the Taiwan and Tibet matters. He urged the two countries to enhance their political mutual trust and establish their partnership as a benchmark for cooperation among developing nations. During the second leg of his tour in China, Motlanthe was scheduled to meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao in Beijing, concluding his visit on 30 September 2011 (Tibet Magazine, 2011). It is evident from the above that Beijing plays a substantial role in engaging with other countries in a manner that aligns with its political inclinations. This serves as evidence that

Beijing exerted pressure on South Africa over the granting of a visa to the Dalai Lama, as it was perceived to potentially harm the bilateral political climate.

It is understandable that Beijing, by applying economic pressure on South Africa, aimed to quell any ideas that might threaten China's territorial integrity and seeks to bolster the stability of its communist regime in this diverse nation. Given the diplomatic connections between China and South Africa, Beijing leverages its trade relations as a strategic instrument to influence the political choices of its trading partners. For example, the administration in Beijing has taken measures to impose sanctions on trading partners following an official reception of the Dalai Lama. The swift growth of the Chinese economy is altering the balance of trade dependencies, increasingly favouring China in its relations with trading partners (Fuchs & Klann, 2013).

This advancement allows China to impose political adherence on its trading partners to a growing degree. The diplomatic reliance between Beijing and Pretoria significantly influences their political relations. It serves as evidence that the justifications and discussions surrounding the denial Dalai Lama are not mere coincidences, particularly given their recurrence on various occasions. This highlights the intricate dynamics of their relations. This has prompted Beijing to value South Africa for its political backing, especially in relations to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Qin Gang emphasised that:

We believe that South Africa will continue to support China's sovereignty and territorial integrity (quoted in Tibet Magazine, 2014:14).

Even though the Dalai Lama's visit to South Africa was not politically motivated, Beijing still viewed him as a separatist. Consequently, Beijing staunchly opposes the Dalai Lama's separatist endeavours in international contexts (Tibet Magazine, 2014).

### **6.4.3. One China Policy**

Before the establishment of diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria, South Africa maintained significant trade and investment relations with Taiwan. In the early 1990s Taipei announced increased investment in South Africa through the series of loans and contracts to Eskom, Macsteel and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), while making commitment to undertake project valued at over R1 billion linked to the Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP). Even so, South Africa in 1997 after they have reached agreement, they have signed a jointed communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations with mainland of China. The condition for diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria was central on Pretoria support to One China policy tied to Beijing support of Pretoria economic development, particularly through investments and trade. These dynamics influenced various interstate visit between Beijing and South Africa (Ampiah & Naidu, 2008).

This diplomatic relations between China and South Africa shaped their political relations in the international community and amongst international organisations and agencies. Pretoria remained of strategic importance to Beijing for political support (Grimm *et al.*, 2014). The diplomatic exchanges between Beijing and Pretoria were tied to accepting the One China policy, and that South Africa cannot have diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The strengthening of diplomatic relations is closely linked to South Africa's commitment to the One China policy. At the same time, South Africa's intention to leverage these relations for its own developmental priorities is clearly articulated in various declarations and communiqués, particularly the Beijing Declaration and the 2011 White Paper on foreign policy (Sithole, 2015).

#### **6.5. Beijing security dilemma in Africa and its political relations with South Africa**

The relations between Beijing and Pretoria during the Zuma era highlights the significance of both countries in strengthening their bilateral ties, which have played a crucial role in shaping their political and regional dynamics. The ongoing strengthening of diplomatic ties is crucial for South Africa, for its aspirations to emerge as the leading economic force in Southern Africa. For Beijing, a robust position is essential for fostering a more balanced global landscape in which it can flourish. Gaining the support of the African continent will significantly bolster Beijing's ability to navigate the evolving international system, particularly as dominant powers like the US attempt to hinder its expansion and outward development strategies. The initiative between Beijing and Pretoria promoting peace and development in Africa represents a crucial element of political solidarity within the framework of cooperation between China and South Africa. South Africa faced significant challenges on the African continent as well as in the global arena. There was anticipation for a new position in an overlooked Africa and a call for increased engagement in diplomatic efforts and peace support missions in several African nations facing significant internal strife, such as Burundi,

DRC and Sudan (Sinclair, 2019).

The above illustrates the intricacies that influenced South Africa's strategy in its international relations. Similarly, China has provided a greater number of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa compared to other permanent members of the Security Council. As noted by Kim (2024), Beijing's efforts to engage in peacekeeping missions in Africa are influenced by its political goals to position itself as a responsible emerging power within the international community. Through these UN peacekeeping initiatives, China seeks to enhance its reputation as a leader in the global order. The Chinese government deploys UN peacekeeping troops to safeguard its investments in Africa. In South Sudan, as of 2020, over 1,100 peacekeepers from the People's Liberation Army were assigned to support the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). Despite the departure of foreign companies from South Sudan's oil sector amid escalating internal conflict, CNPC remains the foremost investor, as the PLA has methodically and strategically intensified its troop presence around the oil pipelines and deposits since 2015 (Kim, 2024). The presence of Beijing in Africa, particularly regarding its involvement in security matters, has been a subject of considerable debate. While funding from Beijing for African peacekeeping missions remains limited, it is evident that the focus is primarily on conducting operations independently of the UN. Furthermore, their role in addressing conflicts in Africa is often viewed as one of providing diplomatic, logistical, and financial support to nations where they have vested interest (Van Hoeymissen, 2011).

Nonetheless, the researcher notes that Beijing's security assistance in Africa is driven by factors beyond mere economic interests, extending into the realm of political relations as well. Beijing forges diplomatic ties with African countries to exert political influence over their decisions. Political relations serve as a means to attain economic advantages. It does not contend that Chinese involvement in African conflicts is solely aimed at securing market access. However, it is recognised that Beijing cannot effectively operate in isolation from African nations, given its rivalry with the US, which competes for influence across various fronts. This may be the reason why Beijing delays or resists the expansion of permanent members in the UNSC. This dynamic offers compelling evidence that Beijing is connected to the Global South, serving as a support structure for enhanced relations against developed states, thereby assisting Beijing in sustaining its growing economy.

Beijing often embodies the interests of developing countries, leverages its considerable influence, whether through financial support or other resources like military aid, to contribute to the restoration of security and peace in Africa. This engagement has progressed from withdrawal to the endorsement of a UNSC resolution that promote peacekeeping missions, the establishment of three training centers for Chinese peacekeeping missions, and active participation in peacekeeping efforts in Liberia, the DRC, Darfur, and South Sudan (Ayenagbo, 2012). In 2012, Beijing established the China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, which aims to incorporate security concerns into the FOCAC process. This approach reflects the effectiveness of broadening its role within current regional and global governance frameworks, as noted by Alden (2014).

This engagement enhances political relations in Africa. Beijing possesses the capability to influence shifts in the regional balance of power. South Africa commends Beijing for its role in aiding the restoration of peace across various hotspots in Africa. This strengthens the diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria, fostering increased exchanges in political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries. The diplomatic relations strengthened by state visits facilitate political alignment between countries. For example, Beijing utilises FOCAC to enhance its relations with Pretoria, while Pretoria seeks opportunities for improvement. It has advocated for the inclusion of mutually beneficial partnerships with Beijing, promoting the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Shelton *et al.*, 2015).

The political relations between China and South Africa have been strengthened through the party-to-party system, fostering closer ties and nurturing amicable relations between the ANC and CPC. Consequently, the diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pretoria, bolstered by their shared ideological interests, have enhanced their political relations. This development underscores the necessity for the inclusion of developing nations in the power structures established by the West, which often marginalises these countries. The connections between Beijing and Pretoria, established through numerous state visits and agreements on declarations, have reinforced governance frameworks at both the continental and global levels, adapting to the evolving dynamics of the international system (Sinclair, 2019).

## **6.6. Conclusion**

The analysis revealed that the CPC has functioned as a mechanism that has allowed China to reach its development milestones, which in turn has served as an inspiration for the ANC. The relations between Beijing and Pretoria have also deepened within the context of the UNSC. Both countries have pledged to tackle the escalating humanitarian crisis in Sudan, a predicament intensified by prolonged underdevelopment and ongoing conflict. Consequently, both Beijing and Pretoria view each other as important allies within the intricate landscape of international relations. Both hold a mutual appreciation for perspectives that are informed by the principle of non-interference. However, South Africa's response to the Dalai Lama has challenged South Africa sovereignty. The decision made in Pretoria to deny the Dalai Lama a visa on three separate occasions is not merely coincidental; rather, it appears to be influenced by Beijing's stance, which views Tibet as an integral part of China. The decision by South Africa to deny the Dalai Lama a visa stems from Pretoria's close ties to Beijing.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Conclusion**

#### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The conclusion is derived from the observed analysis. The conclusion is derived by summarising the findings about the elements influencing Pretoria's political and economic ties, culminating in a general assessment of Zuma's foreign policy.

#### **7.2. Summary of findings**

##### **7.2.1. Reflection of Zuma foreign policy**

The Zuma administration, which began in 2009, has not succeeded in establishing a notable mark in the realm of foreign policy. Indeed, while the invitation to join BRICS was issued during his time in office, much of the groundwork for South Africa's membership had already been established in the Mbeki administration. Zuma's disengagement from Western powers has been reinforced by a significant focus on enhancing the BRICS alliance, often at the cost of Western relations, alongside a robust stance against the West regarding issues in Zimbabwe, Libya, and Sudan (Hamill, 2016a). Throughout this period, South Africa has exhibited a hesitance in assuming a dominant role, driven by its desire to make amends for a burdensome history, the significant backlash it faces in Africa, and an awareness that its influence diminishes as it extends its reach beyond the SADC (Hamill, 2016b). Therefore, based on the above analysis it is clear that the image and reputational challenges faced by South Africa on the continent are exacerbated by a perception that it often disregards African perspectives and tends to equate its own interests with those of the broader African community.

During the Zuma administration, South Africa faced criticism from Western countries that expected Pretoria to advocate for democratic principles. Simultaneously, economic reforms and the expectations from its BRICS counterparts positioned it as a clear leader within the African continent. This study reveals that South Africa falls significantly short of China regarding the close public-private coordination that defines Chinese involvement in Africa. Nonetheless, the South African government plays a significant role in the African economy, particularly through its SOEs like Eskom and Transnet. These entities have recognised the

gaps in energy and transportation infrastructure across the continent as opportunities for growth and business development. This kind of opportunism breeds discontent towards South Africa. Numerous African countries perceive the display of unrefined economic strength by corporations from South Africa and, to a lesser degree, the South African government as a blatant manifestation of dominance. This viewpoint undermines Pretoria's efforts to establish a more cooperative framework of influence, where the nation's garners support based on its principles and its readiness to take on a significant portion of regional responsibilities, especially regarding the allocation of public resources.

### **7.2.2. China's development drives political and economic engagement with South Africa**

China's policy decisions evidently reflect a focus on attaining a range of political and economic goals, aimed at protecting long-term national interests and facilitating the implementation of various development strategies. Clearly, China has consistently implemented strategies aimed at advancing its external policies centered on achieving developmental objectives. The development model employed by China has significantly strengthened the relations between China and South Africa, leading to enhanced collaboration across multiple dimensions, including political, and economic exchanges, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The Look East policy highlighted South Africa's commitment to a developmental state ideology, as evidenced by the significant industrialisation and remarkable economic progress seen in Asian giant, which have prospered through a state-led development model (Khambule & Kariuki, 2024).

The development strategy implemented by the Chinese government, characterised by a focus on political leadership aimed at growth and a self-sufficient bureaucracy, significantly influenced the outcomes of state-driven economic expansion by facilitating effective resource distribution (Khambule, 2021). Zuma's presidency embraced insights from China, acknowledging that the impressive economic advancements and successful poverty reduction strategies exhibited by China present a model that developing countries should consider emulating. China's growing confidence in its role as a significant global power allows it to serve as an alternative for African countries, positioning itself as a prominent figure among developing countries. China also assists countries like South Africa in pursuing national development by employing the strategies that fuelled its own economic advancement. Consequently, Beijing, armed with a persuasive development strategy,

advances a framework that motivates other developing nations to adopt a holistic development model that is easily attainable for the Global South to emulate (Hodzi, 2020).

The analysis reveals that Beijing and Pretoria have strengthened political relations, resulting in accelerated economic joint forces. Both wield economic power in their respective regions. Beijing and Pretoria have strengthened their ties via BRICS. Their relations are not recent; it originates from the battle against imperialism. The investigation revealed that Beijing ties with South Africa is strengthened by South Africa's crucial position in Africa which has reinforced their cooperation. Both countries are allied regionally and worldwide, advocating for South-South cooperation, which demonstrates their commitment to influencing agenda-setting in the developing world.

Pretoria strengthened relations with Beijing in light of the shifts under Zuma's leadership, characterised by a significant decline in diplomatic and commercial relations with Western countries, particularly the US. This change in foreign policy is shown by ANC members criticising US influence in developing countries due to its colonial operations. Zuma acknowledged Beijing as an alternative partner in contrast to Western engagement. However, this notion represented a limited perspective on South Africa, given the changing nature of world politics. The study noted that Beijing has strengthened its influence in South Africa, particularly via its investments. Beijing's influence in South Africa has been reinforced via the FOCAC relations. This cooperation serves as a conduit for the announcement of Chinese investments. Nonetheless, this fortified the relations between Beijing and Pretoria via a substantial MoU outlining the investment agreements related to cooperative infrastructure and industrial development projects in South Africa and across Africa. This is seen as Beijing's soft power, which extends into South Africa via its investment agreements.

### **7.2.3. Diplomatic relations and their influence on political relations**

The diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria are influenced by political alignment in favour of Beijing's One China Policy. Pretoria's endorsement of China has strengthened the allegiance between the two countries, which Beijing regards as a paramount element for its sovereignty. The study revealed that the relations between China and South Africa is reinforced by Beijing's development model, which South Africa, under the Zuma administration, has sought to emulate, particularly in tackling its socio-economic difficulties. The growth model used by China has markedly enhanced the relations between China and

South Africa. This has resulted in enhanced interactions across several aspects, including political and economic exchanges. The Zuma administration's Look East strategy was influenced by significant economic advancements in Beijing. Beijing collaborated with Zuma, influencing relations with Pretoria via a compelling development plan that promoted a framework encouraging South Africa to embrace a comprehensive development model accessible to the Global South.

The Beijing government's influence in Africa has been strengthened by its strong relations with the ANC. Beijing has progressively transformed the prioritisation of collaborative development initiatives and regional platforms among African nations via robust connections between the CPC and the ANC, as well as other global political parties, therefore reinforcing relations with the CPC. The Beijing commitment to the AU has strengthened relations with African nations. Beijing has established its expanding influence and shared developmental experiences via outward initiatives, notably the BRI, which is seen as a framework for economic interconnection. China's distinctive approach integrates state-led, adaptive, and experimental economic growth with rigorous political monitoring of society, embodying a counter-hegemonic viewpoint on the interplay between the state, economy, and society. Beijing has strengthened its relations with South Africa by committing to advocate for African interests and by working to eliminate stabilising risks, while consistently emphasising Africa as a tool to bolster South Africa's status as a dominating power on the continent. The cooperation between Beijing and South Africa was further enhanced by China's coherent framework designed to promote their growth via strategic resource allocation and the improvement of institutions essential for attaining their developmental objectives.

The diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria were influenced by the ANC and CPC under Zuma's tenure. This is evidence of a program exchange that provided political chances for ANC members. The collaboration between ANC and the CPC has strengthened the relations between Beijing and Pretoria. The tight relations between the two parties strengthened diplomatic governance. The study indicated that the Dalai Lama controversy in South Africa under the Zuma administration presented a contentious foreign policy dilemma, whereby South Africa faced the choice of jeopardising its relations with Beijing or permitting the Dalai Lama's visit. The refusal of the Dalai Lama entry into South Africa, attributed to ideological alignment and diplomatic relations with Beijing, evidences China's influence on South Africa. The political influences are evident, as Zuma defended the

government's decision, claiming that it was consistent with the actions of other nations under pressure from China.

The significant deepening of ties between Beijing and Pretoria extends beyond commerce and investment, including peace and development in Africa, which are vital components of their political cooperation. This involvement in African nations, particularly in the DRC, South Sudan, and Darfur, strengthened their political links with the objective of fostering stability in Africa. Thus, it is evident that the diplomatic relations between Beijing and Pretoria is strengthened by their common ideological foundations and political alignment.

### **7.3. Recommendations**

#### **7.3.1. Recommendations**

Even if South Africa recognises the significant investment from Beijing, which has emerged as a promising factor for enhancing strategic relations. Nevertheless,

- South Africa should exercise caution regarding the influence of China in the political sphere to ensure that the assistance offered by China does not eclipse South Africa's interests and sovereignty in their interactions.
- South Africa should navigate the complexities of its global commitments while addressing internal priorities. The Zuma administration focussed on tackling socio-economic issues, yet its shift in international strategy appeared to prioritise an African agenda over initiatives aimed at fostering a stable economy.
- South Africa should closely observe the growing influence of Beijing within BRICS. South Africa, positioned as a gateway to the African continent, ought to navigate its foreign policy transition as a strategic instrument aimed at prioritising an outward market integration approach. This policy should align with the elevation of skills from companies interested in investing within South Africa. This will play a significant role in advancing economic development
- South Africa should strive to maintain a balanced relations with countries from every corner of the globe. It is essential to maintain a balance with Asia, Europe, Latin America, and other regions, considering the complexities of global political dynamics.
- Given the perception of Beijing as a steadfast strategic partner for South Africa, particularly during the Zuma administration, it is crucial to closely monitor the

influence of Beijing within South Africa and across the African continent to prevent any potential exploitation of South Africa.

- South Africa ought to strengthen its ties with Beijing within the framework of FOCAC. However, it must exercise caution regarding the substantial investments offered by Beijing, as these could potentially lead the country into a precarious debt situation, particularly given the nature of the agreements announced through FOCAC.
- It is imperative for South Africa to keep a close watch on MNCs based in Beijing. This action will represent a significant advancement in efforts to enhance the skills sector, which, in turn, is a productive approach to fostering an industrial economy.
- It is imperative that we allocate resources specifically aimed at improving training within various manufacturing sectors. This initiative will enhance the availability of a skilled workforce in South Africa's manufacturing sectors, ultimately fostering strong intra-industry connections, particularly within SEZs, to support essential strategic services.
- Beijing ought to refrain from elevating its labour force to the highest echelons without exception, as it is a country committed to fostering the advancement of the Global South. It is evident that politically, it requires Africa to further its agenda for the Global South.
- Beijing should also oversee its corporations to ensure compliance with local African policies. This oversight is crucial to prevent exploitation of vulnerable countries in Africa, as negative perceptions could arise in relations with African states. There have been instances where MNCs from Beijing have faced accusations of engaging in illicit dealings with corrupt officials in various African countries.
- Lastly, Pretoria should ensure that the SEZs it established promotes the pursuit of a new market, which may signify a phase in the development model of internationalisation within the supply chain.

### **7.3.2. Scene for incoming researcher**

Despite the considerable effort reflected in extensive bilateral relations, South Africa appears to continue facing challenges in its geopolitical and economic exchanges. It is evident that South Africa maintains its strategic relations with China, given their alliance within the BRICS forum and their shared vision for SSC. Researchers may explore the ways in which this relations embodies more profound strategic decisions inherent in the foreign

policy frameworks of both countries. Examining the alignment between South Africa's existing administrative policies and China's energy strategies can be explored by future researchers. Researchers can trace intricate dynamics that reveal whether this collaboration propels national development or discreetly constrains domestic capacity building. This area of research offers exploration of deeper dynamics of power relations. This will further provide opportunities for future researchers to trace China and South Africa dynamic shifts in foreign policy especially one that is consistent with Ramaphosa administrations which is still evolving.

### **7.3.3. Summary of the study policy implications**

South Africa can uphold its position as a regional leader, is remarkable way in which the country projects its agency in global affairs. Significantly when South Africa navigates its diplomatic relations with China, should strive to secure its economic objectives in the relations. The ties between China and South Africa, particularly in the context of their collaboration in Africa, holds significant potential for fostering inclusive partnerships within the Global South, thereby enhancing trade among developing nations. The diplomatic relations established between China and South Africa may offer valuable insights for China in fostering constructive instrumental collaboration with other nations across the African continent.

South Africa, with its significant relations with China, possesses the potential to enhance its influence across Africa through its active engagement in BRICS. South Africa should strive for economic advantages afforded by the open opportunities within BRICS to establish itself as a prominent economic hub in Southern Africa. South Africa, along with other African countries and China, adeptly manoeuvres through the intricate dynamics of their relations to expand and enrich the agenda of the Global South. This collaboration serves as a paradigm for development within the Global South by fortifying infrastructure and enhancing capacity.

South Africa, by navigating its relations with China alongside those with Europe, Latin America, and Asia as whole and other regions, while considering the intricate nature of global political dynamics, possesses the potential to enhance its economic growth through progressive development. South Africa should ensure that its dialogue with China transcends mere trade in raw materials. The DTI should promote initiatives that tackle skill

shortages and facilitate technology transfer. This transfer of technology has the potential to rejuvenate the industrialisation of sectors and facilitate significant activity through the key ports located within the designated SEZs. South Africa will safeguard its contribution to employment while promoting industrialisation in pursuit of enhanced economic development.

South Africa can play a role in Africa, contributing significantly to the economic prosperity of Africa. South Africa can enhance vital sectors like renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure. South Africa and China inclusive partnership in the Global South can enhance each other's development through supportive measures that highlight the opportunities available for China and South Africa including Africa as a whole.

## 8. Referencing list

- Abdenur, A.E. (2014) 'China and the BRICS Development Bank: Legitimacy and Multilateralism in South–South Cooperation', *IDS Bulletin*,45(4):85-101. doi:10.1111/1759-5436.12095.
- Adler, E. 1997. Seizing the middle ground: Constructivism in world politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3): 319-363.
- Agius, C. 2013. Social constructivism. *Contemporary security studies*, 3, pp.87-103.
- Alden, C. 2005. China in Africa. *Survival*, 47(3): 147-164.
- Alden, C. 2014. Seeking security in Africa: China's evolving approach to the African Peace and Security Architecture. *Rising Powers and the African Security Landscape*, pp.13-26.
- Alden C. and Wu, Y. 2014a. South Africa and China: The Making of a Partnership. Occasional Paper 199, Global Powers and Africa Programme. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs,199, pp. 4-39.
- Alden, C. & Wu, Y. 2014b. South Africa-China Relations: Evolving Cooperation, Collaboration and Competition. [Online] Available at SAIIA: <http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/south-africa-chinarelation> Date of access: Feb. 2024.
- Alden, C. & Wu, Y.S. 2016. South African foreign policy and China: converging visions, competing interests, contested identities. In *South African Foreign Policy*, 54 (2): 203-231.
- Alden, C. & Alves, A. C. 2015. Global and local challenges and opportunities: reflections on China and the governance of African natural resources. *New Approaches to the Governance of Natural Resources: Insights from Africa*, pp 247-266.
- Alves, A.C. & Alden, C. 2024. China's economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa: from static model emulation to dynamic learning', *Area Development and Policy*, 9(2): 268–290.
- Ampiah, K. and Naidu, S. 2008. *Crouching tiger, hidden dragon? Africa and China*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Cape Town, University of KwaZulu- Natal Press.
- Anthony, R. 2016. South Africa and China: behind the smoke and mirrors. [Online] Available at Mail & Guardian: <https://mg.co.za/article/2016-01-11-south-africa-and-china-behind-the-smoke-and-mirrors> Date of access: 11 Jan. 2025.
- Ani, K.J. Masola, K.S. & Ojakorotu, V. 2018. Chinese African relations: focus on globalization and liberalization of resource exploitation. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, pp 111-122.
- Anuoluwapo, D., Abdul-Wasi, M.B. and Edwin, I. (2018) 'South Africa's Inclusion in BRICS: Challenges and Prospects for Development in Africa', *International Journal of African*

- Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, 13(2): 27–41.
- April, Y.F. 2009. South Africa's governance challenges: assessing the South Africa–China mineral case. *Contemporary Politics*, 15(4): 461-477.
- April, Z. 2024. The AGOA's Out of Cycle Review: Requirements and the Implications for South Africa. *Africa Insight*, 53(4): 65-79.
- April, F.Y. 2021. South Africa-China diplomatic relations and their impact on the global platform. *The Thinker*, 54.
- Archbishop, A. 2009. South Africa: Dalai Lama visa case goes to Constitutional Court. *Tibetan Review: The Monthly Magazine on all Aspect of Tibet*, May2009, 44(5):24.
- Arestis, P. N. & Lee, S. 2021. The economic growth of China: enabling politico-institutional and socio-cultural factors. *Review of Evolutionary Political Economy*, 2 (2): 339-358.
- Attorneys for Climate and Environmental Justice. 2025. Background on Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone (MMSEZ), Limpopo, South Africa, Available at All Rise: <https://allrise.org.za> Date of access: 17 Jun. 2025.
- Ashley, R.K. 1984. The poverty of neorealism. *International organization*, 38(2): 225-286.
- Ayenagbo, K. Njobvu, T., Sossou, J.V. and Tozoun, B.K., 2012. China's peacekeeping operations in Africa: From unwilling participation to responsible contribution. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 6(2): 22-32.
- Baker, L. and Shen, W., 2017. *China's involvement in South Africa's wind and solar PV industries* (No. 2017/15). Working paper.
- Bautman, B. & Yan, H. 2009. Trade, investment, power and the China-in-Africa discourse. *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*.
- BBC News. 2023. Myanmar country profile. [Online] Available at <https://www.bbc.com> Date of access: 26. May 2025.
- Beeson, M., Soko, M. and Yong, W. 2011. The new resource politics: can Australia and South Africa accommodate China? *International Affairs*, 87(6):1365-1384.
- Behraves, M. 2011. Constructivism: An Introduction. An Introduction. *e-International Relations (e-IR)*. [Online] Available at <http://www.e-ir.info/2011/02/03/constructivism-an-introduction/> Date of access: 17 Mar. 2024.
- Benyi, KA. 2017. The Effects of the Rise of China on the Political Economy of Africa: The Case of South Africa. Thoyandou: University of Venda. (Thesis-MA).
- Benabdallah, L. 2020. Power or influence? Making sense of China's evolving party-to-party diplomacy in Africa. *African Studies Quarterly*, 19(3 & 4): 95-114.

- Bhattacharyya, D.K. 2006. Research methodology. Excel Books India.
- Birmingham, P. and Wilkinson, D. 2003. Using research instruments: A guide for researchers. Routledge.
- Bhana, K. 2024. A new era of China-South Africa relations: strengthening the comprehensive strategic partnership. [Online] Available at the Diplomatic Society <https://thediplomaticsociety.co.za/4675-a-new-era-of-china-south-africa-relations-strengthening-the-comprehensive-strategic-partnership> Date of access 12 Sep 2024.
- Blackwill, R.D. and Campbell, K.M., 2016. Xi Jinping on the global stage. *Council on Foreign Relations*, 74, pp.1-67.
- Bodomo, A. 2009. Africa - China relations: symmetry, soft power, and South Africa. *China Review*, 9(2):169 -178.
- Bond, T. N. 2013. Towards a postcolonial research ethics in comparative and international education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(4): 422-442.
- Bond, P. 2024. Forum on China-Africa Cooperation evades contradictions at the end of the Belt and Road: Chinese investment, finance and trade controversies in Southern Africa–CADTM.
- Bradley, A., 2016. China and South Africa: Emerging powers in an uncomfortable embrace. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25(102): 881-892.
- Bräutigam, D. and Xiaoyang, T. (2012) 'Economic statecraft in China's new overseas special economic zones: soft power, business or resource security?', *International Affairs*, 88(4), pp. 799–816. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01102.x.
- Bräutigam, D. and Xiaoyang, T., 2011. African Shenzhen: China's special economic zones in Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49(1), pp.27-54.
- Breslin, S. 2011. The Soft Notion of China's 'Soft Power'. Warwick [online] February. Available from [http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/4342/1\\_Breslin\\_18575\\_0211p\\_breslin.pdf](http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/4342/1_Breslin_18575_0211p_breslin.pdf).
- Bryman, A. 2012. Social Research Methods, Available at OUP Oxford. [https://books.google.co.za/books/about/Social\\_Research\\_Methods.html?id=vCq5m2hPkOMC&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.co.za/books/about/Social_Research_Methods.html?id=vCq5m2hPkOMC&redir_esc=y).
- Carmody, P.R., 2017a. The new scramble for Africa. John Wiley & Sons.
- Carmody, P. 2017b. 'The Geopolitics and Economics of BRICS' Resource and Market Access in Southern Africa: Aiding Development or Creating Dependency?', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43(5): 863–877. doi:10.1080/03057070.2017.1337359.
- Carmody, P. Zajontz, T. and Reboredo, R., 2022. From 'debt diplomacy to donorship?

- China's changing role in global development. *Global Political Economy*, 1(2): 198-217.
- Carpintero, Ó. Murray, I. and Bellver, J., 2016. The new scramble for Africa: BRICS strategies in a multipolar world. In *Analytical gains of geopolitical economy*, pp. 191-226). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Chabalala, K., *South Africa's Foreign Policy Aspirations and the National Development Plan (NDP 2030): The Role and Impact of Trade and Investment on the State's Political Economy* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Chaleunvong, K. 2009. Data collection techniques. Training course in Reproductive Health Research *Vientiane*.
- Checkel, J.T., 1998. The constructive turn in international relations theory. *World politics*, 50(2): 324-348.
- Checkel, J.T. 2023. International Institutions and Identity. Paper prepared for the ISA Annual Convention, Montreal, March 2023
- Chiyemura, F. 2014. South Africa in BRICS: Prospects and constraints (Doctoral dissertation).
- Chiyemura, F. 2024. 'China-Africa relations in a changing world', in, Emil Dauncey, Chinese President Xi Jinping (4th R) attends a breakfast meeting with African leaders in Durban, South Africa, March 28, 2013. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)
- Condon, M. 2012. China in Africa: What the policy of noninterference adds to the Western Development Dilemma. Fletcher.tufts.edu [online] August. Available from: <http://Fletcher.tufts.edu/Praxis/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/praxis/xxvii/2CondonChinaAfrica.pdf>.
- Cox, K. 2019. Quantitative research design. *Research Design and Methods: An applied guide for the Scholar-Practitioner*.
- Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Daniel, R. and Virk, K., 2014. South Africa and the BRICS: Progress, problems and prospects, Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Available at <https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/3js9xg> Date of access: 12 Jun. 2025.
- De Carvalho, G., 2018. Rejoining the high table: South Africa and the UN Security Council. *ISS Southern Africa Report*, 2018(15): 1-20.
- DIRCO. 2010. Beijing declaration on the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of China.

- DIRCO. 2016. 2015/2016 Financial Year, Vote 6: Department of International Relations and Cooperation. Available at <http://www.dirco.gov.za/> Date of access: 16 Jan. 2025.
- DIRCO, 2024. Joint statement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa on the occasion of the second state visit to China by HE President Cyril Ramaphosa and the establishment of an all-round strategic cooperative partnership in a new era. [Online] Available at <https://dirco.gov.za/joint-statement-between-the-peoples-republic-of-china-and-the-republic-of-south-africa-on-the-occasion-of-the-second-state-visit-to-china-by-he-president-cyril-ramaphosa-and-the-establishment/> Date of access: 2 Sep. 2025.
- DTI. 2012 Policy on the development of special economic zone in South Africa. Pretoria: DTI published in Government Gazette 34968, 23 January.
- Duggan, N. 2023. The agency problem in readings of Sino–African relations. *African Affairs*, 122 (488): 461-475.
- Dugger, C.W., Sengupta, S., Wong, E. & Gibbs, W. 2009. South Africa bars Dalai Lama from a Peace Conference. *New York Times*, 23 Mar. <https://researchebscocom.nwulib.idm.oclc.org> Date of access: 24 Mar. 2024
- Du Plessis, D.F., 2013. The debate on United Nations security council reform: South African diplomatic contributions 1994 to 2012.
- Du Toit, C. 2015. The rise of China and the time of Africa: Gauging Afro-Sino relations in the light of Confucian philosophy and African ideals. *Theological Studies* 71 (1): 1- 10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i1.2864>.
- Dzigbede, K.D. 2024. On the unequal exchange in China's economic partnership with africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 47(8): 509-520.
- Eisenman, Joshua, and David H. Shinn. 2012. *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*, 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Eisenman, J., 2023. China's relational power in Africa: Beijing's 'new type of party-to-party relations. *Third World Quarterly*, 44(12): 2441-2461.
- Fantahun, M.H. 2013. Africa-China Relations: Neocolonialism or Strategic Partnership? Ethiopia as a case analysis. Aiu.edu [online] January. Available At <http://www.aiu.edu/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/fantahun%20doc.pdf>.
- Farley, M. 2008. Russia, China veto move to sanction Zimbabwe regime. *Los Angeles Times*. [Online] Available at <https://www.latimes.com> 12. Jul. 2025
- Farole, T. and Winkler, D. 2014. Making Foreign Direct Investment Work for Sub-Saharan

Africa: Local Spillovers and Competitiveness in Global Value Chains. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Farole, T. and Sharp, M., 2017. Spatial industrial policy, special economic zones and cities in South Africa. *Unpublished manuscript. Washington: World Bank.*

Feigenbaum, E.A. 2018. Reluctant Stakeholder: Why China's Highly Strategic Brand of Revisionism is more Challenging than Washington Thinks [Online] Available at MarcoPolo <https://macropolo.org/reluctant-stakeholder-China's-highly-strategic-brand-revisionism-challenging-washington-thinks/> Date of access: 16 Aug. 2025.

Findlay, S. 2014. South Africa's ruling ANC looks to learn from Chinese Communist Party. Time: 24 Nov. <http://time.com/3601968/anc-south-africa-china-communist-party/> Date of access: 3 Aug. 2025.

Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K., 1998. International norm dynamics and political change. *International organization*, 52(4): 887-917.

Flick, U. 2022. The Sage Handbook of qualitative research design. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Sage

Flick, U. 2025. Introducing Research Methodology. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Sage

FOCAC summit, 2024. (FOCAC) World Insights: China-Africa infrastructure cooperation creating new opportunities for Africa's development

Fu, H., Yan, L. and Li, H., 2022. A Quantitative Analysis of Country Relations in Foreign Direct Investment. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 2022(1), pp.414-473.

Fuchs, A. and Klann, N.H., 2013. Paying a visit: The Dalai Lama effect on international trade. *Journal of international economics*, 91(1): 164-177.

Garcia, A., Thompson, L. and Brito, C., 2025. South-south investments: driver for alternative globalization? Examining China-Led special economic zones in Brazil and South Africa. *Critical Sociology*, 51(4-5): 887-905.

Global Data Power Intelligence Center. 2024. Power plant profile: De Aar Wind Farm, South Africa. Data Insights. [Online] Available at <https://www.power-technology.com>

Gimbernat Girgas, E. 2017. China's strategic partnership with Africa. A Case Study of the Sino-South African Relations.

Gordhan, P.J. 2016. Budget Speech. Pretoria: National Treasury.[Online] Available at <https://sabinet.nwulib.idm.oclc.org/budgetsp2016/#:~:text=Budget%20Speech%202016-.Budget,-Speech%202016> Date of access: 24 Feb. 2025.

Gouvea, R., Kapelianis, D. and Li, S., 2020. Fostering intra-BRICS trade and investment: The increasing role of China in the Brazilian and South African economies. *Thunderbird*

- International Business Review*, 62(1): 17-26.
- Grbich, C. 2012. *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*, sage.
- Grimm, S., Kim, Y. & Anthony, R., 2014. South African relations with China and Taiwan Economic realism and the “One-China” doctrine.
- Gumede, W. 2014. Challenges facing South Africa-China relations. Foreign Policy Centre [online] April. Available from: <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1465.pdf>.
- Guijin, L. 2014. Fifteen years of South Africa-China relations and beyond. *Perspectives on South Africa-China Relations at 15 Years*, pp.26.
- Guzzini, S. and Leander, A. 2005. Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London, Routledge.
- Guzzini, S., 2000. A reconstruction of constructivism in international relations. *European Journal of international relations*, 6(2):147-182.
- Hamill, J. 2016. South Africa in Africa: The challenges of the new multipolarity’ (2016) *Adelphi Series*, 56(463), pp. 127–142. doi:10.1080/19445571.2016.1419718.
- Hamill, J. 2016. Problem in Africa’ (2016) *Adelphi Series*, 56(463), pp. 47–78. doi:10.1080/19445571.2016.1419715.
- Havercroft, J. 2018. Social constructivism and international ethics. In *Routledge handbook of ethics and international relations* Routledge , pp. 116-129.
- He, B. and Warren, M.E., 2011. Authoritarian deliberation: The deliberative turn in Chinese political development. *Perspectives on politics*, 9(2): 269-289.
- He, A., 2023. Beijing’s top-down foreign investment model is roiling African economies. Center for International Governance Innovation. Retrieved from <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/beijings-top-down-foreign-investment-model-is-roiling-african-economies>.
- Herman, F. 2020. China’s party training programs in South Africa: A quest for political alignment. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(3): 437-451.
- Hinkle, D.E., Wiersma, W. and Jurs, S. G. 2003. *Applied Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Hodzi, O. 2020. African political elites and the making (s) of the China model in Africa. *Politics & Policy*, 48(5): 887-907.
- Hofferberth, M. and Weber, C. 2015. Lost in translation: a critique of constructivist norm research. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 18(1): 75-103.
- Huan, C. and Deng, M., 2021. Partners or predators? A corpus-based study of China’s

image in South African Media. *African Journalism Studies*, 42(3): 34-50.

Huck A. 2004. *The Security of China: Chinese Approaches to Problems of War and Strategy*. Pp. 93. New York: Columbia University Press for the Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1970," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 94(1): 130-131.

Igwe, M.I. 2022. *Chinese Trade Policy towards South Africa from 1994-2020* (master's thesis, University of Haifa (Israel).

Insights, P. 2015. *South Africa and FOCAC: Enabling a Partnership for Global Economic Governance Beyond the BRICS?*

International Department, Central Committee of CPC. 2024. *CPC Delegation Engages in Discussions with South African Media and Think Tank Representatives*. Available at <https://www.idcpc.org.cn › bzhd> 06 Aug. 2025.

Islamia, J.M. 2017. *Foreign policy of South Africa: Theoretical framework*. *International Journal of Applied Social Science*, 4(7&8): 230-245.

Iyi, J.M., 2014. *Emerging Powers and the Operationalisation of R2P in Africa: The Role of South Africa in the UNSC*. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 7(1): 149-176.

Jammel, B. & Majid, U. 2018. *Research fundamentals: data collection, data analysis, and ethics*. *Undergraduate Research in Natural and Clinical Science and Technology Journal*, 2(4) :1-8.

Jenkins, R. and Edwards, L., 2015. *Is China 'crowding out' South African exports of manufactures*. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 27, pp. 903-920.

Josi Advertiser, 2025. *China and South Africa deepen nuclear energy collaboration amid Africa's energy transition*. [Online] Available at <https://joziadvertiser.co.za/2025/05/05/china-and-south-africa-deepen-nuclear-energy-collaboration-amid-africas-energy-tra> Date of access: 05 May.2025.

Kahn, M.J., 2011. *The BRICs and South Africa as the gateway to Africa*. *Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy*, 111(7): 493-496.

Karon, T. 2009. *Behind South Africa's snub of the Dalai Lama*. Accessed 24 March 2009, the world.

Kansaye, I. 2021. *Analysis of China-Africa Relations: Historical Development and Current Perspectives*. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(2): 25-29.

Kastner, S.L. and Pearson, M.M., 2021. *Exploring the parameters of China's economic influence*. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 56, pp.18-44.

Khambule, I., 2021. Capturing South Africa's developmental state: State-society relations and responses to state capture. *Public Administration and Development*, 41(4): 169-179.

Khambule, I. and Kariuki, P. 2024. Ten Years of South Africa's National Development Plan: Progress, Challenges, and the Future. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Durban : Democracy Development Program (DDP).

Khambule, I. ed., 2025. The State and Development in South Africa: Impasse, Prospects, and Challenges.

Kim, Y. 2024. Can China Be a Leading Security Actor in the Global South: Focusing on the Case of China's Growing Role in Africa. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 31(1).

Kohlenberg, P.J. and Godehardt, N., 2021. Locating the South in China's connectivity politics. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(9): 1963-1981.

Kotze, D. 2012. South Africa's foreign policy and international relations during 2012. *South African Yearbook of International Law*, 37(1): 356-377.

Kowert, P. and Legro, J.W. 1996. Norms, identity, and their limits: a theoretical reprise, in P. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security— Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Krashen, S. 1985. We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The modern language journal*, 73(4): 440-464.

Kratochwil, F.V., 1998. Politics, norms and peaceful change. *Review of International Studies*, 24(5): 193-218.

Krisch, N. (2003) More equal than the rest? Hierarchy, equality and US predominance in international law. In: M. Byers and G. Nolte (eds.) *United States Hegemony and the Foundations of International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 135–175.

Kurki, M. and Sinclair, A., 2010. Hidden in plain sight: Constructivist treatment of social context and its limitations. *International Politics*, 47, pp.1-25.

Lama, D. 2014. South Africa denies Dalai Lama concludes but justifies visa Canada-US tour with ban on Dalai Lama teachings in New York City. *Tibetan Review: The monthly Magazine on all Aspect of Tibet*. Nov/Dec2014, 49(11/12):17-17.

Lan, Q. and Tan, Y., Deepening China-South Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation.

Landsberg, C., 2014. The concentric circles of South Africa's foreign policy under Jacob Zuma. *India Quarterly*, 70(2):153-172.

Langa, N. and Shai, K.B., 2020. The Jacob Zuma era. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 7(2): 61-75.

- Le Pere, G. and Shelton, G., 2007. China, Africa and South Africa: South-South co-operation in a global era (Midrand Institute for Global Dialogue, pp. 165.
- Leso, M. W. 2017. Economic Diplomacy through International Tourism Co-Operation: The Case of South Africa and China, 2009 to 2017 (master's thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa).
- Li, H. 2020. From Politics to Business: How a state-led fund is investing in Africa? The case of the China-Africa Development Fund. *Asian Studies*, 10(2-3): 234-266.
- Lin, F., Yan, W. and Wang, X. 2017. The impact of Africa-China's diplomatic visits on bilateral trade. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 64(3), pp. 310-326.
- Mabaso, T.S. 2023. Harmony in diversity: Exploring cultural exchange, financial trade, and wildlife conservation in South Africa-China ties during the Zuma administration. *Research Journal of Economic and Finance*, 11(1): 32-50.
- Mabera, F. and Dunne, T. 2013. South Africa and the responsibility to protect. *AP R2P Brief*, 3(6): 1-8.
- MacMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. 1993. *Research in Education: A Conception Introduction*.
- Mbete, S.N., 2018. The 'middle power' debate revisited: South Africa in the United Nations Security Council, 2007-2008 and 2011-2012. University of Pretoria (South Africa).
- McDonald F. 1988. The UN and Decolonization, Africa Report, September-October 1988, pp.4-10.
- Makundi, H. 2025. China's party to party diplomacy in Africa.
- Manthata, L.J. 1991. *The practical skeptic: Core concepts in sociology*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.
- Maphaka, D. 2020. A shift or priority? An Afrocentric analysis of Zuma's foreign policy towards China. *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 42(2): 87-108.
- Maphaka, D. & Shai, K.B. 2021. South Africa in China's Foreign Policy towards Africa: An Afrocentric Analysis. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 8(3): 187.
- Maphaka, D. 2022. An Afrocentric Revisit of Zuma led South Africa-China Relations, 2013-2017: Mutually Beneficial or Not. *African Journal of Political Science*, 10(2): 38-52.
- Maposa, S.K., 2022. A discursive historical approach (DHA) to understanding South Africa's leadership aspirations in Africa: state exceptionalism and foreign policy under Mandela and Mbeki.
- Mariyani-Squire, E., 1999. *Social constructivism: A flawed debate over conceptual*

- foundations. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 10(4): 97-125.
- Maritz, J. 2017. Seven Chinese companies which have made it in Africa. Africa Business Insight, August 8<sup>th</sup> .
- Masango, F.N., 2024. Zuma's legacy: fostering unity through the interwoven strands of culture, commerce, and conservation in South Africa -China relations. *Research Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 1(1): 50-67.
- Maseng, J.O. and Mothibinyane, P., 2023. An Analysis of Chinese and Russian Positions on South Africa's Inclusion as a Permanent Member of the UNSC. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 10(1): 89-110.
- Matambo, E. 2014. The Evolution of China-South Africa Relations: A Constructivist Interpretation. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal (Thesis-MA) <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/server/api/bitstreams/4a53c5b0-0d82-4f2c-9aca-67ad132585cc/content>
- Matambo, E. 2020. South Africa-China Relations: A Constructivist Perspective. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 42(2): 63-85.
- Matambo, E., 2020. Democracy, human rights and ubuntu in post-apartheid South Africa's diplomacy. *African Journal of Democracy and Governance*, 7(2): 115-144.
- Mathee, H. 2016. Turning from the West: South Africa's ominous pivot. *World affairs*, pp.14-23.
- Mazhar, S.A., Anjum, R., Anwar, A.I. and Khan, A.A., 2021. Methods of data collection: A fundamental tool of research. *Journal of Integrated Community Health*, 10(1): 6-10.
- Mbeki, S. and Khumalo, L. 2023. South Africa-China relations: exploring cultural, economic and environmental cooperation during the Zuma era. *Columbia Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management*, 11(3): 36-56.
- Mbete, S.N., 2018. *The 'middle power' debate revisited: South Africa in the United Nations Security Council, 2007-2008 and 2011-2012*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Thesis-PhD).
- McHenry, E.J., 2021. *Russian and Chinese Influence in Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School).
- Mdlalose, M. & Taylor, S., 2019. Coastal regional development in South Africa through special economic zones. *WIT Transactions on the Built Environment*, 188, pp.177-189.
- Melber, H. 2013. Reviewing China and Africa: Old interests, new trends—or new interests, old trends? *Development Southern Africa*, 30 (4-5): 437-450
- Mengshu, Z. 2020. A brief overview of Alexander Wendt's constructivism. E- International

Relations, 19.

Mdunge, M.M., 2018. *Chinese economic diplomacy in South Africa 1994-2015: A Partnership or a Chinese Neo-Colonial Endeavour*. Tesis Magister. Johannesburg, South Africa: Monash University. (Thesis-MA).

Mhaka, S. and Jeke, L., 2018. An evaluation of the trade relationships between South Africa and China: An empirical review 1995–2014. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 21(1):1-15.

Miles, M. 2019. An investigation into the state of governance in a public entity: through the application of world governance indicators: the case of Eskom, South Africa. Free State: University of Free State (Thesis-MA).

Mlambo, C., Kushamba, A. and Simawu, M.B., 2016. China-Africa relations: What lies beneath? *The Chinese Economy*, 49(4): 257-276.

Mlilima, S.S.B., 2021. *The Impact of Risk on Regional Economic Integration in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU)*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Thesis-PhD).

Mnyandu, P. 2021. *South Africa–China Relations: Between Aspiration and Reality in a New Global Order*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Moerane, G.K., 2019. *A Critical Analysis of South Africa Pursuit of an African Agenda at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)-2007/2008 and 2011/2012*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Thesis-MA).

Mohan, G. and Tan-Mullins, M., 2019. The geopolitics of South–South infrastructure development: Chinese-financed energy projects in the global South. *Urban Studies*, 56(7): 1368-1385.

Moinogu, P., 2015. *China-South Africa Relations: Examining Gains and Hidden Challenges in Economic and Diplomatic Relations*. University of KwaZulu-Natal. (Thesis-PhD).

Monareng, L. 2016. *China-South Africa: A Comprehensive Strategic Partnership*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand. Available at <https://www.researchgate.net> Date of access: 20 Mar. 2018.

Monyae, D. and Band, G., 2018. Sino-South African Relations at Twenty: Key Lessons. *UJCI Africa-China Occasional Paper*, 5, pp.1-20.

Mooko, N. 1993. South Africa's Future Foreign Policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(5): 86-97.

Mordkoff J.T. 2016. Effects of average uncertainty and trial-type frequency on choice response time: A hierarchical extension of Hick/Hyman law. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*.

Moyo, S. 2016. Perspectives on South-South relations: China's presence in Africa. Inter-

Asia Cultural Studies, 17(1): 58–67.

Mpako, A. and Moosa, M., 2022. South Africans endorse self-reliant development but question free trade and loan conditionalities.

Mpondo, P. 2024. An Analysis of South Africa's Foreign Policy Priorities on Africa: The Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus, 2018-2022. *Journal of BRICS Studies*, 3(2): 9-23.

Mpungose, L. (2018). SA's foreign policy: Towards greater strategic partnerships in a post-Zuma era. The Africa portal, Available at <https://www.africaportal.org/features/sas-foreign-policy-towards-greater-strategic-partnerships-post-zuma-era/> Date of access: 26 May. 2019.

Munoriyarwa, A. and Chibuwe, A., 2022. Is this not colonization? Framing Sino-South African relations in South Africa's mainstream press. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*, 41(1): 11-24.

Msibi, N. 2024. China in Africa: neocolonialism or mutual relationship.

Muekalia, D.J. 2004. Africa and China's strategic partnership. *African security review*, 13(1): 5-11.

Mwaniki, D.M. 2025. FOCAC lights path to stronger Sino-African partnership. China Daily Global: Date of access, 05 Jul 2025.

Nagel, T. 1993. What is the mind-brain problem". In Bock, Gregory R., Marsh, Joan, *Experimental and Theoretical Studies of Consciousness (CIBA Foundation Symposia Series, No. 174)*, pp. 174-1.

Naidu, S. 2009. Consolidating a look east policy under President Zuma [Blog post]. <https://www.pambazuka.org/consolidating-look-east-policy-under-president-zuma#:~:text=Consolidating%20a%20%27-,look,-east%27%20policy%20under> Date of access: 21 APR. 2025.

Nathaniel, L. 2017. Consistency and Inconsistencies in South African Foreign Policy. *International Affairs*, 81(2): 361–372.

National Science and Technology Forum . Building a capable and developmental state (chapter 13, NDP). <http://nstf.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-NDP-ch13-v5-1.pdf>

Neethling, T. 2017. South Africa's Foreign Policy and the BRICS Formation: Reflections on the Quest for the 'Right' Economic-diplomatic Strategy. *Insight on Africa*, 9(1): 39-61.

Nel, E.L. and Rogerson, C.M., 2013, June. Special economic zones in South Africa: Reflections from international debates. In *Urban Forum* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands,

24(2): 205-217.

News24. 2010. SA, China signs strategic agreement. News24, 24 Aug. <https://www.news24.com>. Date of access: 24 Aug. 2010.

Ngundu, M. 2025. South Africa's trade deficit dilemma with China. Institute for Security Studies. [Online] Available at <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/south-africa-s-trade-deficit-dilemma-with-china>: Date of access: 05 Mar 2025.

Nicol, M. 2022. What is China doing in Africa? It's more complex than it seems—and more interesting. *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy*, 2022 (85), 3-8.

Ninth BRICS Summit. 2017. Opens: Xi Jinping Chairs the Summit and Delivers Important Speech Stressing Stronger BRICS Partnership for a Brighter Future' (2017) *Chinese American Forum*, 33(2): 8–10.

Nkoana, F.N. and Legodi, L.T. 2021. What drives the Chinese involvement in Africa? An Afrocentric reflection on Ghana, 2010 to 2020. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 8(3): 203-224.

Nozulela, M. 2025. SA and China ink nuclear agreement to strengthening energy security. LOL News. Sunday, 02 November 2025.

Nurain, M.B.M. 2008. The decline of Darfur. *Peace Review*, 20(2):192-199.

Obiorah, N. 2006. Who's afraid of China in Africa. Pambazuka News. [Online] Available at <https://www.pambazuka> Date of access:18 Oct. 2025

O'Brien, D.P. Sharkey Scott. 2012. "Correlation and Regression", in *Approaches to Quantitative Research a Guide for Dissertation Students*, Ed, Chen, H, Oak Tree Press.

Onuf, N. 2013. *Making sense, making worlds: Constructivism in social theory and international relations*. Routledge.

Onuf, P.S., 1989. Reflections on the Founding: Constitutional Historiography in Bicentennial Perspective. *The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History and*, pp.341-375.

Otavio, A., 2017. From Mandela to Zuma: the importance of the Southern Atlantic Region for South Africa's foreign policy. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Africanos= Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, 2(3).

Otele, O. M. 2020. China's Belt and Road Initiative and Intra-Regional Dynamics in Africa. *African Studies Quarterly*.

Pandey, P. & Pandey, M.M. 2021. *Research methodology tools and techniques*. Bridge

Center.

Palan, R., 2000. A world of their making: an evaluation of the constructivist critique in International Relations. *Review of international studies*, 26(4): 575-598.

Panchia, Y. 2024 South Africa and China deepen ties with \$51 billion commitment and strategic partnership upgrade during state visit. Africa Forbes

Park, Y.J. and Alden, C., 2012. Upstairs and downstairs dimensions of China and the Chinese in South Africa. *State of the Nation*, pp.643-662.

Paradis. E., O'brlen, B., Nimmon, L., Bandiera, G. & Martimianakis, M. A. 2016. Design: selection of the data collection methods. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 8(2): 263-264.

Park, Y.J., 2020. Playing the China card or yellow perils? China, 'the Chinese', and race in South African politics and society. *Asian Ethnicity*, 21(4): 464-483.

Phetha, H.R. and Zondi, S. 2021. A Critical Review of South Africa's Foreign Policy in Promoting Continental Integration. *The African Review*, 48(2): 381-394.

Phillips, A.B., 2007. Constructivism. In *International relations theory for the twenty-first century*. Routledge, pp. 70-84.

Pirie, G., 2020. China and aviation in Africa: context, thrust, novelty. *African Geographical Review*, 39(1): 74-89.

Ploch, L., 2008. *Zimbabwe: 2008 elections and implications for US policy*. CRS Report for Congress (No. CRSRL34509).

Power, M. and Mohan, G., 2020. Towards critical geopolitics of China's engagement with African development. *Geopolitics*, 15(3): 462-495.

Prinsloo, C. 2022. *Boosting South Africa's Economic Relations with the BRICS*. Institute for Global Dialogue.

Qobo, M. and Dube, M. 2015. South Africa's foreign economic strategies in a changing global system. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 22(2): 145-164.

Qobo, M. 2020. Unprincipled pragmatism and anti-imperialist impulses in an interconnected world. Bischoff, P., eds. *African foreign policies: selecting signifiers to explain agency*. London and New York: Taylor and Francis Group. Pp. 88-104.

Rahi, S., 2017. Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences*, 6(2), pp.1-5.

Ramaphosa, M.A. 2015. China to encourage its companies to invest in South Africa's special

economic zones, says deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa. Accessed 12 August 2015,

Ramaphosa, M.A. 2024a. Relations between China and South Africa enter a new era of opportunity. State of Nation address. Accessed 09 February 2024, <https://www.gov.za/blog/relations-between-china-and-south-africa-enter-new-era-opportunity>

Ramaphosa, M.A. 2024b. Remarks by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the Shenzhen business roundtable on the occasion of the state visit to the People's Republic of China, Beijing, China. [Online] Available at <https://www.presidency.gov.za>

Ramkolowan, Y., Craig, S. and Munro, S., 2018. The dynamics of South African investment in the rest of Africa. *Global Economic Governance Discussion Paper*.

Rapanyane, M.B. & Shai, K.B. 2019. China's foreign policy towards Zambia within the context of BRICS. *Journal of Public Administration*, 54 (3): 424-434.

Rapanyane, M.B. 2023. An afrocentric critique of China's Foreign Policy towards Africa: case studies of Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2010-2020. Polokwane: University of Limpopo. (Thesis-PhD).

Reus-Smit, C. 2005. Constructivism. In: S. Burchill et al (eds.) *International Relations Theories*, 3rd edn. London: Palgrave, pp. 188–211.

Reus-Smit, C. 2008. Reading history through constructivist eyes. *Millennium*, 37(2): 395-414.

Riar, C. 2024. South Africa under Jacob Zuma: State Capture, Corruption, and the Pre-Existing Framework That Fueled the Crisis. *Michigan Journal of Political Science*, 1001(3): 78.

Riya T. 2023. Unraveling Research Population and Sample: Understanding their role in statistical inference. *Enang Academy*, <https://www.enago.com/academy/population>

Risse, T., 2007. Social constructivism meets globalization. *Globalization theory: Approaches and controversies*, 4, pp.126.

Rocco, T.S. and Plakhotnik, M.S. 2009. Literature reviews, conceptual frameworks, and theoretical frameworks: Terms, functions, and distinctions. *Human resource development review*, 8(1): 120-130.

Rohne, E., 2013. Chinese-initiated special economic zones in Africa: a case study of Ethiopia's Eastern industrial zone.

Rotberg, R.I. ed., 2009. *China into Africa: Trade, aid, and influence*. Brookings Institution Press.

- Russell, A. 2013. Zuma warns West's colonial corporates. *Financial Times*, Asia-Pacific.
- SA News. 2014. President Zuma: we need a reformed UN. [Online] Available at [SAnewshttps://www.sanews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za) Date of access: 15 Oct. 2025.
- Sandrey, R. and Edinger, H., 2009. Examining the South Africa–China agricultural trading relationship. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Sayer, A. 1992. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Schmidt, K. 2023. *A New Age of Empire: China's Growing Influence on the Continent of Africa and its Implications for Global Powers: a historical and textual analysis of China's economic and cultural relationship with South Africa*
- Searle, J.R. 1995. *The construction of social reality*. Simon and Schuster.
- Seuring, S. and Gold, S., 2012. Conducting content-analysis based literature reviews in supply chain management. *Supply chain management: An international journal*, 17(5): 544-555.
- Shelton, G. April, F.Y. and Anshan, L. 2015. *FOCAC 2015: a new beginning of China-Africa Relations*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa.
- Shelton, G. 2021. *South Africa and China: A strategic partnership* [online]
- Shoba, M.S. 2018. South Africa's Foreign Policy Position in BRICS. *Journal of African Union Studies (JOAUS)*, 7 (1): 173-188.
- Shoba, M.U.Z.I. 2023. *Interrogating South Africa-China relations in the Context of BRICS*. University of KwaZulu Natal. (Thesis-PhD).
- Shoba, M. & Mtapuri, O., 2024. An appraisal of the drivers behind South Africa and China relations. *African identities*, 22(3): 794-810.
- Simonaviciute, G. 2020. *China in Africa: A Study of Chinese Leadership in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)*.
- Simpson, G.J. 2004. *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, K. 2016. South Africa in Africa and the World: The Diplomatic Strategies of a Global–Regional Power. In *Diplomatic Strategies of Nations in the Global South: The Search for Leadership*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 125-151.
- Simpson, G.B., Badenhorst, J., Jewitt, G.P., Berchner, M. and Davies, E., 2019. Competition for land: the water-energy-food nexus and coal mining in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 7, p.86.
- Singh, P.K. 2022. *South Africa-China Trade Relations: Analysis of Mining Sector*.

Sinclair, K.A., 2019. *The comprehensive strategic partnership agreement between South Africa and China: A geopolitical case study considering African realism (2010–2015)*. Mafikeng: North West University (Thesis-PhD).

Sithole, A.M. 2015. The People's Republic of China's "strategic partnership" with South Africa: 1998-2013. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University (Thesis-PHD).

Smith, E. 2008. Pitfalls and promises: The use of secondary data analysis in educational research. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56(3): 323-339.

Special Investigating Unit. 2022. SIU welcomes the arrest of former Eskom executive and seven others. The Independent Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption Authority for a Corruption-Free South Africa. [Online] Available at <https://www.siu.org.za>

Sofia, B. 2022. The role of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in increasing South Africa's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2018-2021. *Mediasi Journal of International Relations*, 5 (2): 1-18.

Soko, M. and Qobo, M. 2016. The role of the BRIC in Africa's development: drivers and strategies. *Journal for Contemporary History*, 41(1): 80-102.

Soulé, F., Benabdallah, L., van Staden, C. and Chen, Y. 2024. Exploring the role of narratives in China–Africa relations. APRI – Africa Policy Research Institute.

South African Government News Agency, 2023. SA, China cooperation can bring mutual benefit for the future. <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/sa-china-cooperation-can-bring-mutual-benefit-future> Date of access: 21 Aug. 2025

*South African History Online*, 2020. Durban Harbour and Port', *South African History Online*. Available at: <https://sahistory.org.za/place/durban-harbour-and-port> Date of access: 4 Nov. 2025.

South Africa Institute of International Affairs, 2018. South Africa's foreign policy under Zuma: Towards greater strategic partnerships. Available at <https://www.polity.org.za/article/south-africas-foreign-policy-under-zuma-towards-greater-strategic-partnerships-2018-02-23> Date of access: 23 Feb. 2025.

Steinberg, D.I., 2007. The United States and its allies: the problem of Burma/Myanmar policy. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, pp.219-237.

Sterling-Folker, J., 2002. Realism and the constructivist challenge: Rejecting, reconstructing, or rereading. *International Studies Review*, pp.73-97.

Sun, J., 2016. *Technology transfer in telecommunications: Barriers and opportunities in the case of Huawei and ZTE in South Africa* (No. 13/2016). Policy Brief.

Tamunowariye, C., 2021. Examine the implication of China-African financial relations to African economies

Tegan, G 2023. What Are the Limitations of ChatGPT. [Online] Available at <https://www.scribbr.com/author/sarah/> Date of access: 21 Aug. 2024.

Tatiana Deych, L. 2023. China's ties with African political parties. *Journal of the Institute for African studies*, 2 (63): 147-155.

Tella, O. 2019. South Africa and the Great Powers on the United Nations Security Council

Thipanyane, T., 2011. South Africa's Foreign Policy under the Zuma Government: A Human Rights-based Policy or a Pragmatic Approach Based on Political and Economic Considerations.

Thulare, J. 2015. The Impact of China on the Steel Industry value chain in South Africa and the Role of Government's Industrial Policies. MA Dissertation. University of Witwatersrand. Available at <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za> Date of access. 10 Oct. 2019.

Thompson, L., 2019. Alternative South–South development collaboration? The role of China in the Coega special economic zone in South Africa. *Public Administration and Development*, 39 (4-5): 193-202.

Thompson, L., 2019. Locating BRICS development strategies in global development policy narratives. In *International Development Assistance and the BRICS* (pp. 35-58). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Thrall, L., 2015. *China's expanding African relations: Implications for US national security*. Rand Corporation.

Tibet magazine. 2011. S. Africa asked to stand up to China on Dalai Lama visa' (2011) *Tibetan Review: The Monthly Magazine on all Aspects of Tibet*, 46(10), p. 11. Available at <https://research-ebscocom.nwulib.idm.oclc.org/linlpro> Date of access 26 Sep. 2025.

Tibet magazine. 2014. China highly appreciates South Africa's visa snub to Dalai Lama' (2014) *Tibetan Review: The Monthly Magazine on all Aspects of Tibet*, 49(9/10), p. 14. Available at <https://research-ebSCO-com.nwulib.idm.oclc.org> Date of access: 27 Sep. 2025.

Torrens, C. 2018. Chinese investment in South Africa: Set for success, if common mistakes are avoided. *Control Risks*, 25

Tugendhat, H., & Alemu, D. 2016. Chinese agricultural training courses for African officials: Between power and partnerships. *World Development*, 81, pp. 71–81.

Tutu, B. 2018. Wits Journalism Africa-China Reporting Project: First South Africa-China

Dialogue at Wits University. Available at <https://africachinareporting.co.za> Date of access: 2 Sep. 2020.

United Nations. 2020. South-South in action: promoting the sustainable development of Africa through South-South Investment.

United Nations. 1945. Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice.

Vandana Desai, Robert B. Potter (eds), *The Companion to Development Studies*, <https://www.routledge.com/The-Companion-to-Development-Studies/Dauncey-Desai-Potter/p/book/9780367244248>.

Van der Westhuizen, S.C., 2014. *Foreign Policy, Public Diplomacy and the Media: The Case of South Africa, with Specific Reference to the Denial of Visas to the Dalai Lama*. University of South Africa (South Africa).

Van der Westhuizen, J. 2016. "We want to be like them!" Economic policy models as status signaling: Reflections on South Africa's 'developmental state' debate. *AFRICA and ASIA*, pp.129.

Van der Westhuizen, S. and van Wyk, J.A., 2016. Denying the Dalai Lama: South Africa's visa diplomacy, human rights and the media. *African East-Asian Affairs*, (1-2).

Van Hoeymissen, S., 2011. Regional Organizations in China's Security Strategy for Africa: The Sense of Supporting "African Solutions to African Problems. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 40(4): 91-118.

Vinz, S. 2022. What Is a Theoretical Framework? Guide to Organizing. [Online] Available at <https://www.scribbr.com/author/sarah/>. Date of access: Mar. 2024.

Wasserman, H. 2012. China in South Africa: Media responses to a developing relationship. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 5(3): 336-354.

Watson, J. 2007. Watson's theory of human caring and subjective living experiences: Carative Factors/Caritas Processes as a disciplinary guide to the professional Nursing practice. *Texto & Contexto - Enfermagem* 20(1): 129-135.

Wendt, A., 1995. Constructing international politics. *International security*, 20(1): 71-81.

Wendt, A. 1999. *Social theory of international politics* Cambridge university Press, 67.

Wessels, J.S., Pauw, J.C. and Thani, X.C. 2009. Taxonomies for the analysis of research designs in Public Administration. *Administration Publica*, 17(2): 7-19.

Weissmann, M., 2015. *Chinese Foreign Policy in a Global Perspective: A Responsible*

Reformer" Striving for Achievement". *Journal of China and International relations*, 3(1).

White paper on South Africa's foreign policy. 2011. Building a better world: the diplomacy of Ubuntu, Available at [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document) Date of access: 13 May. 2025.

Willey, J. & Sons. 2022. South Africa: Promises of Reform' (2022) *Africa Research Bulletin: Economic, Financial & Technical Series*, 59(10): 24051A–24052A. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6346.2022.10830.x.

Williams, C. and Hurst, C., 2018. Caught between two Chinas: assessing South Africa's switch from Taipei to Beijing. *South African historical journal*, 70(3): 559-602.

Williams, C. and Papa, M. 2020. Rethinking "Alliances": The Case of South Africa as a Rising Power. *African Security*, 13(4): 325-352.

World Atlas. 2023. Myanmar maps and facts. [Online] Available at <https://www.worldatlas.com> Date of access: 28 Oct. 2025.

World nuclear news. 2010. CNNC signs agreement with Sichuan province. [Online] Available at <https://www.bing.com> 28 Jun. 2025.

World nuclear news. 2015. CNNC signs framework agreement with Sichuan province. [Online] Available at [www.world-nuclear-news.org](http://www.world-nuclear-news.org) 28 Jun. 2025.

Wu, H. 2025. Is China Truly the Spokesperson for Developing Countries? An Examination of China's Voting Position with Africa in the United Nations Security Council. *Journal of Contemporary China*, pp.1-17.

Wyk, B. V. 2015. Research design and methods Part I.

Xabadiya, A. and Hu, Z. 2019. An analysis of china-africa agricultural cooperation and prospects of belt and road initiative: A case of South Africa. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev*, 9, pp.221-250.

Xiaoyang, T. 2016. Does Chinese employment benefit Africans? Investigating Chinese enterprises and their operations in Africa. *African Studies Quarterly*, 16(3 & 4): 107-128.

Xinhua. 2008. Russia, China veto US-drafted resolution on Zimbabwe. China Daily News. Available at <https://chinadaily.com> 07 Jul. 2025.

- Xinhua, China's January exports up 15.9%, imports up 25.2%.[Online] Available at ChinaDaily[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/201702/10/content\\_28161624.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/201702/10/content_28161624.htm) Date of access: 27 Feb. 2025.
- Xolani, H. F. 2021. China-South Africa relations in the context of BRICS. Witwatersrand: University of the Witwatersrand (Thesis-MA).
- Yan, X., Tian, X., Li, H. and Guo, H. 2024. Research on technical cooperation path of renewable energy between China and South Africa. *Frontiers in Energy Research*, 12, p.1411546.
- Yandong, L. 2017. Build a rainbow bridge of people-to-people exchange and create a China-South Africa community of shared future. *The Thinker*, 73.
- Yanshuo, N. 2011 'Adding South Africa to The BRICS Mix', *Beijing Review*, 54(17), p. 16. Available at: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=5e42b791-807d-3054-a6ac-bd0254a70b8e> Date of Access: 28 Sep. 2025.
- Youla, C. 2009. *The foreign policies of Mandela and Mbeki: A clear case of Idealism vs Realism*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch (Thesis-PhD).
- Yu, M. 2018. Two sets of truths? A content analysis of South African media coverage of China during the FOCAC 2015 Johannesburg Summit. MA Thesis. University of the Witwatersrand. Available at <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za> Date of access: 05 May. 2024.
- Zámborský, P. Yan, Z.J. Michailova, S. and Zhuang, V. 2023. Chinese multinationals' internationalization strategies: New realities, new pathways. *California Management Review*, 66(1): 96-123.
- Zeli, A. 2024. Postmodern International Relations: Postmodernism beyond Social Constructivism. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*, 4(8): 946-955.
- Zeng, D.Z. ed., 2010. *Building engines for growth and competitiveness in China: Experience with special economic zones and industrial clusters*. World Bank Publications.
- Zondi, S. 2012. South Africa in southern Africa: A perspective. *Peace and Security Series*, pp. 4-31.
- Zuma, J. G. 2009. Address by President Jacob Zuma on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SA National Defence Force Participation in Peace Support Operations. [Online] Available at <https://www.sanews.gov.za> Date of access: 16 Oct. 2025.
- Zuma, J. 2013. South Africa in the BRICS', *Harvard International Review*, 35(2), pp. 17–21.

Available at: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=473beaa5-262b-3584-8bbc-09171960d193> Date of access: 28 Sep. 2025.

Zuma, J.G. Address by President Zuma during the China- South Africa business forum meeting, on the occasion of the state visit to the People's Republic of China, Beijing. [Online] Available at <https://www.presidency.gov.za> Date of access 05 Jul 2025.

Zuma, J. G. 2014. Address by President JB Zuma to the South Africa-China Business Forum on the occasion of the state visit to the People's Republic of China, Beijing. [Online] Available at <https://www.gov.za/news/speeches/address-president-jg-zuma-south-africa-china-business-forum-occasion-state-visit> Date of access: 24 Aug. 2025.

Zuma, J. G. 2017. State of the Nation Address. [Online] Available at, <http://www.gov.za/speeches/president-jacob-zuma-2017-state-nation-address-9-feb-2017-0000> Data of access: 08 Sep. 2025.



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222  
Fax: 018 299-4910  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics  
Committee (BaSSREC)**

Faculty of Humanities Ethics Office for Research,  
Training and Support  
Tel: 018 285 2457

Email: [Fmabocidemudia@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Fmabocidemudia@nwu.ac.za)

Senate Committee for Research Ethics  
Tel: 016 103 4446

Email: [Fezwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Fezwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za)

08 July 2025

## ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on **07/07/2025**, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

<b>Study title: An assessment of China-South Africa Relations: Insights from Zuma's Administration.</b>																															
<b>Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof. L. Amusan and Dr. M.B. Rapanyane</b>																															
<b>Student/Research Team: R. Chipape (34961194)</b>																															
<b>Ethics number:</b>	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>9</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="5">Study Number</td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="5">Status</td></tr></table> <p>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</p>	N	W	U	-	0	0	9	4	8	-	2	5	-	A	7	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status				
N	W	U	-	0	0	9	4	8	-	2	5	-	A	7																	
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																					
<b>Application Type: Single study</b>	<b>Risk:</b> <table border="1"><tr><td>No risk</td></tr></table>	No risk																													
No risk																															
<b>Commencement date: 07/07/2025</b>	<b>Expiry date: 07/07/2026</b>																														
<b>Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</b>																															

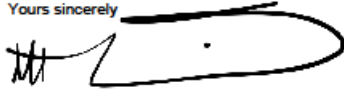
### Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

<b>General conditions:</b> <p>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and</li><li>without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.</li></ul></li></ul>
--

- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
  - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
    - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via [BaSSREC Admin@nwu.ac.za](mailto:BaSSREC.Admin@nwu.ac.za).*

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof. E. Idemudia

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm  
8 November 2018  
File reference: 9.1.5.4.2