

**The People's Republic of China's "strategic
partnerships" with South Africa:
1998-2013**

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as an economic superpower has become one of the most significant developments in world affairs in recent times. As the PRC has grown in economic significance, it seeks to translate this to all areas of its relationship with the rest of the world. Africa and African countries are a region where the PRC's involvement and engagement has elicits major consternation, especially from Western countries. However, this region, relative to its geographic and population size, natural endowments, and engagement with other regions and Western countries in particular, remains insignificant in the PRC's external relations.

South Africa enjoys very good diplomatic relations with the PRC, disproportionate to its significance with regard to the PRC's quest for resource that fuels its phenomenal economic resurgence. South Africa and the PRC's relationship has, within a decade, grown in depth and complexity that supersedes despite major asymmetries between them. South Africa is the first developing and African country with which the PRC established a comprehensive strategic partnership. While the concept of a 'strategic partnership' remains unclear in international relations, it conveys a relationship of significance and stature that supplements ordinary bilateral relationships, although the latter are better defined and binding than the former. Clearly, the Chinese government attaches great importance to its relationship with South Africa.

The advent of democracy and a thriving pluralistic socio-economic and cultural society that is admired despite the challenges it faces, makes South Africa an exemplar and desirable partner. South Africa's international stature and role in the international system, matches the PRC's objectives in this regard, making South Africa a good foil for PRC. However, this study contends that there are reasons that are beyond the well-worn natural resource extraction and diplomacy arguments that make South Africa attractive to the PRC. It uses asymmetry theory of international relations to explore and elucidate this. It explores what underpins, motivates and accounts for the rapid progression of this relationship and the implications this may have on their relationship in the future

This thesis uses Womack's (2001, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2006a, 2010) terminology and methodology to look at how South Africa and the PRC concentrate on areas of complementarity and cooperation and seek and foster mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories. The thesis explore how they work to actively convert hostility to friendship and adroitly manage the relationship to prevent it drifting from friendship to hostility, as well as using what Womack calls routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual, in managing their partnership.

From the perspective of asymmetry theory, the PRC and South Africa are complementary. South Africa is the largest; most sophisticated, developed and diversified economy in Africa and the developing world. It possesses or has access to technical and managerial knowhow that the PRC would have difficulty accessing elsewhere. South Africa remains a strategic

maritime and naval route for the PRC's trade and accesses to key resources on the African continent and elsewhere.

The study finds that asymmetry theory is useful in understanding how South Africa and the PRC manage their relationship. Asymmetry theory provides a framework to analyse the motivations and dynamic interactions that drive the progression of their diplomatic relations.

The findings of the thesis imply a diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC that is based on more than just the PRC's need for resources and diplomatic support in the international system.

Opsomming

Die onlangse toetreding van die Volksrepubliek van China (VRC) tot die gelede van die ekonomiese supermoondhede het een van die mees beduidende verwickelinge in wêreldaangeleenthede geword. Soos die VRC ekonomies belangriker geword het, is gepoog om hierdie sukses te herhaal op ander terreine van die land se buitelandse betrekkinge met die res van die wêreld. Afrika en Afrika lande is 'n streek waar die VRC se betrokkenheid en verbindings groot konsternasie ontlok het, veral vanaf Westerse lande. Maar hierdie streek, relatief tot sy geografiese en demografiese grootte, natuurlike hulpbronne en betrokkenheid by ander streke en veral Westerse lande, bly onbeduidend in die VRC se buitelandse betrekkinge.

Die aandag wat Suid Afrika van die VRC geniet is disproportioneel in vergelyking met die belang van die VRC se soeke na hulpbronne om haar fenomenale ekonomiese groei te stook. Die verhoudinge tussen Suid-Afrika en die VRC het in die bestek van 'n dekade gegroei in diepte en kompleksiteit wat as oorskadu ten spyte van groot ongelykhede tussen hulle. Suid-Afrika is die eerste ontwikkelende land met wie die VRC 'n omvattende strategiese vennootskap gesluit het. Terwyl die konsep van 'n 'strategiese vennootskap' onduidelik bly in internasionale betrekkinge, vergestalt dit betrekkinge van beduidenis en statuur wat gewone bilaterale betrekkinge aanvul, alhoewel laasgenoemde beter gedefinieer en bindend is as eersgenoemde. Dit is duidelik dat die Chinese regering groot belang heg aan betrekkinge met Suid-Afrika.

Die oorgang na demokrasie en 'n florerende plurale sosio-ekonomiese kulturele samelewing wat bewonder word ten spyte van die uitdagings wat dit in die gesig staar, maak van Suid-Afrika 'n navolgingswaardige en wenslike vennoot. Suid-Afrika se internasionale statuur en rol in die internasionale stelsel pas die VRC se doelwitte in hierdie opsig en maak van Suid-Afrika 'n goeie skerm floret vir die VRC. Maar, hierdie tesis betoog dat daar ook ander redes is buiten die wel bekende natuurlike hulpbronnentrekking en diplomatieke argumente wat Suid-Afrika vir die VRC aantreklik sou maak. Womack se ongelykheidsteorie in internasionale betrekkinge word gebruik om dit te ondersoek en toe te lig. Ongelykheidsteorie is nog nie voorheen in studies oor hierdie betrekkinge gebruik nie. Hierdie tesis verskaf dus 'n belangrike alternatiewe metode om hierdie betrekkinge te bestudeer.

Die tesis ondersoek Suid-Afrika en die VRC se betrekkinge na aanleiding van Womack (2001, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2006a, 2010) se terminologie en metodologie en fokus op gebiede waar die twee lande mekaar komplimenteer en kan saamwerk; wedersydse verstaan van, en waardering vir, mekaar se mense en geskiedenis kan koester; om aktief vyandigheid te omskep in vriendskap en om verhoudings so bedrewe te bestuur dat vriendskap nie in vyandigheid verander nie; en om ook wat Womack roetiene, neutraliteit en diplomatieke ritueel noem te gebruik in die bestuur van hul vennootskap.

Deur die lens van ongelykheidsteorie kyk die tesis na wat die vinnige progressie wat hierdie betrekkinge onderskraag, motiveer en verklaar.

Vanuit die perspektief van ongelykheidsteorie vind die VRC Suid-Afrika komplimenterend. Dit is die grootste, mees gesofistikeerde, ontwikkelde en gediversifiseerde ekonomie in Afrika en die ontwikkelende wêreld. Dit besit of het toegang tot tegniese en bestuurskennis wat die VRC moeilik elders toegang toe sou kon kry. Suid-Afrika bly 'n strategiese maritime en vloot roete vir VRC handel en toegang tot sleutel hulpbronne op die Afrika kontinent en elders.

Een van die bevindings van die studie is dat ongelykheidsteorie 'n nuttige metode is om die bestuur van die verhouding tussen Suid-Afrika en die VRC te verstaan.

Dit verskaf 'n raamwerk vir die analise van die motiverings en dinamiese interaksies wat die vordering van hul diplomatieke betrekkinge bepaal.

Die bevindings van die tesis impliseer dat die diplomatieke betrekkinge tussen Suid-Afrika en die VRC nie net op die VRC se behoefte aan bronne en diplomatieke steun in die internasionale stelsel gebaseer is nie.

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DEDICATION

To Caitlin, Zoe and Arin, this thesis attest to the fact that although natural endowment is important, with concerted effort, you can achieve more than you may think possible, at any age and under the most difficult circumstances. The only way to get anything done is to do it!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC African National congress

AU African Union

BNC Bi-National Commission

BRICS Brazil Russia India China South Africa

CADF China-Africa Development Fund

CICC Cairo International Conference Centre

CCP Chinese Communist Party

CSIS Center for Strategic and international Studies

DFA South African Department of Foreign Affairs

DIRCO South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation

EU European Union

FDI Foreign Direct Investments

FOCAC Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

GEAR Growth Employment and Redistribution

GTA Global Trade Atlas

ICBC Industrial and commercial Bank of China Limited

IMF International Monetary Fund

ISS Institute of Security Studies MNCs Multinational Corporations

MAP Millennium Partnership for the Africa Recovery Programme

MOU Memorandums of Understanding

NATO North Atlantic treaty organisation

NEPAD New Partnership for Africa Development

PRC People's Republic of China

ROC Republic of China

SACP South African Communist Party

UK United Kingdom

UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and development

UN United Nations

UNHRC United Nations Human Rights Council

UNSC United Nations Security Council

US United States of America

USSR (Soviet Union) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

According to Tian Xuejun (2013a), South Africa and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have a strong diplomatic relationship which is currently considered to be a comprehensive strategic partnership. It was upgraded to this level from an ordinary diplomatic relationship within a very short time compared to the time taken by the PRC to upgrade many of its other strategic partnerships. This raises the question whether this is an indication of a special relationship between them, especially in the context of the PRC's size, its relationship with other African countries with whom it has longer diplomatic ties and who are more endowed with the natural resources it seeks.

The relationship between the PRC and many African countries attracts disproportionate attention and is seen as controversial in relation to its ties to its major economic partners, for example, the Asian countries such as Australia and Japan, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (US) (Swigonski, 2012). Edinger, Herman & Jansson (2008) argue that the PRC has the potential to become a future super power because it is already an economic giant, and its political influence is growing. As it continues to prosper economically and endeavours to enhance its political influence in global affairs, the PRC is fostering and strengthening its relationships with African countries. Many observers attribute the PRC's flourishing relationships with African countries to its need for the energy and raw materials from these countries to fuel its economic growth and for their political support, especially, in international multilateral forums Alden,(2008a), Large (2008), Le Pere (2007), Shelton (2005), Taylor (2006), Wasserman (2012). It is claimed that to this end the PRC is prepared to work with any government with no question asked (Alves, 2013 & Taylor, 2004). As a result, it is said, it consorts with undemocratic despots, strongmen and human rights abusers in Africa (Taylor (2006).

This characterisation of the PRC's relationship with African countries downplays or ignores the long and enduring ties between them. This is largely a realist perspective of the relationship between the PRC and many African countries, regarded as serving the PRC's pursuit of power and its interests only (Alden, 2008a; Large 2008; Le Pere 2007; Shelton (2005). This characterisation is also applied in South Africa with the PRC (Rotberg, 2008; Lee & Shalom, 2008). South Africa is endowed with natural resources, found there predominantly and key to the PRC's economic output and growth such as coal, platinum and

iron. Furthermore, and it occupies an esteemed position in international affairs attested to by, for example, its occupation of a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council ahead of other countries that may seem to be the logical choices (Alden & Schoeman, 2013). These are some of the attributes that make South Africa a desirable partner for countries such as the PRC with who it may appear to have little in common.

South Africa is a democratic and pluralistic country which espouses human rights and guarantees many freedoms that the PRC is not known for advocating. The differences in values and norms should weigh against a natural partnership between them. A casual look shows them to be an asymmetric pair. The differences between them are stark. In the terms of size and scale on a number of broad measures, gargantuan PRC's dwarfs minnow South Africa as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Illustration of asymmetry between the PRC and South Africa: Comparison of a few key metrics

	The PRC	South Africa
Population	1,355,692,576 (July 2014 est.)	48,375,645 (July 2014 est.)
Government type	Socialist/Communist state	Republic (democratic)
Size of economy	Second largest	Twenty seventh
GDP	\$8.939 trillion	\$353.9 billion (2013 est.)
GDP - real growth rate	7.6% (2013 est.)	2% (2013 est.)
Exports	\$2.21 trillion (2013 est.)	\$91.05 billion (2013 est.)
Imports	\$1.772 trillion (2013 est.)	\$99.55 billion (2013 est.)
Budget	revenues: \$2.064 trillion expenditures: \$2.251 trillion (2013 est.)	revenues: \$88.53 billion expenditures: \$105.5 billion (2013 est.)
Military forces	2,285,000 (active), 800,000 (reserve)	39,445 (active), 12,300 (reserve)

Source: Central Intelligence Agency: The World Fact Book

Assessing South Africa's trade with the PRC, Sandrey et al (2013:1) concluded, in line with conventional wisdom, that South Africa is largely exporting raw materials and importing manufactured goods from the PRC. They also concluded that South Africa is not as important to the PRC as the PRC is to South Africa. Furthermore, exports from other African countries are more important to the PRC than those from South Africa (Sandrey et al, 2013:4). This suggests great asymmetry between them and their relationship.

Often, the PRC's relationships with African countries and South Africa in particular, is viewed and analysed only from the PRC's perspective (Alden, 2008 and 2008a; Alden & Hughes, 2009; Alves, 2013; Large, 2008; Taylor, 2006). However, as South Africa engages with the PRC voluntarily, it is just as important to understand why it pursues these partnerships with the PRC.

Partnerships in international relations are arrangements between states designed to establish stable mutual relationships that do not create formal legal liabilities (Ng, 2013). Buckup (2012) characterise partnerships as a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate' with the emphasis on the values and principles espoused by those in a partnership endeavour. Lister (2000: 228) identifies the following as being amongst the elements that should be present for a successful partnership;

“mutual trust, complementary strengths, reciprocal accountability, joint decision-making and a two-way exchange of information; clearly articulated goals, performance indicators and mechanisms to measure and monitor performance, clear delineation of responsibilities and a process for adjudicating disputes; mutual support and constructive advocacy; and long-term commitment to working together, recognition of other partnerships.”

The PRC was founded in 1949. Six years later, in 1955, the young state was one of the main instigators of the first Asia-Africa Conference, the Bandung Conference.

The PRC sought to position itself against the Republic of China (henceforth referred to as Taiwan), and against the US (and its allies) and the Soviet Union in the context of the Cold War, and establish itself as a leader of the Third World and the nonaligned movement. According to Muekalia (2010: 6), “China shared with these nations a sense of humiliation, the urge to restore dignity and a determination to take control of its own destiny. The leaders

present at Bandung sought to affirm their nations' independence from 'Western imperialism' while keeping the Soviet Union at a distance".

The PRC's diplomatic relations with African countries started the following year when Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. The PRC's support of liberation movements ensured that the newly independent states established diplomatic ties with it. As a result, by the end of the 1970s, 44 of the 50 independent African countries had entered into diplomatic relations with the PRC. These diplomatic relationships played a major role in the PRC's successful ouster of Taiwan as a member state of the United Nations (UN) and subsequently, other multilateral structures and forums.

South Africa remained one of the few African countries to shun the PRC in favour of Taiwan until 1998. The apartheid South African government would not have diplomatic relations with a country it considered to be a socialist and/or communist country. This position weakened somewhat as the apartheid regime began informal contact with the PRC in 1991 (Botha, 2008). The new government after 1994 espoused human rights and therefore had to reconcile itself to a relationship with a country charged with a questionable human rights record. Taylor (2008) & Breslin & Taylor (2008) remind of the important role that human rights used to play in international relations amongst most countries with regard to the PRC before the "made in" China label predominated. Furthermore, both Taiwan and apartheid South Africa were isolated after losing their respective seats at the UN and found solace in their mutually beneficial relationship (Mills & Baynham, 1994).

After 1994, the new democratic South Africa, led by the African National Congress (ANC), which through the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) already had ties with the PRC (the ANC itself was more aligned to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) during the struggle years (Botha, 2008), had to contend with the legacy of the relationship with Taiwan. The relationship with Taiwan was very important for economic reasons and could not be broken off easily. The new South African government preferred having relations with both the PRC and Taiwan. However, in 1998 South Africa took the difficult and long debated decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, and due to the PRC's "One China policy", it had to break off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Geldenhuys, 1995). Therefore, South Africa's diplomatic relationship with the PRC is very new, being only 15 years old, and one of the least tested amongst African countries. Yet, the PRC had within twelve years (1998 to 2010) elevated the bilateral

relationship from ordinary diplomatic ties, to a “partnership” and then to a “strategic partnership” and, in August 2010, to a “comprehensive strategic partnership”.

South Africa is one of a few developing countries to be accorded a “comprehensive strategic partnership” by the PRC, usually reserved for its biggest trading partners in the developed world. This hints at a phenomenal progress in the relationship and the significance placed on it. Each individual stage of the relationship has been analysed and commented upon (Qobo, 2010, 2011, 2013; Alves & Sidiripoulus, 2013; Alden & Schoeman, 2013; Kabemba, 2012; Le Pere & Shelton, 2007 & Muekalia, 2004). However, little attention has been given to a comprehensive assessment of the progression of the relationship from one level to the next and the possible motives thereof. There is therefore an opportunity to understand what underpins and drives the partnership between South Africa and the PRC and explains its rapid progression.

Amongst the attributes that are often forgotten in the study and analysis of this partnership and set it apart from others, especially in Africa, are the historic and cultural ties between the PRC and South Africa. They include the existence of a significant native Chinese South African population and the PRC’s support of the liberation movements in South Africa. Asymmetry theory places significance on mutual understanding and appreciation of each other’s societies and histories.

South Africa is one of a very few countries to have a significant native Chinese population and has the largest Chinese population in Africa, dating back to the arrival of Cantonese traders in 1891, indentured labourers in 1904, and immigrants from China, Taiwan and Singapore in recent years (Yap & Leong Man, 1996; Accone, 2007 & Harris, 2007). With regard to the PRC’s support for liberation movements, Alden and Aran (2012: 61) advocate for a greater recognition of the role of the relationship between political parties in international relationships. They argue that political parties often determine the ideological orientation of foreign policy and that this often becomes the policy of the government. Thus an important aspect of the PRC-South African relationship is the relationship between the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) (Shelton, 2005) which has grown to encompass and has been taken over by the ANC (Mofokeng, 2011, Butler, 2012, Kane-Berman, 2013 & The Economist, 2013a). This was a major factor in South Africa’s acceptance of the “One China policy” which was a precondition for its diplomatic ties with the PRC and led to its breaking ties with Taiwan. Although, these non-

governmental relationships are not officially sanctioned and also have challenging dynamics (Shen, 2009) they create familiarity and a level of comfort for South Africans and Chinese, and through them, their respective countries; South Africa and the PRC in dealing with each other. They facilitate the diplomatic ties, trade and economic ties that foster and through which the partnerships are realised.

It is true that for both the PRC and South Africa their relationship is new. However, the PRC has forged diplomatic relations with many countries around the world and in Africa especially, for a much longer period than South Africa has. In this sense and in this regard, South Africa is a novice while the PRC is a veteran. Therefore although the relationship between them is couched in the language of friendship, equality and mutual benefit, it is characterised by big asymmetries on most metrics, for example, size of their populations, size of their economies, the rates of economic growth as shown in Table 1, and global influence. Furthermore, the PRC has a clearly articulated strategy in its relationship with Africa which includes South Africa, published in 2006. The converse does not hold because South Africa and the rest of the other African countries do not have a PRC strategy. In a relationship between asymmetric states, asymmetry theory emphasises the importance of the smaller state taking the initiative. It is therefore important that South Africa knows what it wants from its relationship with the PRC. It needs to understand the PRC well enough to know the rationale and objectives of its foreign policy in general and as it relates to it in particular. From its rhetoric, the PRC seeks a mutually beneficial engagement with South Africa. If this is true, it is for South Africa to ensure that the partnership lives up to the PRC's claim that it is based on 'equality and mutual benefit.'

1.2 Literature review

Most scholarship and commentary on the relationship between the PRC and African countries, including South Africa, maintain that the PRC is mainly interested in their energy resources and raw materials to fuel its economic growth, as well as their political support in the international system (Alden, 2008a; Large, 2008; Le Pere, 2007; Shelton, 2005; Taylor, 2006; Wasserman, 2012). This perspective gives pre-eminence to the PRC's national interest, i.e. endeavours to realise political, economic, military, social, cultural, etc. objectives and downplays the agency of its African diplomatic partners. It reduces them to pawns in the PRC's pursuit of power and its interests only (Alden, 2008a; Large, 2008; Le Pere, 2007; Shelton, 2005).

Rotberg, 2008; Lee & Shalom, 2008 and Sandrey, Mpitsa, Vermaak & de Beer (2013:1), attribute the PRC's quest for resources as its main rationale for its budding diplomatic ties with South Africa. Scholars such as Alden & Schoeman (2013) emphasise the political dimension of the relationship. These scholars, analysts and commentators draw attention to South Africa's apparent deference and deferral to the PRC's stance on numerous issues such as, its voting patterns when it occupied a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council and its treatment of the Dalai Lama.

This depiction, focusing on national interests, power and dominance is typical of most of the school of thought and theories of international relations. However, the international system is made up of states characterised by asymmetry and accommodation. They use diplomatic ties to manage their relationship in a system that has no supreme authority to guide and adjudicate. The larger and more powerful states make room for the smaller and weaker ones. Keohane (1969), amongst others, investigated and commented on how smaller states manage despite being overshadowed by the larger ones. They either aligned themselves with the larger or joined forces with other smaller states to avoid being overwhelmed. This conceptualisation of the relationship and interaction between asymmetric states regards this asymmetry as a limitation that has to be overcome or mitigated.

Brantly Womack's asymmetry theory offers an alternative conceptualisation of the diplomatic relationship between larger and more powerful states with the smaller and weaker ones (Womack, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2006a, 2010). Asymmetry theory asserts that states in an asymmetric relationship are as similar actors, plus or minus the disparity in capacities, rather than actors whose interests and perceptions are shaped only by their relative positions. It emphasises complementarity and cooperation between them. The thesis applies asymmetry theory as an alternative to the mainstream, to explore how South Africa and the PRC, asymmetric states, manage and develop their diplomatic relationship, operationalized through "partnership."

Although the use of partnership is not new or unique to how South Africa and the PRC depict their diplomatic relationship (Kay, 200:15) the PRC displays a preference for it. Ng (2013) contends that the PRC's preference for partnership may be due to its flexibility and non-binding nature. However, partnerships are long-term commitments that are honoured and adhered to. Their flexibility and non-binding nature necessitate considering of alternative managing and developing, as well as looking at them.

This thesis identifies asymmetry theory as an appropriate theoretical framework to explore the motives, development and the way how South Africa and the PRC manage their relationship, and applies it.

1.3 Problem statement and focus

Based on the apparent differences between them, there seems to be not enough reason why South Africa and the PRC's relationship should be anything other than an ordinary diplomatic tie. Yet, it has been elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership, a status which until then the PRC had reserved for its diplomatic relationships with a select number of its major developed partners, within an uncharacteristically short period of time. This study enquires about the rationales for this.

The main research question of this study is; what underpins and motivates the nature, scope and development of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC since the establishment of diplomatic ties from 1998 to 2013?

The main question is broken down into four secondary questions;

- What are the roots of the relationship? The study examines the history and context of the diplomatic relationship and how their respective broader foreign policies and relations inform their choices?
- How has the relationship developed? The study explores the form of the relationship and examines the changes that have characterised its progress and how this has affected their behaviour towards each other.
- What are the prospects of the relationship? Informed by the preceding questions, the study examines how each partner benefits and can benefit from the partnership going forward.
- Can asymmetry theory be useful as a theoretical framework for analysis to explore the roots and development of the relationship?

1.4 Conceptual and theoretical outline

This study examines why, using asymmetry theory as an analytical framework, despite their differences (asymmetry), South Africa and the PRC conduct their diplomatic relationship through ‘partnerships’ and details the nature and development of these partnerships.

1.4.1 Partnership

Partnerships in international relations are legally non-binding agreements or arrangements used by states to coordinate their diplomatic relationships. Grevi (2008: 147) maintains that bilateral partnerships have always existed in parallel to multilateral frameworks. However, he points out that building closer and structured relations amongst global players in the form of strategic partnerships became more pronounced after 1990s following the rise of new global players such as Brazil, the PRC, and India whose role in international affairs has also risen.

It is important to note that this thesis does not seek to study the concept of “partnership” and “strategy” which are not new, and in their colloquial senses refer to, in the case of partnership, two or more entities cooperating to derive mutual benefit (Kay, 200:15), and in the case of strategy, planning and organising an incursion against an opponent to prevail (Mohapatra, 2011), nor will it endeavour to provide an analysis of ‘strategic partnership’ other than to locate it in the context of this thesis. The uses of strategy and partnership in international relations follow these colloquial definitions but imbued with contextual meaning and detail specific to in international relations. Kay (200:15) points out that while the notion of “partnership” is not a new phenomenon in international relations, its pairing with “strategic” to form the concept of “strategic partnership” to signify diplomatic and military relationships began in the 1990s when the US and USSR were discussing how to manage a post-cold war environment.

What makes a partnership “strategic”? Renard (2001:6) identifies a number of attributes that make a relationship a strategic partnership; first, a strategic partnership must be comprehensive, in order to allow linkages and trade-offs between various policies. Second, it must be built upon reciprocity, short of which it cannot be deemed a partnership at all. Third, a strategic partnership has a strong empathic dimension, which means that both partners share a common understanding of their mutual values and objectives. Fourth, a strategic partnership

must be oriented towards the long-term, which is to say that it is not put into question by casual disputes. Finally, a strategic partnership must go beyond bilateral issues to tackle (with the potential to solve) regional and global challenges, because that is its true *raison d'être*. The strategic partnerships in this sense go beyond bilateral relations and focus on the instrumentalisation of this bilateral relationship for broader ends (i.e. regional or, better, global goals). The bilateral relationship per se is not the core “finalité” of the strategic partnership, although the depth and the quality of the bilateral relationship obviously determine the potential of the strategic partnership, and therefore the former remains crucially important to the latter (Renard, 2001:5).

Strategic partnerships in international relations are located in alliance theory. Walt (1987:12) defines an alliance as “a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states” while Snyder (1990:104) says “alliances ... are formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, intended for either the security or the aggrandizement of their members, against specific other states...” Walt (1989: 4) argues that although several motives can be identified, the principal reason to form an alliance is to balance against an external threat. The rationale for this tendency is straightforward: in the anarchic world of international politics, where no supreme authority exists to protect states from each other, states facing an external threat will join forces with others in order to amass sufficient power to deter or defeat an attack.

Strategic partnerships fit into realist conceptions of international relations theory, particularly the relationship between offensive and defensive state strategies. To offensive realists, strategic partnerships as utilized by the United States are consistent with the notion of international primacy. A strategic partnership can be understood as a tool used by a powerful state, or states, to maximize political, economic, and military dominance in the international system. Strategic partnerships are thus a means of shaping the international environment to suit a state's vital interests (Kay, 2000: 16). Kay says that they allow for flexible bilateral relationships.

Mao Weizhun (2012) maintains that partnership has cultural significance. Partnerships should be based on common values. Without common values, strategic partnerships which are only based on the interests will lead to utilitarian interactions. Once the interests change, this kind of strategic partnership will be very fragile. Common interests are the basic conditions of the existence of strategic partnership. However, too much emphasis on such interests will lead to

the ignorance of other factors, and will particularly lead to ignorance of the importance of common values in maintaining the relationship. Mao Weizhun says there are five standards for strategic partners: common interests, common values, influences, leverage and strengths. This is the main obstacle to build an intensive network of strategic partnerships. Goldstein (2003: 98) argues that whatever other adjectives are used to label these relationships (e.g., constructive or cooperative) “strategic” is the key adjective. Though the PRC uses the “partnership” label for good relations with smaller states, it reserves the term “strategic partnership” to define a “new way of handling relations between major countries in the post-cold war era.” Grevi (2012: 7) says that partnerships are strategic when they pursue objectives that go beyond purely bilateral issues and help foster international cooperation. The basic elements of a real strategic partnership include comprehensiveness, reciprocity, empathy and normative proximity, duration and the ambition to reach beyond bilateral issues. Strategic partnership should be selective adhering to co-operation and growth that serve the partners’ core national interests (Grevi, 2012: 10). Real-life strategic partnerships are multi-purpose ones, pursuing both bilateral and multilateral objectives and shifting focus across these and other dimensions of the relationship in a fairly pragmatic way. The ability to do so represents a key benchmark of their efficacy. Testing strategic partnerships means, therefore, dissecting their multiple functions as a foreign policy tool, thereby delivering a more sophisticated picture (Grevi, 2012: 12).

Although the concept of ‘strategic partnership’ in international relations has been in use for some times, it is relatively new in the international diplomatic lexicon. It is not yet well-defined, explained and consistently applied (Panda, 2013). It, therefore, means different things to different people and may even be used by the same people differently in different contexts. Yet, strategic partnerships are a growing mechanism by which states choose to officially define and conduct their relationships. Thus strategic partnerships are a key component of the foreign policy of many states today.

1.4.2 Asymmetry theory

Asymmetry theory is taken from the work of Brantly Womack who studied the relationship between the PRC and a number of its smaller Asian neighbours (Womack, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2006a, 2010). He maintains that the great disparities in endowments and capacities between larger countries and smaller ones create an asymmetric framework that shapes their relationships (Womack (2004:351).

Asymmetry theory asserts that states in an asymmetric relationship are similar actors, rather than actors whose interests and perceptions are shaped only by their relative positions. It emphasises complementarity and cooperation between them. The thesis will expand on asymmetry theory as an analytical framework in section 2.7.

The thesis draws on and applies the perspectives of the work of Brantly Womack on asymmetry theory of international relations on the relationship between South Africa and the PRC, which to the author's knowledge has not been done before. It explores why the relationship endures and concludes by highlighting its possible future trajectory and the opportunities this presents for South Africa.

1.5 Research design and methodology

One of the major challenges inherent in the study of foreign policy, international relations in general, and a diplomatic partnership in particular, between countries, is that these relationships are dynamic, public and open, and private and opaque at the same time. Official policies and agreements are shared and made publicly available. Yet, most important in these relationships are the motives, attitudes, understandings, strategies and tactics that are employed but not deliberately revealed. This is not necessarily clandestine. It is for this reason that countries develop diplomatic ties, to remove the need for having to manage all their engagements through official treaties, public pronouncements and transparent means that may attract attention and or jeopardise the relationship (Adler, 1997; Cox, 1983; Keohane, 1969, 1982, 1989; Mearsheimer, 2002; Wendt, 1992 & 1994).

Thus in studying foreign policy and international relations, it is important to distinguish between the rhetoric and the reality. This is not always easy because the reality is often defined and or confined by the rhetoric. Ultimately, what is said in official and unofficial settings, as well as what is done, is what gives meaning to these relationships. For this reason, this study looks at official and unofficial statements and developments such as those presented by official conferences or interviews, from the perspectives of the main players (heads of states, diplomats, policy makers, etc.) and independent analysts and observers. This is why the study uses a qualitative descriptive and explanatory design nested in the interpretative social research paradigm which is characterised by the quest for exploration, description and explanation (Babbie and Mouton, 2007: 79). Babbie and Mouton (2007: 33)

posit that the “emphasis is on interpretive understanding (verstehen) rather than causal and nomothetic explanation in terms of universally valid laws.” This contrasts with the quantitative paradigm of social research which focuses on the quantification of constructs, the uses of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour and the control of the sources of error in the research (Babbie and Mouton (2007: 49)

The qualitative method is chosen for this study as it facilitates an interrogation of secondary and primary resources to gain in-depth understanding of the relationships and their context. (Babbie and Mouton, 2007: 270). The researcher focuses on descriptive data based on the observations of participants such as foreign relations officials and diplomats and document analysis within their particular settings and contexts. While the relationship between South Africa and the PRC is not unique in international relations, it is very particular to them and the context in which it takes place. While views and comments on the relationship by scholars, analysts, foreign relations officials and diplomats do not necessarily reflect the reality of the protagonists’ actions and behaviours, they give a good indication of the motives and intentions which inform the reality.

Leedy (1993: 141) says that qualitative research focuses on analysis and synthesis. The qualitative researcher endeavours to have a complete and comprehensive view of what is being studied. This requires an understanding of the meaning that the main characters attach to events in their environment (Leedy, 1993: 144). In this study the characters are South Africa and the PRC, their representatives and independent observers and analysts who independently study and provide informed and objective analysis of the relationship. These role players in international relations are believed to be representative of a sufficiently informed and broad perspective to give a full picture of subject matter being investigated.

This study is descriptive in that it strives to present a detailed picture of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC, how it has developed since it was established. It is explanatory because it looks at some of the possible motives and rationales for the relationship and the speed of its progression.

The descriptive part of the research relies on observation and description, and the explanatory study looks at some of the drivers (Leedy, 1993:187 & Babbie and Mouton, 2007: 80) of the relationship between these two countries. Leedy (1993: 187) says that the descriptive research method deals with a situation that demands the technique of observation as the principal means of collecting data. The data must then be organised and presented

systematically so that valid and accurate conclusions can be made. This requires detailed observation and rich and nuanced interpretation. Leedy warns though that data in descriptive study are particularly susceptible to distortion through the introduction of bias and therefore require vigilance to avoid it.

This qualitative study depends on the use of secondary sources through the exploration of relevant academic journals, books, conference papers, papers and other publications such as credible internet and media sources, and primary data in the form of official policy documents, official and official public statements and comments by policy makers and diplomats in their official capacity, as the basis for the analysis. This includes the views and experiences of those who give effect to these diplomatic partnerships; i.e. the diplomats and policy makers

The units of analysis for this study are the individual “partnership” communiqués or declarations and the levels of analysis are the partners, South Africa and the PRC. (Singer, 1961 & Yurdusev, 1993)

The diplomatic relationship and partnerships between South Africa and the PRC are documented in specific communiqués or declarations which clearly set out their agreements, intentions, undertakings and programmes envisaged. Some of the communiqués or declarations are preceded by joint statements that report on the progress made regarding previous commitments and towards reaching the next level in the relationship.

1.6 Limitations

There is a dearth of empirical work on the concept of strategic partnerships in international relations, and the strategic partnership between South Africa and the PRC in particular. There is also a dearth of literature and scholarly work that uses asymmetry theory to explore their partnership. This is the reason why this study was undertaken. The study uses secondary data that focuses mostly on the bilateral relationship without paying specific attention to its motives and progress. The use of predominantly secondary data gives rise to reliance on the choice and number of sources. This introduces selection bias and overgeneralised interpretation that may make conclusions less robust.

The nature of strategic partnerships as addressed in this study is not generalizable as the focus was not on comparing and distilling their essence from the PRC’s relationships with other countries.

The study relies heavily on secondary sources although a concerted effort was made to use primary contributions even if it is through secondary reporting, for example, direct quotes, of heads of state and diplomats, scholars and analysts, etc., in media reports. It is acknowledged that the study could have benefited from interviews or surveys on the roots and practice of diplomatic relationships between South Africa and the PRC amongst their respective diplomatic corps. Limitations with regard to time to conduct the study and availability of the officials have resulted in primary data being restricted to the official statements and communiqué of the improvements of the partnerships. The use of official considered and vetted declarations statements and comments in media, official functions, conferences and workshops, although they maybe contrived in that they present perspectives that the governments wish to project that may not be a true reflection the real motives and objectives, makes up for this because what is officially made public is what they can be held accountable for.

The study is based mostly on secondary literature and existing scholarship. This consists mostly of the observations and analysis of Western Sino-African and South African experts, and English language sources. Chinese perspectives in Mandarin were not readily accessible or were used in translation. The predominance of a select and prolific number of Western Sino-African experts, who are aware of and cite each other's work, compounds the scope for bias and conformity. To mitigate this, Chinese sources such as China Daily, People's Daily and Xinhua were used, although they may not be considered independent because they are state owned (Smith, 2012). Their perceived lack of independence inadvertently makes them useful in that they provide the official Chinese perspective. They are also a source of the views of Chinese experts and commentators in academia and think tanks. Alternative Chinese perspectives from Taiwan and Hong Kong were derived from sources such as The Southern Metropolitan Daily and Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs.

1.7 Delimitations

This study is not a commentary on or an evaluation of the diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC which is dynamic and complex and beyond its scope. It is confined to examining information that is in the public domain and statements by officials tasked with projecting a desired image that may not necessarily be the reality.

It focuses on the partnership as it has developed from 1998 to 2013 between the two countries. It does not focus on comparisons of their partnerships with other countries. It is not

the purpose of this thesis to study partnerships. The concepts of a ‘partnership’ and ‘strategic partnership’ are not the main focus of the study, although they are explained and contextualised for its purposes.

Womack’s asymmetry theory is used to analyse the partnership. It presents a fresh approach of studying and analysing relations between larger and smaller states. However, it is not tested. It is a new theory which has not been studied widely by researchers and scholars of international relations.

1.8 Thesis outline

Chapter 1. In this chapter the introduction, rationale, research problem, research method, data collection, analysis and limitation and delimitations of the study are provided.

Chapter 2. This chapter provides a review of the mainstream theoretical concepts that underpin international relations studies such as realism, liberalism, critical theory, constructivism neo-gramscianism and asymmetry theory. It focuses on asymmetry theory as it provides a template for understanding and analysing how smaller and larger states manage their relationship their asymmetry notwithstanding.

Chapter 3 focuses on the characteristics of the relationship between the PRC and South Africa’s and its distinguishing features such as their respective histories, foreign policies, status and stature in the international system. It presents the comments of officials and the opinion and analysis of research experts and scholars. Areas where the features of asymmetry theory are apparent are highlighted.

Chapter 4. In this chapter the different phases in the relationship between South Africa and the PRC presented through the official communiqués and statements used to formalise them. Asymmetry theory is used for the analysis.

Chapter 5 revisits the research questions and interprets the overall findings and draws conclusions on them. It provides the implications of these finding on the relationship between South Africa and the PRC and the lessons for international relations in general, and makes suggestions on areas for future research.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores a number of schools of thought and theories of international relations briefly. The nature and merits of each theory will be briefly outlined in turn in order to establish the choice of theory that is used for this study.

This approach acknowledges that although the different theories and strands in international relations have their adherents, they are not opposites or competitors but are complementary and even companions. None explains international relations completely and exclusively. Theory is contingent and not standalone. The choice of theory or tool for analysis depends on the context, the objective and the era. Cox (1981: 128) states this succinctly saying, "Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space". This partly explains the emergence and rise over time of different schools of thought and theories such as realism, liberalism, the critical school, constructivism, neo-Gramscianism, and, more recently, asymmetry theory, in the study of international relations.

This chapter provides a brief analysis of the major schools of thought and theories of international relations to locate and introduce asymmetry theory as the basis of analysis of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC.

2.2 Realism in international relations

Realism is predicated on the assumptions that states are self-interested, rational actors seeking to survive while increasing their material conditions and, that uncertainty pervades relations between countries (Mearsheimer, 2002). Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, Hans Morgenthau, and Reinhold Niebuhr are credited with engendering the view that human nature predisposes individuals and states to be egoistic rational actors whose primary focus are harnessing political power for self-preservation (Wendt, 1992:395). According to Kenneth Walt (1997: 932-933), Hans Morgenthau assumes that competition between states arises from the human lust for power (which he termed the *animus dominandi*). , Waltz ignores human nature and assumes that states merely aim to survive (Morgenthau 1946, Waltz 1979). "Offensive" realists, such as Mearsheimer (1994-95), argue that great powers seek to maximize security by maximizing their relative power. "Defensive" realists, such as

Jack Snyder (1991) or Charles Glaser (1994-95), argue that great powers are generally more secure when they refrain from power maximization and seek to defend the status quo.

While realists may disagree about the relative importance of domestic versus systems-level causes, the relative stability of bipolar versus multipolar worlds, and the importance of intentions in shaping the calculations of national leaders, amongst others, they share the view that each state should act on the basis of caution and concern about the other states and their intentions (Walt, 1997). This arises from the fact that states are sovereign and thus autonomous of each other; there is no inherent structure or society that exists or can emerge to order relations between them (Mearsheimer, 2006). They are bound only by forces flowing from coercion or their own consent (Slaughter, 2011). Mearsheimer (2006: 160) maintains that “in an anarchic system there is no night watchman for states to call when trouble comes knocking at their door. Therefore, states recognize that the best way to survive in such a system is to be as powerful as possible relative to potential rivals.” Hence, power, competition and conflict are the dominant characteristics of international relations in the realism paradigm.

This view accounts for the emphasis on states as the dominant players in an anarchic international political system, interested mostly in maximising their power through war if necessary. It is a view of a world dominated by great military powers. However, the reality is that the world incorporates all countries, great and small and many other actors in between. Therefore, there has been a growing recognition that although states, especially the strongest ones, are important players in international relations, they are not the only ones and security and the maximisation of power is not the *sine qua non* of international politics. This is epitomised by the legal precept of *jus ad bellum* – “the right to war” defining the acceptable limits on the exercise of military power in international relations and law, especially of the strong against the weak. One of the most important principles underlying *jus ad bellum* is that military action must not be pursued for narrowly defined national interests only (Wallace & Martin-Ortega, 2013).

2.3 The liberal school

Philosophers of the Enlightenment such as Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Adam Smith are some of the major thinkers recognised as the originators of liberalism. The core assumptions of liberalism are centred on the primacy of the individual, political freedoms and rights, private property and equality of opportunity, and hold that that even though states are self-

interested and self-centred they can cooperate and realise peace. With regard to international relations, Andrew Moravcsik (1993), for example, has developed a liberal theory based on three core assumptions: (i) individuals and private groups, not states, are the fundamental actors in world politics; (ii) states represent some dominant subset of domestic society, whose interests they serve; and (iii) the configuration of these interests across the international system determines state behaviour. This is affirmation that the national characteristics of individual states matter for their international relations (Slaughter (2011)). Therefore, the domestic characteristics of individual states matter. They inform, influence and constrain the interplay of their socially based choices and actions with regard to distribution of power and the role of the economy amongst them.

Modern liberal international relations theorists such as Robert Keohane (1989) and Joseph Nye (2004) emphasise the role of cooperation between states, multilateralism, and international institutions in fostering a stable international order. However, liberalism generally remains associated with the primacy of the individual, especially in the political and economic realm, and privileges the individual's highest utility within a market and capitalist economy and limits the role of government and the state. This raises the untenable spectre of the domination and exploitation of some individuals and nations by others.

2.4 The critical school

The critical paradigm in international relations is a set of theories that are broadly founded on the writings of Karl Marx, especially with regard to how the primacy of individuals in a market and capitalistic economic order, as espoused by realism and liberalism, lead to the domination and exploitation of the majority in society by the few individuals who amass and control capital. This translates into the domination of the smaller states or powers by the larger ones in the context of international relations. These theories seek to explain international relations by focusing on the interests and behaviours of capital and how these influence state interests and behaviours (Cox, 1983 & Sinclair, 1996). Marxist theorists emphasise the role of social relations, and the associated economic and material aspects that underpin the international relations system. Although capital is important in the relations between states it is not the *sine qua non* of international relations, which is characterised by many actors and divergent motivations that inform them. The critical school recognises the role of these actors and divergent motivations in international relations.

2.5 Constructivism

Constructivism in international relations characterises the international system as a product of human consciousness, human creation, human intervention and human invention and not only a product of material and objective forces (Wendt, 1992, 1994). Constructivism emphasises human agency. According to Wendt (1992: 396-397),

“a fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them. States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not. ----- It is collective meanings that constitute the structures which organize our actions.”

For Wendt (1994), constructivism focuses on the social context in which international relations occur with emphasis on issues of identity and belief. It postulates that the meanings in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction (Wendt, 1992:403). He says that “constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics (Wendt, 1994:385). He posits that corporate identity of states generates four basic interests or appetites; (a) physical security, including its differentiation from other actors; (b) ontological security or predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities; (c) recognition as an actor by others, above and beyond survival through brute force, and (d) development, in the sense of meeting the human aspiration for a better life, for which states are repositories at the collective level Wendt (1994: 385).

Slaughter (2011) posits that constructivism is not a theory but an ontology that represents a set of assumptions about the world and human motivation and agency. Adler (1997: 323) has argued that constructivism is not a theory of politics and “is not anti-liberal or anti- realist by ideological conviction; neither is it pessimistic or optimistic by design. He maintains that constructivism “is the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on the dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world.” This emphasises the centrality of human actors and their interactions in shaping international relations.

In the international system, this highlights the view that states and the relationships between them are not defined by nature but by people's shared perceptions, experiences, values, ideas, and understanding about themselves and their cultural, political, economic, etc. institutions (Wendt, 1994: 385). Thus, the beginning or original condition in the relationship between states is not enmity and the desire to annihilate the other to ensure one's survival. States acknowledge each other's right to be. This acknowledgement necessitates an appropriate mode and mechanism of engagement and interaction between them. This in turn informs how they relate.

The reality remains that humans and their nature and the nature of their social and historical interactions are significant aspects of international relations and world politics. This partly explains the rise of Neo-Gramscianism in the study of international relations. Neo-Gramscianism recognises this as it focuses on the interaction of key variables such as the state and non-state actors, specific social milieu, and prevailing global governance and relational paradigm. It highlights and espouses the important role that context and ideology play in how countries relate to one another and provides a rationale for the relationship between different and unequal countries.

2.6 Neo-Gramscianism

Neo-Gramscianism is an emerging theory in the study and analysis of international relations. It is closely associated with Robert Cox, who imported and applied Antonio Gramsci's ideas to international relations in a seminal 1983 article titled "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method." Although Neo-Gramscianism is heavily influenced by the writings of Antonio Gramsci from whom it gets its name, it diverges from them and evolves as a distinct theory (Fusaro, 2010).

It emphasises broad and interdisciplinary study and analysis of society at the domestic level, and states at the international level, and the interplay between them. However, Neo-Gramscianism is not a synthesis of the other theories of international relations, but, because it integrates many dimensions such as ideas at the individual level, the nature and capabilities of states, and the tools of social, economic, and natural sciences, it covers substantial ground covered by the other theories of international relations. It is the context that gives it a slant to any particular theory, i.e., realism, liberalism, constructivism, etc. For instance, Fusaro (2010) argues that Gramsci presents an analysis closer to Lenin's "imperialism" and to a lesser extent to the realist school.

The crux of Neo-Gramscianism is the conceptualisation of hegemony in the international political arena as power emanating from a confluence of coercion and consent. Cooper (2002) argues this well maintaining that the

”raison d'état and the amorality of Machiavelli's theories of statecraft, which defined international relations in the modern era, especially realism, have been replaced by a moral consciousness that applies to international relations as well as to domestic affairs.”

Unfortunately, Cooper applies this only to what he calls postmodern continent of Europe and advocates a reversion to what he calls the rougher methods of an earlier era, “force, pre-emptive attack and deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the nineteenth century world of every state for itself.” The postmodern states would keep the law but when operating in the “jungle,” they would use “the laws of the jungle.” This paradoxically would limit its applicability contrary to his intention. Applied broadly, Cooper’s argument resonates with neo-Gramscianism.

Fusaro (2010: 3) claims that Gramsci’s understanding of power is exemplified by the comparison with a centaur: half man, half beast and hence, power as a necessary combination of consent and coercion. Hegemony prevails, Cox argues, when the consensual aspect of power is in the forefront. Because hegemony is enough to ensure conformity of behaviour in most people most of the time, coercion will be mainly latent and used only in particular, deviant situations.” Therefore the need for military capability remains. However, it must be available to address the “deviant situations” and protect the status quo or as Cooper (2002) puts it “the weak still need the strong and the strong still need an orderly world. A world in which the efficient and well governed export stability and liberty, and which is open for investment and growth - all of this seems eminently desirable.”

Neo-Gramscianism extends the concept of hegemony beyond the bounds of economic and military power. Qobo (2010:15), referring to the work of Chris Brown, maintains that, “the importance of a hegemon lies in providing stability and creating rules or institutions that may in future render the existence of a hegemon unnecessary.” In this environment, rules and institutions replace economic and military power. Qobo argues that the concept of hegemon is value free. A hegemon can have a good influence as well as a bad one.

As is already indicated, Neo-Gramscianism avers that modern states no longer behave predominantly through the Machiavellian principles and *raison d'état* (Cooper, 2002).

Cooper (2002) presents this as characteristic of what he calls a postmodern international order that is marked by;

- The breaking down of the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs.
- Mutual interference in (traditional) domestic affairs and mutual surveillance.
- The rejection of force for resolving disputes and the consequent codification of self-enforced rules of behaviour.
- The growing irrelevance of borders: this has come about both through the changing role of the state, but also through missiles, motor cars and satellites.
- Security is based on transparency, mutual openness, interdependence and mutual vulnerability.

This characterises a postmodern world which, although Cooper (2002) associates mostly with Europe, is one whose conception of relations amongst nations focuses on the social, universalistic, moralistic aspects of hegemony rather than those of the raw military power of the great powers.

This recognition drives the interest in new tools in the study and analysis of international relations such as asymmetry theory advocated by Brantly Womack based on his study of several asymmetric bilateral relationships in the last decade.

2.7 Asymmetry theory

2.7.1 Introduction to asymmetry theory

Asymmetry theory arose out of Womack's study and insights on the relationship between the PRC and a number of its smaller Asian neighbours such as Vietnam and Cambodia (Womack, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2006a, 2010). He argues that although multipolarity emphasises international cooperation and militates against the superpower's capacity for domination it does not address the real problems created by the disparity of power in international affairs (Womack (2004:351). The great disparities in capacities between larger countries such as the PRC and smaller ones such as Vietnam and Cambodia create an asymmetric framework that shaped every aspect and every phase of the relationship (Womack, 2004:351). Womack (2004:351) maintains that,

“Asymmetry theory is a new paradigm that addresses the effects of national disparities on international relations. It argues that asymmetry inevitably creates differences in risk perception, attention and interactive behavior between states, and that it can lead to a vicious circle of systemic misperception. Despite such tensions, however, the international order is quite stable, and even asymmetric relations can rarely be forced by the stronger side. Asymmetry confirms multipolarity’s critique of unipolarity’s exaggerated claim to absolute power, and suggests a theory of international leadership based on negotiated relationships that avoid the systemic misperceptions that asymmetry encourages”

Although he maintains that asymmetry is new, Womack acknowledges that it shares elements with other theories of international relations. Asymmetry theory assumes that capacities matter and that states attempt to maximize their interests in common with realism (Womack 2006a: 18). It emphasises the role of perception and interaction in the relationship between states in line with constructivism. He argues that asymmetry theory differs from most international relations theories in that it does not assume that relative power implies control by the larger powerful states of the smaller and weaker or absolute helplessness of the smaller and weaker in relation to the larger powerful states (Womack, 2006a: 20). The more powerful states (countries) cannot arbitrarily impose their will on less the powerful Womack (2004: 360).

For example, the PRC could use its size, stature and capacities to overwhelm its neighbours but it does not, at least not overtly. The regional geopolitics of South East Asian, especially the interests and presence of the US, partly accounts for the PRC’s caution in dealing with its neighbours but it is not the only reason. There is a symbiotic relationship between the PRC and its neighbours. Womack realised that their asymmetric endowments are a positive attribute of their relationship. This suggested asymmetry is possible framework in assessing foreign relations and policies in the international political arena in a time where most international relationships are asymmetric.

Womack’s asymmetry theory assumes that although states endeavour to maximise their national interests they recognise and utilise the different capacities of others (Womack, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2004, 2006). The maximisation of national interests if taken at face value as advocated by other theories such as realism and liberalism, would entail the domination of the smaller and weaker by the larger and stronger states in international relations, as most theories equate asymmetry to imbalance of capacities and power that leads to a disequilibrium that creates either subordination or a competition for domination (Firsing,

2010: 27) This would be the political equivalent of a Darwinian struggle where the larger and stronger countries prevail and smaller, weaker ones become extinct. In reality, in the post-colonial and post-imperial era, larger and stronger countries do not annex and subjugate the smaller weaker ones. Furthermore, the smaller, weaker countries do not totally subject themselves to the stronger countries nor do they die out. The larger and stronger countries and smaller, weaker ones coexist and partner, and find ways to collaborate and accommodate each other. Moreover, competition ceases to be the dominant feature of their relationship because as Wendt (1992: 415) so succinctly puts it, “I have no interest in exploiting my friends, not because of the relative costs and benefits of such action but because they are my friends”

Scot Firsing (2012) is amongst a few scholars to apply asymmetry theory in the study of the relationship between states. It is the nature of states to be conscious of and to recognise their own sovereignty and those of others, regardless of size or status, and not to violate the territorial rights of others without “just cause” (Wendt,1992: 414). Therefore, states make room for each other, especially the larger for the smaller. The larger state recognises the autonomy of the smaller and the smaller accords the larger appropriate deference Womack (2010: 85).

Keohane (1969: 301), citing Rothstein, has argued that smaller powers, in the first instance and especially for security and political reasons; seek mixed, multilateral alliances failing which they settle for bilateral alliances even if they are unequal. These alliances are with other smaller powers, but more often than not with the bigger powers. The quest of smaller powers to align themselves with bigger powers has been noted and studied in the past in international relations, amongst others, Robert Keohane who is one of the leading scholars in the field. Womack’s work on asymmetry theory builds from the work of Keohane and assimilates portions of other theories of international relations. Asymmetry emphasises the differences in how the larger and smaller perceive the relationship and behave. The smaller state is relatively more exposed in its interaction with the larger. This predisposes the smaller to being more attentive to the relationship to guide its nature and development Womack (2010: 82).

One of the important premises of asymmetry theory is that to survive in the big bad world of international politics, the smaller and weaker states ally themselves with the larger and stronger or with each other to secure themselves and their position. However, larger and

stronger states cannot dominate the international order for the sake of their narrow interests; if they do they would put their position of power and stature at risk by destabilising the international system Womack (2004: 360).

Firsing (2012:107) argues that almost all theories interpret asymmetry as an imbalance of capacities and power, a disequilibrium that creates either subordination or a competition for domination. Asymmetry theory acknowledges the role of the claim of sovereignty and equality, as advanced by other theories. It builds from other mainstream theories like realist theory, by assuming that capacities matter and that states attempt to maximize their interests (Womack 2006a:18). What sets asymmetry theory apart is the acceptance of asymmetry between states as a valid basis of interaction. It does not regard asymmetry due to the capacities and power as a limitation in the relationship between larger and stronger, and smaller and weaker states, or as the basis for domination and subordination of the one state by the other.

Asymmetry theory asserts that states in an asymmetric relationship are as similar actors, plus or minus the disparity in capacities, rather than actors whose interests and perceptions are shaped by their relative positions. States observe and recognise each other's statehood and sovereignty ahead of any other attribute. This does not mean that these other attributes or capacities are not important.

Of similar importance is the fact that states, irrespective of power and stature, negotiate their interactions. Such negotiations are contingent on leadership, history, and culture Womack (201:98).

2.7.2 The nature of asymmetric relations

Womack (2006, 18)'s asymmetry theory assumes that capacities matter and that states attempt to maximise their interests. He maintains that symmetry theory is not a syncretic sampling of what appears attractive from each of the other theories, but rather a reinterpretation of international relations from a fundamentally different starting point

Asymmetry theory envisages that in a relationship between two unequal states, the relationship will hold larger significance for the smaller and/or weaker than the larger and/or stronger one. This should result in the smaller and/or weaker paying more attention to the relationship, planning, coordinating and generally strategizing to ensure that it is not overwhelmed by the larger and/or stronger and that it derives the benefits of the relationship

(Womack, 2004: 360). By looking at diplomatic relations from the vantage point of the smaller state, Womack's asymmetry theory takes a different approach from other theories as it emphasises the importance of analysing these relationships from the vantage point of both states, especially if they have unequal or asymmetric capacities. This militates against the emphasis of other theories on asymmetry that creates disequilibrium that leads to either subordination or a competition for domination, and reconceptualises the relationship between the smaller and larger states as being on par based on their different and complementary capacities.

The emphasis on capacities underscores the fact that size and scale, political, economic and military might are not the only attributes that countries can leverage in international relations. To illustrate this point, there are a number of stark examples of countries that punch above their weight in international relations such as Cuba, Israel, North Korea and Switzerland. South Africa also punches above its weight but in more subtle ways than the others (Draper, 2011; Davies, 2012; Alden & Schoeman, 2013; Naidu, 2013 & Hazelhurst, 2014). Asymmetries inherent in the relationship between states are thus often far more informative. Asymmetry theory differs from most international relations theories in that it does not assume that relative power implies control (Firsing, 2012:107).

According to Firsing (2012:107), Womack postulates that most asymmetric relationships are peaceful, negotiated and not simply dictated by the stronger side. In this respect it shares common threads with democratic peace theory, which postulates that states with similar forms of government will not go to war. Mark (2013: 125) views this differently. Competition and conflict arises from similarity in endowment, interests and aspirations rather than, as would be expected, from differences. From Mark's point of view, differences between states lead to complementarity and cooperation. In this way asymmetry makes a better basis for international relations. This subverts all theories that interpret imbalance of capacities and power as disequilibrium that creates either subordination or a competition for domination. Mark (2013) concludes that competition between countries with different attributes has more to do with status than ideology.

2.7.3 Complementarity and cooperation

Asymmetry theory acknowledges that the world comprises countries of different sizes, strengths and capacities on many different dimensions such as politics, economics, culture and military capabilities which they endeavour to use to maximise their national interests.

The sovereign smaller state need not always defer to the bigger one in all instances. Asymmetry theory posits that these differences engender complementarity and cooperation.

2.7.4 The attributes of managing asymmetric relations

Womack (2001:135; 2003: 99; 2006:8) advances a number of ways to manage asymmetric relationships. These are; focus on mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories, active conversion of hostility to friendship and adroit management of a relationship drifting from friendship to hostility, routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual. These, individually, are not new or unique to his theory of asymmetry but the emphasis and their grouping offers a fresh and informative method of analysis and synthesis.

2.7.5 Histories and societies

Advancing mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories entails increasing the opportunities for general contact between the peoples of the two societies, through business, educational, cultural exchanges, etc. that should expose them to each other and dispel extreme stereotypes, misconceptions, misperceptions and misinterpretations.

Sharing the states' histories and culture play an important role in aligning and/ or creating a basis for mutual understanding premised on an appreciation of the different backgrounds from which information and behaviour emanates and is interpreted. Histories and societies provide a context for the current state of a relationship and importantly mitigate current misunderstandings. For instance, if current behaviour or action is patently out of line with past behaviour or action, it is easier to interpret it as an aberration and seek to rectify it instead of taking offense and retaliatory behaviour or action. Knowledge, awareness and appreciation of each other's histories and societies create common ground.

2.7.6 Routinization

Routinization entails opportunities for regular contact and discussions, between decision makers and influencers to discuss mutually defined important topics. This builds understanding and trust and reduces the potential for misperception and misunderstanding. Where misperceptions and misunderstandings arise, they can be addressed before they fester.

2.7.7 Diplomatic ritual

Diplomatic ritual involves according each other the appropriate pageantry and protocol as well as what may be seen as pedantic common courtesies. These may include reciprocal official visits marked by joint statements celebrating the relationship and pronouncements of its importance and stability, mutual respect and continued commitment and valuing of the relationship.

2.7.8 Neutralization

Neutralization goes hand in hand with routinization and focus on ways to neutralize situations that lead to serious disagreement or conflict. Neutralization starts with situating problems or challenging situations in the framework of the friendly relationship and common interest. These challenges are then taken out of the realm of regular diplomatic interaction and referred to expert committees or commissions to address and resolve. Although Womack has been advocating asymmetry theory since the mid- 2000s it remains in the periphery of the main theories of political science and international relations. This may be an indication of its failure to gain traction and acceptance with researchers and scholars. Nonetheless, it is very pertinent and useful to studying and understanding the relationship between countries characterised by asymmetry.

2.8 Critique of asymmetry theory

The ‘Westphalian System’ of international relations codified the principles of sovereignty, territoriality, autonomy, self-determination, equality and legality of states. These principles are the basis for most theories of international relations that often differ on the emphasis they place on different principles. Theories such as asymmetry theory place greater emphasis on principles such as self-determination, equality and legality. They deemphasise inequalities such as those of power, economy and global political status that in the final analysis play a big role in the relations between states, symmetric or asymmetric. Power, despite the negative connotations associated with it, is real and cannot be wished away. The playing field between smaller and larger states is not even. The larger states enjoy many advantages in their relations with smaller states. However, the states’ perception of themselves and their exercise of their own agency play an important role in their relations with their asymmetric partners.

The Westphalian principles do provide a measure of protection from the wanton abuse of power by the larger states, especially against the smaller. With the advent of regional bodies

such as the European Union that act as a confederation of states transcending individual states in some instances, individual states are no longer the only actors in international relations. This challenges the notion and basis of both symmetry and asymmetry generally and asymmetry theory in particular.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the main and contemporary theoretical perspectives used in the study of international relations and gives the rationale for the choice of asymmetry theory for this study. The chapter explored the main attributes, the strengths and deficiencies, of the different schools of thought and theories of international relations to contextualise asymmetry theory. This shows that although asymmetry theory is distinct, it not a standalone theory of international relations. It considers and applies many of the same attributes of the other theories in understanding international relations. Nonetheless, Asymmetry theory provides multiple factors and dimensions in exploring the relationship between states. Traditional international relations theories focus on the role and relationships from the perspective of larger states, asymmetry theory turns this on its head and focuses on role and the perspective of smaller states, especially how they can steer their relationship with larger states to their advantage. By categorising the ways by which smaller and larger states manage their relationship, asymmetry theory enhances the understanding of this in particular but also international relations in general. The chapter also looks at the limitations and critiques of asymmetry theory.

The precepts of asymmetry theory will be used to guide the exploration and analysis of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC in the light of the asymmetries between them.

Chapter 3 The evolution of the PRC's foreign policy and relations with Africa and South Africa

3.1 Introduction

In his asymmetry theory of international relations, Womack (2001, 2003, 2006, and 2010) explains the importance of knowing, understanding and appreciating the historical and broader societal context of asymmetric relationships.

This chapter explains the PRC's foreign policy as a reflection of its history of imperial subjugation, internal strife and isolation, its opening up and emergence as an economic giant. This provides hints to why the PRC relates to other countries, in particular those that are asymmetrically endowed relative to it, such as South Africa.

Although the PRC sought to expunge Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution, its Confucian heritage, that is part of Chinese civilization emphasizes benevolent rule, refinement, and social harmony, now underpins its foreign policy and international relations as encapsulated in the Five Principles of Mutual Coexistence. The PRC sees this as a basis for an independent and differentiated foreign policy and model for international relations. This is often at odds with Western conceptualisations of the nature of relationships between countries, states and peoples (Nathan & Ross, 1997 & Womack, 2004: 358). The Five Principles of Mutual Coexistence, even if not referred to directly, and acquiescence to the "One China Policy," is the foundations of all of the PRC's diplomatic ties, encompassing those with African countries and South Africa in particular. In the case of South Africa and other African countries, there has been a tendency to defer to the PRC beyond these because they have not articulated their own conditionalities (Le Pere, 2007).

This chapter builds on the extensive scholarly literature on the PRC's foreign policy in general, and towards South Africa in particular, with the context of the PRC's Africa policy. It looks at how the PRC's quest for alternative spheres of influence and not just for resources and diplomacy, shape its foreign relations and its preference for partnerships to conduct them, especially with smaller countries such as South Africa.

3.2 The PRC's foreign policy

3.2.1 A brief background to the PRC's foreign policy

The PRC's foreign policy is characterised as strongly influenced by its nationalism. It can be traced back to 1949 when the then Chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong, announced the principle of “leaning to one side” by which the PRC would seek an alliance with the Soviet Union and fight against the US and its Western allies (Tianbiao Zhu, 2001: 7). Another pillar of its foreign policy even then was developing relationships with the Third World served the goal of promoting and preserving national independence (Tianbiao Zhu, 2001:10). With the PRC's opening up policy which began in the late 1970s, it began to follow an independent and open foreign policy eschewing formal preferential ties to specific countries. The stated goals of the PRC's foreign policy are to safeguard world peace, oppose all forms of hegemony, and work to achieve domestic economic modernisation. The PRC's foreign policy remains rooted in the following principles (Nathan & Ross, 1997, Panda, 2014);

- Maintaining Independence and safeguarding national sovereignty
- Opposing hegemonism and safeguarding world peace
- Upholding the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence
- Strengthening solidarity of the developing countries, and together opposing imperialism and colonialism
- Improving relations with developed countries to promote common progress

It has recently introduced the concepts of a “harmonious society” domestically, and “harmonious world,” “peaceful development,” and places particular emphasis on the development of “good-neighbourly” relations and “partnership” in its relations with its neighbours and diplomatic allies.

Table 2: The PRC's foreign policy template

Term	Definition	Implications
“Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; • Mutual non-aggression; • Non-interference; • Equality and mutual benefit; • Peaceful coexistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good-neighborly relations—preventing external instabilities from “spilling over” to fuel internal frictions; • Non-interference in internal affairs, most notably Taiwan, Tibet,
“New Security Concept”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unveiled in 1997 to reflect China’s aspiration for a new post-Cold War international security order; • Adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; • Emphasis on mutually beneficial economic cooperation among states; • Pursuit of confidence-building measures amongst states; • Establishment of bilateral “strategic partnerships” that are not directed at any third country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marks new proactive Chinese approach to international affairs; • Offers alternative vision of international order, particularly in relation to the U.S. alliance based security structure in East Asia.
“Peaceful Rise”/ “Peaceful Development”	Campaign to reassure the international community and particularly neighboring countries, of China’s benign future and that China’s rise will not be a zero-sum game.	
Period of Strategic Opportunity”	Conceived in 2002, the next twenty years will be a period during which China’s relations with its periphery and with major powers such as the United States are expected to remain essentially stable to allow the PRC to focus its attention on “building a well-off society” at home.	
“Harmonious World”	First publicly introduced by Hu Jintao at the World Summit and 60th General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005. While the exact meaning and policy implications of “harmonious world” are undefined, the slogan is meant to demonstrate China’s commitment to global peace and stability, and to the goal of a more just and equitable international system	

Source: Center for Strategic and international Studies (CSIS), 2014

Most assessments of the PRC’s foreign policy conflate China as a civilization and China as a state (Sheffery, 2012 & Schell, 2014)). China as a civilization is the longest continuous civilizations in the world. However, although the civilization persists and informs the current state, the state is also a reflection of the forces and times that shaped its establishment and development since. Ma (2014) quotes scholar Lucian Pye who referred to China as "a civilization pretending to be a nation-state." It is important to remember that China as a state only dates back to the founding of the PRC in 1949. This makes the history of the PRC relatively new and accessible especially for the purpose of understanding its foreign policy.

At the level of a civilization, China’s foreign policy is influenced by its Confucian and Taoist philosophical and cultural background (Bell, 2010, Callahan, 2012 & Schell, 2014). They are the origins of its pursuit of harmonious coexistence, a harmonious world and mutually beneficial relations. This is at the heart of the Five Principles of

3.2.3 The PRC's foreign policy in the international relations architecture

The PRC has reduced the emphasis of foreign relations that are dominated by the superpowers to a focus on a diversity of modes of engagements amongst states with differing attributes in international relations (Womack, 2004: 358). Womack argues within the context of the theory of symmetry that this revives and strengthens some of the best cooperative traditions of Chinese foreign policy encapsulated in policies such as the Five Principles. This is a significant departure from the Western traditions predicated on realism and liberalism which emphasise individualism, self-interest and competition (Nathan & Ross, 1997 & Womack, 2004).

These ideological differences persist and still run deep, hence the continued discomfort with the PRC. The PRC does not always share in the Western values, deals and interests. As a one party state, governed by a communist party, it differs with the Western countries in their ideals of stable democratic political rule and economic freedom. The challenge is that from the PRC's perspective, the West does not always share in Chinese values and ideals either. From the PRC's perspective, Western values and ideals are not the default, especially for the PRC. Jianying Zha (2011: 212) says that 'if, broadly speaking, Western culture emphasizes liberty, innovation, and the individual, the Confucian culture emphasizes benevolent rule, refinement, and social harmony.' Are the conventional Western values of; freedom and democracy, universal rule of law and justice universal, he asks?

Can Chinese and Western ideals and values ever be reconciled? Is such reconciliation a condition for equality and sincere friendship? Ayson & Taylor (2008) echo John Ikenberry who argues the need to integrate the PRC into the current Western-led international order otherwise the Chinese may conclude that their country is not respected or wanted as a member of that order and that the West conspires to contain the PRC. The challenge is that the PRC may not want such accommodation and rather aspire to a new world order which incorporates its ideals and values.

The PRC chooses to pursue an independent foreign policy Li (2013: 36). This puts it at odds with the United States and its allies who inform much of Western foreign policy. The PRC's opening up to the world and phenomenal economic growth since the late 1970s obscure the reality that until then it was a pariah state in Western eyes. To many Westerners it has not been fully "rehabilitated" from its pariah status despite the fact that they continue to benefit enormously from the PRC's economic growth while castigating it human rights violations,

poor labour and working conditions, and polluting the environment. The West's benefit in the PRC's growth remains the least and untold story.

The treatment of the PRC as inferior by Western powers, that it is conscious of, is not a new phenomenon. It is part of a long history that the Chinese and their leaders are well aware of and informs its foreign policy. Sir Reginald Johnston (2011: 6), who is the only non-Chinese tutor to a Chinese Emperor, and witnessed the demise of the Chinese Empire in the early 1900s, writes that

“if the Western nations thought that the partition of China was likely to go merrily forward without more than a few grimaces from the Chinese government and its people, they soon discovered their mistake. Foreign aggression was beginning to turn a “civilisation” into a nation. The Chinese who had hardly known what patriotism meant began to realise that they lived in a world of competing and often antagonistic national groups, and their group which was numerically the greatest of all and occupied (if dependencies be included) a larger geographical area than any other, experienced less influence and was treated with less respect than many Western countries possessing scarcely one twentieth of the territory and population of China.

The Chinese were then, as they are now, too proud and sensitive a race to reconcile themselves to a position of permanent inferiority among nations. They could not be expected to acquiesce in the theory that Western races or the Japanese were their racial superiors; and any such theory is (in the opinion of those who know them best) patently false, it was something better than vanity that made them reject it.”

This was not tolerated by China then or the PRC now and underlies its suspicion of Western powers and explains its rapprochement with developing countries, especially those subjected to colonialism and imperialism.

3.2.4 The PRC's position in the international system and quest for spheres of influence

Although it is now the second biggest economy in the world, its marginalisation continues through exclusion from influential forums such as the G7(Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.S. and U.K) and after the inclusion of Russia in 1998, which paradoxically is supposed to represent the most industrialized economies of which it is one. This remains despite the fact that the PRC is part of the G20 comprising Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, the PRC, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, European Union. The G20, regardless its growing prominence, has not replaced the G8.

Interestingly, the G8 has itself not replaced the G7 which indicates that Russia was appended and not included in the G7. This contrasts with the inclusion of Canada into what was then the G6 which nobody remembers because it was genuinely replaced by the G7 so that there is no longer any reference to the “G6 and Canada” in the same way that reference is made to the “G7 and Russia.”

The reality is that the PRC is viewed as an outsider, just like most developing countries, warranting no institutionalized association with the G7. This position is reflected by scholars such as John Kirton who hold that the PRC lacks the full set of qualities required for membership in these exclusive clubs (Kirton, 1999).

The PRC’s exclusion encourages it’ through its foreign policy and relations, to seek the formation of clubs that exclude the G7 where it is an equal partner, leads and or is relevant, hence the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), comprising the PRC, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India the PRC, South Africa), Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), etc. In this context BRICS is conceptualised beyond the parameters used by O’Neill when he coined the BRIC ellipsis.

This is an endeavour to challenge the hegemony of historic imperial and colonial powers and their allies who still stick together and change “the rules of the game.” The Chinese are loathe continuing to uphold a Western led international order that they had no role in shaping. The PRC endeavours to bypass the West where it can do so without jeopardising its own interests. On the other hand, the West is not yet ready to adapt the existing world order to meet the PRC's aspirations. It persists in setting the rules of the road without the PRC and then expects it to accept them (Mark, 2013). However, the goal of these manoeuvres is not to push the PRC out of international trade given its strategic role in this regard but rather to ensure that it trade and relates on their terms. Mark (2013) notes that influential historians such as Shi Yinhong, have argued that the West should think not only of "integrating China into the Western liberal order" but instead try to adapt that order "to accommodate China." Shi Yinhong argues that this adaptation would involve a major redistribution of formal influence in the global financial and security institutional order, with authority and status bestowed on member states according to, as Shi Yinhong puts it, to the "factual strength they respectively have and the contribution they have made” and not to some “preconceived ideas about who should rule" or be influential or be the next superpower. Kleine-Ahlbrandt, (2013) says that while the U.S. has expected the PRC to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the global

system, the PRC has calls for a "new type of great power relations," in which the U.S. recognizes the PRC's core interests and respects it as an equal (Schell, 2014). The PRC expects an appreciation that its interests and aspirations for itself and the world do not always coincide with those of the West and that this does not minimise their significance or invalidate them (Ming Xia, 2013). If this is not forthcoming, it looks to its relationship those that accord equality and respect amongst who are the countries of Africa.

3.2.5 The PRC's status and quest for a sphere of influence in the international system

The PRC is aware of its real position in the global political system relative to the conventional and popular perception. Cui Tiankai, Chinese ambassador to the US, points out that the PRC is not in the same category of power as the US. From the PRC's perspective the U.S. is still much more developed, much stronger. The PRC may be huge but it is still a developing country, whether in terms of the economy, science and technology, or military power. "In many respects, we still have a long way to go before we can really be seen as on par with the United States (Tepperman, 2013).

According to Pistor (2013), despite its economic status, the PRC is currently, excluded from what is termed "the swap-lines club" (Currency swap lines allow central banks to purchase and repurchase currencies from one another which provides countries easy access to the underlying currencies) whose membership is restricted to the United States Federal Reserve, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan, the Swiss National Bank, and the Bank of Canada. Pistor, while acknowledging that there might be legal reasons for this, characterises it as a hint of "neo-imperial" elitism. It is unlikely that these slights are unnoticed by the PRC. As Pistor (2013) points out, "picking partners is an inherently political act." This political act has material economic benefits as it provides access to high-demand currencies to a select few, relatively strong, countries precisely when the weakest countries are at their most vulnerable. It would be inconceivable that the PRC would not factor these realities into its foreign policy and international relations. When the PRC emphasises 'equality and mutual benefit' in its relations with other nations, this is directed as much on how it wants to be treated as it is on how it wants to treat others. The PRC, using Keohane's (1969: 295) categorisation of states, wants to be system-determining rather than just system-influencing, system-affecting or system-complaint in world affairs. This informs its quest for an overhaul of multilateral agencies such as the IMF and World Bank, and the creation of alternatives such as the BRICS' New Development Bank (NDB).

The PRC's national and international aspirations were reiterated by President Xi when delivered a speech at a group study session of members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. Xi (Xinhua, 2014) said that "China should be portrayed as a civilized country featuring rich history, ethnic unity and cultural diversity, and as an oriental power with good government, developed economy, cultural prosperity, national unity and beautiful mountains and rivers. The PRC should also be marked as a responsible country that advocates peaceful and common development, safeguards international justice, and makes contributions to humanity, and as a socialist country which is open, amicable, promising and vibrant." President Xi's sounds contemporary but is a rehash of the PRC's foreign policy dating back to 1949 as indicated earlier in this chapter.

Despite the on-going uncertainty and concern about the PRC's self-proclaimed "peaceful rise" the scope for the PRC to be a military superpower is both limited and moot. The sheer rise of the PRC and its growing influence in Asia and Africa is a *de facto* dilution of the power, influence and status of the existing hegemon(s) and power structures. Wendt (1992: 407) posits that, "competitive systems of interaction are prone to security "dilemmas," in which the efforts of actors to enhance their security unilaterally threaten the security of the others, perpetuating distrust and alienation." In this way, the PRC does not need superior military capability to be seen as a threat. It is a threat by virtue of coming into its own and the shift this engenders in the global balance of power (Ming Xia, 2013). This impacts on its foreign relations, its foreign policy notwithstanding. In Africa and South Africa in particular, the PRC is challenging the century old monopoly the West has had on its socio-politics, economics and culture.

3.2.6 The impact of the PRC's 'dependent' independence on its foreign relations

The PRC endeavours to follow an independent foreign policy, especially from the West. Ironically, communism and socialism are Western social, political and economic ideologies that the PRC has adopted and customised (Ma, 2014). The perceived differences may be over exaggerated as are the fears of the "westernisation" of the Chinese political system. Walter and Howie (2012) make two salient points. The first is that the PRC's economy is no different from any other, in spite of the Chinese characteristics. They argue that if there are such things as economic laws, they work just as well in the PRC and for Chinese businesses as they do in other markets (Walter and Howie, 2012: xvii). The second point is that while the idea that capitalist tools can work in socialist hands is home grown (Deng Xiaoping) and

its realisation required help from capitalist experts that the PRC invited without any coercion. Walter and Howie (2012: 10) claim that it is not an exaggeration to say that Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley made the PRC's state-owned corporate sector and by extension its economy what it is today. They maintain that without Western financial know-how exemplified by these banks SOEs would long since have lapsed into obscurity. It is de rigueur to focus on the PRC's investments in other countries and forget that huge inflows that preceded its current economic status. Stiglitz (2002: 183) states that "the Chinese government invited foreign firms into the country, to participate in joint ventures. And foreign firms came in droves - the PRC became the largest recipient of foreign direct investment among emerging markets, and number eight in the world below only the United States, Belgium, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and France."

This trend continues. Walter and Howie (2011: 6) claim that by 2010 foreign companies were committing US\$100 billion in foreign direct investment in their manufacturing operations in the Chinese market. In the last quarter of 2013 alone Xinhua reported that the PRC had net inflows of direct investment to the value of 362.1 billion Yuan (US\$50 billion). This figure excludes copying and expropriation of intellectual capital. For example Chinese companies' lack of strong development capabilities has resulted in a number of highly publicised intellectual property disputes (Gong Zhengzheng, 2004). A US Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property alleges that "National industrial policy goals in China encourage IP theft, and an extraordinary number of Chinese in business and government entities are engaged in this practice" (Woollacott, 2013). The Commission estimates this to be worth US\$240 billion a year in respect of the US. If this allegation is true, then similar behaviour in Europe and the rest of the world garners the PRC staggering benefit every year. As Ted Fishman (2005: 252) says, "China's failure to police intellectual property, in effect, creates a massive global subsidy worth hundreds of billions of dollars to its businesses and people." Is this a case of the PRC challenging Western conceptualisations of or valuing intellectual property and property rights differently or just expediency?

To this day, the PRC's economic performance is influenced by the presence of many multinational companies from the developed countries that have brought their technologies and know-how and employ millions of Chinese workers (Nolan, 2014). It is also true that they reap substantial profits and earn much higher rates of return on the capital invested! Though the PRC has adopted many Western practices, it retains a distinct culture with its own set of values and goals. The challenge for the PRC is how attractive are its ideals in

comparison to those of the US and its allies in the West. Do other countries voluntarily and freely aspire to its model and example? As (Walter and Howie, 2011:10) argue “the adoption of laws, accounting standards, markets, and other mechanisms of international capitalism are just examples of the formalism that characterizes the PRC today. The names are the same as in the West, but what things are and how they work is hidden beneath the surface. Given the state’s scale in critical sectors, together with the enormous power of the government, the influence of this patronage system pervades all aspects of the PRC’s economy. It inevitably undermines the very contents of its superficially internationalized institutions.” From the PRC’s perspective, its values and goals are equally valid as re the Western ones and the West must engage with them as such.

On 21 January 2014, Premier Li Keqiang met and thanked foreign experts working in the PRC for their contribution to the country's modernisation drive. According to Zhao Yanan (2014), Premier Li said, "What China has achieved in its reform and opening-up should be attributed not only to the hard work of the Chinese people, but also to the wisdom and painstaking efforts of the foreign experts." This can be dismissed as a mere diplomatic overture but it tells the truth.

Paradoxically, what this makes it clear that the PRC has and accepts a variety of Western norms, values and knowhow. Its opening up in the later 1970s and its going out strategies in the 1990s epitomise its buying in into the ways of the West. These ways have been instrumental to its phenomenal economic achievements. For the PRC to then negate these in favour of Chinese ways is disingenuous. However it continues to seek to align itself with marginalised countries based on its own experiences. It can even argue that it experiences place it in a better position to help others is a similar position.

3.2.7 The PRC foreign policy, sovereignty and territorial integrity

For the PRC the ramifications of civil strife are not removed and abstract but real, as it struggles with its relationship with Taiwan and a number of its minority autonomous regions, and the challenges of reintegrating Hong Kong and Macau to the mainland. The PRC’s insistence on the “One China Policy” may seem pedantic if the fact that they have not formally declared peace ending the conflict between them and therefore while they are technically not fighting they are still at war. Furthermore, Taiwan lays claim on the territory of the PRC as much as the PRC lays claim on Taiwan (Sung and Lin, 2014). Thus, both the PRC and Taiwan espouse the “One China Policy” which means that in the long run only one

of them can remain sovereign and that one must be subsumed into the other. The One China Policy is a stated principle of the PRC's foreign policy accordance to which is a condition for diplomatic ties.

Despite its phenomenal economic growth and ascendancy to become the second biggest economy, the PRC remains a developing country with the biggest part of its population poor and on par with the poor in other developing countries. As Brown (2012) points out, "China may boast more than 96 dollar billionaires now, but 150 million Chinese still live in poverty. The country may have become the second richest in the world on aggregate, but per capita income hovers near 90th, similar to per capita income in Cuba and Namibia." It straddles the developed and developing world with a slant to the latter. It is the factors that contribute to the PRC's insistence on territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality, in its African policy that leads to a charge of cosying up to despots and thus undermining good governance and human rights. The fact is that the experience of the violation of its territorial integrity, subjugation and treatment of Chinese as unequal and inferior by most Western powers is still fresh and in some instances still persist. The memory of the opium wars (opium remains taboo in China to this day, even for medical treatment as morphine) and concomitant "unequal treaties" that were largely responsible for the fall of the Chinese empire (Zhao Xu, 2013), annexure of Hong Kong by Britain and Japanese aggression is still raw and ragging in the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The foreign policy principles of safeguarding national sovereignty and seeking "harmonious society" and the development of "good-neighbourly" relations with its neighbours are contested by those who assess its actions rather than focus on its rhetoric.

The PRC's relationship with any country is informed by its own national interests (Ming Xia, 2013). It is not for the PRC to define and champion other countries' national interests.

3.3. The PRC's Africa policy

3.3.1 Background to China- Africa relations

In Chapter 2, a number of ways to manage asymmetric relationships; focus on mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories, routinization and diplomatic ritual, as advanced by Womack (2006:8) were introduced.

The formal principles that guide the PRC's foreign policy and relations with African countries are presented in an official paper setting out its "China's African Policy" issued in January 2006.

The policy begins by reiterating the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the basis of the PRC's relations and engagement with all countries. Zhang Chun has identified four dimensions in the PRC's relations with African countries; political, economic, diplomatic and cultural dimensions. These dimensions are underpinned by the key elements of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The political dimension is underpinned by equality, sincerity, friendship; the economic dimension by mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity; the international dimension mutual support and close coordination and the cultural dimension by mutual learning and seeking common development. The PRC's African Policy is a confirmation and extension of the 5 principles of Sino- African relations put forward by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on his tour of ten African (Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia) countries from December 1963 to January 1964 and of the five principles concerning the development of a long-term, stable, and all-round cooperative relationship between the PRC and the African countries articulated during President Jiang Zemin's visit of six African countries (Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Namibia and Zimbabwe) in May 1996 (Kong, 2003, Le Pere, 2007a and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China).

As already indicated, this puts the PRC's African Policy firmly in its overall foreign policy. The first part of the policy acknowledges Africa's endowments in land and natural resources, but inversely, highlights the PRC's interest in them. Part two and three speak to a common history of colonisation and independence, material and political support as attested to by the accedence to the "One China Policy." The "One China Policy is a tenet of the PRC's foreign relations which is applied across the board and not only with regard to African countries, although the Taiwan and Tibet "questions" are raised mostly in the PRC's relations with African countries. Large (2008), Alden and Alves (2008), Gazibo and Mbabia (2012) & Strauss (2009) refer to the PRC's appeal to history to legitimize its current relations with Africa countries. To illustrate this Gazibo and Mbabia (2012) quote Premier Minister, Wen Jiabao's speech at the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Fourth Ministerial Conference at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2009, Chinese declared:

“I would like to point out here that neither the Chinese presence in Africa, nor the support of the African countries to China are recent phenomena. Already in the 50s and 60s of the past century China and Africa have fought side by side in the battle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemony, and have advanced hand in hand on the rocky path of economic recovery.”

The PRC’s focus on African countries was (is) not aimed at outmanoeuvring the West. When the PRC refocused on its relations with African countries in the late 1980s, after a lull occasioned by its internal focus during the Cultural Revolution, the West had despaired and given up on the continent, a reality broadcast by The Economist’s 11 May 2000 cover page which declared Africa “The hopeless continent.” This Afro-pessimism did not deter the PRC’s engagement with African countries (Cornelissen, 2009). Instead it saw the opportunity this created for it and took it. By the time the West made a U-turn, the PRC had become entrenched and the West’s historical advantage had been eroded. Instead of redoubling its efforts, the West has only redoubled its rhetoric while the PRC engages in highly visible outcome-oriented and practical initiatives; building infrastructure; providing preferential loans, sending experts and technicians; providing needed training, etc. even if some of them are hyped up or provided in return to access to resources (van de Looy, 2006). If the adage actions speak louder than words holds, action based diplomacy should prevail over megaphone diplomacy. This is the convergence and confluence of routinization and diplomatic ritual when applying the theory of asymmetry.

3.3.2 The channels of engagement between the PRC and African countries

According to the theory of asymmetry, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of each other’s societies and histories and diplomatic ritual are important mechanisms in managing relations between asymmetric states.

It is common to highlight Chinese investment in resources and overlook the fact that it invests in all sectors of many African countries’ economies (Ford, 2013: 88), and its own diplomatic intent and overlook its support of the diplomatic aims of its partners, especially the smaller.

Thus, the Five Principles of Mutual Coexistence notwithstanding, the PRC’s Africa Policy is a pragmatic and strategic policy informed by the PRC’s interests. Part four deals with deals with the technical details of the implementation of the policy; high-level visits, exchanges between political parties, consultation mechanisms, cooperation in international affairs,

exchanges between local governments, trade, Investment, financial cooperation, infrastructure, resources cooperation, tourism cooperation, debt reduction and relief, economic assistance, multilateral cooperation, education, science, culture, health and social aspects, peace and security.

This may tell us something about how institutions of sovereign states are reproduced through social interaction, but it does not tell us why such a structure of identity and interest would arise in the first place. Two conditions would seem necessary for this to happen: (1) the density and regularity of interactions must be sufficiently high and (2) actors must be dissatisfied with pre-existing forms of identity and interaction (Wendt, 1992: 414).

Part five is the PRC's commitment to its execution and part six a provision for the PRC's relations with non-state actors in Africa. A look at initiatives such as FOCAC shows the extent to which the PRC takes the lead in its relationships with African countries. The PRC makes concrete commitments, monitors progress and follows through at the next FOCAC meeting. The PRC seeks concrete and practical ways to pursue mutual benefit from its perspective. From this the conclusion can be drawn that this policy is about the PRC's relations with Africa and not Africa's relations with the PRC. There is gritty nationalistic fervour posing as openness and "equalness" in this. This leaves a strong impression of a patron-client relationship. This clientelism sees the PRC offering unconditional assistance in return for resources and political support in multilateral forums. African countries should not believe that the PRC is altruistic benevolent country. What the PRC seeks most of all is its own advancement and stature.

The PRC calibrates, monitors and measures its FOCAC commitments from its perspective, which is not always aligned to the perspective of its African partners. Shelton (2009: 4) says African decision makers and independent researchers have had difficulty in accurately assessing the actual implementation of specific undertakings outlined in the various FOCAC action plans and have been forced to rely on official Chinese assessments. The heavy focus on the PRC's perspective raises the question whether there should be an Africa policy on its relationship with the PRC or at least an African dimension in the way the relationship is conceived. To do this, African countries will have to focus on practical initiatives and be as results oriented as the PRC is. African countries must commit to their own deliverables, monitors their progress towards achieving them and follow through. African countries must seek mutual benefit from their perspective. Although attempts are made in this regard

(Dzinesa and Masters, 2009), they remain focused on extracting Chinese contributions rather than genuine African agency.

Lin Jones (2009) says that due to its own historical suffering from foreign invasions, the PRC's foreign policy highly embraces the principle of sovereignty and equality. African countries, with similar histories, can relate to this. This has resulted in a non-interventionist and no strings attached assistance by the PRC to African countries. This is in variance to Western relations and assistance that comes with conditions especially with regard to governance and human rights. The PRC is, as a result, often labelled as purely opportunistic and mercantilist in securing resources. African despots and dictators are said to use the PRC to bypass conditionality of Western countries' and persist with their flouting of governance. According to Aidoo (2012), the PRC has stopped ideologically driven engagements with African countries to become an economically driven pragmatist focused on resources and market for its finished goods offering cheap loans and infrastructure projects in return. The PRC's mercantilist tendencies are not reserved for relations with Africa but can be found in almost all its diplomatic ties. Furthermore, the PRC's communism and lack of democratic governance do not only come to the fore in its relations with African countries. All countries, not only African countries, with diplomatic ties with the PRC relate with an authoritarian state governed by a communist party that lacks democratic governance in the Western sense.

3.3.3 The imperative for African initiative and agency in the relationship between the PRC and African countries

In 1964, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai laid out eight principles that still govern the PRC's foreign aid as follows: (i) equality and mutual benefit; (ii) respect for sovereignty with no conditions attached; (iii) provided through interest-free or low interest loans; (iv) promotes self-reliance, not dependency; (v) quick results; (vi) uses best-quality equipment of Chinese manufacture; (vii) emphasises technology transfer through technical assistance; (viii) Chinese experts will live at the standard of local experts (Zhou, 1964 in Bräutigam, 2011). From asymmetry theory perspective, this accords more with with routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual in the development of the PRC's relations with African countries.

Asymmetry theory avers that African countries, as the junior partners, should be using routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual more their relationships with the PRC which appears not to be the cases in many instances.

What seems to be lacking are Africa's principles governing its use and offer of foreign assistance. In other words, what is lacking is African agency (Taylor, 2012). Mohan and Lampert (2013) have called for reinserting African agency into the PRC- Africa relations. Zoumara (2013) argues that the challenge in the PRC-Africa relationship on Africa's sustainable development cannot be solely and squarely placed on the PRC. He says the onus lies with African leaders to conceive and execute pragmatic projects, and to direct Chinese investments and aid into sectors that will yield maximum benefits and impact positively on the lives of its people.

Zhong Jianhua (2013), China's Special Representative on African Affairs, responding to Sanusi's claim, rejects comparison between the PRC-Africa trade patterns to those of the colonial era but agrees that Africa must regard the PRC as a competitor pursuing its own interests. The very real fear of Africa's deindustrialization in the face of Chinese manufacturing capacity, erasing decades of development gains (Alden, 2008a: 228) are not new but the alternative of Chinese non- engagement is also not tenable given the PRC's growing economic role in the international order and global dominance in manufacturing..

The PRC's global emergence offers African countries an opportunity to diversify their trading, investment and diplomatic partnerships. This should reduce their dependence on either the Western powers or the PRC. Competition amongst partners for opportunities and influence as a result of the PRC's emergence should be overwhelmingly good for African and African countries as they seek to get a bigger share of its global investments and trade (Stijns and Traore, 2013: 18). Their relationship with the PRC is not going to be any less challenging than that with the US and Western countries but they stand to benefit from it if managed properly, especially by ensuring that the terms of engagement reflects their needs and interests rather than just those of the PRC.

A key feature of the PRC's policy and relations with Africa is its pervasiveness. It maintains active diplomatic relations with all African countries with whom it has diplomatic ties. It endeavours to treat them equally. For example, a state visit by a small country to Beijing is afforded the same protocol as that of a larger one.

Finally, it is important to realise that the PRC's relationship with Africa, or any country for that matter, is based on realpolitik, it will change with changes in the PRC'S needs and interests.

It is crucial to realise that the PRC's broader international relations does not revolve around Africa and African countries at all. "The focus on the relationship between the PRC and many African countries belies the fact that in reality the PRC invests, trades and engages diplomatically with African countries comparatively less than is commonly proclaimed. In actual fact, those that bemoan the relationship between the PRC and many African countries most are themselves the beneficiaries of the PRC's massive investments, trade and diplomatic ties (Sithole, 2013). The PRC is more important to African countries than they are to the PRC. This is so despite the fact that African countries have the resources that are crucial to the PRC's resource security, a fundamental pillar of its foreign policy. This difference can be found in the PRC's relationship with South Africa. It also influences South Africa's foreign policy, especially as regards the PRC.

3.4. South Africa's foreign policy

3.4.1 The roots of South Africa's foreign policy

South Africa's foreign policy is an amalgam of the pre-1994 and post 1994 state (Gelb, 2001). The post 1994 South Africa inherited many of the diplomatic ties of its predecessor. However, its relationship with the PRC is solely a product of the post 1994 state. Furthermore, modern South Africa's foreign policy is informed by the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC)'s foreign policy ambitions are encapsulated in Nelson Mandela's 1991 statement at the UN General Assembly. Mandela committed a democratic South Africa to re-join the international community and espouse a new world order characterised as he said by, among other things:

"a democratic system of international relations; respect for the right of nations to self-determination and independence; respect for human rights; the elimination of poverty, deprivation and economic backwardness; an end to the practice of the resort to force to settle international disputes; protection of the environment; the strengthening and democratization of the institutions of this Organization to ensure that it plays its role as one of the principal architects of that new world order."

Mbeki (1991) as the de facto ANC's foreign minister affirmed Mandela's stance reiterated this stance and reinforced it later as the President of South Africa. Mandela went on to advocate for what he termed a negotiated, just and stable peace in the many parts of the world beset by conflict and the eradication of poverty and inequality as it impacted on countries' domestic affairs and influenced international relations. In 1993 Mandela was to again articulate what SA's foreign policy would be in the future. He reiterated more succinctly that,

South Africa's future foreign relations will be based on its belief that human rights should be the core concern of international relations, and it would be ready to play a role in fostering peace and prosperity in the world that is shared by the community of nations.

The principles which serve as guidelines in the conduct of SA's foreign relations currently include:

- A commitment to the promotion of human rights
- A commitment to the promotion of democracy
- A commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations
- A commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts
- A commitment to Africa in world affairs, and
- A commitment to economic development through regional and international co-operation in an interdependent (and globalised) world.

3.4.2 South Africa's foreign policy currently

South Africa's foreign policy has developed from the stance of the ANC while still in exile to Nelson Mandela's 1991 statement at the UN General Assembly to what it is today. South Africa has, according to Neethling (2011: 37), openly undertaken to;

- Actively engage in efforts to secure international peace and security, promote disarmament, prevent genocide, restrict the proliferation of arms and secure a new world security compact through the UN (as the primary global security body), the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Commonwealth and other multilateral fora.
- Promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system
- Promote the democratisation and reform of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e. International Monetary Fund and World Bank).
- Promote the Agenda of the South through South-South Co-operation and North-South Partnerships.

- Eradication of poverty through the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and through the implementation of agreements such as the WTO Doha Development Agenda, the Monterrey Finance for Development, World Conference Against Racism and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

These form a continuous thread in SA's practice of foreign relations. They were also a core element in President Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance project in the form of Millennium Partnership for the Africa Recovery Programme' (MAP) (Pityana, 2001) which crystallised into New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Despite the clearly articulated pan-African aspirations, Alden and Soko (2005) and Bond (2004) ascribe hegemonic tendencies to South Africa's economic relations with Africa. On the other hand, Qobo (2010:16) sees South Africa's foreign policy as a grand vision of a harmonious world heavily influenced by what he characterises as a 'liberal- democratic egalitarian framework' that privileges human rights, peace building, equality and justice in the international order. This vision has proved very difficult to live up. This is exemplified by its decision to abandon Taiwan and accept the "one China Policy" and form diplomatic ties with the PRC its human rights record notwithstanding. Geldenhuys (2011: 20) notes that although South Africa's record as a global citizen remains uneven, it is improving.

3.4.3 South Africa's foreign policy; intentions versus interests

South Africa has not always lived up to the core principles of its foreign policy. Its malleability started to show when, despite its avowal of human rights as a key principle of its foreign policy and relations; it chose diplomatic relations with the PRC over Taiwan despite the former's human rights record. This was followed by contradictory decisions in the two terms that it has served as a non-permanent member of the UNSC illustrated by its vote against action to hold Myanmar to account for human rights abuses and its back paddling after voting in support of a no-fly zone over Libya during the war against Muammar Gaddafi. The foreign policy stance reiterates but fails to reinforce the values of democracy and human rights in its dealings despotic and autocratic governments. Taylor (2001) earlier characterised this as South Africa's post-apartheid foreign relations being "Stuck in the middle GEAR!"

South Africa's foreign policy confuses and conflates national priorities, national and nationalist interest (Habib, 2009:154; Landsberg, 2010: 289 & Neethling, 2011:37). Habib (2009:154) argues that South Africa's foreign policy agenda and practice has been a product of traditional nationalist aspirations. Amongst the overriding motives of nationalism is to

overthrow colonialism and imperialism and their legacies of racial inequality and inequitably structured and unjust global order. Nathan (2011: 63) says that,

“The anti-imperialist core revolved around the following themes: the iniquitous political and economic power imbalance between the North and the South, to the great detriment of the poor; the dire need to reform the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, and other international organizations in order to address the power imbalance and resultant inequities; the domineering and hypocritical approach of Western states that use these organizations to chide and bully developing countries while ignoring such reprehensible behaviour as Israel’s occupation of Palestine; South– South cooperation and solidarity as a form of collective strength; and multilateralism and respect for international law as the only legitimate basis for inter-state relations and the resolution of international crises.”

Landsberg (2010: 289) maintains that domestic priorities are presented as national interest. It is imperative to link domestic and foreign policy objectives. South Africa needs a coherent and consistent foreign policy. A clearly articulated foreign policy and programme will help it navigate and benefit from its “strategic partnership” with China. To have an effective foreign policy, South Africa should articulate its national strategic priorities to arrive at a clear national interest paradigm (Landsberg, 2010: 274). Alden and Aran (2012: 4) posit that “what constitutes national interest, how it is determined and ultimately implemented are crucial to understanding the choices and responses pursued by states in international affairs.” This they say is characterised by a series of self-interested strategies in pursuit of security and material wealth in competition with other states.

South Africa has not been comfortable with rationalist and realist conception of international relations, emphasises its global responsibilities at times and its domestic needs at other times. This vacillation arises in part due to a lack of a coherent sense of its own interests and the comfort to advance them in its international relations. It needs to appreciate the diminished distinction between domestic and foreign affairs and the interrelationship between them. Landsberg (2010: 275) cites Thomas Robinson who contends a typology of six different types of national interests;

“1. primary interests, which include protection of the nation’s physical, political, and cultural identity, and survival against encroachment from the outside. All nations hold these interests and must defend them at any price;

2. secondary interests, which fall outside primary interests but contribute to them. These may for example include protection for citizens abroad and maintaining proper immunities for a nation's diplomats abroad;
3. permanent interests, or those which are relatively constant over long periods of time; they vary with time but only slowly;
4. variable interests, which cut across personalities, public opinion, sectional interests, partisan politics, and political and moral folkways; in other words, whatever a nation has decided is in its national interest at any particular time;
5. general interests, or those which a nation can apply in a positive manner to a large geographic area, to a large number of nations, or in several specific fields, such as economics, trade, diplomatic intercourse, or international law; and
6. specific interests, which are those positive interests that are usually closely defined in time and/or space, and are logical outgrowths of general interests.”

The challenge facing South Africa is to construct its foreign relations from its perspective. This will require balancing the noble values articulated by the ANC in exile, Mandela at the UN and translated into its official policy after 1994 with its interests. This may prove very difficult and contentious after being defined by highly publicised values based foreign policy coupled with its own experiences of contending with and overcoming the inhumanity of apartheid.

3.4.4 South Africa's foreign policy and the PRC

There are areas where South Africa's foreign policy stance is similar to that of the PRC.

Both countries seek to advance multilateralism in the global political arena. To this end they advocate for the democratisation and reform of the UN system and the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e. IMF and World Bank). This does not mean that they necessarily seek the same outcomes of the envisaged changes. For instance, the PRC is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a privilege it is unlikely to forego very easily in the quest for a democratic UN. The PRC and South Africa's foreign policy stances are pervaded by an overly anti-imperialist paradigm that disdains the economic and political power imbalance between the North and the South. The PRC and South Africa are eager to show that they are not dictated to by the West. There are also a number of areas where similarities exist although they are articulated differently. South Africa commits to international peace and

internationally agreed upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts from a domestic and regional perspective. The PRC expresses similar sentiments although it does so prioritising state sovereignty and independence. As Bräutigam (2014) points out, “sovereignty is a key norm for Beijing, and it is likely to always trump the new international norm of the ‘responsibility to protect.’” Wasserman (2012) argues that South Africa and the PRC are positioning themselves as and are seen to be part of the “vanguard of states in the Global South that seek new strategies to redress the systemic marginalisation of the Global South and reposition the South as a growth engine for the global economy and a strategic political formation.” This indicates that there are many areas of common interest and aspirations between South Africa and the PRC.

The areas of commonality are dwarfed by areas of divergence. South Africa has committed itself to human rights, democracy, and rule of international law and to internationally shared mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts. Qobo (2013: 17) points out that South Africa’s longstanding commitment to political liberalism, a human rights culture, a liberal business climate and regulatory transparency places it at odds with countries such as the PRC that are not keen on “democratization of the market, deepening of democracy, and the empowerment of the individual and civil society.” The PRC’s stance is that principles such as democracy and human rights in particular are internal affairs of sovereign and independent a state.

The PRC projects its own preferences and interests in its international relations. South Africa, as Qobo (2010: 24) argues tries to be “a norm setter (on peace building and post-conflict reconstruction) or a keen multilateralist with no clear sense of its own interests. No country with similar economic characteristics conducts its foreign policy in this fashion.” South Africa has become known for its championing of and engagement in African affairs for advocating the interests of developing countries in international affairs. Its foreign policy stance as contained in a number of different strategy documents has bent to reflect the thinking and policy preferences of succeeding ministers (Wheeler, 2011). To remedy this, the White Paper entitled “Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu” and dated 13 May 2011 was issued for comment and approved by Cabinet and tabled in Parliament in December 2012. The White Paper has been criticised for regurgitating the old pillars of foreign policy and lack of clarity in what constitutes South Africa’s national interests and how these will be achieved (Wheeler, 2011; Qobo, 2011; Masters, 2012 and Leon, 2013). Its pillars are listed as, Africa, South-South cooperation, multilateralism, economic diplomacy, and partnership building with the North. Human rights, democracy and a market economy are not given the

prominence they enjoyed in previous pronouncements and statements. The apparent emphasis on different principles shows the dilemma South Africa finds itself in. South Africa has to resolve the dilemma of having to choose between fulfilling self-interested and globally expected roles. South Africa remain mired in its perceived “responsibility and obligations (such as undoing human rights abuses, given its own past, and promoting democracy), and solidarity (such as associating with the development needs of Africa and the South as well as brokering peace-keeping deals)” (van Wyk, 2004: 125). Although the White paper’s adoption will not lead to binding laws and regulations, it is an important guide on its conduct of international relations. It thus required the rigour accorded other White Papers to lead to the introduction and adoption of new legislation.

3.5. The PRC’s South Africa policy

3.5.1 The origins of the PRC’s South Africa foreign policy

Diplomatic relations between the PRC and South Africa were established in 1998 and bilateral visits by senior government official and heads of state ensued. There were a number of bilateral agreements that were signed to regularise the relationship. However, the key foundational document in the formalisation of relationship between the PRC and South Africa is the “Pretoria Declaration on the Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa” signed on 20 April 2000 (Pretoria Declaration). Although the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are a foundation of the relationship between the PRC and South Africa with equality, sovereignty and mutual benefit lifted verbatim into the Pretoria Declaration, mutual respect has become “sincere friendship,” non-interference in each other’s internal affairs and peaceful coexistence get addressed through South Africa’s acceptance of the “One China policy”. It is specifically stated and generally understood that by accepting the “One China policy, South Africa cannot have diplomatic ties with Taiwan. What is often overlooked is that it also means that it cannot recognise Tibet or any other region that seeks to secede from the PRC. What stands out is the importance placed on “increased consultation and cooperation in International Affairs, cooperation in the establishment of a new international political and economic order, and mutual support in the international economic milieu.” Again, the PRC makes its priorities in its relationship with South Africa very clear. South Africa’s intentions to leverage the relationship for its own developmental priorities are also clearly articulated in the declarations and communiqués, especially the Beijing Declaration and the 2011 White Paper on foreign policy. The

relationship is also driven by areas of shared interest such as the reform of the international multilateral political, economic and financial architecture to reflect new global realities. These shared interests are not unique in the relationship between South Africa and the PRC, and their individual relations with other similar states. Nonetheless, the PRC's relationship with democratic South Africa can also be understood in the context of its longstanding relationship with the liberation movements.

Alden and Aran (2012: 61) advocate for a greater recognition of the role of the relationship between political parties in international relationships. They argue that political parties often determine the ideological orientation of foreign policy and that this often becomes the policy of the government. This is why an important aspect of the PRC-South African relationship is the relationship between the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) (Garth Shelton, 2005) which has grown to encompass and has been taken over by the ANC (Mofokeng, 2011; Butler, 2012; Kane-Berman, 2013 & The Economist, 2013a). This was a major factor in South Africa's acceptance of the "One China policy" which was a precondition of its diplomatic ties with the PRC and its breaking ties with Taiwan. It also explains, in part, the apparent disjuncture between South Africa's avowal of human rights, democracy and liberal economics and close ties with the PRC which is currently opposed to these principles domestically.

The relationship between South Africa and the PRC was beset by contradictions that were difficult to reconcile and required concerted effort to address, for example South Africa prioritised human rights while the PRC did not. South Africa's decision to desert Taiwan for the PRC was involuntary. It may have harboured resentment towards the PRC for forcing it to choose when it preferred to have diplomatic ties with both. Hence the PRC's focus on engendering mutual understanding and appreciation of their societies and histories, actively working to convert resentment to friendship through adept management of a relationship using what Womack in his theory of asymmetry calls routinization and diplomatic ritual.

3.5.2 Similarities between the PRC and South Africa's foreign policies

The PRC and South Africa share many objectives with regard to key multilateral issues and on the need for the reform of the international multilateral political (e.g. United Nations Security Council), economic and financial architecture (e.g. International Monetary Fund and World Bank) to reflect the changes in geo-economics and political sphere marked by the rise of the PRC as an economic power, the growing role of emerging markets and growing

populations of many developing nations. In this regard the PRC will not have to goad South Africa to a particular line of action. South Africa will act following its own convictions. The PRC's benefit from such action will be incidental even if it is significant. However, there is no doubt that the PRC has its national interests at heart in this relationship and it will ensure that it achieves them. The PRC's may be merely following a soft power approach in responding to South Africa economic and developmental focus in their relationship. This could lull South Africa into complacency that the PRC would take advantage of. In this regard, Nye (2012:153) says that economic resources can be used for both soft as well as hard power behaviour. They can be used to attract as well as coerce. The challenge is to tell the difference and respond accordingly.

From an asymmetry theory perspective, in a relationship between two unequal countries, the relationship will hold larger significance for the smaller and/or weaker than the larger and/or stronger country. The smaller and/or weaker would pay attention to it to avoid being overpowered and taken advantage of by the larger and/or stronger one (Womack, 2004: 360). From this perspective, in the relationship between South Africa and the PRC, the relationship probably matters more for South Africa than for the PRC. Therefore, asymmetry theory would envisage South Africa focusing more on the relationship than the PRC. It would spearhead most of the initiatives pursuant on its partnership with the PRC, in its interest, rather than following the PRC's lead.

3.5.3 The PRC's South Africa relations in the African context

The rationale for the PRC's interest in strong ties with South Africa is partly similar to the rationale for its policy towards Africa. However, there are key differences that make the relationship more reciprocal.

South Africa is the only country in Africa with significant investments in the PRC. South African companies such as SAB Miller, Anglo-Gold Ashanti, Anglo American, Standard Bank, Spurand Sasol, have or have had a presence in the PRC (Fakier and Adebajo, 2007). Some of these companies have technologies that the PRC needs. For example; in the case of Sasol advanced coal and gas conversion to fuel; in the case of Standard Bank, market access on the continent and financial expertise in general. The World Economic Forum (2014) ranks South Africa's financial system highest in the world. South Africa is recognised as a leader in most aspects of mining (Helmreich, 2013: 16). Technology and know-how transfers are very important to the PRC hence the proliferation of joint ventures or purchases of existing

enterprises instead of setting up new ventures as is the case elsewhere in Africa. The flow of these transfers is likely to be from South Africa to the PRC as South Africa has no strategy for technology and know-how transfers from the PRC. Although the official declarations and communiqués address mutual sharing of know-how on a number of sectors, this is heavily weighted in the PRC's favour. Furthermore, the trend in investments points to the PRC favouring investments in basic activities associated with resource despite recent effort to diversify to other sectors. On the other hand investments by South Africa enterprises in the PRC are in areas underpinned by sophisticated technology, for example Naspers's investment Tencent and Sasol. In the case of Sasol, its investments in the PRC were initially contemplated because the PRC did not yet have its own coal-to-liquid conversion technology (Winning, 2011). This is an example of advanced technology that South Africa has developed and commercialised beyond its origins in the Fischer-Tropsch invented in Germany (Collings, 2002).

Although South Africa is well endowed in some of the natural resources that the PRC needs, it boasts a much more diversified economy and associated skill and capability set (Yao Jing: 2013). South Africa presents the PRC with an environment that is unlike what it encounters with other African countries. It has a democratic and pluralistic political system and sound economic policies. It has world-class infrastructure and leading technology and industrial capability in many areas on par with many developed countries. Claude Kabemba (2012) maintains that in South Africa the PRC focuses on partnerships, joint ventures and supply relationships with well-established and profitable enterprises that offer reliable supply chains. He contrasts with Chinese investments in other countries in Africa where the focus is on outright ownership, extraction and transportation of raw materials to the PRC.

South Africa is the most advanced economy in Africa and 24th largest economy in the world. According to The World Economic Forum's The Global Competitiveness Report 2013–2014:16, "South Africa does well on measures of the quality of its institutions (41st), including intellectual property protection (18th), property rights (20th), and in the efficiency of the legal framework in challenging and settling disputes (13th and 12th, respectively). The high accountability of its private institutions (2nd) further supports the institutional framework. Furthermore, South Africa's financial market development remains impressive at 3rd place. The country also has an efficient market for goods and services (28th), and it does reasonably well in more complex areas such as business sophistication (35th) and innovation (39th)". The result is that the PRC has a much bigger choice of sectors to invest in as can be

seen from the following example; Standard Bank in financial services (Industrial and commercial Bank of China Limited (ICBC)); Cell C in telecommunications (ZTE) and Huawei Technologies, and in manufacturing in South Africa by the likes of Hisense, Sinoprime Investment and Manufacturing South Africa, a subsidiary of Xiamen Overseas Chinese Electronic Co, and Hence Trade 88, in textiles (Kabemba, 2012). In line with the South Africa as a gateway to Africa thesis of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC some of these investments provide a platform for the PRC's involvement in the region and on the continent. This is an argument shared by senior Chinese diplomats as exemplified by the views of Zhang Xialing, deputy director-general of the foreign trade department of the Ministry of Commerce, at the 114th Canton Fair, which ended on Nov 4 in Guangzhou, Guangdong province who said that, "as the biggest economy in Africa, Chinese companies tend to march into South Africa as a first step in going global" (Yao Jing, 2013). The impact of these investments on South Africa's developmental challenges such as unemployment and poverty is uncertain.

3.5.4 Differences in the PRC and South Africa in the context of their diplomatic relationship

South Africa also has a very strong labour movement and very strong worker protection legislation. This results in low scores in The Global Competitiveness Report; "labor market efficiency is poor (116th), hiring and firing practices are extremely rigid (147th), companies cannot set wages flexibly (144th), and significant tensions in labor-employer relations exist (148th)". What this belies is the fact that South Africa, notwithstanding the occasional flaring of protests and strikes, seems to be coping with this complex and challenging labour environment, something that would cripple many countries. South Africa is admired worldwide for its transformation from a racially, politically, economically and culturally divided nation to a peaceful democracy. Thus, the PRC can learn from South Africa in many areas that it must still address especially political liberalisation.

The PRC and South Africa have other subtle but very important attributes. They are both characterised by great contrast between the haves and have not's. Although the PRC has lifted hundreds of millions of its citizens from poverty to middle-class status, the majority of Chinese remain very poor. The contrast between the haves and have not's pose significant political and economic risk in both countries. The rule of law and strong institutional framework touted by The Global Competitiveness Report make South Africa the easiest

African country in which to do business. Property rights, contracts and agreements are institutionalised rather than personal, subject to the whims of leaders, ruling elites and their administration, which ensures political predictability, continuity and security of investments. In this regard South Africa offers a much lower risk profile. For the PRC this is advantageous and a potential exemplar. South Africa's political values, to the extent that it lives up to them at home and abroad (Nye, 2012:153), are a source of soft power that together with its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority) the PRC may emulate. This assumes that South Africa does not itself emulate the PRC's political values and foreign policies lock, stock and barrel, a possibility given the ANC's close ties and admiration of the PRC and the Communist Party of China (Butler, 2012; The Citizen, 2011 & China.org.cn, 2012)

South Africa, a constitutional democracy, and the PRC which is a self-avowed socialist state governed by a communist party, are an odd pair. South Africa is a young country that attained democratic governance only two decades ago after a protracted struggle for freedom from against racism, discrimination, nepotism and inequality. Its foreign policy is founded on the principles that seek to protect human rights, democracy, and rule of international law, principles that the PRC considers domestic and internal affairs. Yet they are forging strategic partnership that aims to promote democratisation of international relations as well as the construction of a multipolar world (Callahan, 2012). The quest for democracy and multiple political voices should surely begin at home.

The PRC, despite its economic success, faces profound challenges, which are primarily institutional and political. On the other hand South Africa, which is struggling economically, although nascent, has a strong political framework underpinned by its Constitution, strong institutions and civil society exemplified by organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign on HIV/AIDS, The Opposition to Urban Tolling Alliance (Outa) for e-toll, Equal Education in education and Section 27 for human right and social justice, etc. that would probably not be allowed in the PRC.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a broad overview of the PRC's foreign policy, policies towards Africa and South Africa and South Africa's own foreign policy and relationship with the PRC.

The PRC challenges the acceptance of Western conceptualisation of international relations as the natural state of affairs. It does not view the West's approach as inherently principled or standard. The dominant Western Machiavellian concept of own interest and power are set against the Asian, and specifically Chinese, Confucian communalism and harmony. This does not mean that the PRC's foreign policy and international relations are not pragmatic and driven by own interests, it is. The PRC seeks to secure the natural resources that are crucial to its continued development and to bolster its diplomatic ties that ensure its position and stature in the international socio-political and economic system.

Africa and South Africa are important to the PRC in this regard. However, the longstanding relationships forged during the liberation struggles against colonialism and imperialism also matter. Furthermore, despite the phenomenal economic growth that has propelled it into economic superpowerdom; the PRC remains a poor and developing country on a per capita basis. It has and continues to benefit from foreign direct investment of the developed nations. In true asymmetry theory fashion, it can learn from the developmental challenges faced by others as much as it can share its experience of addressing similar developmental challenges.

In this regard, South Africa, with its successful transition, nation building, governance structure, and sophisticated technology and management knowhow, as well as agitation for a changed global order, is the ideal partner for the PRC. South Africa and other Africa countries need to assert their national interests in their relationship with the PRC.

Chapter 4 South Africa and the PRC's diplomatic relationship

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the motives of the diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC. Asymmetry theory encourages the active conversion of hostility to friendship and routinization in forging diplomatic ties. Taking this as a point of departure, this chapter traces the relationship between South Africa and the PRC from its tortured origins when South Africa had to choose between the PRC that was governed by a communist party and Taiwan, its erstwhile diplomatic partner. The establishment of the diplomatic relationship between them did not immediately remove the legacy of South Africa's historical relationship with Taiwan which seems to have continued hanging over them requiring specific confirmation of its demise from the PRC.

The texts of the different statements formalising their relationship specifically state the importance of South Africa's acceptance of the PRC's One China Policy and conversely, the PRC's insistence thereon. South Africa's attempt to maintain diplomatic ties with both the PRC and Taiwan, and its continued economic ties with Taiwan, remained a source of discomfort in the relationship for the PRC. It is a relationship that needed to be shepherded from possible hostility and uncertainty to a stable and secure one.

The development of this relationship is assessed using the methods of asymmetry theory by quantitatively looking at trade and investment and qualitatively through their growing political and diplomatic interaction.

4.2 The development of the PRC's partnerships with South Africa

The new democratic South African government had to contend with the legacy of the country's relationship with Taiwan (Anthony, *et al.* 2013). After extensive deliberations and an attempt to have relations with both, South Africa reluctantly established diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1998 and due to the PRC's "one China policy"; it had to break off its longstanding diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Geldenhuys, 1995).

Thus, South Africa's diplomatic relationship with the PRC is very new and one of the least tested amongst African countries. Yet, the PRC, within twelve years (1998 to 2010), elevated the bilateral relationship from a partnership in 2000; to a Program of Cooperation on Deepening the Strategic Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the

Republic of South Africa on 2006/06/23; a strategic partnership in 2008, and to a comprehensive strategic partnership in August 2010 (DIRCO and Chinese Embassy, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2008 and 2010). This resulted in South Africa being one of a few developing countries such as Argentina, Cambodia, Laos, Mexico, Peru, Serbia and Vietnam, to be accorded a “comprehensive strategic partnership” by the PRC, usually reserved for its biggest trading partners in the developed world (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2010, Feng Zhongping & Huang Jing, 2014: 18). Algeria, Belarus, Chile, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand were accorded comprehensive strategic partnership after South Africa. A major developed country and significant trade partner compared to South Africa, such as Australia, was only graded a strategic partnership in 2013. This signals phenomenal progress in the relationship.

The diplomatic relations between South Africa and the PRC was established in 1998 after cutting diplomatic ties with Taiwan. When South Africa cut off its diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1998, Taiwan was one of its most important trade and investment partners in Asia (Daniel, 1995; Geldenhuys, 1995; Singh, 1997 and Anthony, *et al*, 2013). Taiwan was then also economically more significant than the PRC. Therefore cutting ties with Taiwan was a difficult decision. While the trade and investment relations have continued with Taiwan, South Africa has looked to the PRC to play a critical role in its domestic socio-economic development by targeting more trade and investment from the PRC and opening the Chinese market for its businesses and their products and services. At the same time the PRC and South Africa are competitors both economically and politically, globally and in Africa, where SA has enjoyed some competitive advantage (Alves and Sidiropoulos, 2010). This indicates a complementary relationship.

Holslag (2011: 369) claims that mercantilism explains the PRC’s ties to Africa and by extension South Africa. He says that the PRC separates commerce from politics. He maintains that the PRC, departing from a highly competitive view of the global economic order, seeks to determine the mode of economic growth and defends national economic interests by political means. This offers a limited view of the motive forces in the PRC’s relationship with South Africa. Although pronouncement by politicians should be interpreted with scepticism, Chinese President Li has said that the PRC appreciates its friendship between with South Africa and will seek engender consensus between the two countries (Zhang Qian and Liang Jun, 2013).

Although the PRC's relationship with South Africa is predictably based on its own national interests, it also offers scope for complementary and mutually beneficial cooperation. The quest for reciprocity underlies the progression of the relationship between the PRC and South Africa from an ordinary diplomatic relationship to a partnership, then strategic partnership and currently a comprehensive strategic partnership.

4.3 Ordinary diplomatic ties (1998)

The ordinary diplomatic relationship between SA and the PRC was established and formalised by the signing and issuing of the "Joint Communiqué Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations 1 January 1998" (DIRCO and Chinese Embassy, 1998). This is a very short document setting the basis of the relationship. Its essence derives from the PRC's Five Principles of Mutual Coexistence and its insistence on the "One China policy" as the basis of the relationship within the context of Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

What stands out about this communiqué is its brevity and Chinese bias. Other than the express establishment of the relationship, it contains the basis of the relationship founded on "the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence" taken verbatim from the PRC's of the Five Principles of Mutual Coexistence and insistence on the "One China policy." Although the statement establishing the diplomatic relationship between them is called a Joint Communiqué, it is obvious that it is couched in the language of the PRC.

4.4 Partnership (2000)

According to Nkoana-Mashabane (2013) regular interactions between SA and the PRC at different levels intensified immediately after the establishment of diplomatic ties between them in 1998. President Nelson Mandela visited the PRC in 1999. The following year Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited South Africa. It was during this visit that the two countries signed the "Pretoria declaration on the Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa" that established what was designated as a partnership. The Pretoria Declaration builds on the Joint Communiqué establishing diplomatic ties between SA and China, with the first paragraph restating its commitments. It

locates the relationship between the two countries in the context of the PRC's relationship with Africa by citing the 5 principles of Sino-African relations first put forward by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on his tour of ten African in the early 1960s and expanded by Chinese leaders since (Kong, 2003, Le Pere, 2007a).

What defines and sets the partnership apart is in the text; the establishment of a high-level Bi-National Commission; commitment to remove obstacles impeding negatively on their bilateral trade, investment, service and commercial relations; undertaking to promote the interests of Africa through multilateral for a such as the G-77 and the PRC, and the structures of the UN, and decision to support each other in efforts to create a new international political and economic order (Chinese Embassy, 2004; Orr 2007a; van der Merwe (2008).

5.4 Strategic partnership (2004-2007)

Although the partnership between South Africa and the PRC was upgraded to a strategic partnership in June 2004, it took a number of iterations before it was settled. It was preceded by the Joint Communiqué on the Second South Africa - People's Republic of China Bi-National Commission Pretoria which sat from 28 to 29 July 2004. This was more of a progress report in the development of the relationship and contained no major shifts in existing policy. The only significant development was the agreement to intensify the interaction and consultation between the respective Foreign Ministries.

On 22 June 2006 South Africa and the PRC adopted the Programme of Co-operation on Deepening the Strategic Partnership, which ventured into new areas, encompassing trade, investment and cooperation in the fields of transportation science & technology, agricultural technology, IT, nanometer technology, new materials, energy, mining technology, safety, biotech, policies, regulations and cultural exchanges (DIRCO, 2006 & Chinese Embassy, 2006). The essence of the strategic partnership was finally clarified by The "Joint communiqué between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa" was signed on 6 February 2007" (DIRCO, 2007 & Chinese Embassy, 2007).

What sets this communiqué apart is its acknowledgement and inclusion of South Africa's interests and its recognition of the role that South Africa can play beyond merely recognising China (mainland, Taiwan and Tibet) as a unitary state. It covers all of the ground covered by earlier communiqués but adds new areas that the partnership covers that are important to South Africa such as;

- South Africa actively encourages Chinese companies to seize investment opportunities arising from South Africa's economic growth and favourable investment environment and that the PRC supports South African enterprises to expand investment and business activities in the PRC,
- South Africa and the PRC undertake develop their tourist trade,
- The two countries to propose to focus on human resources development, including skills training, capacity building and Chinese language teaching
- South Africa' role in peacekeeping operations in the region and continent

Looking at the text of the communiqué, although the strategic partnership moves the relationship forward, the PRC remains the dominant partner and its interests predominant. The communiqué specifically states that the government of South Africa reaffirmed its commitment to the one China policy, recognizing the PRC as the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China and Taiwan as an inalienable part of the Chinese territory. The PRC expressed its appreciation for this position. Furthermore, South Africa undertakes to actively encourage companies from the PRC to investment in it. To this end, the PRC undertook to use the China-Africa Development Fund to encourage Chinese companies to invest in South Africa. The communiqué does not provide for reciprocal arrangements for South Africa to invest in the PRC. The imbalances are epitomised by South Africa conceding and acting as a legitimiser of the “one China policy” and acceding to being a source of raw materials and a destination for the PRC’s manufactured goods. At this stage, the offers of assistance are such that they will not cost the PRC much and they will not benefit South Africa significantly.

4.6 Comprehensive strategic partnership (2010)

On 24 August 2010, during an official state visit to the PRC, President Jacob Zuma and his host and counterpart, Chinese President Hu Jintao signed the “Beijing declaration on the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the Republic of South Africa and the People’s Republic of China, 24 August 2010” (Beijing Declaration) (South Africa, 2010). At the time South Africa was the first developing (Wang Yong, 2012: 5) and only African country to sign such a declaration with the PRC and the PRC had entered into such partnership with only eleven other countries (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2010).

The declaration encompassed six memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and 38 cooperation agreements. The Beijing Declaration builds on the earlier partnership and strategic partnerships agreements. The declaration clearly demonstrates very strong and comfortable political and economic bilateral relations the PRC and South Africa. It represents the most significant partnership for South Africa and amongst the most important for the PRC (Campbell, 2010). What differentiates the Beijing Declaration is a palpable focus on practical undertakings and commitments on both sides despite the residual slant on what the PRC will do for South Africa.

It opens access to the PRC to undertake mineral exploration and mining but with beneficiation at source, it does this recognising the trade imbalances and the need to address them. The Beijing Declaration categorically endeavours to,

“Improve, through a concerted effort, the current structure of trade between the two countries, in particular by working towards a more balanced trade profile and encouraging trade in manufactured value-added products.”

It provides for a joint work group to study bilateral trade discrepancies and encourage trade in manufactured value-added products from South Africa to the PRC. The PRC undertook to establish an aquaculture demonstration centre, renovate vocational training institutes and a number of other education and training related initiatives. The two countries also signed the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Co-operation to promote co-operation and exchanges in science and technology fields closely related to agriculture, information and communication, space, nano-technology and new materials, new and renewable energy, the environment and mining. Although earlier agreements had provided for regular interaction through the Bi-National Commissions of heads of state and committees, the declaration provides for direct annual strategic dialogue between the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and South Africa's Department of International Relations and Co-operation, a rarity in the PRC's international relations.

The declaration also, unusually for the PRC, opens the interaction between the countries to non-governmental actors by agreeing to encourage companies from both countries to explore co-operative opportunities in infrastructure construction projects, such as roads, railways, ports, power generation, airports and housing. This is in addition to the Chinese government and its state-owned companies' desire for energy and infrastructure projects. Another key departure from common practice is the commitment to provide mutual technical support in

the areas of the "green" economy, skills development and industrial financing. It is usually only the PRC that undertakes to help in the development of skills and capabilities of African countries.

The presence of Chinese students in South Africa already numbering over 3000 in 2006 according to the Chinese Embassy was acknowledged. South Africa is thus not only a beneficiary of educational exchanges but also a benefactor in this regard for the PRC. Campbell (2010) points out that South Africa is the one country in Africa that can make, and has made, investments in the PRC, as well as receive investments from the PRC citing successful investments by South African investors in the PRC such as Naspers and SABMiller. Furthermore, South Africa has great expertise in a number of areas that the PRC does not such as mining (Helmreich, 2013: 16) and coal and gas to fuel conversion technologies, etc. Helmreich points out that South Africa is a net exporter of world-class mining equipment and specialist services. South Africa can even boast to be an aid donor to the PRC after contributing \$200 000 after the catastrophic Wenchuan earthquake of 12 May 2008 although other African countries; Algeria, Morocco (each at \$1million) and Senegal (\$500 000) contributed more (Yong Chen and David Booth, 2011: 206-209).

The comprehensive strategic partnership recognises the imbalances between the partners. South Africa's concerns about the process of de-industrialisation stemming from the influx of Chinese finished products and measures, to at least stem it if not reverse, it is addressed. The PRC committed to assist South Africa develop "e-skills, to institute an incubation programme in ICT for Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) and to increase investment in South Africa's manufacturing industry and to promote the creation of value-adding activities in close proximity to the source of raw materials". Provision is made to address market access for South Africa goods and services to the PRC.

The Beijing Declaration is thus the first acknowledgement of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the two countries. This makes its relationship with South Africa the closest that the PRC has come to a relationship of equality and mutual benefit with an African country.

Although the comprehensive strategic partnership between South Africa and the PRC provides for cooperation and bilateral defence, it does not envisage mutual security commitments nor exchanges involving military technologies, products and services that both have. .

4.7 Analysing the progression of diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC using the features of the theory of asymmetry

This section will analyse the progression of diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC using the features of the theory of asymmetry; focus on mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories, active conversion of hostility to friendship and adroit management of a relationship drifting from friendship to hostility, routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual Womack (2006:8).

Within the categories of routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual of the theory of asymmetry, the progression of the diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC, despite their differences, can be analysed in quantitative terms from a macroeconomic and trade perspective and qualitatively from a political perspective to assess its the manifestation and benefit to both of them. The relationship strengthened rapidly in correlation with rapid macroeconomic, trade and diplomatic and political engagement. It has been marked by growing economic and political interaction focused on reciprocal benefits and cooperation in multilateral forums to realise a shared vision of the international governance system.

4.7.1 Quantitative economic indicators of the development in the relationship

The theory of asymmetry places great emphasis on broad and extensive contact between the societies of the countries in an asymmetrical relationship. Contact could be for individual purpose, business, political, cultural reasons, etc. that dispel misunderstanding and misconception and create affinity and closeness. Of these, economic relations, especially trade and investment, are the easiest to observe and track. The benefits of economic relations can also be quantified.

There was minimal economic engagement between South Africa and the PRC before diplomatic ties were established in 1998. An examination of the profile of South Africa's global exports shown in Table 3/Figure 1 and global imports in Table 4/Figure 2, from the Global Trade Atlas (GTA) of the World Trade atlas, shows the growing importance of China as South Africa's trading partner although its trade with the rest of the world predominates. Although South Africa's overall trade with rest of the world has also been growing over the period of this study, 1998 to 2013, it is important to note that in 1998 it was already significant while that with the PRC was non-existent or negligible. Furthermore, Table

3/Figure 1 and Table 4/Figure 2 show that there is a marked increase in trade in correlation with the progression in the partnership between South Africa and the PRC from partnership, strategic partnership to the comprehensive strategic partnership.

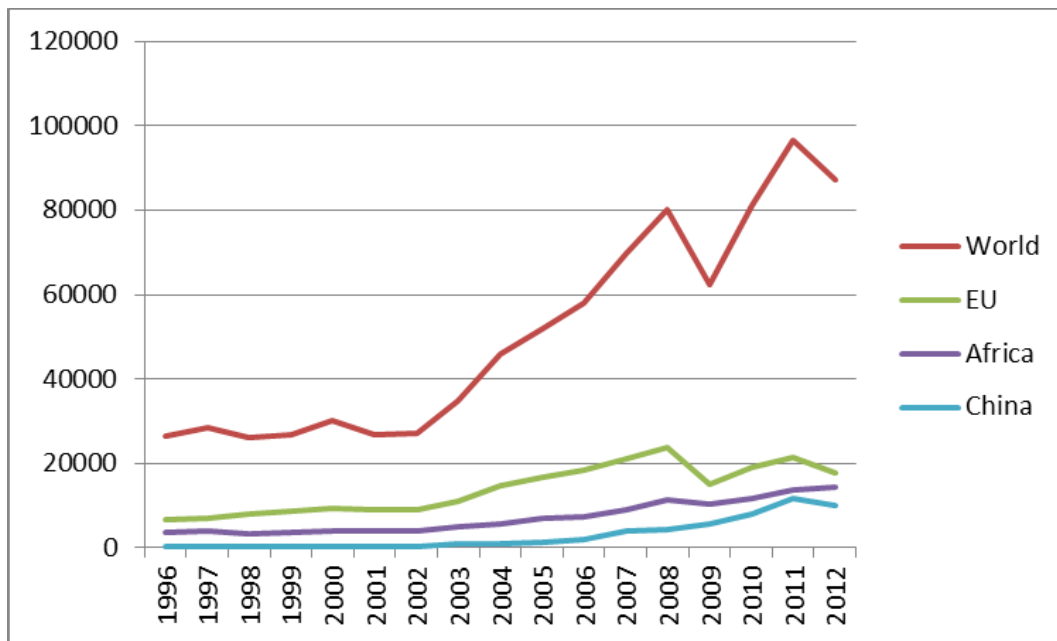
In 1998 the value of South Africa's exports to the PRC was \$167 million and imports amounted to \$779 million. Within only two years, in 2000 when they became partners, South Africa's exports to the PRC had more than doubled to \$342 million and imports to South Africa from the PRC had grown by over 27 percent. Ten years after establishing diplomatic relations and eight years as partners, they formed a strategic partnership. By this time South Africa's exports to the PRC had grown to a staggering \$4456 million and imports to South Africa from the PRC had grown to \$10007 million. When, two years later, South Africa and the PRC upgraded their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2010, South Africa's exports to the PRC had almost doubled to \$8136 million and imports to South Africa from the PRC had grown by over 15 percent. These figures attest to a phenomenal growth in their trade relations. They also indicate a growing trade deficit in favour of the PRC.

Table 3: South Africa's export profile, \$million and % shares

Partner/ Yr.	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
World	26514	28360	26126	26899	30058	26827	27031	34985	45973	51870	57898	69868	80208	62380	81311	96702	87264
EU \$m	6714	7139	7949	8744	9441	8960	8925	10977	14688	16919	18447	21061	23653	15025	19197	21333	17838
EU%	25.3%	25.2%	30.4%	32.5%	31.4%	33.4%	33.0%	31.4%	31.9%	32.6%	31.9%	30.1%	29.5%	24.1%	23.6%	22.1%	20.4%
Africa \$m	3548	4045	3450	3546	3870	3896	4066	5000	5848	7031	7444	8999	11528	10232	11735	13811	14494
Africa %	13.4%	14.3%	13.2%	13.2%	12.9%	14.5%	15.0%	14.3%	12.7%	13.6%	12.9%	12.9%	14.4%	16.4%	14.4%	14.3%	16.6%
China \$m	181	197	167	270	342	442	455	889	1020	1376	2036	3972	4456	5798	8136	11718	10126
China %	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%	1.6%	1.7%	2.5%	2.2%	2.7%	3.5%	5.7%	5.6%	9.3%	10.0%	12.1%	11.6%

Source: World Trade Atlas: Global Trade Atlas (GTA)

Figure 1: South Africa’s export profile, \$million and % shares



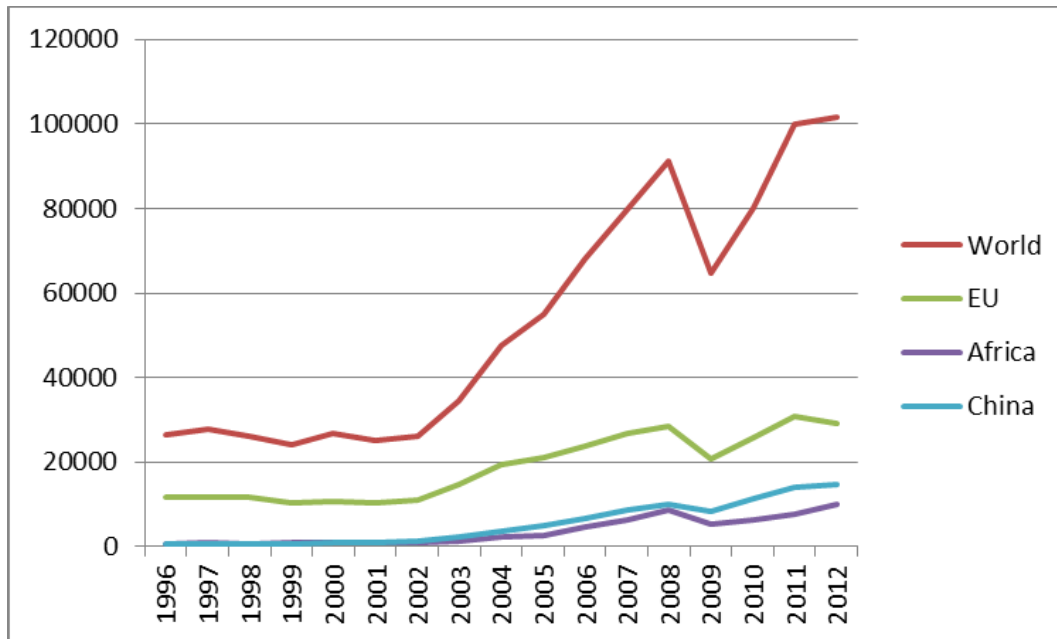
Source: World Trade Atlas: Global Trade Atlas (GTA), own

Table 4 South Africa’s import profile, \$million and % shares

Partner / Yr.	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
World	26364	27720	25998	24067	26916	25127	26205	34400	47653	55029	68157	79924	91059	64867	80212	100008	101558
EU \$m	11793	11817	11610	10369	10864	10455	11138	14885	19365	21018	23705	26903	28515	20842	25731	30712	29182
EU%	44.7%	42.6%	44.7%	43.1%	40.4%	41.6%	42.5%	43.3%	40.6%	38.2%	34.8%	33.7%	31.3%	32.1%	32.1%	30.7%	28.7%
Africa \$m	662	920	734	860	857	850	1070	1264	2181	2826	4640	6295	8798	5258	6251	7655	10019
Africa %	2.4%	3.3%	2.8%	3.6%	3.2%	3.4%	4.1%	3.7%	4.6%	5.1%	6.8%	7.9%	9.7%	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%	9.9%
China \$m	553	690	779	819	993	1053	1365	2225	3591	4926	6819	8586	10007	8494	11535	14120	14592
China %	2.1%	2.5%	3.0%	3.4%	3.7%	4.2%	5.2%	6.5%	7.5%	9.0%	10.0%	10.7%	11.0%	13.1%	14.4%	14.1%	14.4%

Source: World Trade Atlas: Global Trade Atlas (GTA)

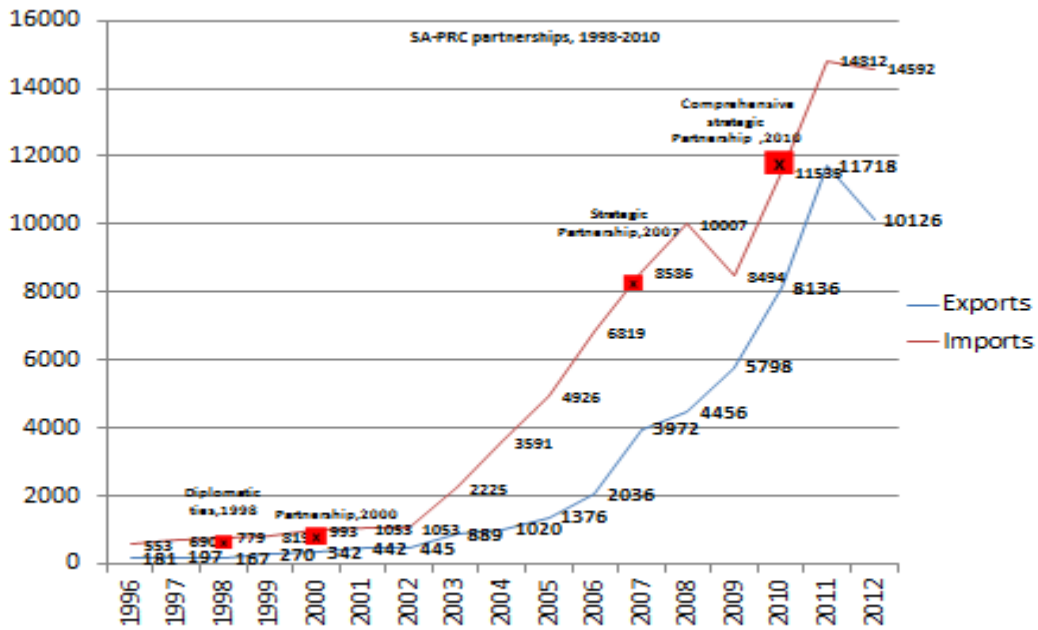
Figure 2: South Africa's import profile, \$million and % shares



Source: World Trade Atlas: Global Trade Atlas (GTA), own

Sandrey, Mpitsa, Vermaak & de Beer (2013) attribute the fast growth in trade between the two countries to raw materials exports from South Africa to the PRC and finished manufactured goods imported from the PRC to South Africa. Sandrey *et al* (2013: 4) highlight the importance of the PRC to South Africa and the fact that South Africa is not conversely that important to the PRC. This draws attention to the growth in their relationship despite the asymmetry. Figure 3 shows a strong correlation between trade and the progression of the relationship to “higher levels” of partnership, even though this cannot be adjudged as causation. The reliability and validity of the correlation is supported by the absence of a proportionate strengthening of trade between South Africa and its other trading partners such as the EU, the rest of Africa and the rest of the world as the associated amounts and percentage shares in Table 3/Figure 1 and Table 4/Figure 2 shows.

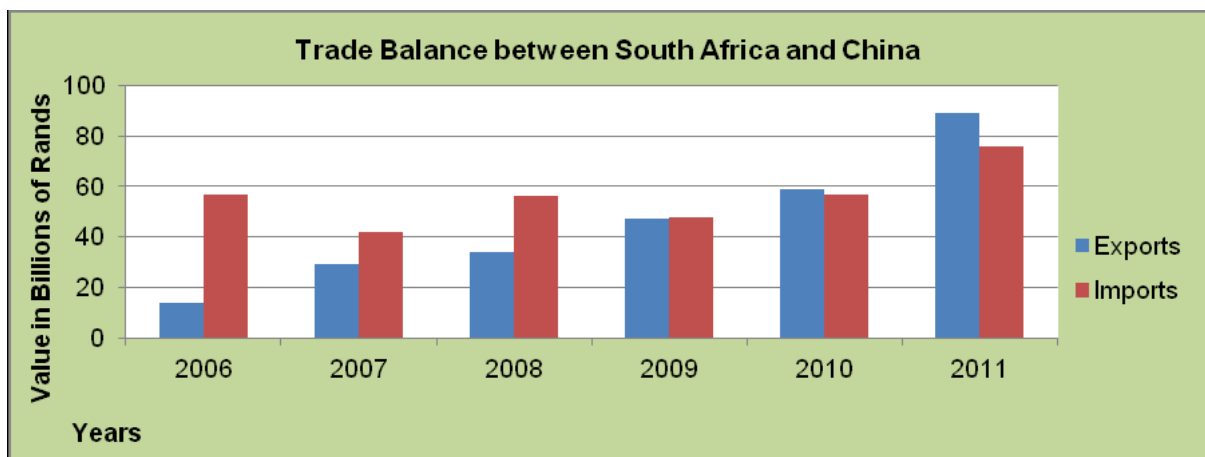
Figure 3: Trade between South Africa and the PRC and progression of their partnership



Source: World Trade Atlas: Global Trade Atlas (GTA), own

In Figure 4, Mazibuko (2010:12) shows the relationship between exports and imports between South Africa to the PRC for the years 2006 to 2011, which is the period within which the diplomatic relations progressed from a strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Figure 4: Trade balance between South Africa and the PRC



Source: Mazibuko (2010:12)

Investment flows between South Africa and the PRC show similar growth to the trade figures Gelb (2010: 3) has conducted a study of the impact of foreign direct investment between South Africa and the PRC. Chinese investments in SA has grown strongly, with the largest investment being the one made by the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) when it purchased a 20% stake in Standard Bank for about R55 billion. Table 7 shows that apart from this significant investment, Chinese investment in South Africa has focused on an increasingly diversified portfolio. Table 5 shows that investments in the PRC by companies based in or linked to South Africa are estimated at between \$600m and \$800m. South Africa is the only African country to have a significant investment presence in the PRC. Of course, many of these companies while South African in origin, may now have their primary listing in London and elsewhere.

Although Gelb (2010) cautions against taking the quantitative data on the FDI between South Africa and the PRC at face value because they are disparate, inconsistent and mostly of unknown origin, they provide a credible indicator of the underlying trends. The most credible is that in Table 5 derived from UNCTAD (2007). Nonetheless Table 5 and 6 show a growing trend in FDI between them.

Table 5: Estimates in the literature for Chinese FDI in SA

Year	Source	Estimate
2004	M Davies	84 Chinese SOEs
2005	Shelton	80 companies, more than \$200m; by 2003: 98 projects, \$160m
2006	Alves	R1.27b ~ \$200m ⁷
2006	Naidu	End-2002: 98 projects, \$160m; March 2004: 111 investors, \$111m; 2004: R500m ⁸ ~ \$72m; 2006: 187 companies, \$100m
2007	UNCTAD	46 projects, \$65.7m flow, 1999 – 2003; \$112.5 stock 2005 ⁹
2007	Shelton	by 2006, more than 80 projects, \$180m
2008	Shelton	by 2006, more than 80 projects, \$180m
2008	Zhong Jianhua (then PRC Ambassador in SA)	end-June 2002: 96 enterprises approved, \$190m contracted value
2008	Burke, Naidu, Negpen	\$112.4m flow (?) 2003-6; ¹⁰ \$600m; ¹¹ 'a very small percentage of overall FDI in SA' (page 8) ¹²
2008	Naidu	98 projects at end-2002: \$600m; ¹³ end-2006: \$200m;
2008	R Davies (then SA Deputy Minister of Trade & Industry)	More than \$2.1 bn ¹⁴
2009	Guliwe & Mkhonta	more than 80 companies since 1998, nearly \$6b

Source: Gelb (2010:3)

Table 6: Estimates in the literature for SA FDI in the PRC:

Year	Source	Estimate
2005	Shelton	more than 200 projects; more than 70 projects, more than \$300m
2006	Naidu	end-2002: 206 projects, around 20 corporations; 2004: R4b ¹⁵ ~ \$575m
2007	Shelton	more than 200 projects, more than \$450m
2008	Shelton	more than 200 projects, more than \$450m
2008	Zhong Jianhua (then PRC Ambassador in SA)	June 2002, more than 200 projects, \$130m contracted value
2008	Burke, Naidu, Negpen	206 projects, \$500m, \$1.2bn, \$2bn, \$600-800m
2008	Naidu ¹⁶	206 projects, \$500m, \$1.2bn, \$2bn, \$600-800m
2008	R Davies (then SA Deputy Minister of Trade & Industry)	\$700m in 2006 ¹⁷
2009	Guliwe & Mkhonta	\$700m ¹⁸
2010	Jia Qinglin (senior Chinese political advisor)	End-2009: Chinese investment in SA \$950m; SA investment in China \$546m ¹⁹

Source: Gelb (2010: 3)

Shelton (2012:13) bemoans the fact that the growing trend in Chinese FDI in South Africa is focused on the mining sector. Nonetheless, the size of the investment by ICBC in the Standard Bank was a significant departure from the focus on raw materials (see Table7).The PRC is diversifying its investments in South Africa to manufacturing and property development. In August 2013, Perfect (China) which makes health foods and personal care products, bought the Val de Vie estate in the Western Cape, the first Chinese investment in South Africa's wine industry, targeting wine exports to China and East Asia (Phakathi, 2013). In November 2013 a PRC property company, Shanghai Zendai, bought 1,600 hectares for R1.06 billion in Modderfontein, Johannesburg, and plans to develop a R84 billion mixed-use project including residential, commercial, light industrial and retail (Steyn, 2013). These illustrate a broadening and deepening of investments between South Africa and the PRC.

Table 7: Chinese – South African investments

Date	Chinese company	SA company/ partners	Type of business	Value (\$)
1996	Sinosteel	ASA metals	Ferrochrome mine	
October 2006	Minmetals	Palabora mining	Iron ore mining	3 year off-take agreement 190 million
December 2006	Sinosteel	Samancor Chrome	Chrome mine and processing	200million
September 2007	Minmetals	Mission point-	Chrome	6.5 million

		Vesatex	prospecting rights	
July 2007	Jisco	International Ferro Metals	Ferrochrome producer	50% off-take agreement
February 2008	Industrial Commercial Bank of China	Standard bank	Banking	5.5 billion
April 2009	Minmetals	Vizirama	Exploration rights	
May 2009	Shenzen Media	Telkom Media	Television Broadcasting	
September 2009	China North Industries	Pietermaritzburg truck assembly plant (super Group)	Automotive	
May 2010	Jinchuan	Wesizwe Platinum	Platinum Mining	877 million
June 2010	Yingli Green Energy	Mulilo Energy	Solar from joint venture	40 million

Source: Financial Mail, 9 July 2010, p. 34

The trade and investment relationship between South Africa and the PRC has grown significantly since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1998 and has strengthened as it was upgraded to partnership in 2000, strategic partnership (2008) and to comprehensive strategic partnership in 2010. The PRC became South Africa's biggest trading partner in 2009 when total trade was only US\$14.1 billion (Gelb, 2010). The volume of trade between South Africa and the PRC reached \$210bn in 2013 and the aim is to double this to \$400bn within the next six years (Kotch, 2014).

According to Gelb (2010), the fact that the PRC became South Africa's biggest trading partner in 2009 is important, however even more significant is the impact that this has had on them. Trade and investment between them is not equally significant. South Africa has economically gained relatively more, directly and indirectly, from investments from the PRC and access to the Chinese market. This underscores the fact that the PRC is significantly important for South Africa, than South Africa is to the PRC. Asymmetry theory predicts the dependence of the smaller partner on the larger one in asymmetric relations.

4.7.2 Political and diplomatic indicators of the development in the relationship

Diplomatic ties between South Africa and the PRC were established in 1998. Before this there was minimal interaction between the apartheid government and the PRC which is governed by a communist party due to the former's strong anti-communist stance and strong ties with Taiwan. However, the PRC provided support to the liberation movements amongst

which was the SACP which is a part of the post-apartheid government through its alliance with the ANC (Geldenhuys, 1995). However, post 1994 South Africa remained ambivalent in its relationship with the PRC. This ambivalence was not only marked by the continued diplomatic ties with Taiwan but also by the hosting the PRC's nemesis, the Dalai Lama in 1996. Once diplomatic ties were established, South Africa and the PRC increased the use of diplomatic and political activity. In terms of the mechanisms that asymmetry theory espouses, this is in line with the expectation of the need for deliberate active conversion of a tenuous relationship to a friendlier one.

In their relationship, South Africa and the PRC routinely make use of the other features of asymmetry theory such as routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual extensively.

After diplomatic relations were established in 1998, it was important to cement the relationship through routinization and diplomatic ritual through reciprocal state visits during which the two accorded their respective leaders the necessary pageantry and protocol.

President Nelson Mandela became the first South African head of state to undertake an official state visit to the PRC in May 1999 (Shelton, 2012). Uncharacteristically, while there, President Mandela eschewed highlighting human rights issues and focused on promoting bilateral trade and investment. A year later, in April 2000, President Jiang Zemin paid a state visit to South Africa, also a first for a Chinese head of state. On this occasion, President Jiang Zemin and President Thabo Mbeki, who had replaced president Mandela in the meantime, signed the 'Pretoria Declaration on the Partnership Between the People's Republic of the PRC and the Republic of South Africa' that committed both countries to a 'spirit of partnership and constructive dialogue', united in the 'moral imperative for developing countries to strengthen capacity for co-operation and mutual support in the international system' (Chinese Embassy, 2004).

Shelton (2012) argues that the most important outcome of the agreement was the establishment of a bi-national commission (BNC). The BNC would meet regularly to guide and co-ordinate all government-to-government relations between the PRC and South Africa, and provide an effective consultative forum for bilateral and multilateral matters of mutual interest. The Pretoria Declaration committed the PRC and South Africa to a 'constructive dialogue', a concerted effort to expand economic links and a joint initiative to advance, peace, security and development on the African continent. The BNC was the first vehicle of routinization between them filling the gap in the period between the high level engagements

at the presidential and vice presidential level. Other mechanisms such as the sectoral committees and the Mechanism of Strategic Dialogue augment and complement the BNC in the routinization process.

President Mbeki paid a state visit to the PRC in December 2001 during which the BNC was officially launched. The focus of the visit was to expand relations, including scientific and nuclear research, as South Africa was looking to the PRC for trade and investment. Shelton (2012), again, maintains that Presidents Mbeki and Jiang Zemin also identified the common foreign policy objective of the partnership to include advancing a new global order. In this context, South Africa looks to the PRC for support in the areas of the reform of the multilateral institutions and the global trading and governance system, especially the IMF, World Bank and UNSC. This commitment would come to the fore when South Africa was lobbying to become a non-permanent member of the UNSC and later for membership of the then BRIC (Seria, 2010). The PRC championed South Africa's membership of the UNSC and invited it to the BRIC when it chaired it.

The reciprocal state visits by the respective heads of state were followed by reciprocal visits by the two countries' respective deputy heads of state are also indications of diplomatic ritual in asymmetry theory. Mr Zeng Qinghong, Vice President of the People's Republic of China, paid an official visit to his South African counterpart, Deputy President Jacob Zuma, between 26 and 29 June 2004 (DFA, 2004). This coincided with the second South Africa - People's Republic of China Bi-National Commission Pretoria, held on 28 - 29 July 2004, which they co-chaired. Vice President Qinghong also paid courtesy calls on President Mbeki, Ms Baleka Mbete, the Speaker of the National Assembly and Ms Joyce Kgoali, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces. Although the two countries expressed satisfaction with the progress in their relationship, attested to by the

“comprehensive nature and growing number of exchanges, especially in areas of trade, investment, culture, education, science and technology and international affairs, which have deepened, strengthened and diversified the South Africa - China strategic partnership during the past two years” (DFA, 2004),

The communiqué ends by reiterating South Africa's commitment to the One China Policy, betraying the residual uncertainty that the PRC had in this regard, and the significance it attaches thereto. The exclusion of specific mention thereof indicates that by the Third BNC it was deemed no longer necessary for South Africa to reiterate allegiance to the PRC and

rejection of Taiwan. This could be a sign of a growing trust relationship between the two countries, marking the dissipation of hostility in terms of asymmetry theory. The use of inclusive rhetoric and references to the “deepened” and “strengthened” partnership are the signs of what asymmetry describes as neutralization and diplomatic ritual. In the quest for mutual understanding and appreciation of each other’s societies and histories, the PRC attracts and supports young Africans to study in the PRC. There has also been a rising number of Chinese students who choose to study in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Traditionally tertiary institutions in the United States of America and Europe were preferred. This contrasts with the PRC sending most young Chinese as volunteers rather than students to the rest of Africa. This attests to the PRC’s recognition of the quality of tertiary education in South Africa and associated technical and managerial capabilities. The aim of these initiatives is to promote mutual understanding between the two countries and to strengthen the human foundation of their partnership.

In June 2006, President Mbeki and Premier Wen Jiabao signed an agreement to help protect the South African textile industry from the influx of low-cost Chinese textiles (van Eeden & Fundira, 2008). In so doing, the PRC signalled its willingness to assist South Africa in alleviating the impact of their asymmetric trade relations and a global trend whereby the PRC became a global manufacturing centre. In so doing, Shelton (2012) argues, the PRC agreed to a more equitable, ‘win-win’ relationship to tackle the overall trade imbalance by increasing the value of South Africa’s exports to the PRC, focussing on mineral beneficiation and the export of manufactured and processed agricultural products. One of the initiatives undertaken by the PRC to facilitate this was the establishment of the \$5 billion China-Africa Development Fund (CADF) at the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) by President Hu Jintao on November 4, 2006. CADF’s only office in Africa would later be opened in South Africa (Campbell, 2009). At the same time South African investment in the PRC also increased as South African companies such SAB-Miller, Anglo-American and Kumba Resources entered the Chinese market (Alden, 2008). These are illustrations of the use of neutralization whereby the PRC accepts an intervention to neutralize a situation that could lead to serious disagreement and conflict in a nascent relationship. Although this action was short-lived and benefited the PRC in the long run, with Chinese textiles having displaced South African textiles since, it was a great symbolic gesture. It provided South Africa an opportunity to revel at having extracted what it believed to be a significant concession from the PRC. On the other hand, the PRC could claim to have

listened to the pleas of its partner even if this was at a cost to itself. The reality as can be seen in Tables 3/Figure 1 and 4/Figure 2 is that total trade between them was insignificant. This highlights the insignificance of the PRC's textile exports to South Africa and the symbolic nature of the agreement. Neutralization appears to have worked as asymmetry theory would predict. Another aspect of the relationship that is characterised by neutralization is the saga involving South Africa's hesitation in granting a visa to the Dalai Lama.

Asymmetry theory predicts that states in an asymmetric relationship will avoid actions and behaviours that may be taken as an affront to the other. A key feature of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC is the former's acceptance of the One China Policy. Accepting the One China Policy implies the rejection of the fragmentation of China. The PRC considers itself to be China and Taiwan and Tibet as its own. It waits the reincorporation of Taiwan to the PRC and resists calls for autonomy for Uighur and Tibet and considers those making the calls hostile. Before relinquishing his political role, the Dalai Lama advocated for the autonomy of Tibet raising the ire of the PRC. Neutralisation envisages that given this antagonism of the PRC towards him, South Africa will desist from any action that may be misconstrued as an affront to the PRC's status, given its hostility towards the Dalai Lama. Asymmetry theory helps to explain why South Africa does not have to take any instructions from the PRC as is often insinuated. The relationship between partners is predicated on them being able to depend and rely on each other without specific demands or instructions. Partners desist from actions or behaviours that are contrary to this. Conversely, they display, pursue and reinforce actions or behaviours that signal dependability and reliability.

Alden (2008) argues that on taking up the non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2006, South Africa's positions on matters like Darfur, Zimbabwe and Burma (Myanmar) mirrored those of the PRC and are a clear indication of the two governments' shared outlook on the key features of the international system as outlined in the 2000 partnership agreement. On the other hand Kornegay (2012) indicates that South Africa stance in this regard was possibly a principled one seeking to avoid UNSC 'mission creep' on a matter that should have been dealt with by the appropriate UN agency; The UN Human Rights Council. The coincidental alignment of their positions should not be misconstrued as kowtowing to the PRC. South Africa is often than not guided by its own foreign policy stance. The conventional perspective that South Africa genuflects to the PRC aligns to the interpretations of mainstream international relations theories such as realism and liberalism that emphasise

competition and dominance. From this perspective, the PRC as the larger partner, lords it over South Africa which is much smaller. Asymmetry theory provides interpretation based on complementarity and cooperation and the principles of routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual.

Diplomatic ritual has been apparent in the presidential, Ministerial and diplomatic exchanges between them. In September 2007 Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Vice President Zeng Qinghong co-chaired the Third Session of the Bi-National Commission in Beijing. As Orr (2007a: 4) has highlighted, the most important aspect of this session as stated in the communiqué was to seek mutual benefit by “taking advantage of South Africa's rich resources base and China's dynamic growth, (both sides) will work for a Partnership for Growth and Development with the aim of establishing a structured and predictable framework for evolving complementarities into higher value added trade and investment sectors”. The focus on reciprocity is apparent.

The high level engagements at the presidential and vice presidential level were augmented by those between their respective foreign affairs departments and the sectoral committees, respectively on diplomatic affairs, trade, education, science and technology, and defence, leading to the signature of many agreements covering a wide range of political, social and economic issues. Furthermore, the increasing diplomatic and political engagements led to a tangible rise in trade and investment as shown in Tables 3 to 7. This period saw the single largest Chinese investment in Africa when the Industrial Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) acquired a 20% stake in Standard Bank for \$5.5 billion (Orr, 2007 & Alden, 2008). This growing political and economic engagement culminated in the relationship being upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2008. Since then, the PRC has become South Africa's biggest trade and investment partner and vice versa in Africa (Ensor, 2014) (also see Tables 3 to 7 and Figures 3 and 4).

On the political front, the Mechanism of Strategic Dialogue was established in 2008 to enhance discussions and exchanges in the period between the BNC meetings (DIRCO, 2009). The resultant deepening of the relationship led to the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between South Africa and the PRC in August 2010. This has enhanced the relationship further.

As already indicated the PRC, in its capacity as rotating chairperson of the BRIC, invited South Africa to be a member to form BRICS despite widespread scepticism on the merits of

its suitability to join this formation. South Africa has since hosted a BRICS summit in March 2013 and will host the FOCAC summit in 2015.

South Africa's growing diplomatic affinity with the PRC has increased the perception that it is currying favour (Kornegay, 2012). The South Africa's government faced opprobrium for dithering to grant the Dalai Lama a visa until he decided not to visit. This was interpreted as a move designed to maintain good relations with the PRC, especially given the fact that he had earlier been allowed to visit South Africa three times; in 1996, 1999 and 2004 (Lieberman, 2013). This view is supported by Draper (2011:210) who contends that some of South Africa's actions, for example the delay in granting a visa for the Dalai Lama to attend Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 80th birthday seeks to ingratiate it to the PRC which makes it "China's stooge." There is hardly any recognition or acknowledgement that South Africa's actions are in tune with its foreign policy and adhere to its commitments. For instance, by subscribing to the One China Policy, it recognises China as a unitary state, encompassing not just Taiwan, but any region that seeks independence or autonomy from the PRC, including Tibet and Uighur.

Initiatives and efforts to enhance the comprehensive strategic partnership continue especially with regard bilateral trade and investment. As Ensor (2014) points out over 90% of South Africa's top 10 exports to the PRC are in raw materials while 100% of our top 10 imports from the PRC are manufactured products. South Africa and the PRC are now focused on working together to promote value-added exports to the PRC; and to increase inward investment from the PRC.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has followed the development of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC. It set out the specific moments of change and the distinguishing parameters of each phase of the relationship and the consequences and impact they had economically, politically and diplomatically. The theory of asymmetry was used to analyse this development. The analysis shows a strong correlation between the features of asymmetry theory and the development of the relationship between them. At the early stages of the relationship the focus was on building mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories and the active conversion of tenuous relationship to a friendlier one. This was achieved primarily through routinization and diplomatic ritual associated with reciprocal visits by heads of state and their deputies and the creation of special mechanisms such as the

BNC, special committees and Mechanism of Strategic Dialogue. When the influx of Chinese textiles into South Africa threatened the relationship, neutralization was employed to diffuse the tension potential disagreement and conflict that it could have caused.

The progression of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC from an ordinary diplomatic relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership with a short period of time is an indication of growing level of trust and confidence between them. It has led to overtures towards growing reciprocity between them.

The improvement in the partnership has allowed the PRC to undertake to improve access to its domestic market in the same way that it enjoys access to the South African domestic market (Gelb, 2010). Nonetheless, the trade imbalance between them continues. Asymmetry theory emphasises the importance of the smaller state taking the initiative in its relationship with a larger state. This has not always been the case in South Africa's relationship with the PRC, although the Beijing Declaration points to a move to focus in addressing the imbalances in the relationship). It remain dominated the exports of raw material from South Africa to the PRC and important of manufactured goods from the PRC.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to summarise and bring together the different aspects and findings of this study. It starts by revisiting the research questions. It employs asymmetry theory to examine the attributes that contribute most to the progression of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC and the PRC's preference to conduct it through partnership.

The main research question of this study was; what underpins and motivates the nature, scope and development of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1998 to 2013?

The main question was broken down into four secondary questions;

- What are the roots of the relationship?
- How has the relationship developed?
- What are the prospects of the relationship?
- Is asymmetry theory a useful framework to explore these questions?

Asymmetry theory was used to get insight into what underpins and motivates the nature, scope and development of relationship between South Africa and the PRC since the establishment of diplomatic ties. The thesis has shown that asymmetry theory is a suitable and useful theoretical framework in this regard. With regard to the future of the diplomatic relationship, reference to its core principles such as complementarity assists in drawing a trajectory of the development and possible drivers thereof. The findings of the thesis imply a diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC that is based on more than just the latter's resource needs and diplomatic support in the international system.

5.2 Employing asymmetry theory to elicit what motivates, guide the progression of partnership between South Africa and the PRC and how this is managed

The empirical evidence presented in chapter 4 supports the assumption that the theory of asymmetry is applicable to how South Africa and the PRC manage their partnership and elicits what motivates, guide the progression. The concluding sections below employs the

principles of asymmetry theory to do so; complementarity and cooperation, mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories, actively convert hostility to friendship and adroitly manage the relationship to prevent it drifting from friendship to hostility, as well as using what Womack calls routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual.

5.2.1 Histories and societies

Chapter 3 showed that the histories of South Africa and the PRC, and the history of their relationship, play important roles in their respective foreign relations and policies in general, and in particular, with regard to each other.

Asymmetry theory predicts that in the relationship between smaller and larger states, both will pay special attention to advancing mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories. They do this by increasing the opportunities for general contact between their peoples using different avenues such as, business, educational, cultural exchanges, etc. that exposes their respective people to each other and dispel extreme stereotypes, misconceptions and distrust. The role of growing positive people-to-people relations between South Africa and the PRC and the stabilising impact in their relationship should not be underestimated. The growing native Chinese population in South Africa and many young South Africans who are taking the opportunity to study in the PRC will play an important role in this regard.

The history the PRC and the fact that it remains a low income developing country despite its phenomenal economic growth in recent times predispose its foreign policy toward co-operation especially with other developing countries, in particular African countries. This co-operation is predicated on the PRC's appreciation of the reality and value of complementary endowments and capabilities of states; large and or small. This is the essence of the asymmetry theory whose central insight is that co-operation may be a rational, self-interested strategy for countries to pursue under certain conditions (Keohane, 1969).

The relationship between South Africa and the PRC did not begin on a good note as South Africa, contrary to its preference, had to accept the PRC's One China policy and break diplomatic ties with Taiwan as a condition of establishing diplomatic ties with the PRC. As asymmetry theory would aver, there has been concerted effort to convert the resultant tension and hostility to an enduring friendship. The rhetoric of the different statements and

communiqués in Chapter 4 attest to this. South Africa's choice of the PRC over Taiwan remains very important in their relationship.

5.2.2 Routinization

It was necessary earlier on to convert any residual tensions and hostility into the friendship and partnership that has come to characterise the relationship between South Africa and the PRC. This is achieved by creating opportunities for regular contact and discussions amongst the decision makers and influencers to discuss mutually defined important topics. This intended to build understanding and trust and to reduce the potential for misperception and misunderstanding. Where misperceptions and misunderstandings arise, they can be addressed before they fester. This process is routinization in the terminology of asymmetry theory.

As indicated in chapter 4 high level engagements at the presidential and vice presidential level are the main mechanism that South Africa and the PRC use to normalise their relationship. However, they established the BNC one of the vehicles to do this. This was believed not to be enough and other mechanism such as the sectoral committees and the Mechanism of Strategic Dialogue augment and complement the high level engagements and the BNC in the interim characteristic of a routinization process using Womack's terminology.

Routinization requires reciprocity and flexibility that may not always be met by the legalistic nature of alliances and bilateral treaties. For this reason the use of partnership affords the partners time to build understanding and trust and progress with a growing level of mutual trust and confidence.

The PRC has shown the most preference and inclination for partnerships that offer it flexibility in how it engages with other countries.

5.2.3 Diplomatic ritual

There has been a large number of high level diplomatic exchanges between South Africa and the PRC since establishing diplomatic ties. All the presidents and vice presidents of the two countries have exchanged reciprocal visits since 1998 as has the ministers of their respective foreign relations departments and other government departments. There have also been reciprocal interparty visits between the ANC (and SAPC) and CPC. This is unprecedented for the CPC which eschews contact with external entities.

In accordance with diplomatic ritual, during these visits the parties accord each other the appropriate fanfare, pageantry and protocol as well as what may be seen as pedantic common courtesies. Furthermore, these reciprocal visits are marked by joint statements celebrating the relationship and pronouncements of its importance and the stability, mutual respect and continued commitment and valuing of the relationship. This is important rhetoric that asymmetry foresees.

5.2.4 Neutralization

Neutralization goes hand in hand with routinization. In Womack's terminology, neutralization seeks to neutralise situations that may lead to serious disagreement or conflict. Neutralization starts with situating problems or challenging situations in the framework of the friendly relationship and common interest. These challenges are then taken out of the realm of regular diplomatic interaction and referred to expert committees or commissions to address and resolve. Neutralization has been used extensively in the relationship between South Africa and the PRC; however the most visible examples of this are how they have respectively dealt with the 2006 textile agreement and the visa applications by the Dalai Lama. As already mentioned in chapter 4, partners must be able to depend and rely on each other.

The study has recognised that there is a need to look at the relationship between South Africa and the PRC differently. Asymmetry theory presents a fresh template for interpretation to understand their relationship. Leadership a fundamental aspect in managing asymmetric relationships because asymmetry is not a problem to be solved but a situation to be managed (Firsing, 2010).

5.2.5 Complementarity and cooperation

The overarching perspective of asymmetry is the recognition that the world comprises countries of different sizes, strengths and capacities on different dimensions that they can use to maximise their national interests. It posits that these differences engender complementarity and cooperation. It does not deny the role of competition but contextualises it. There are many areas in South Africa and the PRC's relationship that can serve as the basis of complementarity and cooperation.

South Africa and the PRC are similar in many ways despite their size differences. They both have the characteristics of both a developed and developing country. Despite the PRC's

success in lifting millions of its people out of poverty in the last three decades, poverty and raising inequality remain endemic in the two countries. They face a yawning divide between the rich and poor that presents a great risk to socio-political stability. They can thus learn from each other. Counter intuitively, this applies more to the PRC in this regard;

- South Africa can be a model of cross-cultural integration for a country challenged by secessionist calls from Tibet and Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous regions and over fifty cultural restive minorities
- South Africa 's international activism, especially in multilateral and global governance structures where it punches above its weight
- For a country its size, it enjoys an enviable international stature. It owes this to soft power rather than hard power

South Africa cannot counterbalance the PRC directly due to the asymmetry between them on many dimensions. Therefore it should focus on leveraging its partnership with the PRC. To do so effectively it needs to have a better understanding of the reasons and import of the partnership to the PRC. Wang Yong (2012: 8) points out that while the PRC has been more cautious and moderate; South Africa has been more vocal and strident in challenging the Western-dominated international order with minimal repercussions which the PRC attributes to the West's sensitivity to the criticism from Africa, owing to either a sense of guilt over its colonial history or residual "patriarchal' responsibility". In serving its own purposes, South Africa may be serving those of the PRC too.

The relationship between South Africa and the PRC is currently framed predominately from the perspective of the PRC. South Africa is important to the PRC for more reasons than the hackneyed resources and diplomacy rationale. The other key factors, less articulated and hyped, that make it attractive as a partner for the PRC are;

- Technological and managerial knowhow (especially in a pluralistic environment)
- Geographic location with regard to maritime trade, naval defence and as a logistical gateway
- Governance in a pluralistic society that increasingly is exposed to more information and different places

There is concern whether the alignment of South Africa's stance with the PRC on a number of issues in the international relations arena, for example, at the UNSC, results in it being a coincidental proxy or useful innocent. In pursuing its foreign policy, South Africa helps the PRC achieve its own foreign policy objectives. In a multipolar world, it is in the PRC's interest for South Africa to be a regional superpower

Asymmetry theory envisages a situation where a junior partner in an asymmetric relation takes the lead in managing it. In this regard, it is incumbent on South African policy-makers to ensure that:

- Agreements, memorandum of understanding, communiqués, etc., do not contain vague provisions that can be subject to discretionary interpretation by the partners. The PRC offers commitments, data and information that it verifies from its own perspective. They should endeavour to seek and agree a common language and understanding of commitments and how they will be monitored and progress assessed.
- It and its enterprises are treated fairly by the PRC and in the PRC, especially given the different ideological differences and how these dictate the property rights and laws, legal, institutional, operational, etc., environments. Otherwise the PRC and Chinese enterprises will have the advantage of being treated according to domestic laws, regulations and practice while it and its enterprises are curtailed by Chinese domestic laws, regulations and practice that act as a barrier.
- The PRC realises and addresses the challenges of working with a hybrid command and free-market economy with ownership limits and restrictions, challenging entry barriers for foreign enterprises, restrictions on the employment of foreigners, etc.

6.3 The contribution of asymmetry theory to the study of international relations

As pointed out in chapter 2, asymmetry theory arose out of Womack's study and insights of the relationship between the PRC and a number of its smaller Asian neighbours. Although scholars such as Keohane had studied and written about the relationship between larger and smaller state, Womack recognised the inherent imbalance amongst states and the impact this has as a positive attribute rather than a benign or negative as the mainstream theories of international studies would predict.

Womack's studies of the relationship between the PRC and countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia led to the conclusion that the great capacity disparities between these countries created an asymmetric framework for the relationship that shaped every aspect and every phase and was therefore key in studying them. There is a symbiotic relationship between the PRC and its neighbours. Their asymmetric endowments are a positive attribute of the relationship.

This suggested asymmetry as a possible framework for assessing foreign relations and policies in the international political arena in a time where most international relationships are asymmetric, including that between South Africa and the PRC.

Womack's assumption that most asymmetric relationships are a result of complementarity and cooperation between the partners irrespective of their size has currency. Womack postulated that it is not the asymmetry that is important but how it is managed. He advanced a number of ways to manage asymmetric relationships. These are; focusing on mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's societies and histories, actively converting hostility to friendship and adroit management of a relationship drifting from friendship to hostility, routinization, neutralization and diplomatic ritual.

This terminology and methodology may not be uniquely and entirely Womack's in the study of international relations, but used together, they present an alternative template to examine and understand it. Applying it to other asymmetric relationships as this study has done contribute to a nuanced understanding of international relations and the growing trend of relating through partnerships with the PRC leading in this regard.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

This study was prompted by a desire to understand the reasons for the phenomenal progression of the diplomatic relationship between South Africa and the PRC given their asymmetry, and the role of its designation as upgradable partnerships in this development. The study focused on using symmetry theory to examine and analyse this.

It has contributed to the international relations literature through identifying how asymmetric theory can facilitate analysis of partnerships and their growing role in the international system by focusing on the partnerships between South Africa and the PRC.

There is a lack of research exploring the partnership between South Africa and the PRC similar to Womack studies of the relationship between the PRC and a number of its smaller Asian neighbours mean that the current study and future studies utilising symmetry theory in this way will contribute to further understanding the nature of these partnership.

It would be interesting to carry out a comparative study of the factors that influence and motivates the PRC's asymmetric partnerships with its neighbours and South Africa.

An advanced study of asymmetry theory can contribute to its understanding and validation because it remains a marginal theory in the study of international relations. This would make it an important tool in the repertoire of theories of international relations.

Although the PRC has popularised the use of partnerships as a toll of diplomatic relations, partnerships remain ill-defined and amorphous. Therefore partnerships in the context of international relations warrant more study and research.

5.5 Conclusion

The study has assessed the nature and scope of the relationship between South Africa and the PRC and the motives that underpin it, using asymmetry theory as a framework of analysis. The study has aimed to fill a gap in the current literature on the relationship between South Africa and the PRC by looking at it as a continuum and using asymmetry theory as an alternative frame work of understanding its development from an ordinary diplomatic tie in 1998 to the current comprehensive strategic partnership. A comprehensive military exchange package may be the basis for the upgraded for the comprehensive strategic partnership in the future.

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