The Evolution of China-South Africa Relations: A Constructivist Interpretation

By

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Social Science in Political Science. Cluster of International and Public Affairs, College of Humanities, School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

June 2014

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Acknowledgements and dedication

My greatest appreciation goes to Dr. Khondlo Mtshali who has been my biggest academic influence for almost two years. I appreciate the fact that after helping me with the thesis for my honours degree, he also offered to guide me through this dissertation. The academic material that he introduced me to, the patience he exercised throughout my struggle with this project, and the sound advice he gave me have helped to transform this work from an aspiration to a tangible contribution to the study of international relations.

My deepest affection goes to my mother, my two sisters and my two brothers who have endured my absence of more than two years from home with unwavering fortitude. I would also like to register my happiness for the latest addition to our family, Chileshe Mwila, a beloved nephew that I am yet to meet. I would also like to thank my many relatives for their enduring support.

I would also like to remember my father, Joseph Matambo Nkosi who died on 10 May 2001; he would have been proud that I have reached thus far in my academic ambition, however modest this achievement might be.

To my many friends, too numerous to be mentioned, I extend a pledge of appreciation for their support and humour. Without these heroic individuals, I would not have weathered the storms that have come my way. Lastly, I would like to thank the School of Social Sciences of the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the financial and academic sponsorship that it has rendered to me throughout the duration of my studies.

I dedicate this research to my elder sister – Lontia Bertha Matambo, who, to all intents and purposes, has been more than a sister to me.

Declaration

I,   , declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Abstract

The rise of China in the international system and its involvement in Africa has attracted a lot of attention and speculation. Western perceptions of China's involvement in Africa are fraught with concerns that a more powerful, undemocratic China will not compel odious African governments to heed Western calls for better governance. China's foreign policy of "non-interference" in domestic affairs has been criticised as China's ploy to perpetuate its poor record of human rights; and provide alternatives to countries that are under Western sanctions. Another concern is that China is challenging Western economic dominance in Africa. Thus, the West regards China's incursions into Africa with suspicion and paranoia. The wide use of realism to explain international relations is hugely responsible for the pessimistic attitude towards the rise of China. In realist perspectives, the rise of China will unavoidably disrupt the current international order and portend possible disaster for other international actors.

This research uses constructivism, a relatively underutilized theory of international relations, to analyse relations between China and South Africa. The reasons for this undertaking are manifold. First, by looking at relations between the two countries, the research shows that nations relate according to specific social contexts, from which stem shared identities and interests. Second, the research seeks to illustrate, by dividing Sino-South African relations into three epochs, that China and South Africa have visibly changed their identities and interests since the mid-twentieth century. This shows that, contrary to realism, national identities and interests are subject to change. Third, the fact that China and South Africa perceive each other as allies in the current international system reinforces the constructivist claim that when identities and interests between actors in the international system correlate, the formation of genuine cooperation, community and international interests becomes possible. This is a further departure from realism which claims that cooperation among "self-interested" actors is difficult if not impossible to achieve. Furthermore, much literature about China looks at China as a country with an enduring and unchangeable identity. It is hoped that through the use of constructivism, this notion will be put to credible scrutiny. The research emphasizes the fact that South Africa should not be fanatic in its embrace of China as a kindred spirit of the global South and a better alternative to Western countries. The paranoia of the West is as misplaced as African naiveté in dealing with China. This caveat will also prove that constructivism is not an idealistic approach to international relations. It

concedes the fact that cooperation and mutual development among nations can be hard to attain when social relations provide no conducive environment for their nurturance.

Acronyms

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FOCAC	Forum for China-Africa Cooperation
G20	Group of Twenty
G8	Group of Eight
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme
ICBC	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	The Republic of China (Taiwan)
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	South Africa

SACP	South African Communist Party
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNITA	The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	The United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWII	The Second World War
WWI	The First World War
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Epigraph

Don't hate China – but don't trust her either.

Trust ourselves – have faith in Africa.

I have faith in the future of Africa, a faith as strong as only an African heart can hold.

I have faith in an Africa where neither the foreigner's rod nor the dictator's heel shall be felt.

I have faith in an Africa with democracy and justice so firmly entrenched that the cocoon man can laugh with pitying contempt at anyone who says we need a violent revolution to achieve progress.

I have faith in an Africa too sensible to allow nuclear and other armaments to play a part in her internal and external policies.

The road to such a future is no easy road. So much the greater, then, must our efforts be to follow it; and so much the greater the prize for achieving it.

I have faith in the future of Africa.

Emmanuel Hevi (1967) – *The Dragon's Embrace*

<u>**CHAPTER ONE: General Introduction**</u>

1.1) Background

During the Cold War ideological conflicts between the capitalist Western bloc and the communist Eastern bloc dominated international politics (Cesa 2009:177). In response, Afro-Asian countries convened the Bandung Conference of 1955 in Indonesia to demonstrate their amity and impartiality towards the Cold War belligerents. This was the precursor of the non-aligned movement (Hunter and Sexton 1999:181). Among the countries involved was the People's Republic of China (PRC)[1], a communist state and a solid ally of the Soviet Union up to the mid-1950s. The Sino-Soviet alliance ebbed away as China inveighed against, inter alia, the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary and criticised Nikita Khrushchev's idea of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist West (nLüthi, 2008). China also wanted to adhere to a strict form of communism which prescribed that capitalist and imperialist systems could only be replaced with a more humane and communist structure through radical revolution which would more likely involve violence. The Soviet Union under Khrushchev was distancing itself from this view and entertained the possibility of a parliamentary solution to capitalism and imperialism. China accused the Soviet Union of revisionism and made clear its ambition to be the due representative of communism (Hunter and Sexton 1999:183).

The PRC wanted to be recognized as a power that could rival the Soviet Union (Goldman and Ou-Fang Lee 2002:448). Being the most populated country in the world, China was piqued for being elbowed from Superpower status. As Ian Taylor puts it, China feels that it "has somehow been cheated of its place in the sun by the imperialists of the nineteenth century, and that this prevention of… assuming its rightful place as a world power has continued, even to contemporary times" (Taylor 2006:1). China sought to discredit the United States and the Soviet Union by aligning itself with the global South. From that context it would posture itself as a *de facto* spokesperson of the marginalized third world. It started aiding African liberation movements that were fighting colonialism and minority rule. In this way the PRC presented itself as a kindred spirit of the South, scornful of colonialism and hegemonism.

The Sino-Soviet split put China in a precarious position with liberation movements that enjoyed Soviet largesse (Taylor 2006:133). Among these were the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. However, China's

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[1] China and PRC will be used interchangeably. The Republic of China, otherwise known as Taiwan should not be confused with mainland China (PRC). PRC is the subject of this research.

anti-apartheid stance was consonant with ANC and SACP policy. Thus, the South African liberation movements had fitful relationships with China throughout the struggle against apartheid. However, from the end of the Cold War and the accession of the ANC to government in South Africa, the PRC and South Africa have had a relationship which has largely been cordial and stable, save for the period from 1990 to 1997 when the PRC was subtly coaxing South Africa into dropping relations with Taiwan which it had inherited from apartheid governments and resuming Sino-South Africa relations that had been severed for over thirty years (Daniel, 1995).

It is from this background that this research emerges. Contrary to prior analysis which has been dominated by realism (e.g. see Taylor, 2006; Botha, 2006; Naidu, 2008), this research will use the constructivist theory of international relations to analyse South Africa-PRC relations. Constructivism in international relations does not give *a priori* judgements about state interests. Political predeterminism, like realism, can be repudiated by the proof that national identities and interests are social constructs and hence dynamic rather than static (Walt, 1998). The current international system is undergoing swift economic and political change with the Third World increasing in influence and the emergence of a multipolar order said to be almost within grasp.

The end of the Cold War and apartheid has promoted the rise of regional powers and China is a prime example of these. The PRC will increasingly play a principal role in the international political economy and it is imperative that other developing states like South Africa engage it. While it is generally maintained that the US will remain a global leader for a long time, China's growth in recent decades has been so breathtaking that by some estimations, it is the only state that can possibly challenge the US "in the foreseeable future" (Scott 2010:4; see also Scott, vom Hau and Hulme, 2010). It is cardinal for South Africa to look at how China has changed and been changed by international relations in order to comprehend China's real motives. Needless to say China may have policies that are inimical to South Africa's development, and these have to be rejected. Nevertheless, the use of constructivism to analyse China's interest will preclude South Africa from impetuously yielding to the criticisms from other powers hence forfeiting certain benefits that China could proffer.

1.2) Outline of the Research Problem

The problem statement of this research is expressed thus: while there have been numerous academic analyses on relations between South Africa and China, these have been confined to widely known theories of international relations. As such, other theories, like constructivism, which can also offer cogent explanations of international relations, have been largely unused. This research seeks to offer an alternative and, hopefully, better theory of understanding how different social contexts impinge on the type of relations that South Africa and China have shared since the mid-twentieth century. It is hoped that the research will show that by using constructivism this project is not merely seeking – without justification - to be different from mainstream theories like realism. The arguments enunciated in the research should make the use of constructivism empirically applicable and intellectually defensible in international relations studies.

Using the constructivist approach to interpret international relations, this research will interrogate the evolving economic and political relations between South Africa and China. The decisive departure that this research makes from realist analyses is that it does not ignore the fact that the international system is influenced by the type of relations that states share. Depending on whether or not two countries are antithetical to, or friendly with, each other, their interests are also bound to follow the social relations that states share. Constructivism does not reject the fact that in formulating foreign policies countries seek self-interest. What seems to be the unique factor of constructivism is that social relations influence the identities and interests that countries have of each other. Furthermore, constructivism looks at how ideas, identities and interests "are created, how they evolve, and how they shape the way states understand and respond to their situation" (Walt 1998:41).

While realism may obsess with the importance of power and self-interest in international relations, the aspirations that countries have of these are not totally independent to social relations that countries have. To make this point less mystifying, the PRC's relations with Taiwan are those of one power seeking to overtake another which it considers a part of it. In an event where the PRC extended certain overtures to Taiwan, the latter would justifiably be leery of this development because since 1949, mainland China has incessantly campaigned for the incorporation of Taiwan into the PRC. China and South Africa have relations that are socially different from PRC-Taiwan relations. The mode with which these countries relate to one another pays testimony to the fact that pre-given interests are not invariably applicable.

In PRC-Taiwan relations, the possibility of dominance and incorporation is undeniable. This would, to some extent, justify claims of realism. However, in the PRC-South Africa relationship, the social contingencies of PRC-Taiwan relations scarcely apply.

This research will have to prove, from this backdrop, that international relations are governed by social interaction. Without discounting the primacy of self-interest in constructing foreign policies, this research will seek to show that countries acquire certain identities under certain social, historical and political contexts; and it is these identities that shape what sort of interest a country will have in its relations with another. From this, it can be inferred; identities and interests of nations in the international systems are neither pre-determined nor static; and neither are they impervious to specific and variant social relations between states. The research will thus have the responsibility of making clear the shortcomings of realism in explaining relations between the PRC and South Africa. For this undertaking to have merit the research endeavours to prove that there have been changes in the identities, interests and relations of the PRC and South Africa. The research will also have to prove that the many forms of realism that converge on the claim that nations are absolute actors in the international system are not invariably and eternally defensible. Curiously, constructivism also buys into the concept of the state being the centre of IR analysis. This is where the research will have to cite international bodies like the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, BRICS and multinational corporations as new possible centres of power in the international system and how these can exercise a reasonable amount of influence on international relations.

1.3) Research Hypothesis

Still standing in need of further evidence, the research starts with the supposition that China and South Africa have been influenced, in their international relations, by the international social structures which impacted on national interest and international relations. Another assumption is that Sino-South African relations have been charted by social factors, which at certain times drew a wedge between the countries, but also at times brought them to cooperate. In their relations, therefore, China and South Africa are susceptible to both mutually beneficial and deleterious relations. These assumptions are representative of the constructivist theory of international relations and the research, through further investigation, is aimed at justifying them.

1.4) Reasons for choosing this study

The rise of China "is causing anxiety in some world capitals and raising the question whether an increasingly strong and assertive China will become a rational, peaceful, and pragmatic power, or an irrational, bellicose, and expansionist state" (Zhao 2006:33). With its increasing prominence China is rapidly becoming a player whose manoeuvres in the international political economy will likely have international implications. Thus, China's involvement in Africa should claim the attention of African policy makers and all concerned. China's relationship with Africa should be studied because it "could be one of the most important developments in the international relations of the post-Cold-War era" (Ampiah and Naidu 2008:3; see also Large 2008). In addition "history and the current socioeconomic challenges [China] faces – which closely resemble those in Africa – position it well to engage with Africa and understand the many difficulties the continent faces" (Alves and Draper 2006:27).

Literature about China's growth and its implications for global politics and Africa has been plentiful. What lacks is the use of different theories to explain this relationship. This research aspires to look at China and its relations with a single African country – South Africa. The motive for this specification is to avert unwarranted generalizations of what China's rise means to Africa. Another purpose for undertaking this subject is to challenge the prevailing mentality of using more common international relations theory – mostly realism - to explain all international relations. The research will use the constructivist theory to explain that many of the realist arguments that are adduced to explain international relations ignore the fact that the international system is a social realm in which actors' identities and interests are influenced by social relations and are hence subject to change. The research will categorize China and South African relations in three epochs to show how the two countries have mutated in their identities and interests.

The reasons for this division are manifold. First, by looking at relations between the two countries, the research will attempt to prove that nations relate according to specific social contexts, from which stem shared identities and interests. Second, the research will seek to illustrate that China and South Africa have visibly changed their identities and interests since the mid-twentieth century. Third, the fact that China and South Africa perceive each other as allies in the current international system reinforces the constructivist claim that when identities and interests between actors in the international system correlate, the formation of genuine cooperation, community and international interests becomes possible.

The first epoch extends from the mid-twentieth century to the death of Mao. South Africa was under apartheid and the current ruling party (the ANC) was an exiled liberation movement. This period also includes the Cold War during which the capitalist and socialist blocs drew a sharp dichotomy in global politics. The main conflict initially evolved around the United States and the USSR. At a later stage China started fighting its ideological battle against the Soviet Union's stature as the global communist representative. Alan Hutchison, writing during the Sino-Soviet split, observed that "with very few exceptions, China's choice of movements to support, and her actions towards these and to other groups, have been dictated by the need to challenge, surpass or embarrass the Soviet Union" (1975:233). China's foreign policy was thus deemed reactive (see Taylor, 2006). During this time "China's relations with the ANC were most important but most tenuous" among the South African liberation movements (Zhong and Xu 2008:1219).

The second epoch extends from the death of Mao, the genesis of China's modernization programme under Deng Xiaoping and ends with the resumption of Sino-South African diplomatic ties. Post-Mao China mellowed in its call for radical revolutions as ways of establishing global communism. It expressed a willingness to work with its erstwhile ideological foes for the sake of gaining its much needed material growth. This period was characterized by the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as sole superpower. It also encompasses the "two Chinas dilemma" (Naidu 2008:169) after 1994. During this time South Africa was dithering about whether or not to cease its diplomatic relations Taiwan. South Africa finally capitulated in November 1997 with an abrupt announcement by President Nelson Mandela (Taylor, 2006). By severing ties with Taiwan and forging new ones with the PRC, post-apartheid South Africa demonstrated what Naidu (2008) calls vacillations between a realist and a moral foreign policy.

The third epoch starts from the resumption of formal Sino-South African relations to the present. This period has witnessed the dramatic increase of relations between China and South Africa and has also been characterized by an escalation of South-South cooperation and the changing world order from unipolar to multipolar. South Africa and China are perfect examples of how South-South relations are gathering momentum. By looking at these three epochs this research argues that relations between China and South Africa, and by extension all actors in the international system, are influenced by specific social relations. In this case, it is plausible to argue that interests between and among states are significantly governed by

these social contexts. Furthermore, these interests are driven more by intersubjective identities that actors share in their relations.

Interests are not static and cooperation among nations that share similar ambitions is possible without the realist obsession with threats and jostles for power. Neither China nor South Africa is imprisoned to the atavistic and unchanging instincts that are characteristic of realist arguments. Far from the pessimism that characterizes realism, mutually beneficial cooperation is possible in the international system. By categorizing the relationships between China and South Africa in a way that this research proposes, it is hoped that new academic light will be cast on South Africa's relationship with China. By way of caution, using the constructivist framework to explain China-South Africa relations does not mean that these relations are free of concerns. On the contrary, the research argues for something akin to what Ofodile (2008:510) calls "guarded optimism regarding the deepening relationship between Africa and China." This means that while South Africa cannot afford to ignore China's growing prominence, it should be alive to the dynamism of interests and identities and only embrace those that will enhance mutual development and not ruin the modest developments that countries of the South, especially Africa, are making.

1.5) Key questions to be asked

- Which of the two approaches, realism or constructivism, can best address South Africa – China relations?

- Focusing on the period from the inception of the PRC to the present, have the identities and interests of China and South Africa changed, or have they remained constant?

1.6) Objectives

- To evaluate the appropriateness of constructivism in the study of South Africa- China relations.

- To explore the identities and interests of South Africa and China from the 1950's to the present.

1.7) Broader issues to be investigated

Currently, the world is undergoing fundamental changes characterized by the increasing economic and political stature of the so-called middle and regional powers (Flemes, 2007). As this happens, the identities and interests of these states are changing. This research seeks to draw attention to constructivism and how it offers an effective explanation of international relations as they are characterized by the change in identity and interest through which players of the international system go.

The research will attempt to present a comprehensive history of China and South Africa's interaction from the mid-twentieth century to the present. This will be a way of bolstering the argument that identities and interests in the two countries have evolved over time. China is one of the promising global players of the twenty-first century and South Africa is also considered a regional leader of Southern Africa and Africa (Flemes, 2007). By using realism to explain the South Africa-China relationship, many scholars forecast a presentiment of unfairness on South Africa. Using the constructivist theory could help South Africa to guard against the precipitate rejection of Chinese overtures. However, the research does not by any means call for a blind embrace of China. The strength of constructivism resides in the fact that since relations between actors constantly change, it submits that there is always a possibility of change that is detrimental to other nations. South Africa should then monitor the changing identities and interests of China and note how these can enhance or diminish the identity and interest of South Africa. The main objective of South Africa should be that China develops with it and not at its expense.

1.8) Research methodology

In line with the theoretical framework and the philosophical analysis used for this research the study was qualitative. This is, however, not the most clear-cut justification because quantitative research can also be used "to study almost anything imaginable in the social world" (Kalof, Dan and Dietz 2008:79). The most obvious indication of what type of research this is resides in the fact it did not base its analysis of data on statistical suggestion such as a quantitative inquiry demands. This is so because the research looked at social relations between states and how these influence the identities and interests of state actors. In other words, "the tradition of qualitative research tends to focus on *meaning and motivation*

[original emphasis] that underlie…understandings of processes in the social world" (Kalof *et al* 2008:79). As David Silverman (2010:104) explains "for qualitative research, detail is found in the precise particulars of such matters as people's understanding and interaction." The insistence on interaction was of great import for this research because, as aforementioned, social interactions are what frame the kind of international relations that states share. In addition, constructivism is in accord with a qualitative methodology whose goal is "to understand processes, experiences and meanings people assign to things" (Kalof *et al* 2008:79).

Some theorists have likened constructionism to postmodernism and hence discounted it with the same criticisms that are leveled against postmodernists. Without adopting all the claims of postmodernism, there are some of its prescriptions that helped to bolster the validity of this research. For example: "the realization that facts (in this case relations between states)…are socially constructed in particular contexts" (Silverman 2010:108) is consonant with the claim that relations between South Africa and China have been constructed by specific historical contexts. This facet of postmodernism "defines the constructionist model, concerned with questions of 'what?' and 'how?' which informs much of qualitative research" (Silverman 2010:108). Kalof *et al* (2008) argue that qualitative research concentrates "on *how* people make sense of their setting" and "*why* people think and act as they do" (Kalof *et al* 2008:80). Despite being at variance with the "what" and "why" focus on qualitative research, Kalof *et al (*2008) and Silverman (2010) agree on the influence of social constructionism in qualitative research. Thus the theory and methodology of this research are validly connected. One of the arguments of this research was that international relations are not immune to social interaction. As Kalof *et al* explain, the principal tenet of constructionism or constructivism "is that the social world is actively constructed by interactions" (2008:80), and that this is the line of theory that has had significant influence on qualitative research.

The sources of qualitative data for this research were be books, journal articles, news bulletins and internet sources. The constructivist framework, which this research uses, has largely been influential in determining the type of analysis that was applied for this research. Interpretive data analysis was used to examine the data for this research. The researcher acknowledged that analysts have different modes of understanding data and reality (Hammersley, 1992). These are likely to influence the conclusions that one may draw from collected data. Research on China-South Africa relations has often drawn different conclusions because of the frameworks used which also dictated that data was analysed in

ways that were applicable to that. For this reason, qualitative data interpretation served the purpose of this research, which used constructivism as its theoretical framework. The findings that were drawn from this type of analysis were different from much of what has gone before it, but that enhanced the basic claims of constructivism; that the world is understood or constructed through dynamic social relations and paradigms. Cassidy makes a succinct defense of interpretive analysis by saying that the social world, or in the case of this research, the international system is "contextually bound up in personal, social, organisational and political histories (social constructions)" (2013:28). For this reason, the tool of data analysis should be something which is tolerant to social interpretation.

As a matter of caution, interpretive analysis is threatened by contingencies that are likely to distort facts. People are usually influenced by certain assumptions and world views and these have the potential to influence data analysis. This research thus comes with the responsibility to acknowledge these biases; this would prevent what Cassidy (2013:27) calls "hubris", an intoxicated conviction that one's interpretation or understanding of texts is the best. Recognizing prejudice or predetermined mentalities as parts of involuntary thought means that the researcher conceded the possibility of error in qualitative analysis (Dowling, 2006). It is hoped that this research – while recognizing the fissures between bias and objectivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) – was a valuable display and credible interpretation of social relations in the international system.

1.9) Limitations of Research

To ongoing analyses of China-South Africa relations, this research added the three-epoch approach which has hitherto not been used to show the way social and international relations change with different contexts. Many have written about the changing relations between China, the ANC and South Africa from the 1950s to the present age, but have been oblivious to the fact that the shift in relations among these players bears out the claims of constructivism, not realism. This research will hopefully inspire the exploration of more international relations theories.

The research has a number of limitations. Firstly, the researcher was not privy to certain materials, especially those that might have been written in Chinese languages in which the researcher is illiterate. Second, because the research looks at a period of almost sixty years

(from early 1950s to 2014), it risked being shallow in detail. The research, thus, was challenged to make sure that the main research objective is not outweighed by historical detail. Furthermore, qualitative research hinges on interpretation of facts and hence could be sullied with personal bias. Unlike quantitative investigations that employ statistical evidence, "qualitative research investigates questions without statistical tools, relying instead on the ability of the researcher to observe patterns" (Kalof *et al* 2008:79). In this way, qualitative researchers should be rigorous enough to find compelling evidence that justifies the claims made in the research.

1.10) Structure of dissertation

The first chapter has given the background of the research including the questions that the research seeks to answer, the objectives to be reached and the type of methodology and analysis that were used to answer the research questions and reach the stated objectives. Chapter two looks at existing literature on China and its standing in the international system. The chapter also presents literature on Sino-South African relations. This will expose the dearth of alternative analytical approaches in international relations analysis. The third chapter comprises the three epochs through which this research showed that Chinese and South African national identities and interests have not been constant because of historical, political and social factors.

Structures like the Cold War, the unipolar world order and the current world order have all been influential in shaping Sino-South African identities and interests. Chapter four is analytical in manner and applies the arguments of constructivism to see how they can help explain Sino-South African relations. The chapter looks at factors that cause genuine Sino-South African relations. This is in contrast to theories like realism that do not readily accept the possibility of authentic, let alone, altruistic cooperation among actors. The concept of correlating identities and interests in South Africa and China will help to explain why South Africa and China relate in the manner that they do. The fifth chapter is the general conclusion which also recommended more use of constructivism in understanding international relations.

CHAPTER TWO: Preliminary literature study and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a general overview of preceding literature that pertains to the subject of this research. The chapter will show the clear dominance that realism enjoys as a theory of interpreting international relations. The chapter has a section on realism to emphasize this bias; it should be borne in mind, though, that realism is not the theory being used for this research. Realism will appear extensively as a way of showing that when this research seeks to offer an alternative theory of international relations, the researcher knows exactly what realism talks about. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to constructivism, the theoretical framework to be used for this research.

2.2) International relations and the Concept of foreign policy

This section will give a brief overview of international relations and foreign policy. This will be helpful in understanding how China and South Africa share the type of relations that they do. The myriad contexts that govern foreign policy-making will cast more light on why South Africa and China would think history has put them in a similar situation from which they can cooperate to realize mutual development. The international system is comprised of many actors with different military, economic, political and social strengths. These differences engender justified apprehension from states that might fear being hemmed in by more powerful states. Colonization, imperialism and the coerced cooption of certain societies into bigger power centres have proven that powerful nations can indeed manipulate the international system to bolster their prestige, economy and military strength even though this might be to the detriment of less powerful actors. In such cases, international relations could rightly be said to have been more beneficial to developed powers. However unjust international relations might be, states are compelled to relate to each other because of the fact that no nation, however developed it might be, has all the endowments needed to secure its survival. It is through relating with other nations that a state can secure much needed resources.

The threat of an unjust and violent international system has forced the development of agreements that emphasize the sovereignty of states. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) has been generally referred to as a milestone in securing state sovereignty of states in the international system. Alongside international agreements, such as the Peace of Westphalia,

which try to regulate how states can intervene in the internal affairs of other nations, states have foreign policies which also guide how they engage with fellow players on the international platform. Foreign policy, hence, is the most important way through which states can feature in the international system. In a world which has become increasingly globalized, foreign policy has proportionately become more vital for states. Foreign policy is instrumental in making sure that globalization does not become a subtle cultural, social, economic and political takeover of smaller nations by big ones.

Matshanda argues that "foreign policy is arguably the single most important policy of any modern nation-state, with the state being the main executor of this policy" (2009:35). Foreign policy embodies "the sum total of all activities by which international actors act, react and interact with the environment beyond their national borders" (Vale and Mphaisha 1999:98). This assertion affirms the fact that domestic and international factors play a salient role in the formulation of foreign policy. Different nations have different goals and aspirations, and framing foreign policy that is tailor-made to sate these desires is an important necessity for states. It is for this reason that foreign policies can neither be uniform nor unchanging across actors of the international system. In a similar way, states try to construct different foreign policies towards different states and other transnational or international players (Palmer and Morgan, 2006). Through foreign policy states attempt to secure their interest through international interaction (Naaz, 2012).

Chandra-Sekhar states that though the main rationale for foreign policy is to achieve national interest, "a country's foreign policy is generally governed by numerous historical, political, economic, geographic, cultural, religious, ethnic and other considerations" (1961:200). By this implication, foreign policy is actually an expression of how a state perceives itself. If foreign policy is to enjoy the endorsement of citizens, it has to be consonant with national identity. Holland writes that "frequently, the most powerful way of achieving a dominant foreign policy is through its framing in ways that link it irrevocably to national identity" (2011:55). Premising foreign policy on national identity is a shrewd political exploit in that the policy becomes not what the state supports but what the state is. Thus, to contest foreign policy on such grounds is tantamount to contesting the identity that a state has taken for itself. A good example of this is the Chinese demeanour towards Africa and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. China identified itself as a kindred spirit of the Third World in its dealings with Africa. Towards the Soviet Union, however, China, especially during the Mao era, wanted to present itself as the more credible custodian of communism. Those who

promote foreign policy are thus tasked to sell the identity of their states. This is what Zhou En-Lai sought to do during his long visit to Africa in 1963-64. He presented the identity of China that was appealing to independent African states. The main agents of foreign policies are diplomats, trade negotiators and military personnel. The range of these agents shows that foreign policy can manifest itself in political, economic and at times military terms. States at times have had to exercise the option of negotiations, diplomacy, even war, in order to implement their foreign policy (Naaz, 2012).

From what has been written about international relations and how they are mainly governed by foreign policies of states, the concept of national interest seems to enjoy supremacy. As Palmer and Morgan (2006) aver, foreign policy is framed in a way that the state will seek to alter components of the international status quo that are injurious to national interest and will promote those that enhance national interest. Waltz talks of "unregulated competition" (1979:117) in the international system to which states respond by making self-benefiting policies. One of the theories that have accentuated national interest in international relations is realism. The ensuing pages will present the basic tenets of realism and neorealism and their concept of national interest. The main reason for opting to present realism is that much literature that has been written on China's international relations has been explained or analysed using this paradigm. In addition, since the end of the Second World War (WWII) realism has been the most dominant theory of international relations.

2.3 Realism in International Relations

The section will present the general overview of realism, a theory which has dominated post-WWII international relations. The popularity of realism has seen it being used to explain almost all forms of international relations in the current international system. Realism replaced the dominance of idealism, a theory which explained international politics with decisive reliance on ideas of international cooperation, ethics and dialogue. After the First World War, the formation of the League of Nations - mainly advocated by President Woodrow Wilson of the United States - was an idealistic manoeuvre driven by the conviction that human need for a better international system would prevent another far-reaching conflagration (Nau, 2012; Nicholson, 2002). Idealism makes an optimistic assessment of human nature and argues that the international system should be governed by a common yearning for cooperation in confronting global problems (Basu, 2012).

The failure of the League of Nations to preclude the eruption of WWII engendered the necessity for a worldview that would have an objective and not utopian interpretation of the world. Thus, the theory of realism seemed felicitous in that it claimed to explain the world the way it is rather than the way people would want it to be (Nau, 2012). One book that made a huge impact in shifting twentieth century political theory in favour of realism was E. H Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (1956). Carr writes about the interwar period during which idealism held much sway and the world was lulled into thinking that the international system could be a world of cooperative security.[2] With the outbreak of WWII Carr deprecated idealism as utopian and running athwart the proven "fact that few people do desire a 'world state' of 'collective security' and that those who think they desire it mean different and incompatible things by it" (1956:10). He thus talks of realism as "the impact of thinking upon wishing which in the development of a science follows the breakdown of its visionary projects and marks the end of its specifically utopian period" (1956:10).

The theory of realism has been attributed to thinkers like Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and more recently Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz (Basu, 2012). From Machiavelli, realism adopted the claim that politics and indeed international politics are driven by amoral forces, wherein politicians need not revert to their values for political action; foreign policy, in the same way, is guided by national interest rather than moral precepts. For this reason, realists are quick to discount any theories of international relations or foreign policy that base their tenets on moral principle. Thus, actions such as humanitarian initiatives can only be done if they bolster the material interest of nations. Rosenau (1971) refers to realists as objectivists because they argue that national interest and identity have objective existence and hence personal values or beliefs cannot determine what national interest is. Though values can be occasionally used to defend national policy, realists argue that the use is strictly euphemistic, aimed at concealing the real motive of foreign policy which is "interest defined as power" (in Basu 2012:172). It is important to note that national interest in realist terms refers to power. This is what sets Hans Morgenthau's thought apart from other theories of international relations. Despite stating that "the kind of national interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated", he still insisted on linking interest to power (Morgenthau 1954:9).

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[2] See also Basu, R (2012). "Realism" in Basu, R (ed). *International Politics: Concepts, Theories and Issues*. New Delhi: Sage, pp.170-185.

Morgenthau (1958), one of the most celebrated advocates of realism, argues that actors in the international system are immanently concerned with power. He states that "there is no escape from the evil of power, regardless of what one does" (Morgenthau 1973:13). This concept of power politics "is [sometimes] known by the German word *realpolitik*" (Nicholson 2002:91).[3] The inescapable lust for power is understood as inherently embedded in human nature and the international system is thus driven by these human instincts (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985). Realism also argues that human nature is essentially selfish. Thus, states always act in a selfish manner because they express human or individual nature at a general scale. Human nature here is akin to the behaviour that characterizes Thomas Hobbes' state of nature where every human being is inexorably involved in what Nicholson calls "a war of all against all" (2002:91) to survive. In all the activities in which states indulge, they do so for purposes of survival, power, wealth and security (Hurd, 2008). By starting their analysis at the atomic human level, realists reach the inference that even rationality, the faculty used for assessing one's interests, is uniform in human beings. Decisions that are taken by states are the exact sentiments that individuals espouse. The state is thus taken as a unitary system, with correlations between individual and general interests.

Morgenthau avers that because human nature is fixed, political realists can determine and predict with certitude the actions of "statesmen" (sic) (Morgenthau 1958:6). The state is thus understood as an objective entity which is mechanical and can be fathomed independent of specific social or historical contexts. Carr (1956) argues that though the arguments of realism may appear critical or cynical, they are nevertheless correct because people are incapable of transmuting the world by mere purpose and wishful thinking. Indeed, Carr goes on, wisdom resides in accepting the world in its immutable form; and also in scouting for ways of how a state can adapt to this type of a world. State identity – in realism - is that of a self-interested actor and its interests are survival and power. States are perceived as the most important players in international relations because only they know what national interests are (Nicholson, 2002). Thus, according to realism "no overarching or sovereign authority exists to control the actions of states or relations among or between them" (Basu 2012:172).

Morgenthau forcefully supports realism amid possible alternative theories. He argues that realism should not be discounted because it is an old theory; he is of the conviction that history bears out realist assumptions. In Morgenthau's words, novelty "is not a virtue in

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[3] See also Waltz (1979:117).

political theory, nor is old age a defect" (Morgenthau 1958:4). By this he attempts to forestall the employment of theories which might aspire to challenge old ones. He argues that to discredit a theory on the basis of rational grounds and not on the basis of reason and experience is to employ the prejudice that the present is better than the past (Morgenthau, 1958). Hence, realism is touted as eternally applicable and should not be rebuffed by the intellectual intrigue of upcoming theories.

After Morgenthau, the biggest contemporary influence in the school of realism was Kenneth Waltz. His book, *Theory of International Politics* (1979) has been known to represent neorealism, a slight departure from what has been called the classic realism of Morgenthau and other writers who preceded Waltz's book. One of the biggest variants that neorealists bring to international politics is that they acknowledge the influence – though minor - of non-state actors in international relations, unlike classical realists who consign non-state actors to the margins of state behaviour (Nicholson, 2002). Waltz presents the concept of power as a relational concept in that states seek it to be more powerful than others. This is the pith of what has come to be known as the balance of power concept and Waltz asserts that "if there is any distinctively political theory of international relations, balance of power theory is it" (1979:117).

The balance of power argument leads Waltz to the inference that "states are unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination" (1979:118). Waltz makes a distinction between national and international politics. "National politics", he argues, "is the realm of authority and administration, and of law. International politics is the realm of power, of struggle, and of accommodation" (Waltz 1979:113). Thus, Waltz presents the international system as anarchic spurred "only by relations of strength" (1979:112) and different from a national system where authority maintains some order. It is precisely because of such arguments that realists posit that the rise of any power is bound to cause a disruption in the international system. John Mearsheimer (2001) predicts that China's rise will 'tragically' provoke great power conflicts that are inevitable in the international system when one power is challenging the status quo.

2.4 China under the Realist Prism

The previous section intended to explain the main claims of realism and neorealism. What has been more conspicuous in realist arguments is the high premium they attach to national interests, power relations and – to neorealists – the ingrained anarchy characterizing the international system. This section reviews the literature that has used realism to explain China's international posture and its recent stupendous rise. The section will also use the literature which – though not directly mentioning realism – made arguments and allusions that are consonant with those of realism. As will be seen, there has been a paucity of literature that has sought to explore other theories as possible tools for interpreting the rise of China and the type of international relations it betokens. The literature that has been reviewed for this research will be presented in a systematic manner: it will first present how China's growth has been interpreted on a global scale; following from that will be literature based on China's tortuous relationship with Africa and finally, the research will present what has been written about China and its relationship with South Africa. The rationale for doing this is to show just how literature on China and its international participation has mainly spawned almost similar arguments without the exploration of other theoretical tools to interpret this participation.

In a world that realists consider anarchic and fraught with tussles for power, the rise of China is surely considered a threat to states that have already allocated for themselves the status of global power. Furthermore, if realism is anything to go by, China poses a threat to weaker nations that are increasingly becoming more politically and economically intimate with it. This is so because realism sees the world as an arena of self-interested states that will reserve no extents in trying to secure their goals and objectives. The dominance of realism in contemporary international relations has thus played the biggest role in influencing states to look askance at China's newly gained economic and political prominence. In addition, many writers have written about the perceptions that Chinese have of themselves. Right from the time of the Cold War, it is argued, the PRC wanted to be recognized as a power that could rival superpowers (Goldman and Ou-Fang Lee 2002:448). Being the most populated country in the world, China found its non-Superpower status galling and unfair (see Taylor, 2006:1). According to Shiping (2008) Chinese rue the fact that they are not regarded as great power despite being custodians of a rich civilization and history, the highest global population and a significant physical size of their country. It can be deduced from this that China might use its newly gained economic power to hold the world in thrall and thus take its 'due' place.

Against the backdrop of so much speculation about China's intention in the international system, China still applies the five principles[4] of peaceful existence as its main basis of foreign policy and international relations. China's foreign policy has also emphasized "territorial integrity, which for the PRC leadership necessarily implies the reintegration of Taiwan" (Hunter and Sexton 1999:177). O'Leary writes that from the outset of communist rule in 1949, China's "primary foreign policy preoccupation has been with imperialism" (1980:17). This was obviously because of China's own bitter history with Western dominance dating to the nineteenth century. Added to this threat from the West – especially Britain – China was also threatened by Japan "whose concern in [China's] affairs was…political, preferred to see China weak, divided and incapable of contesting Japanese supremacy or thwarting Japanese ambitions" (Carr 1937:160).

It was because of its profound antipathy to foreign domination that China played a significant role in terms of propaganda against colonialism. It also explains China's material assistance to national liberation movements in Asia and Africa. However, colonialism in both Africa and Asia is over and hence Chinese foreign policy making should be apposite to the current international system. According to writers who use neorealism as a tool for foreign policy making analysis, the form of the international system is the ultimate determinant of foreign policy. The conduct of states on the global arena is determined by their strength in comparison to other international players (Waltz, 1979). Thus, those who perceive China from this perspective expect a more imperious China with the proportional growth of its economy. One of the major reasons for supporting this argument is that there is always a possible discrepancy between what foreign policy might enunciate and the actual behaviour of the state. Hence, in the current international system China might claim, through its foreign policy, to be a cooperative power, but in actual fact succumb to "the drive for power and the will to dominate" which realists argue is the essential aspect of human nature and the international system (Basu 2012:173). Thus, seen from this plane, an increasingly developing China will precipitate international crises in its wake.

Mearsheimer (2001) wrote that the more China grows the more conflicts it will engender because this is an inevitable reality when one country threatens the global status quo. The current status quo has the United State of America at the helm and hence China is expected to challenge this. This argument is in tandem with realism (Mearsheimer is an avid defender of

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[4] See chapter three.

the *realpolitik*) in that it interprets national growth and its subsequent implication for global politics as seeking survival and dominance in the international system. This argument culminates in "various realist insights" which infer that "rising powers are almost invariably interested in challenging extant international institutions, norms, and power distributions" (Jonhston 2003:6). This proposition "falls generally within a power-transition version of realism where a static set of interests – the desire to establish a great power's sphere of influence – interacts with changing Chinese to give China more opportunities to challenge U.S. power" (Jonhston 2003:6).

Arguing from another angle, Zhu (2008) avers that "China's rise will be peaceful" because "the unipolar 'American system' and ongoing US efforts to make its hegemonic position unchallengeable have reduced China's balancing options and compelled China to bandwagon with the United States" (2008:) Bandwagon is a form of realism by which weaker states – realizing the invincibility of a bigger power – choose to toe the line of the bigger power and benefit from playing this subservient role (Waltz, 1979; Nau, 2012). Countries that 'bandwagon' support the status quo and Zhu is of the idea that China is such a country. The contrasting views of whether or not China will challenge the unipolar system or bandwagon all converge on the assumption that China adheres to realist instincts.

Yuan-Kang argues that evidence from history proves that China "behave[s] according to the dictates of realism" (2004:174). One of the main points of Yuan-Kang's article was that there are different types of realism and so not all of them can be discounted from explaining China's experience. However, these different aspects of realism still share assumptions of state centrality, the struggle for survival and the understanding of global anarchy. One aspect that has fueled the use of realism to explain China's international relations is China's awkward relationship with Taiwan, a state that it considers 'a renegade' of mainland China (Nau, 2012). The fierce competition between China and Taiwan has been used as a clear example of China's imperialist bent. The PRC favours a one-China policy by which no nation can simultaneously hold formal relations with the PRC and Taiwan. Much that has been written about China has drawn its inspiration from China's conduct at the formation of the People's Republic. China has undergone significant changes from the time of its founding to the present age. This necessitates the need for theoretical tools that take cognizance of the changes that China has undergone.

Tang Shiping, though stating that "there is little doubt that China's security strategy is still firmly rooted in realism", (2008:152) argues that the China of the Mao era was based on offensive realism and what came after that could aptly be called defensive realism. Shiping describes offensive realism as state behaviour that aims to augment the security status of the state while simultaneously and deliberately seeking to attenuate that of other states. Offensive realism represents the raw form of realism proposed by Morgenthau which states that conflicts in international relations are both inevitable and necessary. The ideological militancy of the Mao era and the bellicose way with which China sought to aid the battle against imperialism in colonized countries, especially in Africa, convinces Shiping that China was an offensive realist state. During the Sino-Soviet feud, one of the accusations that China hurled at Moscow was that the Soviet Union was derelict in its "international duty" for not being more radical in assisting liberation movements (Van Ness, 1971). The Mao era was thus characterized by radical ideology and the elevation of revolutions in the international system.

The period after Mao – according to Shiping (2008) – has been characterized by defensive realism. Other writers argue, almost similarly to Shiping, that "China's" current "military doctrine [is] based on 'active defence'" (Foot and Walter 2011:42). China no longer seeks to deliberately weaken the security or strength of other states; it appreciates the possibilities of cooperation in the international system and acknowledges the fact that even though countries do have disagreements radical conflict is not always inescapable. From Shiping's arguments, states are treated based on the type of realism they evince. When a state exhibits signs of offensive realism, other states may respond with "containment" (Shiping 2008:152). On the other hand, when a state displays defensive realism, other players on the international arena may see in it a possible ally and will respond with engagement. Recent decades have seen China being integrated more into the international system. The impressive number of countries that have recognized China over Taiwan proves that China appeals more to international players. Its joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 was another milestone pointing to an integrated China.

Shiping (2008) classifies contemporary China as a defensive realist state because it shows signs of restraint in its international posturing and displays a willingness to let other states limit its maneouvres. Classifying China as a more integrated and defensive state lends a bit of variety to how the PRC is perceived in the international system, even though realist interpretations still enjoy prevalence. Although Shiping still looks at China from the

paradigm of realism, the assertion that China is more defensive rather than offensive in its international bearing offers more positive possibilities for China's impact on Africa, the continent embodying most of the weakest states.

2.5 China and Africa

What has been written about China and its current relations with Africa has also followed the tenor of realism. Some Africans were suspicious of China's intention behind helping Africa during the anti-colonial crusade. Emmanuel Hevi (1963), a Ghanaian with an empirical experience of China, drew Africa's attention to what he thought was China's imperialist ambitions in Africa. Hevi (1967) urged Africans that imperialism was not the preserve of Western powers only. China's interest in Africa during the twilight of European colonialism allegedly signalled China's turn to conduct its "own carve-up" of Africa (Hevi 1967:66). By describing China as Eastern imperialists, Hevi bought into the realist interpretation that international relations are vastly dominated by the struggle for power among countries. Hevi cited China's 1962 brawls with India – despite sharing diplomatic peace promises - as proof that China was a power-hungry state ruled by "inveterate liars" who could not be trusted (1963:9). Felix Houphouet-Boigny – former president of Ivory Coast - was purported to have said that "in Nanking, China, Africans [were] being taught to assassinate those whose eyes are open to the Chinese danger, in order to replace them with servile men who will open the gates of Africa to China" (Van Ness, 1971).

In 1977, Charles Akinde of the Anti-Poverty Movement of Nigeria wrote a testy letter to the editor of the *African Communist* - the journal of the South African Communist Party (SACP) - describing China as the "enemy of African liberation" (Akinde, 1977). This came in the wake of China supporting the apartheid-backed UNITA movement of Angola. This Chinese move was done to oppose the MPLA of Angola which was supported by the Soviet Union (Akinde, 1977; Ofodile, 2008). By supporting UNITA, China, in unison with the South African government, was unwittingly supporting the mayhem that UNITA wrought in southern Angola. Akinde (1977) mentioned that "it [became] fashionable for China to oppose everything which the Soviet Union supports even when such a policy is detrimental to the interests of the people concerned" (Akinde 1977:117). This, he argued, was China showing its "anti-African face" (Akinde 1977:116).

The period of the 1980s saw a drastic decrease of China-Africa relations. Mao was dead and China toned down its communist propaganda. Deng Xiaoping appreciated the indispensability of the West in modernizing China's economy; and there was a sparkle of amity in Sino-Soviet relations after a protracted ideological conflict. Africa was fraught with unstable economies and volatile political circumstances which discouraged China from regarding the continent as useful to harness the Chinese modernization project (Hsiung, 1988; Harding, 1984: 184). However, after the Tiananmen Square crisis[5], China was ostracized by the West (Bergere, 2003) who had hitherto ignored the country's controversial human rights record (Taylor, 1998). The United States and a number of European countries even "announced economic sanctions" (Hutchings 2001:426) against China even though they did not sever diplomatic ties with it.

Africa's supportive stand on the Tiananmen crisis endeared the continent to China and thus revived Sino-African relations (Taylor, 1998). Riddled with its own cases of human rights abuses, Africa did not reprimand the high-handed manner that the Chinese government used to quell internal dissent. This whole episode presents Sino-African relations immediately after Tiananmen as strictly expedient and driven by controversial similarities. China's defence against Western censure, which it saw as suggestive of interference, resonated with Africa's own rejection of perceived Western interference or neo-imperialism in African governance. Thus, judging from these reasons for renewed Sino-African synergy, it is not hard for analysts to read China's involvement in Africa from a paradigm that puts national interests and sovereign survival above all else, even human rights and political sophistication.

Taylor (2006) submits that China's foreign policy is realist and so does Ilana Botha (2006:7) who avers "that China's involvement in Africa can well be explained from a Realist perspective in International Relations (sic), since it is that theory that most aptly explains China's political stance towards Africa." Xiaoming (2013:12) has stated that structural realism "informs the discussion and analysis of the impact of a rising China on the international system." In 2008 Andrew Malone, a renowned journalist, authored an article entitled *How China's taking over Africa, and why the West should be VERY worried* (sic) (*Mail online*, July 2008), cautioning that "in the greatest movement of people the world has ever seen, China is secretly working to turn the entire [African] continent into a new colony." Malone stated that the "astonishing invasion of Africa" is "more dramatic" than the

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[5] A more elaborate explanation is found in the next chapter.

European invasion of the 18th and 19th century. He went on to mention that in addition to the 750,000 Chinese already in Africa, "more are on the way" (Malone 2008).

To buttress such views, those who present an ominous picture of China's involvement in Africa cite the conduct of China in politically controversial countries like Zimbabwe and Sudan. It is hardly surprising that all four photos accompanying Malone's article were of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Malone's view is the latest version of Hevi's (1963, 1967) and has been cogently countered by Lumumba-Kasongo (2011). However, it shows just how realism has permeated most of the literature written about current international relations. For Adem (2010:336), those who use realism to interpret Afro-Chinese relations are "Sino-pessimists" who

> accept the basic premise of political realism about international relations and international political economy that the interaction between China and African states is a zero-sum game in which the stronger party gains at the expense of the weaker. But, they also concede, this is a fact of international life and should be accepted as such. Neither reform nor revolution could change this structure.

Arthur Mutambara[6] offers what Adem (2010) describes as the liberalist view of Sino-African relations. This view emphasizes African responsibility in the continent's interaction with other international players (Adem, 2010). It does not merely blame non-Africans for Africa's dismal performance in the international system. Mutambara – who was the Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe (2009-2013), divides the critics of China's presence in Africa into two groups: the Western critics and Africans critics. He is sceptical of Western criticism because he is not convinced that it is pro-African. This brand of criticism stems from the notion that China is challenging Western "hegemonic positions" in Africa (Ampiah and Naidu 2008:3). After having used Africa as "their area of political and economic influence" (Mutambara 2013:54) for a long time, the West are threatened by China for their own good and not Africa's. In similar analysis Ofodile (2008:505) states that: "In the West, reaction to China's involvement in Africa has bordered on suspicion and paranoia."

African opinion on China has more credence in Mutambara's view, but he states that Africa should not blame China or any other external power for its enduring travails. The duty to find sustainable solutions to the many problems confronting the continent is incumbent on Africans (Mutambara, 2013). Furthermore, Africans should not pander to the criticism laid on

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[6] Quoted in *New African*, June 2013.

China by its competitors for African resources. There is a need to understand China's relations with African countries from different paradigms, other than the overused ones. The interests and identities of China are created in the way it interacts with different countries. For example, even among African countries, China interacts differently between countries with which it shares formal ties and those with which it does not. For a country that is desperate to cater for its vast population, China is likely to tilt more towards African countries that offer the necessary resources. What Africans ought to do is to make sure that China's intentions and interests, as it spreads its footprint in Africa, do not compromise what developments Africans are trying to gain. This view departs somewhat from the realist one in that it opines that Africa can gain from Sino-Africa relations "if the right policies are adopted by African states" (Adem 2010:335).

Notwithstanding the modest use of other theories to explain international relations, most of the literature that has been presented thus far has mainly used the realist perspective. There has been a rarity of literature about other theories of international relations. While some literature has overtly attributed the Sino-African nexus to realist tendencies, some allusions have been implicit. Hevi (1963), for example portrayed China as a marauding potential imperialist in Africa and so did Malone (2008) more than fifty years later. The underlying insinuation of such sentiments is that Africa is prone to come out worse off in its international relations mainly because of its economic weakness and political inconsequentiality compared to other powers in the international system. The next section will look at the literature that has been written about China and South Africa; it will try to show whether what has been written about general Sino-African relations has found expression in relations between China and specific African nations. Attention ought to be drawn to the scarcity of using other international relations paradigms in interpreting international relations. Emphasis has to be laid, though, on the fact that it is intellectually mischievous to use other theories simply because there has been a deluge of certain theories. Alternative theories have to warrant their place in international relations studies, supported by valid arguments and compelling evidence on the general behaviour of states towards one another in the international system.

2.6 China-South Africa Relations

The literature written on South Africa's relations with China has largely been historical, but there is a steady increase of academic attention on the subject. Much academic literature that has focused on Sino-South African relations has done so as part of a larger study, wherein many other countries' relations with China are analysed. The most effective way of avoiding over-generalized conclusions on the subject of China-Africa relations is to look at the case by case basis of these relations. With the use of constructivism, this research brings to attention the specific nature that drives South Africa's relations with China. These specific contexts through which Sino-South Africa relations evolve need not necessarily be similar to other countries simply because they are African. The historical details of China-South Africa relations will be relayed in the next chapter detailing the three epochs into which these relations have been divided.

The key intention of this section is to present the main arguments used to interpret Sino-South African relations. This aims at showing just how literature has not explored other – equally effective ways of interpreting international relations. Much of the literature written about South Africa and its relations with China has realist overtones and this interpretation could influence how the two countries relate. The use of realism as an interpretive tool is in part because writers use selective episodes in history to make their inferences. The China of Mao, especially, has played a significant role in how China is perceived in international politics. This research looks at China-South Africa relations from the mid-twentieth century – when Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took over government in China. There is still yet more academic literature to come that will demonstrably present China in new light. It has to be mentioned, however, that some criticism on China's behaviour – though couched on realism - is warranted.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was conceived on Communism. The PRC was born a poor nation; and belonging to the communist camp antagonized its potential trade partners of the West who would have played an instrumental role in revamping the PRC's hamstrung economy. Apart from being a communist state, China identified itself as part of the Third World. However, general opinion has pointed to the allegation that though China perceived itself as part of the Third World, it wanted to place itself on a pedestal higher than other Third World countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. In its dealings with South Africa, therefore, China was bound to be approached with a mixture of both optimism and suspicion.

After South Africa incurred the condemnation of the world because of apartheid, China dealt more overtly with South African liberation movements that sought to overthrow apartheid. This collaboration was also a clear way of exhibiting China's resentment towards minority rule and colonialism in the Third World.

However, relations with South African movements, mainly the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were volatile at best. The Sino-Soviet feud which developed after 1957 had negative ramifications on China's international reputation (Martin and Johnson, 1985). South African liberation movements aligned themselves with the Soviet Union and denounced China as a bellicose state. After the CCP inveighed against what it called Soviet revisionism, China started entertaining the possibility of being a greater communist power than the Soviet Union. Furthermore, as has been written, the China of Mao was an offensive realist state which invested energy in bolstering its security and consolidating power, through violent means if possible.

Ronnie Kasrils, a member of the SACP, wrote that China forfeited the support of other communist organizations because it was so determined to promote revolutions through "the barrel of the gun" (2004:69). China was also abundantly aware of the weakness of its weaponry in comparison to the two superpowers i.e. the Soviet Union and the United States. In order to address this handicap, China was more determined to augment its nuclear weaponry at the expense of other forms of development (Kasrils, 2004). These actions on the part of China bear out the concerns that South African movements had towards it. Furthermore, China's fixation with garnering more traction in the communist camp and developing its cache of weapons fits perfectly with the realist paradigm which puts material interests over other interests. It is thus not surprising that the SACP and the ANC observed China with many misgivings.

Another matter that sullied China's relations with South African liberation movements was China's support for any political group that was not under the aegis of the Soviet Union (Cheng and Huangao, 2009). Among the South African movements China supported the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), a radical breakaway organization from the ANC. The PAC broke away from the ANC because – ostensibly or not – it decried the infiltration of mainly white communists, into the ANC. Furthermore, the PAC did not inspire hope among South Africans, divided as it was by internal leadership conflicts which at times became fatal (Ellis, 2012). For this reason, the PRC was not expected to support a liberation movement that

emphasized racial exclusivism and was non-communist. The main reason for supporting the PAC was to counter Soviet influence in the anti-apartheid struggle. The PAC was also desperate for Chinese assistance to the extent that it allowed its members to be trained both politically and militarily by the Chinese. This move on the part of China provoked opprobrium from the SACP.

The *African Communist* (1979), a journal of the SACP, loathed the extent to which China went in its quest to curtail the Soviet Union. In addition to supporting the moribund PAC, the 1972 visit of President Richard Nixon to China confirmed the notion that China was willing to court any nation to thwart Soviet prominence (Hunter and Sexton, 1999). By befriending the US, China, according to the SACP, had "abandoned the fight to end capitalist exploitation of the human and material resources of the world and [had] thrown in its lot with forces of imperialism, colonialism and racism" (*African Communist* 1979:6). The Vice Premier of China Deng Xiaoping met with Jimmy Carter and denounced what he called Russian expansionism. According to the SACP, the US fraternized with China because the PRC no longer threatened capitalism. This rapprochement did not indicate a mellowing of the US's attitude towards communism. China, to the SACP, had committed apostasy and insulted the Soviet Union which was "a rock on which the whole anti-imperialist structure of the world rests" (*African Communist* 1979:7). The US, therefore, was willing to humour China providing this would foil Soviet influence (*African Communist*, 1979).

From the presented literature thus far, China has been portrayed as an ambitious and combative power. It is explicable that many writers would understand China in realist terms. Its relations with the largely ineffective PAC and its convenient rapprochement with the United States in the 1970s justify – to some extent – realist interpretations. The ANC and the SACP were thus cautious of relating to China because its ambition to compete with the Soviet Union led it to make questionable pacts. Recent literature about South Africa and Chinese relations has not drifted from using realism. In *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise* Ian Taylor (2006) writes about China's old relations with a number of African countries including South Africa. He draws the conclusion that China's policy in Africa could be understood through realism. This indirectly means that there is a general way through which China deals with all African states. Secondly, Taylor's conclusion does not acknowledge the possibility that over time China has changed its identity and interests.

Ilana Botha (2006), in a dissertation entitled *China in Africa: Friend or Foe? China's Contemporary Political and Economic relations with Africa* also reviews China's connections with four African countries – South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Just like Taylor (2006), Botha opines "that China's involvement in Africa can well be explained from a Realist perspective in International Relations (sic), since it is that theory that most aptly explains China's political stance towards Africa" (2006:7). Naidu (2008) has written about China's relations with South Africa after the end of the Cold War, traversing the period she describes as the "two Chinas dilemma"[7]. She argues that South Africa has been vacillating between morally and realist driven international relations.

The option to cut ties with Taiwan – which became a democratic country in the 1990s – and opt for China showed what many understand to be a realist streak in South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa was more concerned with economic gain than any other image that relations with Taiwan can present. On the part of China, like all preceding literature, Naidu argues "that in the case of Sino-South African relations, the realist interpretation of China's behaviour holds true" (2008:189). This and many other assertions rest partly on what China is expected to do with its newly gained economic growth, and its determination to win back Taiwan. Africa has been the battle ground for China's resolve to regain Taiwan and South Africa was a telling example of how China is winning.

Apart from competing for legitimacy with Taiwan, China, as an emerging market, is also said to be in competition with South Africa, another emerging economy. While China and South Africa have mutual South-South ambitions, and are further bound by "the same or similar views on international affairs, and both are committed to seeking a fair and reasonable new global economic and political order, despite the differences in their domestic political systems" (Wang 2012:5); Sidiropoulos and Alves (2010) aver that "these same countries are competitors both economically and politically, globally and in Africa, where SA has enjoyed some competitive advantage"[8]. When this competition escalates to a level where cooperation will be threatened, then there might be justification for realist claims. While both countries

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[7] To be explained more in the next chapter.

[8] Alves, A C and Sidiropoulos, E. *South Africa-China Relations: Getting Beyond the Cross-roads?* As published in the Sunday Independent, 29 August 2010. [Accessed 25 February 2014]. From http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/south-africa-china-relations-getting-beyond-the-cross-roads

are resolved to improve their fortunes by strengthening relations with the other, this determination has to engender conjoint gain.

There is no gainsaying that South Africa is of strategic importance to China. "This is reflected in South Africa being the first developing country to which China has proposed establishing a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'"[9] (Wang 2012:5). Chinese analysts "believe that South Africa holds a uniquely advantageous position among the BRICS countries, which would help African countries as a whole to play a greater role in international affairs" (Wang 2012:5). South Africa also appreciates the importance of China and perceives it as "a key political ally and an economic development partner" (Shelton 2012:5). This commitment has been evident through "high-level exchanges, bi-national meetings and co-operation in multilateral forums, such as the G20, Forum on China–Africa Co-operation (FOCAC), and climate change gatherings" (Shelton 2012:5) in which the two countries participate. Wang (2012) argues that the differences between Chinese and South African domestic political systems do not preclude genuine cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, concerns about environmental degradations have fostered authentic and not opportunistic collaborations in international affairs (Wang, 2012). This argument challenges the main claim of realism.

2.7 Justification for a New Approach of Understanding China's International Relations

What could be deduced from those who use realism to judge Sino-South African relations is that if relations between South Africa and China do not underline good governance and human rights then they are essentially realist. In other words, to emphasize economic, military and political development and pay cursory attention to other possible conditions of international relations is to embrace realism. People who employ other theories to explain international relations often reiterate the fact that national interest can still be maintained by the use of other theories of international relations. What lacks in realism is a compelling explanation of what national interest is. In addition, it is erroneous to argue that the national

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[9]In August 2010 the South African President, Jacob Zuma paid a state visit to China. With his Chinese counterpart, Zuma singed bilateral economic agreements and augmented their cooperation to reflect a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'. See http://www.cssn.cn/news/138368.htm. See also Alves, A C and Sidiropoulos, E. South Africa-China Relations: Getting Beyond the Cross-roads? As published in the Sunday Independent, 29 August 2010. http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/south-africa-china-relations-getting-beyond-the-cross-roads

interest for survival and power among nations comes naturally because it represents the will of ordinary people. This leaves the question of who decides what national interest is especially if there are people within the nation who are not hell-bent on overpowering other states and maintaining the survival of their resident polity. There have been cases where people within the nation have sought to break away from it, hence defeating the whole idea of a nation relentlessly struggling for survival. National interest does not come naturally; it is cultivated by specific multifaceted contexts.

From what has been presented, there has been a dearth of international relations literature that uses other theories - apart from realism - to explain global politics and to write about China's posture in international politics. What has caused this preponderance of realism is the failure of idealism to explain the element of dominance and the untamed zeal for survival which has made the international system less cooperative and more conflict-prone. Most significantly, the League of Nations - a product of idealism - failed to stave off the resumption of war after the First World War (WWI). In deprecatory terms, E.H. Carr (1956) dismisses idealism as wishful thinking which should be replaced by analysis of the real world not the idyllic one that is the construct of imagination.

Morgenthau (1958) forcefully supports realism amid possible alternative theories. He argues that realism should not be discounted because it is an old theory. He attempts to forestall the employment of theories which might aspire to challenge old ones. The obscurantism that Morgenthau adopts in his understanding of international relations is typical of how theorists become implacable when they are entrenched in their theoretical perspective and do not accept that their theory is just one of many that seek to comprehended international politics (Rosenau, 1971).

What should be noted is the fact that there are other possible theories – apart from realism and idealism - that could be used to interpret international relations. Theories that are "not deterministic" in their understanding of international relations could be used to explain the dynamics of the international system, the rise of China and its implications for international politics and Africa (Power and Mohan 2010:465). One such theory is constructivism. The essence of this research is to use constructivism as a useful theory of international relations which should not be subsumed into any of the more popular theories of international relations. By using a type of theory that has not been used to interpret China's international relations with any other country, South Africa included, this research does not aspire to

present new facts pertaining China's international relations. Theories do not change past events; they only change interpretations. What constructivism will help to do is to provide another way of interpreting events and policies that have happened in the international system – in this case in Sino-South African relations. One of the major topics of China's foreign policy is non-interference in domestic affairs, with the Taiwan question being the main subject of this. China does not formally relate with countries that recognize the Taiwan (The Republic of China – ROC).

The Chinese, naturally, argue that a country that recognizes Taiwan is interfering with China's national policy (Adem, 2008). The Taiwan question has loomed very large in Sino-African relations and China has been draconian in its treatment of certain countries that have tried to recognize Taiwan.[10] Such occurrences challenge analyses that are overly idealist in interpreting China's links with Africa. Constructivism makes no idealist claims. What it accentuates is the influence of social relations which can either be good or bad. Neither is constructivism in line with realism. For constructivism, international relations and nations themselves are mutable realities whose identities and interests are constantly worked on, refined and at times abandoned with respect to social influence. This stands in stark contrast to "a realist world [which] is a frozen world of separate essences" (Duchacek 1961:262).

Relations between China and South Africa have changed substantially from the time of apartheid to the present. The two countries have helped to shape the international system and have also been shaped by it. The China of Mao was characterized by Marxist zealotry; but after Mao, China was more open to the outside world and it shed its emphasis on ideological correlations as the *sine qua non* for picking international relations partners. Ideological relations with the Soviet Union also subsided as China was trying to modernize its economy. At this point China was more pragmatic and concerned with internal development (Lin, 1989). It is for this reason that China was no longer prescribing violent revolution to African countries that were under minority rule. China also scaled down its relations with Africa, especially prior to the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre (Taylor, 1998). It concentrated more on its economic ambitions. In the recent decades, economic modernization seems to have worked in China. The PRC is now making forays in Africa for raw materials and South Africa is a bountiful source of this.

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[10] See chapter three.

South Africa has also gone through enormous changes. Once an outcast of the world, South Africa is now well ensconced in the international system as a country of consequence. Its relations with China have also evolved according to the changing vicissitudes of global politics, national policies and, in some cases, the personalities of some influential individuals of the two countries. These are the matters that constructivism will emphasize without changing the events that have occurred in Sino-South African relations. Constructivism is only a way of interpreting what has happened in the relations between the two countries.

2.8 Conclusion for Literature Review

China's international bearing has been divisive, especially in recent times. This chapter has tried to show that in terms of Afro-Asian relations, China has been a controversial state, whether by default or design. From an African perspective, China has managed to launder the reputation which it had during the period of Africa's anticolonial struggles. China was very anxious, especially during Mao, to pontificate about the alleged superiority of communism over capitalism. In the incipient stages of the People's Republic, China had no qualms about Soviet leadership in the communist/socialist bloc. Mao was reported to have called the Soviet Union the "teacher of socialism" (Schrecker 2004:213). However, after ideological differences crystallized into unconcealed hostility between the two communist powers, China became more ambitious to thwart Soviet influence, and Africa was thought to be the best arena for this battle. China's zeal to curtail Soviet influence saw it forfeit the friendship of some states and liberation movements in Africa. It also led China to support liberation movements that were not under Soviet aegis but were partially supported by Western powers. A good example is China's support of UNITA, an Angolan rebel movement that enjoyed both Western benefits and apartheid South Africa's assistance.

China also tried to sponsor radical or violent revolutions in Africa as a way of showing its pure form of communism. This posture presented China as a war monger. There were also accusations that China was training African lackeys that it wanted to use to shore up its international profile and influence. Judging from much current literature, China has been assessed in unchanging tones. The preponderant use of realism to understand China's international relations has frozen China into a unitary whole whose identity, interests and intentions have remained unabated by the passage of time and the occurrence of events like the end of the Cold War and the resumption of South-South cooperation.

In the reviewed literature, there is a clear gap in the use of other theories of international relations to explain China's interaction with South Africa. Western governments have especially inveighed against China's principle of non-interference in Africa; this principle has been said to aid and abet unsavoury African governments that have incurred Western condemnation. China is thus understood as a rogue donor for not emphasizing decent leadership as a requisite for foreign aid and trade. This is an implicit way of arguing that China will do anything to gain more power in the international system; it is even poised to trade with governments that are a menace to their citizens.

The West argues that leaders of controversial states like Sudan and Zimbabwe feel no pressure in promoting good governance because China has proven a timely solution for those who do not conform to Western political and economic prescriptions (Rogers, 2007). The "China threat" (Yee and Storey 2002:2) from the West has largely been publicized based on China's breathtaking economic growth from the late 1970s. Western countries, especially the United States and other proponents of democracy are unnerved by China's economic stamina as they fear that China may one day graduate to be a formidable competitor for global leadership. Furthermore, the fact that China still claims to be a communist state long after the collapse of Soviet communism, and shows no visible intent to democratize its political system has rankled pro-capitalist and democratic states of the West (Yee and Storey, 2002). For these reasons, the use of theories that will present an ominous interpretation of China's bearing in the international system is convenient for China's detractors.

From the African perspective China has been accepted as a better economic and political ally than the 'imperious' West. "African governments perceive political and economic ties with China to be an important asset, which strengthens their international bargaining power, especially vis-à-vis Western governments" (Cheng and Huangao 2009:87). President Jacob Zuma of South Africa stated that "China does business with South Africa on an equal footing, unlike Western former colonial powers who still act like its master" (*Business Report*, 28

February, 2014)[11]. Zuma went on to say that "China has come to do business, not to try to tell you what to do, what not to do. Others do."[12]

The contrasting views from the West, Africa and China itself, as regards China's rise, are very important if one is to draw valid analyses of what the rise of China really means. What should be noted is that states take up different identities in the international system; these identities exert influence on the type of relations that a nation is likely to pursue with another nation. As an illustration, the West perceives China in negative terms based on China's avowed communist and non-democratic political leanings. To Africa, China presents a picture of what poor African countries can become with the right type of economic programmes. Thus, African states, by and large, are sanguine about China's growth.

China wants to present itself as a member of the global South. This is both a political ploy and a product of history. Politically China uses the identity of being a state of the South so as to dismiss Western censure when the latter attack China's political system. It is handy for China to reject Western prescription on the basis that the West has imperialist inclinations through which it tries to meddle with the sovereignty of countries of the South. History has also reinforced ties between China and Africa. These identities shape the relations that players share. Thus, constructivism, which will be under in-depth explication in the next part of this chapter, will try to explain why, when identities are fluid in the international system, theories that do not take cognizance of this fluidity, do not aptly apply to explain international relations.

The next part of this chapter will present the basic arguments of constructivism. It is through this theory that epochs that have shaped China's and South Africa's relations will be interpreted. Constructivism does not deprecate some claims of realism like the primacy of national interest in international relations. The major distinctive factor of constructivism is the importance of social identity in shaping international relations. The interests that countries pursue are mainly shaped by identity and this comes as a result of historical, social and other contexts that would categorize players in the international system as either friends

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[11] Business Report, 28 February, 2014. *Zuma: China treats SA as business equals*. http://www.iol.co.za/business/news/zuma-china-treats-sa-as-business-equals-1.1654335,. [Accessed: 5 March 2014]

[12] Business Report, 28 February, 2014. *Zuma: China treats SA as business equals*. http://www.iol.co.za/business/news/zuma-china-treats-sa-as-business-equals-1.1654335,. [Accessed: 5 March 2014]

or foes. It is from this categorization that different interests are formed in international relations.

Theoretical Framework: Constructivism

2.9 General Understanding of Constructivism

Against the much vaunted theories of realism, neorealism and liberalism in international relations, constructivism has often been discredited as a cogent framework in international relations theory. Some mainstream political scholars look at constructivism "with a great deal of skepticism" (Hopf 1998:171), while others treat is as a theory of international politics but still not of the same category as realism and liberalism (Nau, 2012). Hopf (1998:171) argues that constructivism courts skepticism because of its "ambivalence about whether it can buy into mainstream social science methods without sacrificing its theoretical distinctiveness." Debates on the ontology of constructivism among its scholars have compounded the scepticism that other theorists have of constructivism. This dissent has undermined constructivism's "potential contribution to a better understanding of International Relations" (Adler 1997:320). Henry Nau (2012), who subsumes constructivism under idealism (see also Mearsheimer, 1994/95), writes that this school has been assailed by realists who assert "that reality must be accepted as it is, namely anarchy and power politics, not as we might wish it to be, namely utopian ideas and universal institutions" (2012:46-47; see Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991 and Carr, 1956).

Amid such misgivings, constructivism is a theory which deserves more attention in studies on international relations because it "addresses both philosophical and empirical issues that were inaccessible through the prevailing models of international relations" (Hurd 2008:299) in recent decades (see also Adler, 1997). The unfolding prominence of constructivism as a theory of international relations is also largely due to the neutral and/or optimistic analysis it uses to judge international relations, thus drifting from the cynical arguments of realism (Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991). This has made constructivism a more attractive theory especially in the current international system where threats and challenges to national survival have taken an international scale, hence galvanizing many nations into cooperation and collective action. Constructivism argues that human interaction is fashioned "by ideational factors, not simply material ones" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001:391) as realism is wont to argue. Furthermore, these factors behind human interaction are "intersubjective" (Wendt 1992:394) in nature and are hence "not reducible to individuals" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001:391). Intersubjectivity means that actors learn their ideas, identities and interests through a process of socialization. The constructivist understanding of the social

fabric of human and, by extension, international relations puts it under the critical theories of international relations

The understanding of anarchy is one area which makes the fissures between realism and constructivism more pronounced. Realism argues that the world is anarchic and 'self-help' (Waltz, 1979) is the linchpin of all international relations. For this reason, states are the utmost actors (Yuan-Kang, 2004) in the international systems and hence do not cede power to any other institutions as this might be detrimental to state interest. However, "where actors do not worry much about the potential costs of ceding control over outcomes to other states or institutions" such as regional frameworks or trade concessions, "neorealist ideas of anarchy are just imaginary" (Hopf 1998:174). In the current international system (with its emerging multi- or non-polar order) wherein the influence of non-state actors like multinational corporations has grown exponentially, claims of the state as the ultimate actor are hard to sustain. Furthermore, Wendt (1999) decries what could be termed as realism's obsession with material ambitions. He argues that human relationships are reinforced more by consonant ideas than the forces of material need (Wendt, 1999). These human relationships could be expressed at a general (state) level, thus leading Wendt to argue that "the key structures in the state system are intersubjective, rather than material" (1994:385).

Kratochwil, in a similar way posits that constructivism is an approach that "is characterized by certain assumptions concerning human action" (2001:15). Unlike other theories of international relations that view the international system as an entity of enduring identities and interests, constructivism is interested in "providing a better explanation of social reality" (Adler 1997:333-334). Furthermore, Nau (2012) argues that states regard one another by the experience of their relationship. States are not found in a realm of anarchy that is totally estranged from other states. On the contrary, subjective and intersubjective dialogue with other states plays a prominent role in influencing the identity, interest and foreign engagement of a state. This mutual constitution of identities and interests comes as a component of what Wendt (1999:326-327) calls "social learning" and Adler calls "cognitive evolution" (1997:319). Through interaction among players in a given structure, "identities and their corresponding interests are learned and then reinforced in response to how actors are treated by significant Others" (Wendt 1999:327). It is by this social intercourse among states that social classifications of allies and enemies are made. Independent of this, there is no justification for states to preemptively classify others. In short, the anarchy that realism talks about is not an objective reality. It "is what states make of it" (Wendt 1992:395).

The most unique feature of constructivism is the claim that the interests of states in their international relationships are influenced by social interactions (Hurd, 2008) and that "international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world" (Adler 1997:319). In the words of Kratochwil, constructivism discounts "naïve empiricism and naturalism" by arguing "that the human world is not simply given and/or natural, but that, on the contrary, the human world is one of artifice; that it is 'constructed' through the actions of the actors themselves" (2001:17). The identities and interests of interaction among actors also proceed from this 'construction.' For this reason, while realism claims that the identities and interests of states are exogenous to interactions, constructivists claim that identities and interests between states are endogenous to, and hence mutable by, social interactions (Wendt, 1994). This is a major shift from more popularly known theories of international relations. It reiterates the fact that a state will interact differently with those it considers its allies and those it considers its foes. Added to this is the assertion that "state identities and interests are in important part constructed by… social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics" (Wendt 1994:385).

In arguing about how states are constructed, Wendt acknowledges that there are corporate and social dimensions of state constitution and identity. The type of interests that these two dimensions produce are still framed by collective and individual identity. Corporate forms of identity and interests are nurtured by individual experience and physical properties. In terms of states, corporate identities are those that are shared by a single nation in a way that sets a nation apart from other states, but unifies its citizens in a uniform and unique way. Following from this, corporate identities have a direct correlation to a set of interests. Wendt identifies four basic interests that come forth from corporate identity:

1. Physical security: states have an interest to secure their physical existence which set them apart from other actors.

2. Apart from physical security, nation states also aim at fashioning a pattern of "ontological security or predictability in relationships to the world" (Wendt 1994:385). This entails that social identities in states should have a certain amount of stability.

3. Thirdly, nation states have the corporate desire to be recognized as separate polities and they should subsist as such without resort to "brute force" (Wendt 1994:385).

4. Finally, states aspire to develop and to proffer their citizens better welfare. This is a human desire which states yearn for at a general level.[13]

As said earlier, corporate interests are more intimately linked to how states perceive themselves and the identities that they attach to themselves in relation to other states. Though corporate interests could, to some extent, be thought of as being cultivated before interaction, they are not predetermined due to the fact that they are brought about by identity.

Moving away from individual interests, social identities and interest comprise the perceptions that a state "attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object" (Wendt 1994:385). States have a number of multiple social identities, unlike corporate ones which are individual. This multiplicity of identities is necessitated by the fact that states interact with diverse states, are embedded in different international institutions and are consequences of specific and unique social, political and historical experiences (Barnett, 1993). States are also cognizant of the fact that there are individual and collective identities by which they can define themselves in both individualistic and collective terms. States are thus aware of the fact that in the international system, social structures dictate what state interests might be and hence have influence on the actions that states opt for.

Thus, constructivism does not deny the existence of individual and, at times stable, identities and interests. It argues, however, that these stem primarily from how states perceive themselves in relation to other actors. Much literature on international relations has paid attention to the influence of domestic identity and influence in the international system, thus treating identities and interests in international relations as exogenous to interstate relations. Constructivism, on the other hand also looks at social identities by which states define themselves both individually and collectively, creating the possibility of socially endogenous identities and interests which are nurtured by international relations and specific social contexts. The international system is undoubtedly composed of many structures, which can take the shape of either political, economic or cultural diversities. These diversities impact and are impacted on by actors such as states. As Banchoff (1999) puts it "at the core of constructivism is the concern with the mutual constitution of agents and structure, states and the international system" (1999:261). With this having been said, this research will present certain national and social identities and interests that China and South Africa have. By doing this, the research will show that though states influence international relations because of

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[13] Wendt (1994:385)

their specific/corporate identities and interests, they are also influenced by how they define themselves in relation to others and are thus influenced by other factors beyond national/individual identities and interests.

2.10 The Influence of Identities and Interests in the Formation of International Relations

Alexander Wendt, one of the most ardent proponents of constructivism, gave a telling illustration of social influence in international relations when he wrote that "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons" (Wendt 1995:73). The simple reason for this demeanour on the part of the United States is that it considers Britain an ally and North Korea a threat. Henry Nau offers a similar example by noting that after WWII, France and Britain were not unsettled by the physical presence of American troops in their respective countries; but they were more threatened by the Soviet Union which did not have troops in either of the countries (Nau, 2012). From these illustrations, it can be noted that the internal and external identities of countries determine the type of associations that states share. In the last example, the capitalist and democratic leanings of the United States were amenable to Britain and France, whereas the Soviet Union's communist identity rendered it suspicious in the West. Thus, while constructivism recoils from completely dismissing material ambitions as parts of national interest and behavior, it "contends that collective identity shapes the content of state interest and the course of state action" (Banchoff 1999:262).

Judith Brown, in her biography of Jawaharlal Nehru, says that a nation is "a working identity" (Brown 2003:3) that is constantly progressing through domestic dynamics and international socialization. Identities in international relations are both numerous and dynamic (Barnett 1993). They are numerous in the sense that a state would have an internal identity by which it would want to be known, but it cannot have absolute leverage over the identity that other players might attach to it. This reality was particularly clear during the Cold War when the Soviet Union strove, often unsuccessfully, to present itself as more than a Russian empire (Hopf, 1998). Its internal identity was thus challenged by the countervailing identity that its detractors gave it. Thus, identities of states are not impervious to social influence; or the Self cannot cultivate a generally accepted identity that is totally independent of the Other (Wendt 1999). For example, what Katzenstein means when he writes that

national identities are "primarily external" (1997:20) is that nations define themselves according to where they situate themselves in a specific international structure (see also Banchoff, 1999). Apart from observing its place in the international system, a state can get a notion of its idea from many other sources; like the way it perceives its international bearing through foreign policy, the popular notion that the public has of the state's international repute and role, and the prevailing image portrayed by local media. Identities are dynamic in the sense that they are not universal and immutable. They are constructed by the way states interact with varying social contexts, both domestic and international (Katzenstein, 1996). They are not predetermined. The acceptance, by constructivism, that states in the international system have different identities, puts constructivism at variance with realism, the latter claiming that the only identity of states is "that of self-interested states" (Hopf 1998:175).

The identity that states carry determines the kind of interest they pursue. Just as identities are constructed, it logically follows that the interests that states have are as variant as state identities. As Wendt (1992:398) puts it "[i]dentities are the basis of interests. Actors do not have a 'portfolio' of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situations." Thus, the interests that states pursue by interacting with each other are not irremediable consequences of human nature. Furthermore, because identities are influenced by both domestic and international politics, interests are also partly determined by international politics. The interest of states and their behavior can thus not be inferred *a priori* and cannot be generalized.

The different international bodies to which states subscribe exert influence on national behavior and interest. Rationalist theories cannot easily explicate why states would take up various identities, interests and behaviours in their interaction with other states and international institutions. By introducing a social dimension to international politics and the "role conflict" that states can incur by belonging to different institutions, constructivism brings to political analysis what cannot be easily gleaned from other theories (Barnett, 1993). As regards the stability of interests and behavior in international relations, Wendt concedes that in a situation where collective identity between states remains unchanging for some time, interests among them might remain unchanging. However, Wendt does not argue that this stability is testimony to the eternity and inflexibility of interests. Additionally, while rationalists concede the notion that states can transform their behavior but not their identity and interests, constructivism argues that through the process of socialization, states are not

only dynamic in their behavior but also learn to cognitively internalize "new identities and interests" (Wendt 1992:399). This possible change of identities and interests provides for the possibility of both cooperation and conflict in the international system, depending on mutual perception among actors.

2.11 Rationale behind the use of Constructivism for this Research

This research covers an old and tortuous relationship between China and South Africa. From the mid-twentieth century the PRC claimed to be a stout opponent of apartheid South Africa and thus aligned itself with the banned and exiled South African liberation movements. However, claims have been made that – after severing official ties with South Africa in 1960 – the PRC still shared surreptitious links with apartheid governments (Akinde, 1977). This allegation, added to the Sino-Soviet conflict, had a negative bearing on China's relationship with South Africa's liberation movements. While China still wanted to be viewed as a kindred spirit of the Third World and party to anti-apartheid campaigns, the identity that it incurred from other actors was an unsavoury one. Clearly China had myriad interests during this time, ranging from ousting Taiwan from the United Nations and improving its communist credentials. These interests, in one way or another were to influence China's relations with apartheid South Africa and liberation movements.

With the advantage of hindsight, it can be stated today that both South Africa and China have undergone tremendous changes in the last six decades. The identities and interests of the countries have equally been changed and in certain respects completely overhauled. Today China does not have the Soviet Union with which to tussle over who is the veritable communist power in the world. South Africa has also shifted from being a pariah to a favourable destination of investment. Having changed its identity, today South Africa has generally succeeded in winning the confidence of prospective political and trade partners. Recent decades have also experienced the rise of the global South of which South Africa and China are part. Thus, the relationship between the two countries has been complicated by shifting identities and interests and, recently, the changing world order. Prevalent relations between China and South Africa are firmly premised on the increases of power centres in the international system.

Furthermore, by being regarded as emerging powers, China and South Africa have, in both rhetoric and action, demonstrated genuine cooperation. This research will interpret this international collaboration in constructivist terms that make allowance for genuine cooperation. Constructivism argues not only for the possibility of harmony between nations but also for an internationalization of state interests whereby states converge on matters that are beyond the national scope (Walker, 1990). States can move beyond cordial relations and go on to form a "community" (Wendt 1992:400). The research departs from realism, which argues that authentic international collaboration "is very difficult to achieve and sustain because states do not trust each other and because a competitive setting makes them concerned with relative as opposed to absolute gains" (Kupchan and Kupchan 1991:117; see also Wendt 1992:400).

For this reason, analysing the complexities of international relations requires a theory which acknowledges that states are not bound by unchanging structures and interests in the international system. A theoretical framework is needed that does not judge interests in the international system as consequences of immutable human nature and struggles for power. Constructivism concedes that actors and their structures in the international system are mutually constitutive (Wendt and Duvall, 1989). Far from realism and liberalism which claim to have predictive powers over international politics, constructivism argues that events in the international system occur because they are germane to a certain context and not because they are unavoidable effects of predetermined conditions (Nau, 2012). The conditions which have shaped Sino-South African events warrant a sober analysis that will not seek a ready-made answer. The research will thus use constructivism, not to argue for the fanatic embrace of China, but for an objective engagement as South Africa relates with it. Emphasis has to be made again that the efficacy of constructivism resides in the fact that because of its insistence that social relations and identification influence international interactions, countries have to make clear which terms of these events have to be rejected so as to attain what China calls 'win-win' cooperation.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the numerous literature that has been written about China and South Africa's international relations. Much of the literature, as has been shown, used realist interpretations of international relations to try to establish the reasons behind Sino-South

African relations. The inclination to employ realism as the most effective theory of understanding international relations is explicable but not advisable. After the failure of the idealist initiatives like the League of Nations many political scientists were disenchanted with idealism as a cogent theory of understanding international relations. This is why in the immediate aftermath of WWII, Carr and Morgenthau gained popularity as theorists who interpreted international politics in *real* and not *ideal* ways. However, this research will seek to prove that constructivism, though not entirely against realist claims of national interest and the material ambitions of states, offers a reasonable explanation of international relations.

The second part of this chapter has shown that according to constructivism, the reality of international relations is dictated by social interaction, the identities that are born through this interaction, and the interests that identities breed. Constructivism concedes the argument that conflict is always a possibility in international relations but it is contingent on the social and dynamic identities and interests that actors are involved in. In a situation where actors share stable identities and interests for a period of time, their identities and interests can thus be taken as predictable for that time subject, of course, to the possibility that these can change because they are endogenous to social interaction.

Actors can be at odds with those they consider foes but be at peace with those they consider allies. This is possible because actors in the international system have multiple identities, nurtured by the actors' involvement in many institutions which present their own expectations on actors. The numerous identities that actors have manifest themselves in the simple truth that one actor can consider another actor and enemy while considering a third actor as an ally. For example, China and South African consider each other as dependable allies, but China considers Taiwan as an inalienable but errant part of China. In the case of China-Taiwan relations, therefore, some claims of realism may be explicable but these become hard to defend when it is shown that an increasingly powerful China still wants deeper integration with the global South.

The following chapter will delve into the three epochs of Sino-South African relations and how they have evolved over time. Of the two countries, China has a bigger economy and is attracting more attention in the international system. For this reason, any analysis of Sino-South African relations looks at how South Africa should guard against China's abuse in the relations that the two countries share. For this reason, the chapter will dwell more on how China has changed from the time Mao took over power to the present time. Accordingly,

while the research looks at relations between the two nations, the scope of this section will look more on how Chinese identities and interests have been shaped by the changing tides of time.

CHAPTER THREE: The Three epochs of China-South Africa relations

3.1 Introduction

This chapter tackles the three epochs of Sino-South African relations and how they have been shaped by the vicissitudes of international politics. The epochs will show that China and South Africa have undergone significant changes in their identity, interests and behaviour. The first epoch starts shortly after the PRC was established and ends with the death of Mao. This epoch coincided with the Cold War wherein animosities between the capitalist bloc and the socialist/communist bloc were clear-cut. The second epoch is marked by the era of Chinese modernization, largely influenced by Deng Xiaoping. The death of Mao, the thaw in relations following the Sino-Soviet split, the end of the Cultural Revolution and the consequent changes in China's economic and ideological outlook illustrate the changes that China underwent during this time. Change was also being registered in South Africa, especially when liberation movements and the National Party started to attempt dialogue to end South Africa's political stalemate. This period covers the end of the Cold War, the emergence of the unipolar world order and the cessation of apartheid in South Africa. China started carrying out overt trade relations with South Africa at this point. The second epoch also traverses the awkward two Chinas dilemma. South Africa had to make the choice of either continuing diplomatic ties with Taiwan and hence isolate the increasingly developed PRC or to capitulate and opt for China, following the majority position, though seemingly parting from its stated commitment to a foreign policy that promotes human rights. Opting for the PRC would give the impression that South Africa subscribed to realism and the *realpolitik* of international relations.

The third epoch, starting from the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and South Africa to date, will look at the rise of the South and how this has bound South Africa and China together. The relations that they share are driven more by their shared identity and history; the need to develop the South; and to initiate a more just world order, starting with institutions like the United Nations. This epoch is also characterized by the gradual emergence of a polycentric world order e.g. "the rise of new centers of economic strength" (Ignat and Bujanca 2013:24; see also Haas) like China. Mention has to be made that the epochs were not clinically divided; there are many overflows of certain policies from one epoch to another. However, there were also some visible changes in the identities and policies

of South Africa and China's foreign policies which justify the division into the chosen epochs.

3.2 Epochs of China and South Africa International Relations

3.2.1 The First Epoch of China-South Africa Relations: During Mao Zedong's Rule

As a result of twenty-two years of domestic conflict, the China that Mao Zedong (also Tse-Tung) inherited in October 1949 was in financial and material desperation. At this time China was considered one of the poorest states in the world (Kendall and Louw, 1989). In addition to its economic travails, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was a self-confessed communist state and this elicited ostracism from many nations even in Asia except the newly independent India and Pakistan (FitzGerald, 1976). China, then, had to struggle with problems of legitimacy, especially from the United States which still recognized Chiang Kai-Shek as the *de jure* representative of China despite having been driven to Taiwan with his nationalist government (called the Kuomintang). After the Kuomintang ensconced itself in Taiwan and established The Republic of China (ROC), it retained China's permanent seat at the United Nations, to the exclusion of the PRC on mainland China. Faced with all these challenges, the newly established PRC had a number of major aspirations for its nascent existence: one was to surmount the economic redundancy into which the country was mired; the second was to excise remnants of Kuomintang adherents and any form of opposition to the new communist rulers (Saich, 2001). For its ideological orientation, the Chinese Communist Party looked to the Soviet Union as the head of global communism and the channel through which communist China could launch itself in international politics and revamp its collapsed economy.

Not only did China look up to the Soviet Union for support, Mao asserted that "the Communist Party of China is a party built on the model of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (Mao 1961:284; see also Shirk, 1996). At this stage, China was more of buck-passing, joining the status quo of superpower politics, not with the lofty objective of itself becoming a superpower, but aligning itself with one against the other of the two superpowers. Mao lauded the Soviet Union as "a defender of world peace" but described those from the United States who were actively against the Soviet Union as "reactionaries" (Mao 1961:100). However, the economic relationship that China had with the Soviet Union was largely tilted

towards the latter's favour. Given the US embargo on Chinese economic activities, China had to rely primarily on the Soviet Union for its international economic transactions.

The amiable relations that China shared with the Soviet Union came to a tragic end in the 1950s and catapulted China to the centre of global political controversy. The Sino-Soviet discord had devastating results for China and its international profile. The genesis of the fissures between China and the Soviet Union could be traced back to 1954 when Nikita Khrushchev, the new premier of Soviet Union met Mao in Beijing. Khrushchev carried the objective of trying to work out a communist relationship after the death of Stalin. Upmost in Khrushchev's mind was the revitalization of Lenin's style of collective leadership (Taurer, 1977). It was clear, though, to Khrushchev, that Mao was more inclined to Stalin's type of enormous personal power. The differences between Khrushchev and Mao were already so vast that upon his return to Moscow, Khrushchev reported to his associates that "conflict with China was inevitable" (Khrushchev 1974:252). In 1956 during the Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Khrushchev compounded the Sino-Soviet rift by inveighing against what could be termed "Stalin's purges" (FitzGerald 1976:94) and excessive abuse of power. As expected, Mao was against what he thought was the denigration of Stalin, his communist lodestar. During this period, the word revisionism found itself in Chinese description of the post-Stalin Soviet Union.

Mao's 1957 proclamation that another world war was in the offing and socialism would emerge victorious further imperilled Sino-Soviet relations. The PRC appeared to be a warmonger and bellicose state. It was during this period that, arguably for the first time, China started nursing the notion that it was a better and more credible face of communism than the Soviet Union. This period shows, to a degree, a shift in the interest of China and its international standing. At the time when the CCP came to power in China, its policies were more inward looking; they were meant to rectify an economy which was in dire straits and to foil any threatening presence of dissension against the new dispensation. Judging from how pathetic its economy and unity was in 1949, China had made estimable development in the mid-1950s. Soaring inflation was mitigated and unity, at least a semblance of it, was entrenched "with the exception of Taiwan" (Saich 2001:22). The identity of China was also being tinkered by domestic and international influences. China was no longer a slavish follower of Soviet idiosyncrasies. It sought for itself a communist identity which was different from – and hopefully more credible than - the Soviet one.

The Sino-Soviet discord together with the 1955 Bandung Conference were influential in shaping China's standing in international politics and relations. It was at the Bandung Conference that China became more involved in, and enlightened as to, Africa's political state. The ensuing subsection will show the original principles of China's foreign policy and explain how the Bandung Conference gave China an opportune moment to present itself as an important player in international politics. The conference also introduced China to independent African states and whetted its interest in working with movements that were still contending with foreign and white rule in Africa.

3.2.1.1 Mao's PRC and the Original Principles of International Relations

It has to be borne in mind that China had its personal interests at heart when it was propagating the principles of coexistence. The pronouncements that it made were partly driven by its yearning for national sovereignty. The PRC had its national or self interest in view. For example, its ambitions over Taiwan could be treated as a national matter in which other states are not allowed to interfere. This national interest by no means controverts constructivism. As Checkel posits, constructivism does not debunk what the neorealist and neoliberal theories say about national interests. Rather, it looks at "what they ignore: the content and sources of state interests and the social fabric of world politics" (1998:324). Furthermore, Wendt writes that intersubjective institutions through which states share certain identities can either be conflictual or cooperative. In a situation whereby the likelihood of conflict is high, "states will fear each other and defend egoistic identities by engaging in relative terms thinking and resisting the factors that might undermine [the state system]" (Wendt 1994:389). Furthermore, Wendt adds that "within a conflictual intersubjective context, actors will tend to infer intentions from capabilities, such that the latter may become emergent sources of insecurity" (1994:389). By making these points, it could be said that China did not really want to forge cooperative relations with the states with which it shared the principles of peaceful coexistence. In addition, the social structure of the international system determines relations between states and thus no unwarranted credibility should be attached to what states say or commit themselves to do.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which China's foreign minister Zhou En-Lai and India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, signed in 1954, continue to guide China's conduct in international relations. When PRC President Jiang Zemin made his tour of Africa

in 1996, the five proposals that he submitted as terms for Sino-African relations were mostly rephrased versions of the five principles of peaceful coexistence (Alden, 2005). The principles entailed[14]:

1. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Non-interference in another's internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

The 1955 Bandung Conference, the meeting of the then newly independent African and Asian states, adopted Ten Principles of international relations which were virtually five additions to the principles of coexistence signed between China and India. Much of the criticism that has been leveled against China in contemporary times stems from the PRC's fervent adherence to these principles. Its insistence that nations in the international system should not interfere with the internal affairs of other nations has been criticised as an excuse for China to get away with its deplorable reputation of human rights abuses. Apart from fortifying itself against an international outcry on human rights, China is also said to evoke non-interference as an excuse to trade with odious regimes (MacDonald, 2010).

The Bandung Conference was the most propitious opportunity for the development of China-Africa relations. Egypt was the first African country to open diplomatic ties with China immediately after the Conference (Anshan, 2007). The Bandung Conference changed the way China perceived itself. Apart from being an erstwhile acolyte of the Soviet Union, it could now play a more proactive role among Third World countries. When the PRC's conflict with the Soviet Union became even more obvious, China branded both the US and the Soviet Union as hegemons, the behemoths against which the Non-Aligned Movement had to protest (Zhong and Xu, 2008).

Mao was particularly influential in non-alignment propaganda and he divided the non-superpower states into middle zones i.e. the first and the second middle zones. Asian, African and Latin American states comprised the first middle zones and were explicitly opposed to US and Soviet imperialism. The second middle zone, which included Canada, Australia,

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[14] See Chandra-Sekhar, S (1961). *Red China: An Asian View*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, pp.202, or Brown, J M (2003). *Nehru: A Political Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Oceania and Europe were not diametrically opposed to the two superpowers but were nonetheless indirect allies of the first middle zone. The efficiency of Chinese propaganda in Africa was well rewarded in 1971 when the PRC replaced Taiwan on the United Nations Security Council, with the help of African nations (Masud, 2013). China bolstered its political intimacy with Africa because of its emphasis that anti-imperialism was principally to be led by the first middle zone. It is through such propaganda that China started its interaction with South African liberation movements. China has had a complex relationship with South Africa, dating to the first decade of the twentieth century. The following subsection will look at China's complex relations with South African the liberation movements of which the current ruling party (ANC) in South Africa was the most significant representative.

3.2.1.2 The PRC, Apartheid and Liberation Movements

Relations between China and South Africa date back to 1905 when China was under the Qing Dynasty and South Africa under British rule (Taylor, 2006). These relations – though weak and limited - survived after the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the 1911 Chinese revolution which replaced the 2000 years of dynastic leadership with the nationalist Kuomintang (Zhong and Xu, 2008). In 1948 South Africa adopted the controversial policy of apartheid and the following year China also underwent a revolution; the nationalist (Kuomintang) leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek was replaced by the communists led by Mao Zedong. Through all these changes, relations between South Africa and China, now rebranded as the People's Republic of China, survived. The Kuomintang was exiled to Taiwan and took the name The Republic of China. The PRC, though still maintaining diplomatic relations with South Africa, had registered its opposition to apartheid, partly because apartheid would "discriminate against the Chinese minority in South Africa" (Larkin 1971:16). China displayed its disapproval of apartheid by initially entertaining a steady flow of anti-apartheid activists to China in the 1950s (Slovo, 1995).

The first recorded visit of anti-apartheid activists to China was in 1953, by ANC members Duma Nokwe and Walter Sisulu and Indian Congress member Ismail Bhoola (Zhong and Xu, 2008). Sisulu reported favourably of the way the PRC feted South African activists and this exhibited the likelihood that China was authentically opposed to apartheid (Sisulu, 2002). Sisulu, at Mandela's behest, reportedly inquired if the Chinese would provide materials for an armed insurrection in South Africa. The Chinese argued that a turn to violent struggle was at

the moment inopportune. South African liberation movements were by this time gathering momentum in their international bearing. Their sending of representatives to the Bandung Conference, which was solely for independent Asian and African nations, proves that their anti-apartheid and anti-colonial stance was receiving widespread acknowledgement. After the conference, Moses Kotane, secretary general of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Molvi Cachalia (Zhong and Xu, 2008) of the Transvaal Indian Congress visited China and India, their allies in the "anticolonial left" (Ellis 2012:10). Yusuf Dadoo and Vella Pillay, both of the SACP, visited China in 1960 and met with Deng Xiaoping of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Mao Zedong, the chairman of CCP. It is reported that the South African communists broached the topic of military aid during the visit (Ellis 2012:13).

Despite the visits of South African anti-apartheid activists to the PRC, the period from 1949 to 1960 was characterized by complex Sino-South African relations. The first complication was that apartheid South Africa still had formal ties with the PRC. This gives a hint that despite what China told members of the ANC and SACP, it still wanted to maintain relations with the South African government. Even when China formally severed its relations with South Africa in 1960, many have argued that it continued secretive trade links with South Africa, infringing the terms of the embargo which was imposed on apartheid governments (e.g. see Hutchison, 1975; Larkin, 1971; Snow, 1988; Taylor, 2000; Naidu, 2006).

Taylor (2006) writes that China was coerced to repeat its anti-apartheid position a couple of times after severing ties with apartheid South Africa, proof that liberation movements looked askance at China's stance. When writers such as Hevi (1963) talk of Chinese leaders as dishonest, it is partly due to these allegations of double dealing. It is also possible that China and apartheid South Africa could have continued trading and sharing other furtive relations so as to curtail Soviet influence, especially during the Sino-Soviet split when the USSR was the common enemy of Pretoria and Beijing (Akinde, 1977). This notwithstanding, the fact that the PRC cut its ties with the apartheid government in 1960 was proof to the South African liberation movements that China was opposed to apartheid. Thus, it was expected that China would form bonds with South Africa liberation movements. The biggest hurdle in forging stable relations between the PRC and South African liberation movement emerged during the Sino-Soviet conflict.

3.2.1.3 Effects of the Sino-Soviet Split on the PRC's relations with South African liberation movements

When China and the Soviet Union were embroiled in ideological conflict, the effects of this circumstance manifested themselves in Africa. The Sino-Soviet rift started in the 1950s when most African countries were still trying to overthrow colonialism and apartheid and were largely dependent on international support, of which the Soviet Union and China were parts. Mao's ambiguous statement that the East wind prevails over the West betrayed "China's aim to lead the world's Marxists-Leninists" (Larkin 1971:3). Furthermore, China's insistence on doctrinaire Marxism and the purported necessity of radical or violent revolutions gave the impression that colonialism and apartheid could only be ended through "the barrel of the gun" (Mao, 1938:224; Kasrils 2004:69).

Other possible explanations for the communist conflict included the "conflicts of power and ambition within the international communist movement and the Third World" (Zagoria 1974:139). The clash of personalities between Soviet and Chinese leaders has also been cited as one accelerant of the Sino-Soviet split (Zagoria, 1974). The relationships that China had hitherto shared with South African liberations movements began to ebb away during this period and remained thus up to the 1980s (Taylor, 2006). The South African Communist Party (SACP), which was in close alliance with the ANC, enjoyed very formidable connections with the Soviet Union (Larkin, 1971). These relations ranged from political to ideological sponsorship. Naturally, when China fulminated against everything Soviet, the SACP and ANC sided with their Soviet sponsors. The SACP and ANC found merit in Nikita Khrushchev's policy of peaceful existence with the West but the PRC denounced it as revisionist, hence implicitly favouring a hostile stance against the non-communist bloc.

The differences that emerged between China and the ANC on the policy of radical revolution is understandable when one takes into account the enduring commitment that the ANC had to non-violent means of winning political power. The Cold War period was such that despite the formation of the Non-aligned Movement, it was largely divided between the West and the East and other regions that sought to affiliate with either sides of the iron curtain. The Sino-Soviet split also took a similar pattern, those who supported China risked forfeiting Soviet auspices and vice versa. The split also divided African liberation movements (Martin and Johnson, 1985). Apart from the influence of the SACP on the ANC, the question of armed

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struggle played a major role in poisoning Sino-ANC relations, with the ANC being historically inclined to non-violence.

In 1960, Chief Albert Luthuli, then President of the ANC was offered the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in peaceful struggle against apartheid. Even after the ANC decided to embark on sabotage in 1960, it restrained itself from full-fledged guerilla warfare and terrorism, the methods that Mao's China cherished. The formation of Umkhonto We Sizwe[15] (MK), a military outfit created by the ANC, was aimed at destroying government installations and inducing doubt in foreign investors, all in the hope of bringing the apartheid "government to the bargaining table" (Mandela, 1994:526). The armed wing "would engage only in very carefully controlled sabotage operations designed to avoid any casualties" (Lodge 2006:90 see also Sampson, 1999).

Even after the ANC had carried out its first sabotage assault in December 1961, the statement issued by MK reiterated the peaceful nature of the ANC by stating that it was still ready to dialogue with the government. In the now immortalized statement that Nelson Mandela made from the dock during the 1964 Rivonia Trial, he stated that the ANC contemplated violence because "the hard facts were that fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights" (Mandela, 1964).[16] Mandela still maintained, however, that in lieu of attacking people, MK would venture into "planned destruction of power plants, and interference with rail and telephone communications…[and]… sabotage on Government buildings and other symbols of apartheid" (Mandela, 1964).[17]

Mandela, who was the main brain behind the formation of MK, wrote in his autobiography, that if sabotage "did not produce the results we wanted, we were prepared to move on to the next stage: guerrilla warfare and terrorism" (Mandela, 1994:572). Even after Mandela started negotiating with leaders of the National Party in the last stages of his imprisonment, he stated that the ANC was ready to renounce violence if the National Party was amenable to ending

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[15] A Nguni phrase for *Spear of the Nation*. It has often been referred to by the acronym MK.
[16] Nelson Mandela`s statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial. 20 April 1964
Quoted from the African National Congress's website. http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=3430 [Acessed 24 March 2014].
[17] Nelson Mandela`s statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial. 20 April 1964
Quoted from the African National Congress's website. http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=3430 [Acessed 24 March 2014].

apartheid "through peaceful means" (Mandela, 1994:526). This information shows that even though the ANC chose to use sabotage when the government of that day proved hostile to peaceful negotiation, it was always ready to negotiate peacefully. Fundamentally, then, the ANC of the 1960s was very different from Mao's China in its outlook on how political power should be attained. China was a staunch communist state, helmed by a person who was heavily influenced by revolutionary zeal and violent struggle. Even though China in the 1950s had stated that violent struggle was not yet appropriate in South Africa, the PRC became radicalized with the passage of time and the effect of competition with the USSR. It was thus inevitable that the identity of China and that of the ANC would clash on the role of violence in the struggle for political power.

Despite its clashes with the ANC and SACP, China still wanted to have a part in Africa's politics. The best way of evincing this ambition was to continue its support, modest as it was, of struggling liberation movements. The 1963-64 visit to Africa by Zhou En-Lai marked a major milestone in Sino-African relations. Zhou visited ten African countries and proclaimed that Africa was ready for revolution. He only visited independent Africa and enforced connections that soon saw China helping Africa with infrastructure (Anshan, 2007), albeit at a minimal level. With the SACP and ANC siding with the USSR during the Sino-Soviet dispute, the only other South African movement that China could support was the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). China followed the same pattern with liberation movements from Zimbabwe; it supported the Zimbabwe African Nation Union (ZANU) (Ka Plaatjie, 2006) against the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which was under Soviet support. China offered military and ideological training to members of Poqo[18], a military facet of the PAC.

According to Thami ka Plaatjie (2006) China was impressed with Poqo's apparent readiness to start guerilla warfare inside South Africa. However, far from the well-organized ANC, the PAC was a fractured movement rent apart by internal disputes and succession conflicts (Ellis, 2012; Ka Plaatjie, 2006). Furthermore, the PAC was a splinter movement from the ANC, formed in 1959 by a group of self-proclaimed "Africanists" (Resha 1991:89) who decried the inundation of white communists in the ANC. By supporting a radical and – at least initially - anti-communist group, the PRC exposed its desperation to counter Soviet influence by placing under its auspices any movement that was independent of the USSR. The China-PAC

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[18] This organisation was later called the Azania People's Liberation Army, and was modelled on the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Mashike and Mokalobe, 2003).

relationship was based on political expediency rather than ideological convergence (Taylor, 2006). This provoked the resentment of the SACP which stated:

> The oppressed people of our country and all honest revolutionaries are indignant at the unprincipled backing given by the Chinese Government to certain discredited splinter groups of southern Africa. These groups are known to all, including the Chinese Communists, for their racialism, anti-communism and the disruption of the liberation struggle. By associating with them, the Chinese leaders only expose their own opportunism and lack of principle (*African Communist* 1967:17).

The PAC was also desperate for material support and hence toned down its anti-communist rhetoric when China started sponsoring it. It rather laid more stress on anti-imperialist sentiment which found resonance with the propaganda of the PRC. As Joe Slovo, one time leader of the SACP put it, "as soon as its leadership realised that it could profit from the Soviet-Chinese dispute, the PAC suddenly embraced the tenets of the Maoist variety of Leninism" (1995:114). However, China, being a poor country during this time (Kendall and Louw, 1989), did not support the PAC to the extent that the Soviet Union supported the SACP and ANC. While the Soviet-sponsored parties enjoyed exponential growth of membership, the PAC could not move as much because of China's meager support (McKinley, 1997). To compound this dire situation, the alienation of their founding president Robert Sobukwe and his subsequent death in 1978 cast the members of the PAC into further internecine strife (Taylor, 2006).

From what has been presented thus far, it is clear that after China differed with the Soviet Union, much of the help that it gave to the fight against colonialism and apartheid was intended to counter Soviet influence in Africa. Thus, Akinde (1977) is right when he presents China as a reactive force during the 1970s. The only limitation in his argument is that despite being right about that particular context i.e. the period of the Sino-Soviet dispute, his argument loses some credence when China's African policy is analysed over a longer period. One other development that thrust China in more controversy during the 1970s was its improved relations with the Nixon Administration in the United States, the main antithesis of communism. It was this unlikely relationship that provoked a barrage of criticism from the SACP and by extension the ANC. Because of the Sino-Soviet rift, relations between China and the South African liberation movements remained fraught up to the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.

The extent to which the PRC under Mao interacted with the international system was driven by the international social structure that was prevalent at that time. This structure was

influenced by factors such as the struggle for power between the United States and the Soviet Union. Later China and the Soviet Union tussled for communist leadership. Prior to the Sino-Soviet conflict, China displayed the identity of a modest communist power content with being second to the Soviet Union. The identity that China projected more during this time was that of a communist state. Its interest was to defeat capitalism and incorporate states that were under Western and therefore capitalist colonialism into the communist bloc.

During the Sino-Soviet split, the social structure of the communist bloc changed and China identified itself as the true custodian of communism not the 'revisionist' Soviet Union. China was trying to lure African liberation movements from Soviet influence. It sought to import what it considered an orthodox way through which capitalist colonies and those under minority rule could change their political system. Thus China argued for radical or violent revolution in replacing capitalism and imperialism, contrary to the possibility of parliamentary means which was being mooted in the Soviet Union. This was both an adherence to what the PRC took as real Marxism-Leninism and an influence of Mao's propensity for "conflict and violence" (McDonald 2011:18; see also Mao 1961:14, 15). This put China against political parties that were inclined towards Soviet influence and less enamoured by violent revolution. The ANC, for example, was pushed into violent sabotage only after exhausting peaceful means of negotiation. It was with the accession of Deng Xiaoping, as Mao's *de facto* successor that China underwent some of its most significant changes. During this period, a Chinese identity which the outside world found more tolerable than the Maoist one emerged. The following epoch will show how this happened.

3.2.2 Second Epoch of the PRC's and South Africa's International Relations: After Mao

This section will look at the changes that the PRC went through after the death of Mao. From being a China that was somewhat closed in on itself, the leadership that came after Mao responded to global problems in a different fashion. The biggest influence on the transformed face of China was Deng Xiaoping, an enigmatic figure in Chinese politics who was once sidelined by Mao, but gained prominence after the Chairman's death. Deng never became the Premier of China or the General Secretary of the CCP, the highest post in the party. Nevertheless he served both as Vice Chairman of the CCP Central Committee and Vice Premier of China. Deng's influence on China after Mao derived largely from the way he was regarded as the "paramount leader" (Goodman 1994:1). The section will also look at the form of relations between China and the South African liberation movements after Mao. In keeping with the dynamics of this research, this section will look at how identity and policy was gradually shifting in China, South Africa and among the liberation movements that were striving against apartheid.

3.2.2.1 China's Foreign and Economic System under Deng Xiaoping

Under Mao, China was a doctrinaire Communist state. It was hostile to most of what it perceived as Western because most of the West was capitalist. China was also concerned about cultural dilution if it opened its doors to Western influence. The obsession with retaining the untainted Chinese culture against foreign influence carried chauvinistic tendencies. Deng, on the other hand, was convinced that China could actually gain more if it changed its strict international and economic policies. He staked his political career on the conviction that fighting ideological battles with the Soviet Union at the expense of improving the economy which was severely affected by embargoes would have deleterious results on China. For this reason, Deng gradually opened China to the international market and paid less allegiance to Mao's overused mantra of self-reliance (Gelb, 2010).

It is to Deng's credit that, years before Mikhail Gorbachev's rule in Moscow, the eventual "disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the CCP under his leadership abandoned the political strait jacket Mao had imposed on the PRC during the Cultural Revolution, decided on a programme of modernization and instituted considerable political reforms" (Goodman 1994:1). Economic modernization was to become

the hallmark for the new China (Nau, 2012; Saich, 2001). Moreover, the 12th CCP "National Assembly in 1982 officially marked a shift from a policy that emphasized 'war and revolution' to one emphasizing 'peace and development'" (Anshan 2007:72). To the West, Deng was regarded "as a communist modernizer acceptable to the capitalist world" (Goodman 1994:1).

To move even further from Mao, Deng was tolerant of Hong Kong and its capitalist model. Hong Kong was at the time under British rule and hence was bred on capitalist ideology. The people of Hong Kong thus needed assurance from mainland China that they would be allowed to continue their form of economic system if a time came for them to be part of mainland China. Deng formulated want could be called a 'one state, two systems' policy which was aimed at accommodating Hong Kong' capitalist model and, hopefully, Taiwan's nationalist model. By the time Mao died, Khrushchev had already died and ideological battles were dwarfed by the necessity for economic improvement.

State intervention on the economy was relaxed and more responsibility was devolved to local governments. "Starting from 1978, China embarked on a series of gradual economic reform programs, which moved away from the excessive centralization of the command or the planned economy" (Lumumba-Kasongo 2011:248). More effort was put into attracting foreign trade and investment. For this to happen, lower rungs of government had to control the majority of industries (Montinola, 1996). At this time China was poised to work with any nation that would enhance its economic ambitions (Hunter and Sexton 1999:183). Though China did not espouse democracy in the sense of having elections and multiple political parties, its economy was not totally at variance with that of other liberal democracies (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2011).

Today, it could be argued that while Hong Kong feared that its capitalist model would be obliterated if it was to be incorporated into mainland China, the current Chinese economic framework suggests that mainland China has actually been won over to the capitalist flock. Gittings argues that Deng transformed China from a rigid Marxist state "into a quasi-capitalist state" (Gittings 2005:251). The form of economy that China has followed since 1978 has been described by many as state capitalism. It was thus not surprising that shortly after Mao's death, there was evidence of another rapprochement between China and United States and, according to James Mann, the two nations entertained each other to a degree that the issue of human rights, which had previously shaped their relations, was relegated into

insignificance (Mann, 2000). In the same vein, "human rights was considered a suitable subject for high-level American diplomacy with the Soviet Union, but not with China" (Mann 2000:103).

From observing this period, it is apparent that the United States did not perceive China as a threat. For its own part, China was concerned with disabusing other nations of the notion that China remained the militant communist polity that it had been under Mao. Of greater importance for the new China was economic modernization and development (Zhong and Xu, 2008). The Soviet Union was also faced with its own problems. It could not continue supporting liberation movements in Africa with the same magnitude as it had in the past. For this reason, opportunities were opened up for liberation movements that were under Soviet auspices to relate with China (Taylor, 2006). In addition to this, Leonid Brezhnev, the Secretary General of the CPSU, and leader of the USSR had – as early as 1973 – shown his readiness to end the Sino-Soviet dispute. Brezhnev stated that despite China's "frenzied anti-Sovietism and opposition to the easing of tensions" the USSR was "consistently [coming] out for "a normalization of relations and, more than that, for a restoration of Soviet-Chinese friendship" (1973:6).

The attitude of the ANC and SACP towards China did not change immediately after the death of Mao. The ANC criticized China's fleeting war with Vietnam in 1979 (Taylor, 2006). It also accused China of aiding and abetting racist regimes and said it would only mend its ties with the PRC if the latter rejoined the antiapartheid fold – an indirect accusation that China had abandoned anti-apartheid activity. However, in the long run, Mao's departure from the PRC's political scene proved significant for relations between the PRC and the South African liberation movements. In August 1982 Vella Pillay of the SACP visited China and urged the CCP leaders to rectify the strained relations between China and the ANC. Li Anshan (2007) writes that after the 1982 CCP National Assembly, the PRC forged formal inter-party ties with many other African parties.

The major boon to ANC and CCP relations came in 1983 when Oliver Tambo – ANC president - visited China and for the first time established formal party to party relations between the ANC and CCP (Zhong and Xu, 2008). The CCP made monetary donations to the ANC during this visit. An important point to make at this time is that the aid that China was giving the ANC at the time was no longer aimed at countering Soviet influence, but rather at bolstering China's presence in African politics. As Kempton observed "the renewal of

Chinese aid [was] a by-product of Soviet policy toward China, rather than a renewal of Sino-Soviet competition" (1989:171). The PRC appreciated the fact that its future place in South African politics could only be secured if it aligned itself with the biggest political movement – the ANC (Taylor, 2006). Furthermore, because Sino-Soviet tensions were subsiding, China had no real motive to use the PAC as a tool for its anti-Soviet machinations. Thus, the PRC resolved to support "all organisations struggling for national liberation in Southern Africa…without discrimination" (*Renmin Ribao*, December 31, 1983).

What was gradually emerging during the post-Mao period was a different PRC. Far from one that was previously based on communist zealotry (Anshan, 2007), the new China was more pragmatic in its policies. One of the fundamental changes taking place during this time was the shift in the outlook on how apartheid could be ended. There was a growing realization that military or violent struggle had not borne dividends on the side of liberation movements. The shift on the question of violence permeated the Soviet Union, China and South African movements.

The Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union was agreeable to a "negotiated settlement…, [having been aware] of the disaster that had befallen Angola after a protracted liberation struggle" (Taylor 2006:137). The ANC did not find it hard to opt for this stance, based on its own antipathy towards violence and realization that armed struggle had only put the ANC and the apartheid governments in an immovable impasse. The ANC had started negotiations with South Africa business personnel in the 1980s. In 1985, the ANC, then based in Zambia, had met a business delegation from South Africa headed by Gavin Relly, chairman of Anglo American, South Africa's biggest mining corporation. The two parties were scouting for a way to end the political stalemate which had negative impacts on the South African economy (Gervisser, 2009).

In 1986, Thabo Mbeki gave an interview in which he openly declared that the ANC was "not thinking of overthrowing the [South African] government, but turning so many people against it that it will be forced to do what Ian Smith (former Rhodesian Prime Minister] had to do" (*Observer*, March 2, 1986). In essence Mbeki wanted the government to commit itself to negotiations, just as Smith had done. In fact Mbeki put it frankly that the ANC wanted "to talk" (*Observer*, March 2, 1986). This shows that the ANC was always poised for negotiation. Even initially when the ANC had ventured into sabotage, it stated that its

objective was to force the obdurate Nationalist government to make political concessions with its opposition (Mandela. 1994; *Financial Times*, 1986).

In 1987, Alex Boraine and Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, founders of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) led a group of 61 people from South Africa to meet 17 representatives from the ANC in Dakar, Senegal. The fact that most of those from South Africa were Afrikaans speakers was particularly telling and earned them the scorn of Afrikaners who considered this overture and act of perfidy. The South African contingent expressed its misgivings about the ANC's use of violent struggle. At the end of the conference however, a summary of the deliberations stated that the parties involved "unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution to the South African question" (Boraine 2008:315). Absolving the ANC of dithering, the communique further stated that "the attitude of those in power in South Africa is the principal obstacle to progress in [a negotiated resolution]" (ibid). The only condition that the ANC had before it could commit fully to negotiation was the unqualified release of political prisoners and a lift of the ban on proscribed political movements. The stance of China towards negotiation during this critical period is underscored by the fact that Boraine and Van Zyl Slabbert later visited China, primarily to discuss the future of South Africa (*Xinhua*, September 6 1987). It could be said with a high chance of certitude that China entertained this delegation because it also countenanced a peaceful settlement for South Africa.

During the same period, the National Party government was trying to overhaul what could be termed "the outdated concept of apartheid" (Eglin 1986:23), though the ANC and other anti-apartheid activists perceived these undertakings as cosmetic changes. Some baneful laws of apartheid were changed; black workers were now allowed to form labour unions, the immorality act which forbade marriage and sexual expression across races was rescinded and racially determined job reservations were also jettisoned (Eglin, 1986). The changes that P.W. Botha sought to make were a reflection that apartheid leaders were aware that they existed in "a world which was developing in the exact opposite direction" (Stemmer 2009:86). By 1980, most of southern Africa was dominated by black leaders and this fact put apartheid South Africa in besieged position. For the country to enjoy a modicum of support, therefore, it had to show some noticeable willingness to change its identity and the best way of doing so was by rescinding some policies that were politically problematic, economically counterproductive and practically indefensible.

China was also refining its priorities. Violent struggle, which would entail massive material and military donations to the liberation movements, could undermine the economic modernization programme. The PRC was contented with confining its anti-apartheid contribution to rhetoric and other non-violent means. Thus, China was more concerned with the calls for more sanctions on apartheid South Africa. This stance was a far cry from the Chinese rhetoric of the 1970s which charged that "in dealing with counterrevolutionary violence, revolutionary violence is necessary" (*Beijing Domestic Service*, January 11, 1978). Shortly before Nelson Mandela was released from prison, the PRC observed with optimism that there was a "trend towards a political settlement of South Africa's problems" (*Beijing Review*, January 8-14, 1990).

With its new stance on international politics, post-Mao PRC managed to convince the world that it had transformed itself from being an ideological fanatic to a practical player in global politics. This change was patent to other nations and explains the changed perceptions of the United States, the Soviet Union and South African liberation movements. The ANC had always held aloft the supremacy of negotiation, but the door had always been shut to that process by the apartheid governments. The 1980s brought some waves of hope for negotiation and the fact that China was amenable to this shows that the PRC was itself changing.

Towards the end of the 1980s a disaster happened that was a blight on China's international reputation. The world witnessed the crisis which almost unraveled the good name that China had painstakingly built after Mao. This crisis has now come to be called the Tiananmen Square crisis. The Tiananmen protest was a brainchild of Chinese students who grew increasingly restive because of corruption and nepotism among national leaders and the lack of liberty and employment opportunities for students who pursued certain academic qualifications.

During the time when China enjoyed rapprochement with the United States, Africa seemed to have receded in the background on China's agenda. However, after the Tiananmen Square crisis, China rejuvenated its relations with Africa because it was now ostracized by Western powers. The violent manner with which the PRC leaders suppressed the Tiananmen protesters sent shock waves across the world. The crisis revived the criticism on human rights abuses in China. The crisis also coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was a direct presage of the end of the Cold War.

The social structure that emerged after Mao prompted major changes in China's identity and interests. The Sino-Soviet conflict was virtually over and China's relations with the West and Soviet Union were less conflictual. The Western world and the Soviet Union found the new Chinese economic and political identity and interests more tolerable than old ones. China was now more interested in economic modernization than ideological purity. Its national interests of reviving the economy took precedence.

China wanted to benefit from ties with other international players, regardless of their ideological orientation. It adopted policies that would enhance economic development. Thus, China started visibly calling for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. It could not continue to vouch for armed struggle against apartheid, lest it spends its much needed resources on it. The ANC revived its relations with the PRC and formalized party-to-party relations with the CCP (Taylor, 2006). International opprobrium and censure seemed to have been successful in South Africa as some laws of apartheid were excised from the national canons and leaders of government had started secret talks with liberation leaders. For the first time then, China, the South African liberation movements, and the apartheid government seemed to have come to a uniform conclusion: that dialogue rather than armed struggle in South Africa was both economically attractive and politically effective. This new outlook on how to solve the South African dilemma paid off in 1990 when liberation movements were unbanned and a number of political prisoners were released. With the modest help that China offered the exiled ANC during apartheid, combined with the economic challenges that post-apartheid South Africa faced, it was almost a foregone conclusion that the similar identities and interests that China and South Africa had would drive the countries towards formalizing diplomatic ties at the expense of Taiwan.

3.2.2.2 Sino-South African Relations after the Cold War and the institution of Democracy in South Africa

Major changes in relations between the PRC, South Africa and the different anti-apartheid organizations came when the apartheid government lifted the ban on liberation movements and released certain political prisoners. This period was to prove a milestone for South Africa, and provoked another complex relationship with the PRC. It is also important to note

that this period came at a time when the Soviet Union had disintegrated and a unipolar world order was blossoming. It also came a year after the Tiananmen Square crisis at which a number of Chinese protesters were killed by Chinese security forces. China had not yet recovered from the bad repute into which the crisis cast it.

The Tiananmen Square Crisis of 1989 shattered the period of rapprochement between the Western world and China. The incident was redolent of communism's seeming obsession with violence. China has been haunted by allegations of human rights abuse, and the Tiananmen Square is one example that lends credence to these allegations. In the same year, 1989, the Berlin Wall, which for decades had been the symbol of communist defiance, was torn down, signaling a communist defeat. China could then be said to have concluded the 1980s on a very somber note. The following decade was to equally put China in a precarious situation as China struggled to maintain communist dominance after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In its relationship with South Africa, China also underwent a difficult period of trying to win back diplomatic ties with South Africa at the expense of its longest nemesis – Taiwan.

After apartheid, South Africa had to socialize itself with the international system. China had the same interest as well after the Tiananmen crisis. Additionally, the two countries shared the uniform goal of economic development and political acceptability. It is thus not surprising that their identities put the two countries in consonance over a number of issues and China displayed uncharacteristic patience during the two Chinas dilemma, possibly because it knew that resuming formal relations with post-apartheid South Africa was certain.

3.2.2.3 China-South Africa Relations from 1990 to 1994

When the National Party government of South Africa decided to release some political prisoners, lift the ban on the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations, South Africa attracted some measure of international optimism after decades of isolation. The PRC, which was overly against apartheid, gradually started extending overtures to South Africa (Zhong and Xu, 2008). Despite having been accused of trading secretly with apartheid South Africa, the PRC now had a reason to openly explore prospects of trade and investment ties with South Africa. South Africa could not afford to ignore China based on the latter's economic force and its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. South Africa was also

anxious to end the status of being an international outcast. China was cognizant of South Africa's economic and mineral importance. The PRC also rued the fact that Taiwan had formal ties with such an important African country. China was thus determined to construct formal relations with South Africa so as to further isolate Taiwan.

During this period, it was obvious that if free and fair elections were held in South Africa the ANC would emerge victorious. China and Taiwan, therefore, dealt with both the ruling National Party and the ANC which was certainly going to form the subsequent government. Prior to the unbanning of the ANC, China had already changed its rhetoric from supporting a violent onslaught on apartheid to peaceful negotiation. By this time, the PRC had by and large repaired its relationship with the ANC and the SACP. When Mandela visited Zambia shortly after his release, he met the Chinese ambassador to Zambia and thanked him for China's support of the liberation struggle (Taylor, 2006). Taiwan was well aware of the fact that the PRC was determined to take over formal relations with South Africa. To forestall this possibility, Taiwan made more investment available for South Africa and also committed to support the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was one of the main trademarks of the ANC (Naidu, 2008; Barber, 2005).

The tussle for South Africa's relations between the PRC and Taiwan, prior to the 1994 election in South Africa, was a foretaste of the "two Chinas" dilemma which confronted the post-apartheid government. South Africa was also partly to blame for the awkward episode. In 1991 Pik Botha, the South African minister of foreign affairs visited China with a business delegation. There he met his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen and discussed "the opening of the China Institute for International Studies in Pretoria in February 1992 and the South African Centre for Chinese Studies in Beijing the following month" (Botha, 2008). In 1992 Mandela visited China and met with Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin. Jiang expressed the hope of reinforcing the bond between the CCP and the ANC and between China and South Africa. These meetings put South Africa-Taiwan relations under threat. What complicated the situation even more was that Mandela reassured the ROC government that once the ANC came to power in South Africa it would not sever ties with Taiwan. Mandela was of the opinion that unless Taiwan did something intolerably vile, South Africa would not end relations with it (*Agence France-Presse*, June 8, 1994). Furthermore, Mandela was of the opinion that it was morally indefensible for the new South African leadership to dump Taiwan just because it had won the struggle against apartheid (Taylor, 2006).

Mandela's reassurance to Taiwan were not in tandem with what he expressed in a 1993 statement made on his behalf by Joe Slovo during a visit to Beijing. In it Mandela said that once in power, the ANC government would "follow the principles adopted by the overwhelming majority of countries in the world in developing ties with China" (*Xinhua, Domestic Service*, August 17, 1993). Mandela reckoned that by having formal ties with the apartheid governments, Taiwan was in cahoots with "South African racism" (*Xinhua, Domestic Service*, August 17, 1993). Thus Mandela promised to "diplomatically recognise the People's Republic of China as the sole representative of the whole of China" (ibid).

In sum, after 1990 China and South Africa increased interactions which had been formally severed for three decades. What remained was to formalize relations between the two countries and this meant South Africa cutting its formal relations with Taiwan, because China would brook no shared relations with Taiwan. Though China was less forceful at the time when the National Party was still in power, after the 1994 elections in South Africa, it became more ambitious in urging the ANC-led government to recognize Beijing and abandon Taiwan. The ANC was cast in a quandary and this episode has come to be known as the Two Chinas dilemma that dogged the ANC government up to 1997 (Naidu, 2008).

3.2.2.4 Sino-South African Relations during South Africa's first post-apartheid government

Sanunsha Naidu writes that South Africa's foreign policy since 1994 has confounded policy analysts because of its "vacillations between 'realist' and 'moral' internationalism" (Naidu 2008:169). According to this assertion, in the context of Sino-South African relations, formalizing ties with China carried undertones of realism, but continuing ties with Taiwan indicated a moral commitment on South Africa's part. It is right to say that the relatively peaceful manner in which the 1994 transition was facilitated in South Africa presented the country as a moral example to Africa and the world. For this reason, there was an expectation that in its foreign policy South Africa would consider human rights and political rectitude as key priorities. It is less surprising, then, to note that Mandela made human rights, the adherence to international law and democracy the priorities of foreign policy during his tenure as president (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). This insistence on human rights, as will be explained later, compounded the two Chinas dilemma. Long before the advent of majority rule, it was a matter of course that South Africa would want to have formal ties with China.

The problem was whether or not South Africa would sever ties with Taiwan for this to happen. This was the crux of the two Chinas dilemma.

China has been unequivocal on the fact that it cannot have diplomatic ties with a country that recognizes Taiwan. Qian Qichen, the Chinese foreign minister at the time, told a South African delegation in 1995 that a country that aspires to have formal relations with China can only have informal ties with Taiwan (Taylor, 2006). The competition between the two Chinas grew more intensely with time. In 1996, Taiwan held its first ever democratic elections. This was a major improvement on its international reputation (Taylor, 1998), in comparison to mainland China which has severally been regarded as an Orwellian and non-democratic polity. South Africa emphasized, at least initially, the primacy of human rights, and so the democratic reform of Taiwan gave it an advantage over the PRC in vying for South African friendship. In the same year, the PRC president Jiang Zemin delivered a speech at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) entitled "Towards a new Historical Milestone in Sino-African Friendship". This presentation formed the major template of what was later to be called the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The speech was centered on preparing for multifaceted relations between China and Africa in the twenty-first century (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC*, 2000). Zemin also reiterated the five principles of Sino-African cooperation (Alden, 2005). To South Africa, this presentation added a further complication to the undesirable position of having to choose what relations it wanted with the two Chinas. Zemin had changed from China's former rhetoric on ideology which was redolent of the Mao era. The one thing that remained unchanged was "Beijing's insistence on a 'one China' recognition policy, which has led a number of African states to cut off diplomatic relations with Taiwan" (Alden 2005:148).

Greg Mills (1995) presented three possible options that South Africa had to solve the two Chinas dilemma. The first option was not to disrupt the status quo. This meant that South Africa would retain diplomatic ties with Taiwan while enjoying increased interaction with China (Mills, 1997). This option also came with the hope that the two Chinas would find a solution to their diplomatic relations without compelling South Africa to elect a side (Naidu, 2008). The second option that South Africa had was to suggest dual recognition of both Taiwan and the PRC. This is the policy that Mandela favoured (Botha, 2008; Barber, 2005). During his visit to Taiwan before the 1994 election, Taipei had provided the ANC with significant financial support for its campaign (Cornish, 1997). After Mandela became president, he reiterated that he did not have the "immorality" to ditch Taiwan as the country

had helped the ANC in the dying days of apartheid (*Taiwan aujourd' hui*, 1996)[19]. China had made it unambiguously clear, though, that it could not allow this position though it treated South Africa with what has been refered to as "quiet persuasion" (Alden, 2005) or the "kid gloves" approach (Taylor, 2006).

To opt for dual recognition was thus, in essence, to opt for Taiwan because the PRC would not tolerate it. To show that the PRC was unswerving on this position, when Chad recognized Taipei in 1997, China swiftly severed ties with Chad and withdrew its aid (Mills, 1997; Liu, 2001). The third option, which was the general case, was to sever ties with Taiwan and institute new ones with the PRC. The reasons for this were both economic and political (Mills, 1997). China had more prospects of growing its economy and hence offered more rewards for South Africa than Taiwan did (Naidu, 2008). Taiwan has largely been inhibited in its international influence by the increasing global footprint of China. For this reason, it is expected that a country that aims to play a role in the changing international system and wants to share relations with the ever-developing China, should cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan. South Africa became such a country.

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[19] *Taiwan aujourd' hui* (1996). Mandela says South Africa will keep ROC ties.
http://taiwanauj.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=14318&CtNode=122 [Accessed 24 January 2014].

3.2.3 The third epoch of Sino-South African Relations

This section will show how South Africa and China have interacted from 1998 when they established formal relations. South Africa is now more comfortably ensconced among other nations in the international system. Much change has happened in the interests of South Africa and China since the resumption of their relations. Fairbanks wrote that the change that South Africa has undergone since Mandela stepped down "is striking" (2012). South Africa seems to have moved from being a "principled state to pragmatic actor" (Moore 2013:545) and an increasingly confusing international player. This epoch covers the tenures of Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma because, as will be shown later Mbeki's philosophy has permeated the tenure of current President Zuma. China has also joined the World Trade Organization after a long struggle of trying to reassure its trade partners, especially the United States and the European Union, that China was "doing enough to open its economy to international competition" (*BBC News,* 11 December, 2001).[20]

Relations between China and South Africa are multifaceted but linked. South-South cooperation, for which China and South Africa are leading advocates, is a manifestation of political relations. The year 2006, dubbed "China's Year of Africa" (Naidu 2007:41) was particularly important in China-Africa relations. For the first time, China crafted its Africa Policy, stating the wide-ranging plans that China has for its African expeditions (Anshan, 2007). The main highlight of 2006 was the convergence, on Beijing of 48 heads of African states for the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit (Large, 2008). The leaders present at the summit supported a "strategic partnership between China and Africa featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win co-operation and cultural exchanges" (*China Daily*, 2006).[21] The intent on the part of China and South Africa to have an equitable relationship will discount any claims that China's engagement with South Africa is unavoidably ominous. Through BRICS China and South Africa's identity as "key emerging powers" (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012:464) with intersecting interests exhibits itself. The G8 in 2007 further illustrated China and South Africa's shared identities by inviting the two countries alongside Mexico, Brazil and India as outreach partners that represented potential emerging powers (Cornelissen, 2009; Scott, vom Hau and Hulme, 2010). This section will attempt to address both economic and political relations between China and South Africa.

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[20] *BBC News. China joins the WTO - at last*. 11 December, 2001.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/1702241.stm [Accessed 25 March 2014].
[21] China Daily (2006). *Declaration calls for enhanced ties*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-11/06/content_725766.htm. [Accessed 15 January 2014]

In November 1996 President Nelson Mandela suddenly mentioned that South Africa would cut its ties with Taiwan in preference for the PRC. This decision was not an easy one to make. Taiwan had given the ANC substantial donations for its campaign and had made more offers of investment. To some, South Africa's decision was a betrayal of its commitment to human rights and, not only this, the South African government was exposed as duplicitous because it had assured Taiwan of continued formal relations (Naidoo, 2000). This notwithstanding, on 1 January 1998 South Africa formalized its relations with China (Botha, 2008). Three reasons can be cited that occasioned China-South Africa relations. The first is South Africa's need for economic growth; the second being the Hong Kong question and third, the need for international integration (Taylor, 2006).

During apartheid, South Africa had been largely isolated from the international political economy. The ANC played a principal role in ensuring that apartheid governments were sanctioned by other global players. By the time the ANC ascended to power in 1994, South Africa's economy was not commensurate with the country's unrivalled natural and mineral resources in Africa. For a country that was desperate to augment its economic fortunes, South Africa was bound to mould ties with China, a more promising economy than Taiwan. The second reason for forging ties with China was that South Africa had for a long time shared trade relations with Hong Kong, a British-ruled island which was destined to be returned to China in 1997 (Geldenhuys, 1995). Hong Kong was South Africa's fifth biggest trade partner. After 1997, South Africa faced the fact that China would control trade relations with Hong Kong. Without formal ties between the two countries, this was going to be a fraught situation. Furthermore, with the inclusion of Hong Kong to mainland China, the PRC would have more economic power to outstrip any promises that Taiwan could make to South Africa. Finally, apart from the economic isolation that apartheid had attracted, South Africa was also politically isolated. The new dispensation wanted to be a part of the global community. Merging with a widely recognized PRC was one way of ensuring this. South Africa could also ill afford to ignore the influence of China (Taylor, 2006).

The patience with which China treated the two Chinas episode "proved to be a potent symbol of South Africa's centrality to China's African interests, recognised and utilised by South African officials on a number of occasions" (Alden 2005:156). China's patience was partly due to the social structure and context that have bound relations between the ANC and China and the upset in social relations between China and the West over the Tiananmen debacle. China turned to Africa for support, a continent to which it had paid less attention in the

1980s. Consequently, the PRC refrained from being forceful in urging South Africa to abandon ties with Taiwan. Thus, while China had economic interests in its foreign policy it was also interested in refurbishing its international identity and reputation. During this period as well, South Africa's "foreign policy was focused on the reintegration of South Africa into Africa and the international system" (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2009).[22] Therein lies a correlation of interests between the two countries, both emerging from political isolation.

South Africa's foreign policy after 1994 was enigmatic. The non-violent transition from apartheid to democracy which South Africa enabled gave the new dispensation a moral bent in its political outlook. Contrary to this backdrop, however, was the daunting need for investment and economic development for a country that had endured decades of disinvestment. South Africa needed partners that would aid its much needed growth. Much literature about this time deems South Africa's foreign policy confounding because the perspective from which many analysts view international relations and foreign policy does not take into account the fact that at any given time a country can take up different identities and interests according to the prevalent social structure. The constructivist notion of possibly multiple national identities would explain just why South Africa at one point presented itself as a supporter of human rights while expediently forging ties with countries whose human rights record is controversial. The next section will look at economic relations between South African and China in the current epoch.

3.2.3.1 Current Economic Relations between China and South Africa

Apart from the allure of South African resources, China is aware of the importance of South Africa as a strategic entry point to the rest of Africa, especially Southern African in particular. As Sidiropoulos notes, for any non-African country "with an interest in the continent – South Africa is the obvious first port of call and a partner of strategic importance" (Sidiropoulos 2007:2a). Even before 1998, South Africa was already one of China's biggest trade partners in Africa. Tao Shu, writing in *Chinafrica* (February 1998) wrote that trade

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[22] Speech by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, HE Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, on the Occasion of the Heads of Missions Conference, 13 August 2009F. http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2009/index.html.

[Accessed 06 June, 2014]

relations between South Africa and China improved by 700 percent between 1991 and 1996[23]. This staggering trade improvement was boosted after the two countries formalized their diplomatic relations in 1998 (Botha, 2006; Beeson, Soko & Wang, 2011).

According to Shelton (2004) trade between the PRC and South Africa stood at $1.5billion in 1997 and was doubled to $3billion by the year 2000 (Muekalia, 2004). Right from the twilight years of apartheid, trade between South Africa and China has increased at this unprecedented rate (Taylor, 2006). China was one of the first countries with which South Africa established the Bi-National Commission, a framework which governs trade and investment connections between the two countries. The frame of the Bin-National Commission, which was structured in 2000 when the then president of China Jiang Zemin visited South Africa, was officially launched in December 2001 (Naidu, 2008). The importance of South Africa to China is made evident by the fact that the Bi-National Commission was the first of its kind between the PRC and any other country (Taylor, 2006).

China puts a high premium on its relations with South Africa because the latter is the mineral giant of Africa and the world (April, 2009), the exact kind of ally that a consumer-driven economy such as China needs. "South Africa is a net supplier of raw material to China" (Naidu 2008:176). The 2008 global economic crisis was a serendipitous moment for China's growing links with South Africa. According to Gelb (2010), Germany had been South Africa's biggest trade partner up to 2008 but the economic recession, which affected industrialized states more than emerging markets, dealt a severe blow to this trading partnership. Even though South Africa's trade with China in the aftermath of the recession only enjoyed a slender 1.8% growth, it was enough to take China to the top of the pile because trade between South Africa and Germany had declined by more than 30% (Gelb, 2010). To date, China remains "South Africa's largest bilateral trading partner" (Zuma, 2013:19)[24].

Hitherto, economic relations between China and South Africa have generally been lauded by the two states. The mutual development which China reiterates has undoubtedly appealed to

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[23] Also quoted in Shelton, G (2005). "China, Africa and South Africa Advancing South-South Co-operation" in *Politics and Social Movements in an Hegemonic World: Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America,* pp. 184-203. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales.

[24] See also Smith, Jack A.(January 16, 2011) BRIC becomes BRICS: Emerging Regional Powers? Changes on the Geopolitical Chessboard. *The Global Realm.* Retrieved July 17, 2011, from http://theglobalrealm.com/2011/01/16/bricbecomes-brics-emerging-regional-powers.

its South African ally. In 2007, at the third Sino-South African Bin-National Commission session in Beijing, the then deputy president of South Africa Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka extoled the evenhanded economic and political relations that South Africa and China share (Naidu, 2008). At the same session the two partners committed themselves to continue reinforcing their ties in myriad sectors like economics, trade, education, social and cultural interaction and the provision of potable water to rural areas in their respective countries (*PRC Embassy in South Africa*, 2007).[25]

In the same year, China made one of its biggest investment in South Africa when the the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) purchased "a 20 per cent stake (worth US$5.6 billion) in Standard Bank, South Africa's largest bank" (Beeson *et al* 2011:1378[26]). President Jacob Zuma has acknowledged the change of economic partnerships between South Africa, its traditional trade partners and BRICS.[27] Zuma averred that "the share of the European Union (EU) in South Africa's total trade has declined from 35.7 percent in 2005 to 25 percent in 2012" while "[t]he share of BRICS in South Africa's total trade has grown from 10 percent in 2005 to 19 percent in 2012" (Zuma 2013:19). The optimism with which Zuma perceives South Africa's economic ties with China vividly vindicates the conviction in China that South Africa "sees Chinese investment more as a development opportunity than as a security threat" (Beeson, Soko & Wang 2011:1370-1371).

Despite the positive and mutually beneficial picture which Sino-South African trade relations may suggest, trade relations between South Africa and China are largely in China's favour. President Zuma decried the fact that South Africa's "exports to China… continue to be dominated by low value-added products" (Zuma 2013:19). The content and quality of imports and exports between South Africa and China is more beneficial to the latter (Naidu, 2008). It is patent, even to a casual observer, that China has made more inroads, in terms of exporting manufactured goods, into South Africa than the other way round. This trade axis is indicative of the resented North-South trade dynamic which has been detrimental to Africa.[28] South Africa is abundantly endowed with minerals that are desperately sought by China. These include diamonds, gold, chromium ores and a vast cocktail of base metals. A

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[25] Joint Communique (2007). The Third Session of the Bi-National Commission of the People'sRepublic of China and the Republic of South Africa. http://www.chinese-embassy.org.za/eng/znjl/t367303.htm [Accessed 28 January 2014].

[26] See also China Daily, 26 October, 2007. *ICBC buys a 20% stake in African bank*. By Zhang Ran.

[27] Brazil, Russia, India China and South Africa.

[28] Christina Alves, 'South Africa–China relations: getting beyond the crossroads?', *Sunday Independent*, 29 Aug. 2010.

significant number of South Africa's exports to China comprise these resources. However, these raw and superior exports are reciprocated by ready-made Chinese products consisting of plastic ware, textile materials, electrical appliances and footwear. Added to this unjust exchange is the widespread criticism of the substandard quality of these imports from China.

The presence of manufactured Chinese goods in South Africa has provoked controversy in South Africa, especially among trade unions. In 2012, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) launched a broadside against what it termed the "tsunami of cheap Chinese goods" that was jeopardizing South African industry and labour employment (*Business Day Live,* 2012[29]; see also Kaplinsky and Morris, 2006). The competitive prices at which Chinese goods are tagged have claimed a substantial number of South African consumers, to the detriment of locally produced goods. Apart from being of an inferior quality, Chinese goods have also threatened local manufacturers (Hanusch, 2012).

In the last two decades, South Africa has sought to increase its industrial and manufacturing potential. This ambition is crucially challenged by the influx of finished products from China. The side effect of this reality on the side of South Africa is that the country is at a loss of providing employment to people who would be poised to work in manufacturing plants. This compounds the already alarming levels of unemployment in South Africa. Unsurprisingly, because of the infiltration of Chinese goods in South Africa factories have had to close and in some cases retrench workers whose employment has become superfluous due to the stalled activity of industry in South Africa[30]. Going into the future, this is one of the concerns that the South African government has to be unequivocal in bringing to China's attention. Needless to say, the responsibility to rectify this blemish in Sino-South African relations rests squarely on South Africa's shoulders.

The main point of this subsection has been to show how trade relations between South Africa and China have grown. The stupendous scale of these relations over such a short period of time evinces the importance that the two countries attach to each other. As has been said, however, trade relations between China and South Africa have generally favoured China. The main reason for this is that despite the trade of goods between the two countries, South Africa is mainly consigned to exporting raw material while China, with its massive labour base, has

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[29]Hopewell Radebe. Cosatu lambasts "Chinese Tsunami". 6 August 2012. *Business Day Live.* *http://www.bdlive.co.za/articles/2009/08/24/cosatu-lambasts-chinese-tsunami* [Accessed 14 Jan. 14]

[30] Christina Alves, 'South Africa–China relations: getting beyond the crossroads?', *Sunday Independent*, 29 Aug. 2010.

been exporting manufactured goods to South Africa. The main implication of this trade imbalance is that trade between China and South Africa has done little to improve the manufacturing capacity of South Africa, and this has placed South Africa at the disadvantaged end of the trade equation. Strangely, South Africa has more investment in China than the other way round. This has largely been because of the strength of trade union movements and a reasonable industrial capability which has kept Chinese interests in South Africa in check (Beeson et al, 2011). The following subsection will focus on political dynamics that have shaped relations between South Africa and China from the time the two countries resumed formal relations.

3.2.3.2 Political Relations in the third epoch of Sino-South African Relations

Despite the economic imperatives that compelled South Africa to relinquish the ties it had with Taiwan in favour of China, relations between the two countries have also been made steadfast by political solidarity. South Africa has often been referred to as "the de facto leader of the African continent" (Alden and Le Pere 2004:283) and part of the global emerging powers together with other states comprising BRICS (Chiroro, 2012). The admission of South Africa as the only African country to BRICS exhibits the importance of South Africa in the international political system (Frank, 2013). From the advent of its democracy in 1994, South Africa was regarded as a political and moral example to Africa and the rest of the world. It was also widely expected that after decades of being ostracized as an outcast, South Africa would play a pivotal role in promoting human rights and good governance in the international system. The next subsection will look at the foreign policy of South Africa after Thabo Mbeki became president. The underlying theme of South Africa during this time was pan-Africanism contained in the African Renaissance ideal.

3.2.3.3 Thabo Mbeki and South Africa's Foreign Policy Ideal of African Renaissance

At the 1997 ANC conference whence Thabo Mbeki was elected party president, the ANC rued "[t]he undemocratic nature of many multilateral institutions, including the United Nations Security Council" (*African National Congress*, 1997).[31] The ANC went on to call for "the solidarity and strategic alliances amongst, in the first instance, developing countries, and with those in industrialised countries committed to the creation of a just and equitable world order."[32] China was inarguably one of the developing powers the ANC had in mind. The continued exchange of high level visits between China and South Africa after resuming diplomatic ties betokens the healthy relations that the two countries enjoy. Thabo Mbeki's visit to China in 1998 focused "on the potential for economic co-operation and the possibility of working together to establish a fair and just world economic and political order" (Shelton 2005:194). Political relations between China and South Africa in the third epoch of Sino-South African relations coincided with and were boosted by the accession of Thabo Mbeki to national power in 1999.

A year before being sworn in as president, Mbeki presented the ideal of the African Renaissance at the African Renaissance Conference in Johannesburg. In the statement, Mbeki cautioned Africans not to blindly embrace "the injunctions" which Western governments command to Africa because their much vaunted "results have been slow in coming."[33] The statement was also replete with caveats of how globalization could actually prove deleterious to Africa especially if the voice of Africans and other less developed regions of the world go unbidden or unheeded. The main thrust of the statement seemed to have pointed out the fact that, from Mbeki's perspective, African problems have been compounded by the fact that Africans are forced to adopt foreign systems which ignore African contributions. This was the case of the post-Cold War era in which the capitalist world emerged as victor. The new international system, with the United States as the undisputed superpower, (Matshanda, 2009) was still deaf to the input of Africa and the Third World in general.

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[31] *African National Congress*. 50th National Conference: Resolutions - International Relations.
http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2432
[32] Ibid.
[33] Statement by Deputy President Mbeki at the African Renaissance Conference. Johannesburg, 28 September 1998
http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/1998/mbek0928.htm

The reign of Mbeki was thus based on repositioning South Africa and Africa in the changing world mostly by striving to increase the influence of the global South in international politics. The most potent ways of solving this were to be the restructuring of the UN, the IMF and other international bodies of influence where the participation of Africa and the South was severely limited (Alden and Le Pere, 2004). Mbeki became the chief embodiment of African Renaissance or pan-Africanism (Sidiropoulos, 2007; Alden and Le Pere, 2004), even though he also espoused the aspirations of other countries of the South. In support of this, Nathan (2005:12) posits that "[c]ritics who view South Africa's foreign policy as essentially realist and as limited to the advancement of national interests are mistaken." He further argues that the South African foreign policy "embraces an ambitious continental and global agenda that has idealist, internationalist and emancipatory tendencies" (Nathan 2005:12).

The zeal with which South Africa championed the formation and propulsion of the AU and NEPAD was a telling testimony to South Africa's determination to think beyond its borders and promote "the African agenda" (Landsberg and Kondlo, 2007:1). The *Strategic Plan* produced by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs was unequivocal in stating that South Africa's foreign policy was driven by the desire to develop African economies through regional and international collaboration in a global sphere that is more interdependent (Chiroro, 2012).[34] South-South sentiment is palpable in South Africa's foreign policy. This is why Pretoria has sought close ties with countries like India, Brazil and China in order to explore alternatives to the traditional North-South axis of economic and political relations (Sidiropoulos, 2007a).

The following subsection looks at how South Africa positioned itself in global politics through its participation in the now famous rise of the South. This is partly an extension of the African Renaissance ideal, understood in the sense that Africa was not the only continent or region that suffered the consequences of an unjust North-South divide. China and other countries of the South were also aware of the skewed nature of global politics and economics. It is partly for this reason that Sino-South African relations are ideally driven by a mutual intent to improve the welfare of developing countries.

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[34]See also Department of Foreign Affairs, Strategic Plan, 2003–2005, 2004, at www.dfa.gov.za.

3.2.3.4 South Africa, China and South-South Cooperation

The themes that underpin South African foreign policy were compatible with China's stance on the post-Cold War international system. When the former Chinese President Jiang Zemin was invited to South Africa by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the type of discussions that the counterparts had were mostly reflective of how similarly China and South Africa viewed each other. They are both important parts of the developing world and economic powerhouses of their respective continents. China and South Africa also pointed out that foremost in their international posturing was the objective to contribute to the construction of an international order which is suffused with more justice and reasonability (*China.org.cn*, 2006).[35] It was also during this visit that the establishment of the Bi-National Commission between the two countries was mooted. At the inaugural Bi-National Commission meeting in Beijing China, Thabo Mbeki evoked the enduring interactions that China and Africa have shared for untold centuries. He also thanked China for its intervention during the South African struggle against apartheid. Thabo Mbeki expressed optimism that "political relations", between South Africa and China, "can only go from strength to strength" (*South African History Online*, 2001).[36]

At the second session of the Sino-South African Bi-National Commission (2004), Zeng Qinghong, who was the vice president of the PRC, assured Thabo Mbeki that South Africa and Africa could count on China's support for NEPAD. The two countries also vowed "to advocate multilateralism and equality in international affairs… [and to recognize]… the importance of the role of the United Nations in safeguarding world peace and stability" (*dfa.gov.za*, 2004).[37] On the question of the last point, China has been a supporter of the African call for the overhaul of the global institutions like the United Nations to render them more inclusive of, and present to, African states and other Third World regions. The declaration of the Beijing Summit of the 2006 FOCAC meeting expressed China's view that "the United Nations should strengthen its role through reforms, pay greater attention to the issue of development and give priority to increasing the representation and say of African

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[35] China.org.cn. (2006). South Africa. http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/focac/183423.htm (Chinese Foreign Ministry October 10, 2006) [Accessed 28 January].

[36] *South African History Online* (2001). Statement at the Official Launch of the Binational Commission in China Beijing, 10 December 2001. http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/statement-official-launch-binational-commission-china-beijing-10-december-2001#content-top [Accessed 28 January 2014].

[37] Joint Communiqué on the Second South Africa - People's Republic of China Bi-National Commission Pretoria, 28 - 29 July 2004. http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2004/chin0629.htm [Accessed 28 January 2014].

countries in UN agencies" (*China Daily*, 2006).[38] South Africa has been an aspirant to the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and China can be of great import to satisfy this quest (Naidoo, 2000).

At the third Bi-National Commission session in 2007, both South Africa and China "agreed to maintain close contacts between their governments, parliaments and political parties with a view to enhancing mutual political trust" (*PRC Embassy in South Africa*, 2007)[39]. On political grounds, both South Africa and China have made major commitments. While China supports the notion that the UN has to be transformed, hence accommodating South Africa's aspirations, South Africa has also made a commitment to adhere to the one-China policy, to regard Taiwan as an "inalienable" part of China and to repudiate any claim of Taiwan independence, both de facto and "de jure" (*PRC Embassy in South Africa*, 2007)[40].

Apart from the mutual concerns about the exclusive nature of the UN, the rise of countries like China and South Africa and ipso facto the strengthening of relations among these countries has been necessitated by what Robert Kappel (2011:1) calls "a dangerous power vacuum" caused by the decline of United States and Europe. The increasing inability of the United States to provide "public goods"[41] has been cited as one of the principal reasons for the mounting influence of middle and regional powers, hence indicating the incipient stage of a multicentred world order. Kappel goes on to say that countries like China and South Africa "are becoming global actors and are gaining relative strength…[and] are influencing global energy, climate, security, trade, currency, and development policies" (Kappel 2011:1).[42] Though these countries are grappling to overcome their domestic problems, the alliances that they have formed and the attention these have brought gives the impression that the rise of the South has global consequences.

South Africa in Africa and China in Asia are very influential players in their respective regions. The former enjoys the status of being one of Africa's economic powerhouses while

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[38] China Daily (2006). *Declaration calls for enhanced ties*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-11/06/content_725766.htm. [Accessed 15 January 2014]

[39] Joint Communique (2007). The Third Session of the Bi-National Commission of the People'sRepublic of China and the Republic of South Africa. http://www.chinese-embassy.org.za/eng/znjl/t367303.htm [Accessed 28 January 2014].
[40] Ibid.
[41] Could refer to "security, monetary arrangements, development aid" (Kappel 2011:1)
[42] Schirm, S A (2006). *Leadership in Regional and Global Politics: Why do Emerging Powers (Sometimes) Fail to Reach Their Goals?* Paper prepared for the Workshop "The Rise of (New) Regional Powers in Global and Regional Politics", German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg, December 11.-12., 2006

the latter enjoys the biggest economy in Asia and the largest population the world over. In order to benefit their respective citizens, China and South Africa ought to transform their rhetoric into action. Both countries are still confronted by high levels of poverty and unemployment and economic polarization. The failure to mitigate these realities is at variance with the objectives of states that are expected to restructure the current precarious international system.

One of the most important representatives of South-South cooperation is BRICS. The presence of Russia also presents BRICS as a group of the emerging powers that are presumed to challenge the architecture of the unipolar international system. With the addition of South Africa to this group of countries, BRIC was transmuted into BRICS and had members in four continents. Before the invitation of South Africa, the acronym BRIC was coined by Jim O'Neill in 2001.[43] There was so much hope put on BRIC as it was thought to constitute countries that would jointly lead the economy of the world in the twenty-first century. The BRIC countries represented the "world's largest emerging markets" (Atale, 2012). The addition of South Africa to this group was a shrewd political move on the part of BRIC.

South Africa's economy, coupled with its numerous resources and its position in Africa gives BRICS access to African resources and enhances the geopolitical influence of BRICS (Frank, 2013). As a member of BRICS, South Africa has the responsibility to ensure that Africa, which has the largest number of developing countries, is not left out in the new international order. India and China are becoming major trade partners in Africa and so South Africa should use its unique place in BRICS to make sure that the development that BRICS enjoys percolates to Africa. By doing so, South Africa would prove that its admission to BRICS was not merely to make BRICS "euphonious" (Atale 2012:17).

Apart from these politico-economic relations among the members of BRICS, South Africa has seen more economic engagement from its fellow members of this group as mentioned before. This section has shown that South Africa and China are united for multifarious reasons. These range from the historical interaction which Thabo Mbeki evoked at the first Bi-National Commission meeting between China and South Africa in Beijing, 2001; the twentieth century struggle against apartheid; and the post-Cold War zeal to bring about an international system that caters for nations that are still on the fringe of the international community. In terms of economics, South Africa and China are aware that economic

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[43] Jim O Neill, Goldman Sachs, November 2001.

recovery and improvement will be key to demonstrating the determination of the emerging economies to take up positions of agency and not passivity in the new world order.

Trade relations grew exceptionally between China and South Africa even before they formalized their ties in 1998. Their formal relations were partly tailored to develop the global South. Both countries realised that the end of the Cold War has not engendered any major benefits in the Third World. The interests that China and South Africa are currently pursuing have been shaped by the prevalent international social structure and the identity that the states attribute to themselves. Thabo Mbeki was very instrumental in advocating South-South solidarity while painting a gloomy picture of hitherto Afro-Western relations.

The traditional division of the international system between the core and the periphery still finds expression in current politics and has driven countries of the periphery to more political and economic intimacy. Based on its growth, China, whether overtly or subtly, entertains the notion that it presents an ideal picture of what the Third World could become given a congenial economic framework. This identity has seen China become more involved in African development. South Africa is also taken as a de facto leader in Africa. This identity, though not readily accepted by South Africa because of "the apartheid legacy" (Scott, vom Hau and Hulme 2010:28)[44], has given the country incentive to be more involved in solving African problems and has whetted its appetite for higher international ambitions like occupying a permanent seat at the Security Council. China has also supported the reconfiguration of the United Nations Security Council to make it more inclusive of other regions.

Apart from FOCAC, Sino-South African relations are further strengthened by the Bi-National Commission that the two countries share - and BRICS. Both South Africa and China are sanguine about their relations. As Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka[45] stated at the second session of Bi-National Commission in 2007, South Africa is amenable to the win-win cooperation that China is cultivating with South Africa. However, this chapter has also pointed out areas of concern that sully Sino-South African relations. These include the influx of substandard, cheap and manufactured Chinese wares in South Africa which stunt the development of South African industry. This problem, which has alarming possibilities for the South African

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[44] See also Alden and le Pere (2009).
[45] Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was at the time the Vice President of South Africa.

labour force, ought to be solved if Sino-South African relations could be more genuinely cordial.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter was aimed at presenting historical facts that have shaped Sino-South African relations since the mid-twentieth century. The different epochs were shaped by specific social structures and contexts, which were influenced by both domestic and international politics. Though the chapter has been more historical than analytical it was aimed at making obvious the claim that state identities and interests are both changeable and possibly numerous (Walt, 1998). This means that relations between countries are influenced by how countries perceive each other in social terms. The interests that countries pursue in their relations are endogenous to social interaction. Where mutual benefits are perceived between two or more countries, the possibility of genuine rather than conflictual cooperation becomes clearer.

There are a lot of intersections between South African and Chinese interests. With the benefit of hindsight, it can safely be deduced that South Africa perceives China as an ally in the new global political economy. This is not to say that the two countries will be immune from problems and disagreements in their relations. The international social structure could also change in a way that can pit the two countries in stark contrast. Currently, though, the fact that China is vehemently against the institution of Taiwan as a de jure polity and seeks to stymie its effort to join the United Nations does not mean that China will treat other countries in the same fashion. This justifies the constructivist idea that nations treat each other according to unique social relations and identities. South Africa's continued support for a one-China policy has also strengthened its relations with the PRC. Furthermore, by sharing the identity of emerging powers, South Africa and China have the coinciding interest of changing the course and depth of international trade and politics. In this way, the two countries have more reason to interact in a socially positive and not conflictual manner. Drifting from the historical nature of this chapter, the next one will be more analytical in its manner. It will interpret, with deeper clarity, Sino-South African relations using constructivist arguments.

<u>CHAPTER FOUR: A Constructivist Interpretation of Sino-South African Relations</u>

4.1 Introduction

The substantive difference between the previous chapter and the current one is that the previous chapter was mainly tailored towards presentation of historical data on Sino-South African relations. The present chapter, however, seeks to interpret that data and hence firmly prove why constructivism is apposite to interpreting Sino-South African relations. This comes against the backdrop of realism being the dominant theory hitherto used to interpret or analyse Sino-South African relations. The academic literature of Taylor (2006), Botha (2006), and Naidu (2008) is testimony of the dominance of realism in Sino-South African international relations analysis. Other literature e.g. like that found in *The African Communist* (1979) and Kasrils (2004), imply realist interpretations of China's behaviour and interests though this is not expressly stated. From this background, constructivism will be used as a theoretical framework which draws a direct correlation between national identity and national interest in a way that these are socially constructed. Furthermore, constructivism argues that where the interests of certain partners are identical, genuine cooperation is possible.

The structure of the chapter is such that it will present China's changing identities and interests and then move on to present the same subjects in South African liberation movements. The chapter will then present the different variables that offer some compelling reasons behind Sino-South African relations. Proceeding from that, the chapter will state some caveats which South Africa especially must be apprised of in its interaction with China. A summary of Sino-South African relations and more emphasis on constructivism will conclude the chapter. Concepts of identity and interest according to constructivism will be employed in an endeavour to accentuate the applicability of constructivism in interpreting Sino-South African relations.

4.2 Analysing the Changing Identities and interests of China

As stated in the third chapter of this research, a nation cannot be impervious to internal and external social circumstances which have enough potential to force a reconfiguration of national identity and consequent change in national interests and agendas. This possibility of change in terms of national identity and interests, especially when seen from the international relations perspective gives constructivism a social dimension which is either ignored or

downplayed by other more prominent theories of international relations like realism. As Checkel puts it, neorealism and neoliberalism ignore "the content and source of state interest and the social fabric of world politics" (1998:324). Despite its manifest promise in interpreting international relations, constructivism has not gained a lot of academic attention. There has been a gradual growth in its usage in China but it has often been pitted against Marxist and liberalist theories. This reason has often foreshadowed the novelty that comes with constructivism. The second "reason is the short history of constructivism as a theoretical perspective for the study of international relations" (Wang and Blyth 2013:1277).

This analysis of China as its international posturing evolved from the entrenchment of the communist regime in 1949 will show how China has made fundamental identity and ideational changes. At the time when the PRC was formed, the world was reeling from the apocalypse precipitated by WWII. For the United States, the post-WWII destruction was a serendipitous boost, for it catapulted the United States to global prominence. The destruction suffered in Europe was, at most, remote to the status of the US. The Soviet Union, at the time a claimant of superpower status sought – with the aid of its socialist ideology – to rival the capitalist West. The capitalist and more developed regions of the world constitute what has come to be known as the core of the international system; the less developed parts are on the margins and thus constitute the periphery of global politics. Typical of such stratification, the capitalist system, from the perspective of underdeveloped players, was and still is riddled with exploitative propensities and social ambiguities (Ru, 2009). It was in this context that the PRC was instituted. Marxist sentiment ran deep in Chinese foreign policy, and naturally between the Cold War belligerents, the communist PRC toed the Soviet line.

By siding with the Soviet Union, the PRC still believed in the ultimate triumph of socialism in the world, notwithstanding the formidable hurdles leading to such a culmination (Hu, 2000). Needless to say, the PRC antagonized the United States by this manoeuvre. However, China withdrew the trust it had in Soviet socialism after the Sino-Soviet split, accusing the USSR of being a revisionist body. China was at the time under Mao and was burning with Marxist zeal. Shiping (2008) called Mao's PRC an offensive realist state and post-Mao PRC a defensive realist state based on the shift from militancy to part acquiescence. The question to constructivist scholars, especially those of Chinese provenance, is how China has changed from being the vehement critic of revisionism and the architecture of the capitalist-led world order, to being a somewhat grudging supporter of such an international order.

After Mao and the recession of the Sino-Soviet split, China was painstakingly trying to repair its international repute. The arrest of the leftist Gang of Four[46] who were Mao's closest confidantes and the re-acceptance of the pragmatic Deng Xiaoping was visible evidence of China's intent to drift away from radical communism and socialize itself in the international system. This socialization process was prompted both by China's internal changes and the shifting dynamics of the international system. By socializing itself in the international system, China was changing its identity and this had an impact on the type of interests that the country was gradually taking up.

4.2.1 China's International Identity and shifts in foreign policy

Qin Yaqing, who translated Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) into Chinese, was one of the first people to introduce constructivist analyses of China's identity and international relations. In his analysis of Chinese society, Qin argues elsewhere that Chinese society, in contrast to the West's "is not a self-enclosed, self-contained entity. Rather, it is a process, an open process of complex social relations in motion" (2010:138). His analysis affirms constructivist claims that relations are mutable and various depending on the context and, implicitly, this concurs with the claim that relations between two societies or states will take into consideration the nature of their social relations. In tandem with Wendt, states comport themselves in a way that is commensurate with their "international identity" (Wang and Blyth 2013:1283) and not according to some eternal and permanent material interest (Qin, 2009).[47] In his treatise, Qin argues that there are three possible state identities in any given international order. His analysis leads him to understand what sort of identity that the PRC has taken up through its fundamental changes from its inception.

The first type of state identity is a status quo identity, which does nothing to tinker with the prevalent international system and architecture (Qin, 2009; Zhu, 2008). Not only does it abstain from changing the global order, the status quo player is an avid supporter of prevailing global systems (Wang and Blyth 2013). The second category of national identity

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[46] This comprised Jiang Qing (Mao's fourth wife), Zhang Chunqiao (who had organised the Shanghai Commune in 1967), Yao Wenyuan (an author) and Wang Hongwen (a Shanghai activist). These represented the outdated vestiges of Maoist thought in China. See McDonald (2011).
[47] See also Wang, Q K. & Blyth, M (2013) "Constructivism and the study of international political economy in China" in *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.20, No.6, pp.1276-1299.

that Qin identifies is the isolationist state which stands apart and distinct from the reigning international order, and does not partake in many of its undertakings. The third identity, which is descriptive of Mao's China is a revisionist state which has misgivings about the existing global order and seeks to overhaul it. During Mao, communism and its notion of changing unjust societies was followed to the letter. Here, one has only to remember that one of the major propulsions of the Sino-Soviet split was the question of whether the transition from capitalism to socialism could be peaceful and parliamentary or inescapably revolutionary. The PRC disagreed with Khrushchev's notion that communists might accede to power "by parliamentary means" (MacFarquhar 1983:8).

At different times of its existence, the PRC has taken up the identities stated in the previous paragraph. This, of course does not mean China did not manifest traits of other types of identity; there were merely certain characteristics of state identity which were more pronounced at any stage of the PRC's existence. The China of Mao up to the 1970s had characteristics of a revisionist state as it "sought to revolutionalize the existing world order" (Wang and Blyth 2013:1284). Though Khrushchev was initially persuaded by the Marxist-Leninist idea that as long as imperialism is extant violent revolutions are inescapable, he stated that the global context had shifted since the time that doctrine was propagated (MacFarquhar, 1983). China was thus striving to revive what was a gone era.

It is the yearning to attain communist and revolutionary purity that nudged China towards closing its doors to the outside world so as to pursue a cultural revolution from 1966-1976. This revolution was to be the grandest way of ridding China of every trace "of the old society and establish the supremacy of Mao's Thought" (Hutchings 2001:11). During the Cultural Revolution[48], high ranking members of religious, academic, political and ethnic groups were victims; many were ostracized and some liquidated as they were seen as ruinous to what the CCP was planning to initiate. Furthermore, even Deng Xiaoping, the most influential Chinese politician after Mao, was isolated from the CCP, having been accused of capitalist tendencies. The Cultural Revolution eventually spun out of control and had grave international

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[48] This episode is also known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao launched it as a response to what he perceived as the lingering tendencies of the old order and capitalist tendencies. Furthermore, Mao was taken aback by corruption in China and the yawning rift between the rich and the poor. He thus entrusted more power in the Red Guards who wreaked havoc and attacked even CCP officials who were prospective threats to the Chairman. Mao put more trust in the military than Party ideologues to fulfil this revolution. In retrospect, it appears that the Revolution was more about changing the attitude of Chinese people and consolidating Mao position as leader. It was not designed primarily to restructure the economy.

consequences for China as it "marked a departure from the norms of civilized behaviour producing cruelty and oppression on a horrific scale" (Hutchings 2001:90).

From the launch of the Cultural Revolution, China was at once a state with a number of identities. It postured itself as the custodian of untainted communism. It was also at the same time an isolationist state as it thought to rid its society of unwanted vestiges and anything that smacked of Western influence. Surprisingly, 1972 ushered in a period of détente as China and the United States made overtures towards each other with the historic visit of President Richard Nixon to the People's Republic in the same year. This is evidence that at any given point, a state can have more than one identity, as constructivism argues.

The China that emerged from the 1980s has largely adopted status quo tendencies. This has been so because the tremendous growth that China currently enjoys is the result of at least three decades of massive changes in its domestic policy. At the time when China was ridding itself of all that was redolent of the Mao era, the Soviet Union was also in its last stages of existence and the United States and capitalist ideology were slowly becoming more influential. Thus, China has benefited from the current international order. Trading with its erstwhile ideological nemeses has also helped China to surmount a number of economic problems that bedevilled it during the Mao era. Furthermore, this interaction has not only bolstered China's economic fortunes; it has also impacted on China's other dimensions. The signing of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty and the joining of the World Trade Organization are proof that the international system is cognizant of China's efforts to move apace with the rest of the world and not engender controversy based on ideology and other factors that troubled the PRC in the first few decades of its existence (Zhu, 2007).

The tide of globalization has also engendered collective interests in the international system. China is not blind to the fact that the European Union, for example, has been an exemplary body in showing that regional cooperation rather than competition can help realize common interests. Absolute national sovereignty in the current world order is not very feasible, but "finding an institutional balance between national interests and regional integration is paramount" (Wang and Blyth 2013:1285). This is resonant with what China and other countries in BRICS are trying to do. They are persuaded by the conviction that international cooperation can only be reinforced when the states involved share intersecting goals and identities (Qin and Zhu, 2005). Cooperation has thus supplanted the crude form of international competition. From the evidence offered on how China perceives the current

dynamics of the international system, Wang and Blyth assert that "The growth of institutionalized international cooperation also means that there has emerged some semblance of stable international order, and that the realists' conception of the notion of international anarchy is no longer accurate" (2013:1280; see also Meng, 2008).

The current international system also works for China in that it insists on peace and not military solutions to defusing conflicts. Seeking peace through non-forceful means is both less destructive and cost-effective. China thus finds peaceful coexistence both politically convenient and economically beneficial. Implicitly, this means that China has endorsed the role that international systems have played in promoting peace and a stable international system (Qin and Zhu, 2005). With the prevalence of capitalism in the international system, China's silence over Marxist preferences has been conspicuous. Through a correct reading of the international system, China has seen just how current modes of international economics have benefited the PRC. Indeed, it seems, the only surviving tie that China still maintains to communism is the name of the ruling party. The economy is market oriented, though some sectors are still closely monitored by the ruling elite. Apart from shifting from doctrinaire Marxism, the PRC does not seek to export its economic framework, let alone socialist/communist ideologies to its international partners, even to the less powerful ones of the Third World.

With the foregoing information, the argument that China has undergone fundamental changes becomes more applicable. The PRC that the world perceives today is a far cry from the China that Mao and his colleagues instituted. The realization that gains can be won by cooperation with other global players and adherence to the international system and institutions has tampered China's initial belief in war and revolution as the only means by which world order could be transformed (Wang and Blyth 2013:1286). China has become increasingly practical in its foreign policy and seeks cooperation with other states as an option which would not undermine the unbelievable strides that the People's Republic has made in the last three decades. The changes in identity and how these have affected China's international posture vindicate the claims of constructivism.

While conceding that states are naturally inclined to follow their interests, constructivism tries to prove that the type of interests that nations follow are always subject to national identity and the type of social relations a state shares with other states. The unwarranted competition which realism believes in becomes harder to sustain in a world of states whose

actions have been galvanised by the need to stem certain common problems like climate change, environmental degradation and, especially since the beginning of this century, terrorism. Furthermore, realist arguments have the potency to tempt international relations theorists to think that with the rise of China will come fierce competition and more effort to change the current international system. However, identity will play a pivotal role in dictating China's future foreign policy. In addition to this China shares different types of relations and perceptions with specific countries depending on the historical, social, economic and political context that it shares with particular states. Having looked at how China has changed its international identity from the time of its formation, the next section analyses identity and foreign policy changes in South Africa.

4.2.2 South Africa's Changing Identities and Foreign Policy

South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has confounded many because it oscillates between different tendencies e.g. insistence on human rights and at the same time maintaining close ties with countries whose human rights records are questionable (Naidu, 2008). Writers are prone to find South Africa's foreign relations and policies curious if they view them from the perspective of realism. This is so because realism argues that a state has an established identity and interests that cannot be changed. For this reason, it is confusing for analysts who are faced with the reality of a state that goes against realist anticipations in its foreign relations. In their behaviour and actions, states defy rationalist expectations that do not appreciate the possibility "that states are embedded in multiple international and domestic institutions, which implies that states may have multiple roles, identities, and interests" (Barnett 1993:273).

Barnett (1993) argues that every so often states have seemingly conflicted behaviours or actions because they belong to a number of institutions which in turn come with different and sometimes contradictory roles. Thus a commitment towards human rights for example might be induced due to South Africa's past and its membership of the United Nations. At the same time, as part of the global South, South Africa is embedded in another institution which would not exclusively prioritize human rights amid economic, infrastructural and other challenges. This seeming contradiction, Barnett argues "is a potentially important area of concern, but one that both rationalist and reflectivist approaches to institutions have failed to examine" (1993:273). After apartheid, South Africa was expected to yield to a foreign policy

that emphasizes human rights. "There was an expectation, in other words, that South Africa's past would be predictive of its future" (Borer and Mills 2011:77). This was thought to be commensurate with South Africa's new identity as a promoter of human rights.

Nelson Mandela roused such expectations before he became president when he wrote that "South Africa's future foreign relations will be based on our belief that human rights should be the core concern of international relations, and we are ready to play a role in fostering peace and prosperity in the world we share with the community of nations" (1993:97). Writing a decade after Mandela's accession to power, Laurie Nathan stated that "a principled commitment to democracy and respect for human rights was the essence if not the totality of President Mandela's foreign policy" (2005:364). This assertion conceals the notion that South Africa's identity and foreign policy cannot be reduced to one thing. South Africa's human rights activism is limited to the type of state it deals with. With more economically powerful states, for example, South Africa cannot be expected to play a hawkish role. This explains why South Africa has not been active in trying to call for democracy and human rights in China. Secondly, South Africa finds compelling the opinion that China is on the side of the Third World against erstwhile colonizers of the West. For this reason, the country is slow to upbraid a state that it considers a kindred spirit.

Even in its relations with less powerful states like Zimbabwe, South Africa has not acted according to what was predicted. This has also to do with how South Africa seeks to present itself. The fact that the Mbeki era in South Africa sought to consolidate pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism made it very hard for the country to chide the Mugabe regime (Vale and Barrett, 2009). It has thus become clearer with the passage of time that South Africa's identity and interests are at variance with what was anticipated.

Apart from pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism, South Africa has also sought to present itself as a state that supports democratic rule. Again on this matter, though, South Africa has been constrained by identity and the identity of the states it deals with. In its dealings with China for example, South Africa is bound not to be normative about democracy. It thus looks more at China's own struggle against Western dominance or imperialism and China's undertakings to support certain African initiatives and institutions. Laurie Nathan argues that during the era of Mbeki, Africanist sentiment and anti-imperialism were always in tandem but always at odds with the democratic aspect of South African foreign policy. In the face of this impasse, "it is usually the democratic position that gives way" (Nathan 2005:363b). This

reality is expected to attract the friendship of China, a country that does not profess democracy.

South Africa's geographic positioning, political history and economic status have bearing on its identity and interests. As part of the Third World, South Africa's interests were driven, especially during Mbeki's era, towards promoting Third World and African solidarity in an international system that was comprised of the rich core and the poor periphery. In this way, South Africa found in China a dependable partner. There is a genuine resolve on the part of China and South Africa to augment the fortunes of the Third World, and at times this determination will seem to trump other equally important but ethical facets of foreign policy like human rights and benign governance. Even though Mandela promised that "Human rights will be the light that guides our foreign affairs" (1993: 88), he was also cognizant of the fact that South Africa had other Third World problems, apart from human rights. As such, the ANC-led government had a practical responsibility to improve the economic status of its citizens. This is so because, albeit claiming the identity of a human rights crusader, other identities that come with being in the Third World were also influential in determining South Africa's international conduct. It is because of multiple identities at a given time that South Africa's international behaviour exudes a discrepancy between rhetoric and action. Ideally speaking South Africa's shameful history would route the country towards supporting human rights and democracy, even when such a course might not bear immediate fruit to South Africa. The ANC Working Group released a statement in 1994 in which it said:

> Human rights concerns will also influence our bilateral relations. In this we shall not be selective nor, indeed, will we be afraid to raise human rights violations with countries where our own and other interests might be negatively affected. South Africa's experience, we believe, shows how damaging policy can be when issues of principle are sacrificed to economic and political expediency (1994:211).

Evidence has shown that the ANC government has not actively honoured this ideal. The political and economic intimacy that South Africa has struck with China clearly shows that expediency has taken root in South Africa's foreign policy. A constructivist paradigm offers more credible explanations for South Africa's confounding demeanour. Rationalist or realist arguments claim that states cannot fundamentally change their interests and self-perception through time and that this makes them predictable (Morgenthau 1958). However, South Africa underwent some major changes from the time of apartheid to the institutionalization of democracy in 1994. The apartheid regime had a hostile relationship not only with

neighbouring states that gave succour to anti-apartheid movements (Slovo, 1997), but to other global players that were authentically against apartheid. The ANC government had the task of reversing this history of isolation and censure. Some of the identities of the new South Africa were different from those of the apartheid era. It is these identities that have governed South Africa's international relations. As Borer and Mills put it "South Africa's identity and its perceptions of its interests, rather than being traditionally rationalist, are domestically generated based on its history and its new understanding of itself" (2011:82). From this perspective they go on to say that "we thus seem to have a very strong constructivist account of South Africa's stated policies" (Borer and Mills 2011:82).

From the information provided thus far, South Africa under Mandela was mainly driven towards the promotion of human rights, at least in its rhetoric, but was also aware of the Herculean task of material development that the country was faced with. This gave room for some seeming contradictions in national priorities and interests. The South Africa of Thabo Mbeki was more candidly driven towards reinforcing bonds with other actors in Africa and the South. Currently, under Jacob Zuma, South Africa has continued its support for African solidary and South-South cooperation. The change of one portfolio from being the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation was meant to signal South Africa's "emphasis on issues of collaborative non-hegemonic soft-balancing as opposed to dominant, hegemonic intentions and power-seeking realist approaches to relations with other states and international entities" (Landsberg 2014:155).[49]

The current South African government has stated that, through the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation[50], South Africa has a clear understanding of its national interests which include "the state's survival and security, extending to its pursuit of wealth, economic growth and power" (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2009).[51] However, the minister in charge of this portfolio was quick to mention that South Africa puts a high priority of its interest in its international relations but "unlike realists [it does] not believe that the international system is characterised by anarchy and that states have to hide behind the cover of their sovereignty and focus narrowly on the pursuit of their national interests."[52] Furthermore, Jacob Zuma's

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[49] See also Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Speech by the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Heads of Mission Conference, Sandton, 13 August 2009a.
[50] I.e. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.
[51] Speech by Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane during the Ministerial Outreach Programme, University of Limpopo, Polokwane, 16 October 2009.
[52] Ibid.

stance on Africa and the South have largely remained the same as those promoted by the Mbeki Administration.

It is not surprising that South Africa has continued this foreign policy because it appreciates the existence of "general interests, not primary or permanent interests" (Landsberg 2014:156) and hence supports "cooperation over competition, and collaboration over confrontation" (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2009a) with other actors in the international system. While not utterly discounting the possibility of anarchy wherein countries are not naturally inclined to further common interests with other actors, constructivism argues that anarchy is created by social processes in the international system. The concept of anarchy from which South Africa seems to part is one of self-interested states, characterised by purportedly immutable objectives. Wendt drifts from this type of anarchy, which is supported by realism, and argues that "anarchy is what states make of it" (1992:395).

The continuous trend in foreign policy from the time of Mbeki to the time of Zuma is understandable when interpreted in constructivist terms that claim that national identities and interests are changeable. This assertion, however, does not discount the possibility of consistency and predictability in foreign policy and international relations in circumstances where the social context between actors remains stable. Analysing the period from 1994, however, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, at the onset of the Zuma-led government, acceded to the fact that "South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy evolved in the context of a changing world order" (2009). While the end of the Cold War transformed the world order into a unipolar system with the United States at the helm, "it also signalled the emergence of a new global power in China, new regional powers in India and Brazil in the South, and the re-emergence of Russia".[53]

4.2.3 Sino-South African Relations: Why and How South Africa and China Cooperate

The main question of this research is to try and show whether or not constructivism could offer a better understanding of Sino-South African relations compared to realism. If rationalist claims are true, the rise of China will see major upsets in the international system because China would seek more influence that is proportionate to its improving fortunes in

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[53] Speech by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, HE Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, on the Occasion of the Heads of Missions Conference, 13 August 2009. http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2009/mash0813.html [Accessed 05 Jun. 14].

the international system. Therefore, in realist terms, China would be expected to promote a more independent and assertive foreign policy which would make it (China) stand out from the rest of international players.

Banchoff (1999) cites the rise of Germany in the 1990s as the European power house and Germany's call for more European integration as an example which repudiated the claims of realism. It was not expected that a state which has unrivalled strength than any of its continent's counterparts could be so strident in its call for more European cooperation. Realists were at a loss to explain this puzzle and some of them claimed that Germany will still flex its strength and others made an apocryphal claim that it was already doing that. Time has shown that Germany has not yielded to realist anticipations. Realism or the '"Hobbesian problem of social order' is at the heart of political philosophy and the social sciences" (Mantzavinos 2009:215). This doctrine has dismissed possibilities of authentic human and international cooperation. Evidence from observing the social order illustrates that people do cooperate and that altruism in this cooperation is a possibility. The Hobbesian school, and its contemporary surrogates, does not attach any truth to such an assertion.

Jim Woodward (2009) asks why "human beings cooperate as much as they do" (2009:219). The answer he gives to this question carries with it reasons that are akin to constructivist claims. Woodward acknowledges that people treat each other differently and for different reasons. The fact that he departs from realism does not mean he talks only positively of human and international relations. He says, "the same person may cooperate for very different reasons in different situations, depending on the circumstances in which the cooperation occurs, the behavior and the motivation of others with whom they cooperate and so on" (Woodward 2009:219). This variety of relations happens simply because "people differ in type" (Woodward 2009:219). In a period whence the mutual perception that two actors share remains stable, there cannot be a change in their social relations. Wendt, in arguing for stability in certain social circumstances avers that social or "structural change occurs when actors redefine who they are and what they want" (1999:336). For this reason, states may be benign and altruistic in dealing with one state, but can be self-interested in dealing with a state with which they do not share positive social identities and interests.

There are players in the international system that are self-interested and seek to shore up their material fortunes when it comes to certain relations, but there are also those that can cooperate given specific conditions (Fehr and Fischbacher (2003). These "conditional

cooperators" (Woodward 2009:219) can cooperate with players that they deem cooperative or inclined towards cooperation "even when this serves no narrowly self-interested purpose" (Wendt 1999:341). This type of a player can also refrain from cooperating with a player that it deems uncooperative, even when this choice of action does not maximize material interests of the conditional co-operator.

The concept of cooperation, even when this is not materially beneficial, becomes possible when actors share "collective identities" (Wendt 1999:337). These identities, however, are specific to social relations. This explains why South-South sentiment and emerging power identities that shape Sino-South African relations do not offer anything in terms of the countries' attitude towards nations that do not fit the two collective identities mentioned. Thus China and South Africa are expected to be friendlier to countries of the South because of their shared identity and interests. This is evidence that human nature and relations are not always driven by maximising material gains and attempts to overpower others. Furthermore, the type of interests that human beings or states would have in their interactions with their counterparts is endogenous to social relations (Wendt, 1999; Banchoff, 1999).

Realism makes a claim that international relations are driven by basic human nature – which is fundamentally selfish (Morgenthau, 1958; Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985; Basu, 2012). In the same vein, the argument of constructivism is drawn from dynamics of ordinary human interaction. The fact that human beings treat each other differently either selfishly or even altruistically holds true of nations as well. Fehr and Fishbacher state that "Experimental evidence indicates that human altruism is a powerful force and is unique in the animal world" (2003:191). They hasten to mention, however, that "Depending on the environment, a minority of altruists can force a majority of selfish individuals to cooperate or, conversely, a few egoists can induce a large number of altruists to defect" (Fehr and Fischbacher 2003:791). In terms of China's relations with Africa, Garth le Pere writes that "there is an avowed history of altruism in China's relations with Africa, as the manifold advantages of its aid programme since 1956…attest" (2006:14). This assertion puts a dent in the argument that human and international relations are reducible to self-help (Waltz, 1979) ambitions.

In some types of relations, self-interest could be of utmost importance and hence could occlude mutually beneficial interaction. In other relations, however, different motives and dispositions play a more prominent role (Woodward, 2009). In South Africa and China's relations examples of cooperation are legion. The high-level visits that the two countries

share, combined with the different trade deals that they have signed, and China's patience during the 1990-1998 period of the two China's dilemma are evidence that the two countries place a high premium on maintaining cordial and less threatening relations. During the last stages of apartheid, China kept a distance from South Africa, even after its relations with erstwhile foes like the United States and the Soviet Union were being repaired.

Judging from what post-Mao China was trying to do at the time, it was going to be to China's material benefit if it had huge trade relations with South Africa, but from what has been gathered about this period, China's trade ties to South Africa were, at best, stealthy. As has been written in the preceding pages, when South African liberation movements began negotiating with apartheid leaders, China supported the liberation movements' calls for the continued economic isolation of South Africa. China thus exudes what Woodward (2009) calls a conditional co-operator. As such, and contrary to Morgenthau's thought, we cannot "adequately predict [China's] behavior across different contexts" (Woodward 2009:220). It forfeited relations with apartheid South Africa even though wide-ranging trade and economic ties with a besieged country were going to bolster China's economic modernization programme. The main influence behind all this seems to be the identity that South Africa had at the time and the identity too, that China was thoroughly building in the international system. Apartheid South Africa was a political castaway and many countries did not want any overt cooperation with it. Post-Mao China still retained its identity as a sympathiser of liberation movements and African states even though during the 1980s this identity was more apparent in rhetoric than deeds because only the developed countries offered more promise in aiding China's economic interests.

The PRC became more interested in open relations with South Africa after the 1990 unbanning of liberation movements and the release of political prisoners. Apartheid South Africa courted China's animosity because of the identity and context that was prevalent before 1990 but this started changing when South Africa undertook some changes in its political thinking. International relations are "context sensitive" (Woodward 2009:220) and are thus prone to change relative to the changing identities and political and social contexts in China, South Africa, the then liberation movements and the international system. National interests and social interests are also changeable, relative to contextual dynamism.

Using Wendt's notion of corporate and social identity, the existence of individual and social identity and interest in both China and South Africa cannot be controverted. China has its

own individual and corporate interests which include its physical security, mainly the incorporation of Taiwan into mainland China (Penhelt and Abel, 2007). The British departure from Hong Kong was a major boost to China's grand ambition of the one China policy. South Africa's commitment to uphold the one China policy bodes well for Sino-South African relations (Shelton, 2012). From the time the People's Republic was instituted in 1949, it sought recognition as the de jure representative of the Chinese people. For this to happen, it had to be accorded the permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council which was still occupied by the toppled government in Taiwan. This interest was finally realized in 1971 with much support from African states (Anshan, 2007). Another of China's current individual or corporate goals has been economic development at the expense of ideological purity. Though this development has largely been economic rather than political and social, China has excelled tremendously. It has also excelled due to the fact that it has achieved a stability in its international relations, especially in the last thirty years. The world has come to accept, albeit grudgingly, the stable nature of China's international relations, though this differs from one context or form of relations to another.

Apart from these corporate interests, China has some social interests that have consolidated its relations with countries of the South like South Africa. As aforementioned these include China's identity as part of the marginalized global South, the so-called Third World. Originally, Third World identity bred the interest of ending imperialism (Cheng and Huangao, 2009). China, especially during Mao's era put much more emphasis on revolutionary fervour against Western capitalism and later the Soviet Union as well.

In its interactions with China, South Africa also comes with its individual or corporate identity. In 1994, South Africa emerged from decades of isolation. Though South Africa was never expelled from the United Nations, it was relentlessly punished through economic sanctions and arms embargoes. One of its corporate challenges was to create a stable identity for itself that could attract economic, political and social cooperation with other states. To realize its economic objectives, South Africa came up with programmes like the Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR), a neoliberal framework through which it sought to chart its economic future. Through GEAR, South Africa "promised to reduce poverty and inequality via a surge in economic growth" (Streak 2004:272) mainly through promoting private investment. Infrastructural and social development is another corporate interest that democratic South Africa still seeks to achieve.

South Africa's corporate identity and interests are complemented by its social identities and interests which are multiple and intersect with other states, China among them. Like China, South Africa perceives itself as a consequential state of the South, the historical periphery of global politics. The two countries are regional actors, which, during the Cold War did not receive much attention but now have an opportunity to influence global politics to some extent (Essuman-Johnson 2009). This correlation between South Africa and China creates collective identities and interests. With the influence of these collective interests South Africa is wont to compromise its insistence on human rights when relating to China but at the same time posture itself as a crusader for human rights in order to satisfy other nations, like the tradition donors of the West/North who insist on good governance and human rights in their international relations (Hanusch, 2012). Thus, nations can assume different interests depending on the type of partner they are relating with. Indeed, even through their individual interests, South Africa and China define themselves, to some extent, in relation to other states. By seeking recognition prior to 1971, for example, China had a corporate interest which had to be sated by other states i.e. those that voted for China as the de jure candidate for the UNSC, at Taiwan's expense.

The identification of corporate and social interests proves that the goals that states pursue in the international system need not be domestically bred, totally independent of foreign and international influence. If this were the case, then these goals would indeed be exogenous to social interaction. But as has been shown, states always act according to individual perception in relation to the other. In forging intersecting goals, states form collective alliances which need not be driven by material gain or instrumentalist ambitions. Wendt (1999), talks of the four "master variables" of "interdependence, common fate, homogeneity and self-restraint" (1999:343) as among the most important factors that can nurture cooperation and collective identity and interests among states. Through these variables, states are able "to undermine egoistic identities and help create collective ones" (1999:343).

Interdependence in international relations simply means that whatever decisions one state takes will have an effect on the other. Furthermore, states that are interdependent have reason to prop up each other's wellbeing because once states have reached a collective or shared identity, the loss and gain of one state will be the loss and gain of a partner state. Constructivism joins critical theories of international relations that stress the social structure as opposed to the materialist or instrumentalist structure that dominates rationalist theories (Wendt, 1995). Common fate is another matter that, though not necessarily constituting

cooperation among states, causes one group of states to be affected by the actions of the other. An illustration of this would be that though South Africa and China were not to cooperate, their identity as members of the South would ensure that countries of the North treat them in the same manner. If states of the South actually cooperate, common fate would more readily ensure that they develop a collective identity. In the current international system, South Africa and China, in rhetoric if not in reality, share the threats of Third World problems which have made the identities and interests of the two countries identical.

Relations between South Africa and China could also be explained through a thorough understanding of homogeneity and how it "helps to constitute collective identity" (Wendt 1999:354). Through homogeneity, countries are drawn together because of their shared corporate (individual) interests.[54] Apart from individual interests, countries can also be homogenously classified because of type identities[55] that put them into a collective group. This means that countries that have shared political cultures, for example, have more chances of forming a community. When relations between two countries are heterogeneous, however, the possibility for conflict is high. Samuel Huntington's (1993) "*Clash of Civilizations*" supports the assertion that clashes are more possible in heterogeneous relations.

In terms of Sino-South Africa relations, the political homogeneity that has strengthened cooperation between the two counties is expressed through South Africa's support of China's corporate identity, especially on the Taiwan question. China, through evoking the humiliating history (Hunter and Sexton, 1999) that it has shared with Africa at the hands of Western domination, offers South Africa more reason to cooperate with it. The fact also that South Africa and China do not stake their relationship on principles of democracy and other prescriptions that are typical of Western countries makes the two countries' type identities correlate and hence create more room for cooperation.

Another variable that Wendt (1999) argues could breed cooperation between two states is self-restraint wherein states cooperate with the assumption that partner states do not harbour any hostile or selfish intentions against them. In other words, states in the international system should rest assured that those they cooperate with can assume the role of caring for them. In Wendt's' words, collective identity that could emerge from self-control "implies giving over to the Other at least some responsibility for the care of the self" (1999:359). One caveat that should be mentioned, though, is that inasmuch as states could be homogenous and

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[54] See also Wendt (1994).

[55] Type identities refer to aspects such as cultural and linguistic properties that countries have.

self-restrained in their relations, the possibility of conflict or clashes in their relations is not totally eliminated. The fact that two countries belong to the Third World or the global South does not in any way mean they cannot be at conflict with each other.

Contrary to what some theorists may argue (e.g. see Nau, 2012), constructivism is not an idealist paradigm just because it makes a departure from realism. Indeed, Wendt, a self-proclaimed constructivist, shares some of the assumptions made by realists and rationalists such as John Mearsheimer's assumption that: international politics are characterized by anarchy; that all states have the potential to be offensive; that states are rational; that states wish to survive and finally that we cannot be utterly certain of the intentions of other states (Wendt, 1995). The main difference that Wendt draws between constructivism and realism is the role and influence of international structuralism. Realists dismiss the importance of social relationships in international structures while as constructivists argue that this structure is impacted upon by social relationships. These relationships need not be necessarily cooperative. International discord, for example, is a social circumstance that is fraught with mutual suspicion and could preclude cooperation. Thus, even relations between China and South Africa, though explained through constructivism, need not necessarily be cooperative.

The process of social learning, through which countries determine who is friend or foe, is of great importance to international relations. Through social learning countries do not perceive themselves in a vacuum, independent of other actors. This, from the onset, controverts the claim that states come to relate with others with a readymade identity and interest which is resistant to change. Actors are influenced also by what others think of them. For example, if China thought of South Africa as an adversary, South Africa will have to "internalize that belief in her own role identity *vis-à-vis*"(Wendt 1999:327) China. The influence of how states perceive each other is proportionate to the power of other states. For example the perception that powerful countries have over smaller ones could be more important than vice-versa. This could partly explain why South Africa could be equivocal on human rights and democracy in relation to China but could behave more decisively towards smaller nations.

4.3 Conclusion

Constructivism has been used as the tool for analysing Sino-South African relations. The chapter attempted to show that China and South Africa have undergone a lot of changes in their foreign policy and action. These changes have largely been determined by changes in national identity and the changing dynamics of global politics. Another argument of constructivism is that identities and interests among states in the international system are not exogenously foisted on states as realism claims. They are constructed through social interaction and are thus endogenous to international relations. Among states that share certain identities and interests, the possibility of creating genuine international cooperation, and not cooperation by necessity among perennial egoists, becomes more defensible. Constructivism is not against the possibility of stable identities and interests in the international system. In fact, it argues that by using terms such as social structure, we implicitly suggest the existence of stability because structures cannot stand totally independent of stability. Wendt actually submits that "social identities and interests….may be relatively stable in certain contexts in which case it can be useful to treat them as given" (1994:386). Nevertheless, he quickly cautions that this stability is a consequence of the stable nature of social relations at a particular time, not an externally and unchangeable condition. If two states do not radically change the way they perceive the self and the other, it follows logically that their identities and interests will be shaped by this continuous mutual recognition.

The chapter also sought to demystify why states engage in foreign relations that could appear, and indeed could be, contradictory. As argued, states are embedded in many institutions and they possess many identities with each of the institutions and identities exerting influence on foreign policy (Barnett, 1993). Despite the presence of many national identities at any given time, there are certain international relations tendencies that could be more prominent at each stage of the nation's existence. For example, immediately after the initiation of communist China, the People's Republic was at once trying to associate itself with countries that vowed not to choose a side during the Cold War, but was also ranging itself with the Soviet Union against the Western bloc. China was thus involved in roles that were seemingly contradictory; at the Bandung Conference it assumed the identity of developing countries. Despite the many facets in its policies, China exuded dogmatic communism and naturally, "verbal and ideological hostility between China and the United States was intense" (Hutchings 2001:142).

With the passing of Mao "China's *national* interests [became] more important than its *revolutionary* interests" (Hutchings 2001:143, original emphasis). This trend of thought seems to be prevalent even in China's current international relations and foreign policy. The temptation that many observers of China's foreign policy and international relations face is to judge China from its historical inclinations, ignoring or downplaying the fact that "[s]ince Mao's death in 1976, China has been drastically changing under the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping" (Pan 2006:227). It is also noteworthy that in 1980 and 1981, the CCP was desperate to drift away from the embarrassing episode of the Cultural Revolution (Schoenhals, 2008). The CCP squarely laid the blame of the disastrous Revolution on Mao, despite absolving him of many other atrocities by claiming that his merits far outweighed his defects (McDonald, 2011). This acknowledgement further illustrates the fact that China was no longer bothered about the veracity of its ideological claims. Of principal importance after Mao was the economic development of the country, the new national interest.

In its relations with South Africa, China aims to realize what it considers its national interests, subject, of course to its social relations which are influenced by identity. South Africa is also likely to commit steadfastly to its relations with China, in its pursuit to surmount its formidable challenges. What is also likely to unfold in South Africa, and will indubitably augur well with China, is more insistence on economic empowerment, even if this will entail more and more reticence on issues like human rights. The argument that foreign policy or demeanour cannot accurately be determined a priori is supported by South Africa's decision to cut ties with Taipei in favour of "Beijing largely due to economic reasons" (Schraeder 2001:234). This was a surprise move because during its campaign against apartheid, the ANC "resoundingly denounced any government that emphasized the importance of economic self-interest in their refusals to implement comprehensive economic sanctions against the apartheid regime" (Schraeder 2001:234). This is so because the social context has shifted from the time the ANC was an exiled liberation movement. South Africa today stands as one of the most polarized states in the world. This reality has caused considerable rancour among the poor of South Africa and its profundity shows itself in relentless service delivery protests and strikes in the country. The desperation to calm a restive populace is likely to drive South Africa more towards a pragmatic foreign policy.

Furthermore, it has to be borne in mind that foreign policies are not conceived in a void. There are both national and international factors that mitigate the type of foreign policy that a country can pursue. This applies even to relatively powerful states like China, and regional

powers like South Africa. For this reason, people who formulate foreign policies only have "the capacity to choose between relatively limited options" (Wallace 1971:17). Thus, the scope of national interests will always be cognizant of the dynamics of the international system and, in the case of two states, their social context, before embarking on certain policies.

Using the constructivist paradigm makes it easier to understand why a country such as South Africa, having made a politically miraculous transition from racial fascism to democracy, would hold close international relations with controversial states such as Cuba, Libya under the slain Gadhafi and China. These curious relations have been shaped by the camaraderie that the current governing party, the ANC, received from the aforementioned states during apartheid (Schraeder 2001). So while to the United States and other liberal democracies South Africa's relations with non-democratic states are a political betrayal of South Africa's expected posturing, from South Africa's perspective relations with countries that fuelled anti-apartheid sentiment were a foregone conclusion. The next chapter is the general conclusion of the research. It contains a summary of what the research has done and offers some recommendations on where further research on Sino-South African relations can focus.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Brief Introduction and Recommendations

This chapter concludes the research by first promoting constructivism as a promising theory for future research on international relations studies. Sino-South African relations have been used as an example of how effectively constructivism can interpret international relations. The research has made clear its position that constructivism is not an idealist theory. To drive this point further, the research has made clear certain misgivings about China's involvement in Africa. One of the major concerns about China's involvement in Africa is its pragmatic mode of carrying out business which does not use human rights and good governance as prerequisites for political and economic relations. Predictably, one of the recommendations is broadening the scope of theories that are used to interpret international relations. Constructivism, as the research hopefully showed, is one theory that has merit but has been overshadowed in political studies by the time-honoured theories of realism and rationalism. This chapter will also offer some ideas that can enhance extensive development not just economic growth as South Africa interacts with China.

The research has attempted to illustrate the efficacy of constructivism to explain Sino-South African relations. The concept of self-interests and national identity is at the heart of international relations and, as shown in the literature review, much that has been authored to explicate and analyse Sino-South African relations has used the realist understanding of self-interest and national identity.

The theory of constructivism does not discount the influence of self-interest or the primacy of nations as the main repositories of international relations analysis. Constructivism merely states that self-interest and national identity are dynamic entities that shift according to the changes in national and international systems. Furthermore, constructivism has been used to show that nations do not relate with any other nation for uniform reasons and interests. Tellingly, constructivism also argues that among nations whose identities and interests correlate, the possibility of genuine rather than forced cooperation cannot be dismissed. For this reason constructivism does not dismiss the possibility of predictability and stability when social relations between nations remain unchanging for a long time. In looking at China and South Africa's international friendship, the countries have been drawn together by historical circumstances and continued identity of each other as kindred spirits of the global South. This intersection of identities and interests, however, should not tempt either of the two states to

wholly tolerate any manoeuvre from its partner, even though this might be inimical to the interests of the other. To do this is to misunderstand constructivism by presenting it as an idealist framework that it is not.

It is possible that in the future, social contexts might poison Sino-South African relations in a way that unravels all that the two countries have enjoyed since establishing diplomatic ties. It could happen that some of the injurious interests mentioned by realists could materialise in Sino-South African relations and thus compel a revision of these relations. In that particular instance, the realist understanding of national interest would be manifest but, of utmost importance, it would be provoked by specific social contexts, possibly because of the change in national identity and consequent national interest, still leading us back to the fundamental tenets of constructivism.

It is hoped that through the presentation of the epochs that have characterized Sino-South African relations and the constructivist interpretation in the previous chapter, the research has shown that it is possible for nations not only to undergo changes in their behaviour, but in their identities and interests as well. For its promising analytical efficacy, it is important that constructivism gains more attention among international relations scholars and analysts. The explanation behind the end of the Cold War was a great boost to constructivism "because realism and liberalism both failed to anticipate this event and had some trouble explaining it" (Walt 1998:41). Constructivism explained that Soviet disintegration happened after "former president Mikhail Gorbachev revolutionized Soviet foreign policy because he embraced new ideas such as 'common security'" (Walt 1998:41).

In contrast to its possible contribution to international relations theory, constructivism has been excoriated "for adopting too many of the assumptions of the mainstream it was criticizing, including the continuing emphasis on states as unitary actors" (Fierke and Jøgensen 2001:6). The current international system is not only characterized by a move from the unipolar architecture, but the mounting influence of non-state actors like multinational corporations (MNCs) that can influence the foreign policies of both their home and host countries (Cornelissen, 2009). This is an area that warrants further research and analysis of international relations. It is also recommended that though the research showed that constructivism can be reasonably used to explain Sino-South African relations, future research should try to see how this theory could be used to explain relations between many other states and non-state actors in the international system.

5.2 Conclusion

From the onset, the research set out to prove that constructivism offers a credible interpretation of Sino-South Africa relations from the inception of the People' Republic of China to the present times. The literature that has been reviewed for this research shows a clear dominance of realism in interpreting international relations. Not much attention has been given to constructivism as a suitable theory of international relations. It is hoped that the research has presented a reasonable interpretation of relations that have hitherto been interpreted through realism.

Constructivism offers a social dimension to international relations. It emphasizes the fact that international relations are governed by social identities and interests that are nurtured by specific contexts that shape relations among actors in the international system. The research has shown that from the mid-twentieth century to date, China and South Africa have undergone major changes not only in their international behaviour but in their identities and interests as well. During apartheid, China presented itself as an ally of the anti-apartheid movements, even though it was always dogged by accusations of carrying out clandestine exchanges with South Africa. Even in other parts of Africa, China was a known critic of imperialism and minority rule. It was openly offering some modest support to liberation movements that were seeking to end apartheid. This was happening mainly during the time of the Cold War, and during Mao's rule in China when the centrality of ideology in Sino-African relations enjoyed pride of place. The Sino-Soviet split was also an episode during which China was agitating for more support from Africa in its quest for communist dominance in the Eastern bloc. During this time, "China harboured lofty ambitions of non-aligned third-world leadership" (Alves and Draper 2006:23-24).

After the end of the Cold War and apartheid, identities in both South Africa and China seem to have been transformed. China started to change after the death of Mao, with less insistence on ideology as the hub of foreign policy. National interests of economic development and pragmatism seem to have gained more ground. Change seems to have taken place in South Africa where the exemplary shift from apartheid to democracy gave the democratic leadership a moral expectation in its foreign policy. With the passage of time, however, the shift that South Africa has made from a moral foreign policy concerned with human rights and democracy to a practical one, premised on economic development and the change from a unipolar to a multi- or nonpolar system is easily visible.

South Africa sees itself as part of the emerging powers of the international system that can infuse change in a world order that has been deemed unfair to the global South. In this context, South Africa, and Africa in general, sees China as a dependable partner. China has also retained the rhetoric of being a close ally of Africa. The 2006 Africa Policy crafted in China continued to talk about the need for "mutual support and close coordination" (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, PRC, 2006) between Africa and China. After the disillusionment engendered by certain Western-bred ideas like the structural adjustment programmes, coupled with the continued deplorable state of Africa after decades of North-South political and economic intercourse, it is expected that Africa would look at China as a fount of "lessons, advice, and assistance" (Alves and Draper 2006:24; see also Wu & Cheng, 2010).

It is not likely that China will meet African expectations, as it continues to grapple with its own social and economic problems. The PRC is also abundantly aware that the Unites States is still a superpower and that China has gained tremendous growth within the current global structure with the US at the summit. For this reason, China will still have to tread carefully, lest it disrupts a system that can reverse the miraculous growth that it has enjoyed. In addition to this, "the importance of emerging South–South relations at the expense of North–South ties should… not be exaggerated" (Andreasson 2011:1170). Presently, it is still the traditional North-South nexus that has more influence in controlling the international political economy (Cornelissen, 2009) and consequently the status of the South (Grovogui, 2002; Jones, 2008).

By way of conclusion, constructivism has been used to show that relations in the international system can either be cordial or hostile depending on the intersubjective identities that nations have about each other. Constructivism has also been used to argue that despite nations having individual interests, they also have collective interests with those they consider allies. For this reason, the possibility of nations forming international communities in which national problems take on international proportions becomes easier to understand. Of, course, this argument goes against the realist doctrine which does not easily brook the possibility of genuine cooperation and altruism in the international system. Furthermore, by looking at constructions of ideas, identities and interests in the international system as determinants of international relations, constructivism argues against the realist emphasis on material interest as the major determinant of international relations.

South Africa and China have thus far, despite a number of concerns in their relations, proved to be authentic partners sharing the same Third World identity, the position of being part of

the global South and the uniformity of being touted as emerging powers. These intersecting ideas have also occasioned intersecting interests. This intersection of social identities and interests among actors that can cause them to cooperate is also countervailed by the diversion of identities and interests which can stymie the nurturance of cooperation among them. This argument, that the international system can either be cooperative or conflict-ridden, depending on social identities and resultant interests among actors, sets constructivism apart from idealism, as argued in this paper. Thus, constructivism warrants standing alone as a cogent theory for interpreting international relations.

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