

Change or Consistency? A Historical Overview of South Africa's Post-apartheid Foreign Policy

Lona Gqiza

**School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa**

Olusola Ogunnubi

**Centre for Gender and African Studies,
University of the Free State, South Africa**

Abstract

This study examines the trajectory of South Africa's *post-apartheid* foreign policy by establishing the extent of change or consistency in its implementation since 1994. Under the ruling African National Congress (ANC), South Africa has emerged as a promising international actor, particularly within the Southern African region and on the African continent in general. The authors provide a historical analysis of the major trajectories of foreign policy articulation under the administrations of Presidents Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma spanning the period 1994 to 2018. In investigating the conception and execution of foreign policy under these dispensations, the authors unravel a consistent but skewed pattern of national role conception that underscores Pretoria's vision to be a major actor in international affairs, both regionally and globally. We conclude that South Africa's foreign policy during this period was marked by Mandela's altruism, Mbeki's Afrocentrism and the antediluvian signature of Zuma.

1. Introduction

Following the African National Congress' (ANC) electoral triumph in 1994, the Republic of South Africa arose as a formidable regional foreign policy actor. The democratic dispensation that emerged following one of the most epic global political struggles promised to promote peace and development and be committed to human rights. Its international relations stance also seemed to usher in a new era in Africa (Marthoz 2009: 1). According to Mthembu (2017), post 1994 was the time South Africa ceased to be known as a pariah state. Expectations were high for the newly democratic country; the international community expected South Africa to play a very active role in Africa and to a certain degree, the world stage. The fact that Pretoria has the second highest number of embassies after Washington DC demonstrates South Africa's role and interest in global politics. It suggests that post 1994 South Africa has been an active player in the international arena.

The post 1994 South Africa recognised itself as a very important actor on the continent that would act as a mediator and send peacekeeping troops to conflict-ridden areas. South Africa also launched ambitious plans to develop Africa and guide the reforms leading to the

rebirth of the African Union (AU) (Marthoz 2009: 1). This focus on Africa was accompanied by a strong commitment to the Global South and the forging of associations with other developing states such as democratic Brazil and India (Marthoz 2009: 1), particularly during the Mbeki era. South Africa committed itself to the development of the Global South by being an integral part of development associations such as IBSA and BRICS. Over the past two decades, South Africa has recorded some important victories and has become one of the most critical players in the international community. However, while the ANC had shown that it can disagree with the West, for example, during the *apartheid* era when a number of Western countries supported the racist white government, belonging to the South does negate the fact that the country's telecom and banking corporations and multinational mining interests have substantial links, interests, and affinity with the developed Global North (Marthoz 2009).

The critical question addressed in this research is: has there been change or consistency in South Africa's *post-apartheid* foreign policy? It is answered by means of an examination of the foreign policy trajectories of the Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma administrations spanning the period 1994 to 2018. The findings are used to draw conclusions on the future direction of South African foreign policy. The study is a comparative study based on a qualitative paradigm. It draws on multiple sources of secondary data drawn from journals, textbooks, newspaper articles, government publications, dissertations, and verifiable internet sources. Content analysis was used to organise, integrate, and examine the data and the Realist theoretical framework is adopted to make meaning of the analysed data.

2. South Africa's Foreign Policy: A Historical Review

Scholars such as Alden and Soko (2005), Landsberg (2006), le Pere and van Nieuwkerk (2002), and Prys (2009) have analysed South Africa's foreign policy-making as well as its application in Africa and beyond. They argue that the ANC - governed state has faced challenges at both micro- and macro-policy level. Their work analyses South Africa's foreign policy development from 1994 into the 2000s, its achievements and failures, and progress made in many areas of development. Since 1994, the South African government has prioritised African development in its foreign policy and has assumed a leadership role on the continent. However, it has confronted some challenges in implementing such policy, which the literature mainly ascribes to overlapping commitments and multiple principles. These intersecting commitments have placed South Africa in difficult positions in the past.

A clear example is when South Africa failed to arrest the former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir when it was ordered to do so by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Omar al-Bashir was charged in 2009 and 2010 with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region. This is important because South Africa is known for its advocacy for human rights and democratic values yet it failed to arrest and handover al-Bashir to the ICC. South Africa was part of the International Criminal Court and was advocating for the African Agenda. So this placement left South Africa in a peculiar position. Commentators believe South Africa chose Africa over the West as it disregarded the calls made by the ICC. There is general agreement that South Africa's robust foreign

policy has been assisted by its relatively strong economy and substantial military power in Africa. However, while some scholars believe that the country is an African hegemon, others argue that it should be seen as a continental leader that is interested in the region's development. It, therefore, eschews any hegemonic label, especially given that it does not hold preponderant material resources in the region. Thus, much remains to be done in order for South Africa to be identified as a powerful state at the global level.

The primary advantage that the democratic government elected in 1994 had over its *apartheid* predecessors was support from the international community. This called for changes in all sectors of the country's polity. The first democratic president, Nelson Mandela declared on the eve of the 1994 Presidential elections that human rights and democratic values and norms would guide the country's foreign policy (Mandela 1993: 87). According to Alden and le Pere (2003: 12), "by incorporating experiences of the *anti-apartheid* struggle into the conduct of foreign policy, the ANC leader sought to imbue the practice of international affairs with an orientation towards the promotion of civil liberties and democratisation".

After 1994, South African policymakers confronted the challenge of rendering the country functional following the devastation wrought by decades of isolation from the international system as a result of apartheid policies. The country's foreign policy has come a long way since the *apartheid* era when the white minority used brutality to get its way. Mandela announced that ethical foreign policy would be adopted in order to establish the country as a model global citizen and to replace a racist, unjust, and authoritarian government with a non-racial, just, prosperous and democratic nation (Marthoz 2012: 2).

From the Mandela administration to Zuma's time in office, South Africa confronted massive challenges. It had to formulate its foreign policy from scratch, forge relations with states that shunned the apartheid government and join international organisations that the country was previously barred from. Furthermore, its foreign affairs bureaucracy had to be shifted from its previous focus on defending white supremacy (Ogunnubi 2014). Importantly, it also focused on redefining its foreign relations with states that had been complicit in *apartheid* South Africa's rogue policies. Finally, it had to redirect international economic relations that were affected by the United Nations (UN) sanctions (Marthoz 2012: 2).

In 1945, South Africa was one of the 51 founding members of the UN. Membership now stands at more than 200. South Africa was readmitted to the UN in 1994. Since then, it has pursued a foreign policy that is based on the centrality of the UN in the multilateral system (Rodriguez 2013). Twelve years after South Africa was re-admitted to the UN, it was endorsed by the AU and elected by an overwhelming majority to serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the periods 2007-2008, 2011-2012 and more recently 2019-2020. It has used this platform to promote an African Agenda of peace, security, and development.

South Africa has thus fully reintegrated itself into the international arena as a respectable member of the comity of nations and has played an active role in seeking to forge a new international order, especially with regard to Africa, as well as the Global South where it has partnered with other key players to launch an alternative international economic order (Marthoz 2012). The country has also

hosted international events such as the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, the Rugby and Cricket World Cups, the FIFA Soccer World Cup in 2010 and the COP17 Climate Change Summit in 2011. These are clear indications of South Africa's importance in the international arena (Marthoz 2012). It has also hosted a range of international bodies, including the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), the AU, World Economic Forum, the World Trade Organization (WTO), African Union Parliament, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Commonwealth amongst others. South Africa is a committed member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the AU and is well-known for promoting good causes such as cooperating with Canada and New Zealand to eradicate anti-personnel mines (Barber 2005: 1082).

South African foreign policy suggests that South Africa seeks the status of emerging power and is sometimes treated like one. For instance, as noted earlier, the country was granted a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for three periods. South Africa also joined India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) group, became a member of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS); and co-chairs the Development Working Group of the G20 with South Korea.

Some scholars have described South Africa's foreign policy as being realist driven (Hughes 2004). They argue that the Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA) adoption of the theme, 'security wealth creation'; the South African government's commitment to being a visible partner in Africa and to promoting regional economic development; and the centralisation of the foreign policy body in the Presidency's office fits with the realist theme as it seeks to promote South Africa's national interests at the international level. However, it is important to examine the major themes of foreign policy since 1994.

3. Mandela's Altruistic Era

President Nelson Mandela took over the reins of South Africa in 1994 in what can be regarded as an exciting but difficult time. His priority was to end the country's international isolation. Between 1994 and 1999, South Africa's foreign policy was inspired by Mandela's towering personality, international prestige, and stature. According to le Pere (2002), Mandela's command of every major foreign policy decision and issue was impressive and overshadowed the role played by the DFA, Cabinet and even parliament. While all decisions made by the President require approval by Cabinet, le Pere believes that during Mandela's presidency, South Africa's image and foreign policy were equated with the president's profile and that his public statements rather than the policy were what counted (le Pere 2002: 15).

However, the new government struggled to find its feet and familiarise itself with a confusing and fast-changing post-Cold War global order. It was committed to becoming a full and respected member of the family of nations and to diplomacy that conformed to institutionalised, accepted practices aligned with international law and diplomatic conventions.

The following seven principles guided President Mandela's foreign policy thrust: 1) human rights are important to international relations, and they extend across the political, economic, social and environmental landscape; 2) Just and long-term solutions to the

problems of humankind can only come about by advancing democracy worldwide; 3) Considerations of justice and respect for international law should guide interactions between nations; 4) All nations should strive for peace and when it breaks down, globally acceptable non-violent mechanisms must be adopted, with effective arms-control by governments; 5) The challenges and interests of the African continent should be mirrored in South Africa's foreign policy choices; 6) Economic development rests on developing regional and international economic cooperation in an interdependent world; 7) South Africa's foreign policy interactions should reflect deep commitment to the consolidation of its democracy (Mandela 1993: 87; African National Congress 1994).

As noted earlier, Mandela and the ANC's main concern was the quest for human rights, including economic, social, environmental, and political rights. Furthermore, they held that just and long-term solutions to global problems can only be achieved through the elevation of democracy world-wide. Other principles included respect for international law and promoting peace, disarmament, and universality. Four contexts further informed these principles. The first was the separation between the First and Third Worlds (Barber 2005: 1079). In pursuit of economic equality, the new regime aligned itself with the Third World, emphasising its concerns in relation to economic inequality and an unfair global trading system. The second was the community of international organisations; Mandela met with bodies such as the UN, the NAM, the OAU, and the Commonwealth as they were vital to the pursuit of human rights, peace, and equality. The third context was demilitarisation; South Africa declared that its army would only be used in self-defence, and for peacekeeping and peace-making. As interactions with other countries changed, it was anticipated that this would produce financial savings, which would be diverted to social development. Finally, it was acknowledged that South Africa's destiny lies in Africa, which was owed a debt for its support for the liberation struggle. In terms of the future, it was clear that South Africa could not flourish while bordered by extreme poverty; this required that it partner with neighbouring countries (Barber 2005: 1080).

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was launched just prior to the 1994 election (Barber 2005: 1081) was regarded as replicating the views of those inclined towards the Western market economy rather than those subscribing to socialist principles. The RDP was replaced by the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) programme. Rukhsana Siddiqui noted that GEAR accepted "the challenge of an open global system" and aimed "to increase savings and also attract more foreign inflows in order to increase levels of investment" (Barber 2005: 1081).

The Mandela government was aware of the need to strengthen and consolidate the young democracy in order to gain respect abroad. Different experiments were undertaken as it searched for its new role. The new government aimed for a moralistic, ethical foreign policy while simultaneously promoting the country's economic interests. The government sought to be both non-aligned and close to the West, while Africa came first, and the Global South was also at the top of its foreign policy agenda. The Mandela administration learned that it was difficult to practice diplomacy along the lines of a set of seemingly contradictory doctrines as the government struggled to promote human rights on the African continent (Landsberg 2012: 26). For example, it aimed to promote democratisation and human rights in countries such as Nigeria but also required these

countries as strategic partners to promote peace in the DRC and Burundi. The Mandela administration thus emphasised ethical foreign policy goals while building African unity and solidarity.

4. Thabo Mbeki's Afrocentric Posture

Change as well as consistency in certain areas marked South Africa's foreign policy during the Thabo Mbeki era. The most striking change occurred at the top when the more reserved Mbeki replaced the charismatic Mandela. As Mandela's Vice-President, Mbeki was influential in South Africa's foreign policy arena. This role became more pronounced during the latter part of Mandela's presidency. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who replaced Alfred Nzo on his death, was more forceful than Nzo but followed Mbeki's lead. Mbeki introduced a new ideological thrust to foreign policymaking. Laurie Nathan states that this comprised of democratic, Africanist and anti-imperialist elements (Barber 2005: 1087). Nathan concludes that while Mbeki's Africanist and anti-imperialist features sat easily together, this was not automatically the case with 'democratic' as the ANC linked 'human rights' to 'democracy', adding that, when questions were raised, "usually the democratic position gives way" (Barber 2005: 1088).

According to Landsberg (2012), there was much continuity between the Mandela and Mbeki governments' domestic and foreign policies. However, Mbeki modified national and international strategies in line with his promotion of a developmental state and development goals. He argued that, in class and material terms, the country consisted of two different economies and two nations, which was the legacy of white domination during the apartheid era (Landsberg 2012). In order to address the deep divisions in society, Mbeki introduced a new notion of the nature of the state and pushed for transformation and development. During his second term of office, he promoted the new strategy of making South Africa a developmental state, a fast-growing, industrialising nation that put education and health at the top of its agenda. Between 1999 and 2008, while Mbeki was President, Africa was a foreign policy priority and South Africa assumed an important role as the foremost champion of the continent's political and socio-economic development. This was achieved by negotiating common rules, principles, and values and crafting common institutions. Mbeki's African Agenda held that there is no peace without development and no development without peace and he ensured that this theme was adopted by the AU (Landsberg 2012: 27). Functionalism (the usefulness of a state as a form of social organisation) and institutionalism (a focus on formal institutions of government) were the policy thrusts of the African Agenda, highlighting the need to build solid continental and regional institutions, with South Africa playing the role of institution builder and policy inventor (Landsberg 2012: 27).

While Mandela's administration was vocal about domestic and continental interests and universality, Mbeki pursued an ambitious policy to put these words into action. He presented South Africa as a dynamic agent of progressive change as he pursued a foreign policy of redress and development. Mbeki wanted to see South Africa become the key actor in Africa and a dependable global player whose foreign policy pursued a progressive agenda. He relied on negotiations and diplomacy in what became known as soft power in

the pursuit of his foreign policy ambitions (Landsberg 2012).

It can be said that Thabo Mbeki was the leader of a modernising development model for Africa in the form of New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). He also played an important role in negotiating a strategic partnership between Africa and First World countries based on mutual accountability and responsibility with the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). South Africa set out to be Africa's leading partnership builder, while remaining sensitive to widespread perceptions that Pretoria was seeking to become the dominant hegemonic power in Africa. On the contrary, the Mbeki regime opted to be a non-hegemonic partner in order to address the country's political and developmental challenges (Landsberg 2012).

Cooperation with the Global South gave rise to the IBSA trilateral forum and the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP). The Mbeki government also endorsed the idea of a North-South discourse in which developing states of the Global South and Africa sought to gain relief from obligations to the industrial powers arising from decades of colonial domination and exploitation. Mbeki and his government also supported global governance transformation, which highlighted the need for reform of international institutions such as the UN Security Council, the IMF, World Bank, WTO and others that perpetuate the Global South/Global North divide (Landsberg 2012: 27).

The change in the level of South Africa's commitment to other African countries from Mandela to the Mbeki administrations was significant. As noted earlier, Africa is a vital element in South Africa's foreign policy. While this is understood in geographic terms, there are other geopolitical considerations, namely:

1. South Africa's responsibility to Africa arises from the support that a number of African states provided to the national liberation struggle as a result of which they suffered cross-border raids by the apartheid regime;
2. South Africa's experience of internal negotiations and agreement could work as a template for other conflicts in Africa;
3. Recognition that South Africa's political and economic future depends to a certain extent on the fortunes of the continent and that its well-developed economy could play a leading role in Africa's economic development (Sidiropoulos 2007).

Making Africa a priority thus makes sense from both an altruistic and hard-nosed domestic and economic viewpoint. Mbeki aimed to spearhead Africa's recovery and increase its influence in global multilateral forums. South Africa's engagement with Africa during this period rested on three pillars, namely:

1. Strengthening Africa's regional (SACU and SADC) and continental (AU) institutions by improving South Africa's proactive contribution to these bodies aimed at promoting integration and development.
2. Playing a supportive role in the implementation of Africa's socio-economic development programme, NEPAD and SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, the regional expression of NEPAD.
3. Strengthening bilateral interaction through effective structures for dialogue and co-

operation. This includes support for peace, security, stability, and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives and South Africa's contribution to Africa's peace and security agenda and management of peace missions (Sidiropoulos 2007).

In sum, South Africa demonstrated a preference for dialogue to promote good governance and democracy over strict non-interference. This was encapsulated in the notion of an African renaissance. Under Mbeki's tenure, South Africa worked hard to increase Africa's developmental and security profile in the eyes of the North, particularly with the adoption of NEPAD in 2001. It has also played an important role in engaging with the G8 (Sidiropoulos 2007).

Overall, Mbeki assumed Mandela's mantle of domestic change and reform, skilfully introduced a transformational programme at home, and associated it with a proactive role in foreign diplomacy. South Africa needed the West as much as the West needed South Africa and this symbiotic relationship had profound effects for Mbeki's influence on the continent and in multilateral organisations. It gave Mbeki a strong bargaining chip and he was, at times, forceful in his criticism of the West.

Therefore, it can be established that Mbeki's leadership showed a pattern of skewed consistency in continuing Mandela's foreign policy. As he became more comfortable in his position, he introduced changes to promote a more prominent role for South Africa in regional and global decision making.

5. Jacob Zuma's Antediluvian Outlook

The democratic coup at the ANC's 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in 2007 that saw Jacob Zuma replacing Mbeki created enormous expectations, especially among Zuma's supporters. These included the notion that a change in personality would lead to a shift in actual policies (Landsberg 2012: 75).

Mbeki followed a four-pronged strategy that sought to bring the foreign policy in sync with domestic policies. It included the African Agenda, South-South co-operation, North-South dialogue, and socio-economic and political security, which would promote growth (Landsberg 2012). It was against this background that the Medium-term Strategic Framework to Guide Government's Programme for the Electoral Mandate Period 2009-2014 was released. The document signified that the Zuma administration would pursue a foreign policy guided by the comprehensive rubric of Pursuing African Advancement and Enhanced Co-operation. A number of pillars that were similar to those of Mbeki were adopted, including:

1. Reducing the gap between domestic and foreign policy, or the national interest;
2. Encouraging SADC integration;
3. Prioritising the continent through African Advancement;
4. Reinforcing South-South relations;
5. Reinforcing political and economic relations; and
6. Contributing to the global governance system. (Landsberg 2012).

Of major interest to critical observers was the fact that these foreign policy goals signified a marked shift in, or strengthening of those pursued by Thabo Mbeki (Landsberg 2012). It was hoped that Zuma's term of office would reverse the move away from human rights in South Africa's international relations. However, International Criminal Court (ICC) judges strongly criticized South Africa for failing to arrest President Bashir of Sudan, who was wanted on charges of crimes against humanity for his government's violence against civilians in the Darfur conflict, when he visited Johannesburg for an AU meeting in 2015. It was suggested that South Africa was obliged to do so based on its international obligations under the Rome Statute. For his part, Mbeki had opposed the indictment of the President of Sudan by the ICC (Thipanyane 2011). Landsberg (2012) stated that the political shift that occurred in Polokwane did not result in much change in the ruling party's domestic and foreign policy (Landsberg 2012). Referred to as national interest-oriented, Zuma's foreign policy was directed to benefit the people and the state. Some of the factors that informed it was similar to Mandela's government, such as promoting non-racialism and non-sexism, the supremacy of the Constitution and respect for human dignity and human rights. The Zuma government's paradigm of national interest, which it adopted in 2012, is important and unique because it is considered to be broad, wide-ranging and highly of national interest, which it adopted in 2012, is important and unique because it is considered to be broad, wide-ranging and highly diverse. Before this date, national priorities included economic growth, job creation, rural development and improving health and education.

While Zuma's government aimed to ensure that foreign policy specifically responded to the domestic imperatives of generating economic growth and job opportunities, improving social and human development and combating crime and corruption, there is little evidence that international relations were linked to these priorities. Instead, the government adopted grand positions concerning African progress; consolidating South-South co-operation; improving strategic relations with the North; actively contributing to global governance; and strengthening bilateral relations while seeking to enhance economic diplomacy. Like its predecessors, the Zuma administration was interested in reconciling moralistic approaches (altruistic identities) to foreign policy with utilitarian, economic self-interest considerations. Landsberg (2012) states that moralistic pronouncements on human rights disagreed with statements that South Africa were open for business. As James and Mills (2018) assert, the ANC's 2015 foreign policy discussion document reflects the party's antediluvian stance.

The Zuma regime was also marked by a renewed focus on developing countries of the South in the form of South-South Cooperation. It also focused on the consolidation of the African Agenda, demonstrating continuity from the Mbeki administration. This is also demonstrated by South Africa's membership in BRICS. The aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis strengthened South Africa's relationship with China (Shoba 2018). Therefore, the intense focus on regionalism clearly defines the Zuma era.

Zuma's foreign policy has had its fair share of criticism over the years. For example, the government maintained that South African troops were deployed to the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2013 in order to honour the capacity-building agreement with CAR President Bozize. In contrast, International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane stated that, more broadly, the mission was part of a broader effort to

safeguard democracy and respect for international law in Africa. These mixed justifications raised questions as to whether South Africa's involvement was to safeguard national or individual commercial interests. After the death of South African soldiers near Bangui, Zuma's ruling party quickly dismissed allegations in a national newspaper that the soldiers were sent to protect the commercial interests of high-level officials (Dudley 2013).

Another important signature of the Zuma tenure was the numerous controversies surrounding his leadership such as the state capture and several corruption allegations. These domestic issues spilled to the international arena, where South Africa lost its reputation as a well-run and economically stable country. Zuma's foreign policy was accused of three inter-related ills that took South Africa backward. According to Qobo (2018), there was a defective political culture and institutional paralysis. Qobo (2018) suggests that South Africa's dealings in the international arena were based on personal gains rather than the good of the country. Secondly, poor leadership of the International Relations and Cooperation Department led to most of its strategic objectives not realized. Thirdly, the majority of diplomatic missions were political appointments wherein appointments were not based on merit. In essence, during the Zuma administration, the country was consumed by its domestic politics, which were connected to corruption scandals, institutional erosion and an increase of public unrest (Klingebiel 2017). As a consequence, the international perception of South Africa following the transition from apartheid has changed dramatically and that has equally affected South Africa's global relations.

As noted above, Zuma's foreign policy took some leads from the Mbeki government. After he assumed office in 2009, the government emphasised the need for a marked change in foreign policy direction, but in retrospect, very little changed under Zuma's tenure, and his foreign policy themes were consistent with Mbeki's seven pillars.

6. Any Trend or Pattern?

The centrepiece of South Africa's Afrocentric foreign policy ideology can be summed up in what Zondi (2015) calls the three pillars of "Africanist internationalism" which include Africanity, pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. According to him, these themes were historically determined first the long years of ANC's affiliation with African countries who were sympathetic to the struggle against apartheid and secondly through rhetoric and practice of its 'political commitments' towards an African agency of reversing the damaging effects of colonialism on the continent and its people.

The Mandela administration pursued an ethically-based foreign policy which emphasised an altruistic orientation marked by a focus on human rights, democratisation, and respect for international law. On the other hand, Mbeki opted for pragmatist foreign policy that was mainly concerned with the delivery of an African posture, officially dubbed "The 'new' African agenda" (Landsberg 2005). Mandela downplayed South Africa's ambitions in Africa and emphasised the need to engage the African continent as a partner rather than as an arrogant regional superpower bent on supervising a civilisation mission. This perceived non-hegemonic position was perfected by the Mbeki government and signified the country's national role conception (Landsberg 2005). When Mbeki took the presidency after Nelson Mandela, there was a great deal of continuity in South Africa's domestic and

foreign policy. This was evident from the fact that Mbeki was, in effect, the prime minister of South Africa during the Mandela administration when he carried the title of Deputy President. Additionally, many domestic policies carried over from the Mandela administration to Mbeki's first term.

The Mbeki regime followed a grander foreign policy agenda in search of greater international status. During his first term of office, South Africa pursued a rule-based global order and saw itself as a bridge-builder between the developed and developing worlds and, more importantly, as a *bona fide* representative of Africa in international forums. South Africa rejected unilateralism and actively endorsed multilateralism. The country was regarded as the premier norms and values creator in Africa and pursued mechanisms and rules in defence of governance, democratisation, peace, and security through the AU, NEPAD and the APRM (Landsberg 2005).

Since the transition to democracy, South Africa has prioritised an Afrocentric foreign policy which is embedded in national liberation, the pursuit of African renewal, and attempts to address the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism. This has led to major, ambitious African initiatives and support for the transformation of the continent's political-economic institutions (DIRCO 2011). South Africa's foreign policy takes into account current socio-economic realities, but it has been criticised for its slow progress in addressing the historical legacy of economic inequality despite its contribution to Africa.

Mandela ensured that human rights were at the forefront of South Africa's foreign policy and global efforts to foster democratic government (Thipanyane 2011). Experience has shown that this had lasting benefits for South Africa in terms of the country's international and regional standing as well as its economic, social, and national security interests. This approach requires a long-term vision coupled with a real commitment to democracy and human rights in government, which should involve specific training of all officials and diplomats. The credibility of *post-apartheid* South Africa in the global arena and its long-term economic, social and political interests will depend on how it conducts itself as a beacon of democracy and a champion of human rights in the international arena and the extent of its participation as a global citizen and norm entrepreneur will be critical in the future.

South Africa's foreign policy experience represents a history of both consistency and change. This skewed pattern rests on a number of factors such as institutional, environmental and personality traits. Features such as decision-making styles, beliefs, socialisation, and human and financial resources have also impacted on the country's foreign policy. All these factors have impacted on the direction and degree to which successful governments transverse between the themes of altruism, Afrocentrism and an antediluvian world view. Costa Georghiou's argues that "persistence and change coexist uneasily, and it is this mixture that makes the future so uncertain. The twin forces of integration and disintegration, continuity and change, create a mood of both confidence and disorientation in international politics" (see Landsberg 2012: 1).

Zuma inherited from Mbeki a well-institutionalised foreign policy that borrowed heavily from aspects of the foreign policy rubrics of his predecessor under the theme of pursuing African advancement and improved international cooperation. President Zuma made it clear that, in keeping with Mbeki's approach, his government would pursue a broad-based

developmental foreign policy trajectory. Mbeki stressed an African agenda, South-South cooperation, North-South dialogue, and global governance. Zuma's government articulated a similar set of foreign policy pillars, including African development, reinforcing South-South interactions, engaging the North and actively contributing to the global governance system. The Zuma administration's emphasis on foreign policy motivated by domestic considerations was also a continuation of Mandela and Mbeki's outlooks (Landsberg 2012). While it was assumed that foreign policy would change when Zuma came to power, on paper, the measures adopted suggest continuity, but with a more in-depth focus on parochial national priorities.

As far as the future of South Africa's foreign policy is concerned, as long as the ANC is elected to power, it is unlikely that any significant changes will occur. While the country's foreign policy has shown more consistency than change, there is a slight element of change. This usually arises from a change in personnel, for instance, in the Presidency with the incoming President applying his version of foreign policy outlook while drawing on crucial elements adopted by his predecessors. It suggests that, in the future, South Africa's global influence will be predicated on the extent of the consistency in the expression of its foreign policy and its ability to achieve a careful balance between domestic priorities, national interest, and multiple foreign policy considerations. In order for South Africa's foreign policy to prosper, improved coordination is required between government departments. The issue of transparency is also vital and requires careful attention, especially in light of South Africa's military efforts in other African states. South Africa's foreign policy actors must also reach consensus on the formulation and execution of a foreign policy that reconciles the state's conflicting inclination towards respect for other states' sovereignty, non-intervention, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

7. Conclusion

South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has demonstrated a pattern of consistency over the past 24 years, broadly reflecting the three major themes of altruism under Mandela's tenure, Afrocentrism, which characterised the Mbeki period and an antediluvian orientation during Zuma's term. While these themes overlap in the formulation and expression of South Africa's foreign policy during this period, they are guided by varied principles that impact on the extent of the expression of each theme. In the authors' view, the African orientation of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has been more strongly visible than altruism and the antediluvian outlook.

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