



Department of Political Science

**Multilateralism and Identity: the case of South Africa in the
United Nations Security Council (2007-2008).**

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Abstract

Since the end of apartheid, there have been many difficulties in discerning South Africa's national identity. It has indeed become the result of an unclear rivalry between competing interests, social allegiances, ideological positions and international considerations. In parallel, there have been numerous tensions and contradictions within its foreign policy, and particularly in regard to multilateralism. Most illustrative of this lays within the country's first two year temporary rotational seat within the UN Security Council in 2007-2008. The country's officials have then often defended positions or actions countering the narrative of South Africa being a "moral actor". South Africa has defended "rogue powers" and has refused to support UN resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran, Myanmar, Sudan and Zimbabwe. It has also persistently promoted negotiations with Tehran concerning its nuclear program, and the violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These postures have been considered by many as a betrayal of the country's own democratic transition and of the international support that facilitated it. Opting for a constructivist lens and using Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology, this inquiry has uncovered the ways in which South Africa's multilateral practices can be better apprehended with a focus on the effects of identity transformations related to the post-apartheid democratic transition. What has been uncovered it that South Africa's unsettled national identity provides a non-absolute but nonetheless highly substantive answer to its controversial multilateral practices. This has permitted to contribute and offer new leads to the growing place that 'identity' has taken in contemporary social sciences.

Key words: South Africa; Identity; post-apartheid; Multilateralism; United Nations Security Council; Global governance; Sovereignty.

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Introduction

a. Contextualization and problem statement

In January 2007, South Africa became a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the first time. It was then elected as one of the 10 non-permanent members of the 15-member United Nations Security Council by the 193-member UN General Assembly to a two-year term¹. This term lasted from the 1st of January 2007 until the 31st of December 2008 and was endorsed by the African Union. Moreover, it was a testimony of the way in which the country had evolved since the end of apartheid, as it had a new standing in the international community. Less than two decades earlier, South Africa was still subject to Security Council sanctions, as it embodied a conflict-afflicted society. Although the country had been a founding member of the United Nations in 1945, it was excluded from the UN General Assembly in 1974 because of the racist policy of apartheid, resulting in diplomatic isolation². The election as a Security Council member can thus be regarded as an indirect result of the establishment of a democratic government in May 1994. The country was readmitted within the UN during that same year under the presidency of Nelson Mandela³. South Africa was argued to have superior moral leadership on the African continent and in the global *multilateral fora*, although its leadership credentials were not considered to be as entrenched as those of the two other African non-permanent members of the Council, Egypt and Algeria. Moreover, the end of the Cold War can be argued to have released the world from an “*ideological apartheid*”⁴, unleashing a certain pressure to transform global governance structures, thus also applying to the issue of a Security Council reform. This applies to the Global South and particularly to South Africa for which the structure of global governance is at the basis of a diplomatic “*liberation struggle*”⁵. This is illustrative of a need for a more secure, democratic and rule based international order⁶.

¹ Policy Advisory Group Seminar Report : “South Africa, Africa, and the United Nations Security Council”, 13-14 december 2011, Erinvale Estate, Western Cape, South Africa.

² Department of foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa, multilateral Branch: “South Africa in the United Nations Security Council (2007-2008)”, February 2009.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Spies Y. K.: “The multilateral maze and (South) Africa’s quest for permanent United Nations security council representation”, Department of Political Science, University of Pretoria, May 2008.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Strydom, H.: “The context and determinants of South Africa’s new role in the United Nations”, Strategic Review for Southern Africa, vol. XXIX, no.1, May 2007, p.1.

During this mandate, the country sought to make an emphasis on multilateral diplomacy that it had defended since the end of apartheid. One of its main goals has been to reassert a rule-based multilateral system, which would constitute the pillar of global governance⁷. In the context of the end of the Cold War, combined with the emergence of a “post-11 September 2001 era”, South Africa became gradually concerned about the unilateral trend on the part of major powers. These had no reluctance at imposing sanctions at the expense of the sovereignty of weaker States. Consequently, stronger states reproduced colonial-like situations justified by doctrines such as “the responsibility to protect” or “humanitarian interventions”. The perception among South African officials was therefore to consolidate an African peace and security agenda within the Security Council, combined with a synergy between the UN body and regional organizations⁸. Furthermore, the commitment to multilateralism under the banner of “transformation of global governance” has been best embodied by the stand taken by African countries in the 2005 so-called “Ezulwini consensus”⁹. This position on both international relations and reform of the UNSC called for a more egalitarian representation within the Security Council¹⁰. As such, it called for its expansion from 15 to 26 members, with two permanent seats with veto power for Africa, and three rotating nonpermanent seats¹¹. Most importantly, the idea was for a member to be able to calculate how to respond to the seemingly disproportionate power of the Permanent five (P5). South Africa saw itself concerned about France’s, Russia’s, China’s, the UK’s and the US’s ability to use their power to push through issues of self-interest, arrogating themselves the right to define threats to international peace and subsequent responses¹². This seemingly exaggerated power of the P5 has been further emphasized as some of them insisted on a veto and opposition to the “Ezulwini Consensus”, ending any chances of UNSC reform in 2005. Quite often, African interests have been marginalized¹³. Nonetheless, South Africa’s diplomats were entirely aware of the moral weight the country carried internationally, intending to have an impact on global governance. As a senior Department

⁷ Kagwanja Peter : “Cry Sovereignty : South Africa and the UN Security Council in a hegemonic world, 2007-2008”, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, vol.3 (1), pp. 35-58.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Landberg, Chris.: “Multilateralism and the UN in South Africa’s foreign policy”, *Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations*, vol. 4, n.8, jul/dec. 2015, p.43-57.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), *A More Secure Continent, African Perspectives on the UN High-Level Panel Report, “A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility”*, policy report, Cape Town, 23 and 24 April 2005 (available at www.ccr.org.za)

¹² *Ibid.* p.52

¹³ Roshdy, A.: “When Will is Not Enough: Why the Current Attempts at Reforming the Security Council have Failed”, in Garth Le Pere and Nhamo Samasuwo (eds.), *The UN at 60: A New Spin on an Old Hub* (Midrand: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006), pp. 53-59

of Foreign Affairs official stated on the 3rd of August 2007: “*The UN should not change us. We should change the UN.*”¹⁴.

In concordance with this quest for Security Council reform, South Africa’s at the time prime minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma often reiterated that “*multilateralism is the most effective and efficient system for addressing global problems*”¹⁵. Multilateralism has been presented as a platform and space for developing countries to have a voice and agency¹⁶. This has been a central strategy for South Africa since the democratic transition, as it has pursued multilateral solutions to vexing international issues and has embraced compromise positions in international disputes. It is a fact that all post-apartheid governments have supported multilateral diplomacy as a *modus operandi* and as a strategy behind diplomatic efforts. However, multilateralism in the new millennium has been distinguished by more complex agendas of negotiations and conferences, with the increasing involvement of NGOs, experts and citizens and with larger numbers of issues¹⁷. These changes have led multilateral diplomacy to adapt to the complex conditions of a post-Cold War environment, nonetheless at a very slow pace¹⁸. Moreover, South Africa has long had the profound belief that the United Nations and its Charter should best be set as the centre of world governance. The main reason being that since 1994 the country has been pursuing a strategy of a rule-based and transparent international political and economic order. Multilateralism was considered a means to an end, an important instrument to solve global problems. South Africa adhered to multilateralism both in the normative and instrumental senses of the word¹⁹. In the normative sense, multilateralism holds an important counter-hegemonic element, as it delegitimises any hegemonic discourse²⁰. It is herein that lays one of the first contradictions regarding South Africa’s stances within the UNSC. As such, post-apartheid South Africa has shown considerable hegemonic tendencies, not necessarily admitting it. This has been emphasized by a vigorous quest for comparative advantage in international trade²¹.

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Round-Table discussion on the review of South Africa’s current tenure in the United Nations Security Council, Pretoria, 3rd of August 2007.

¹⁵ Statement by D. Zuma on South Africa’s election to the United Nations Security Council, Republic of South Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs, Press release issued on 16 October 2006.

¹⁶ Landsberg, *op cit*, p.44.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Petrovski, V.: “Diplomacy as an instrument of Good Governance”, Ed by J. Kurbalija, 1998.

¹⁹ Spies Y. K.: *op cit*: “The multilateral maze..”, p.112.

²⁰ *Ibid*: p.112.

²¹ Taylor, “When Rhetoric isn’t Enough: Contradictions in South African Foreign Policy and NEPAD”, in Carlsnaes, W and P Nel (eds), pp. 170-171.

Moreover, many contradictory tendencies arose during South Africa's first two year temporary rotational seat within the Security Council of the United Nations. The country has indeed been characterized as being a "moral actor", but has defended positions and actions related to human rights in international affairs that have led to consternation and confusion²². Resulting from this was an approach to multilateralism that however engaged and active led to sharp controversy domestically and on the international scene²³. South Africa wished to uphold the sanctity of the United Nations Charter, defending the importance of observing its rules. The country implemented many UNSC resolutions on several issues, including combating terrorism and the implementation of peace-support operations. An emphasis was especially made to advance the Universal Declaration of Human rights. In this perspective, one may add that there were two other main strategies towards the UN. First, moving away from a Western perspective emphasizing "peace and security" in order to elevate issues of poverty and development. Second, challenging the dominance of the West in international relations in order to address the problem of representation and fairness for the developing South²⁴. In a multilateral effort, South Africa also highly encouraged UN members to adopt the "responsibility to protect" concept (R2P)²⁵. Already since 2000, South Africa had encouraged the African Union (AU) to permit interference in African States to tackle problems of violations of human rights, genocide, international instability, and changes of government that were unconstitutional²⁶. However, during the 2007-2008 seat in the UNSC, four main controversial decisions principally alienated the domestic and international human rights lobby²⁷. South Africa worked along with Russia and China in order to prevent the adoption of a number of UNSC resolutions. These were resolutions condemning and imposing sanctions both on the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe and on the military leadership in Myanmar, resolutions condemning States that used rape as a military and political weapon, and resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran for violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT)²⁸. Consequently, the human rights community made allegations accusing South Africa of betraying its own legacy of human rights struggle by going against

²²Black David R. & Hornsby David J.: "South Africa's bilateral relationships in the evolving foreign policy of an emerging middle power", *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 2016, Vol.54, No.2, p.151-160.

²³ *Ibid.* p.156.

²⁴ Landsberg, *op cit.*, p.46.

²⁵ Mwanasali M.: "Africa's Responsibility to Protect.", in *A Dialogue on the Deaf, Essays on Africa and the United Nations*, edited by Adekeye Adebajo and Helen Scanlon. Fanele: Jacana Media.

²⁶ Akokpari J. & Zimble D.S.: "Africa's Human Rights Architecture", Jacana eds., 2008.

²⁷ Habib H.: "South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.16, No.2, August 2009, p.143-159.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p.153.

the traditions that permitted it to become free²⁹. As a fact, these multilateral decisions were ostensibly contradicting the image that arose from the direct post-apartheid transition around 1993 and 1994. Starting from there, South Africa had been an example of peaceful and negotiated transition from a discriminatory and bitter civil conflict³⁰.

South Africa mainly motivated these decisions by accusing European countries and the United States of two controversial facts. On the one hand, the one of violating existing rules of the UN system by tabling issues in structures that were not appropriate. On the other hand, of selectively targeting countries they were hostile to³¹. Post-apartheid South Africa has however always faced tensions that were contradictory in developing a role that would be activist in foreign policy. This role was as such premised upon a belief in the compatibility of solidarity politics, human rights, and the country's own development needs³². An ambiguity can be especially highlighted as Thabo Mbeki, successor of Nelson Mandela, sought to reinvigorate his predecessor's conduct of international affairs. That was the one of constantly making reference to the country's democratic transition and moral stature that had come with measures such as the dismantling of its nuclear program. In this same line of conduct, an emphasis had been made on the "human rights guideline", with an incorporation of the anti-apartheid struggle in to the conduct of foreign policy³³. A tension has also been persisting between a pursuit of foreign policy through equitable multilateralism and a persistent notion of South Africa being a *de facto* leader of the African continent³⁴. It is indeed a fact that South Africa has been acting and regarding itself as the "spokesperson" for Africa, not only within the UN and other international organizations. Consequently, South Africa's first seat at the United Nations Security Council can be apprehended in regard of several ambiguous tendencies, as the country embodied contradictory principles. On the one hand between a "moral identity" and premises made on South-South solidarity; on the other hand between a "Western identity" orientation and the bridge position taken between centre and periphery. As such, a major tension persisted

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

³⁰ Black David R. & Hornsby David J, *op cit.*, p.152.

³¹ Habib, *op cit.*, p.153.

³² Alden, C. & Le Pere, G.: "South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy: from reconciliation to ambiguity?", *Review of African Political Economy*, 2004, Vol. 31, n100, p.283-297.

³³ *Ibid.* p.284

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.283

between an appeasement strategy and an anti-imperialist posture, sometimes leading the country to defend “rogue powers”³⁵.

Quite paradoxically, South Africa encouraged accusations of inconsistency, incoherence and opaqueness in policy formulation in a globalized world subject to a multiplicity of actors³⁶. At the same time, its commitment to multilateralism embodied several tensions and contradictory principles. However, the academic literature seems remarkably quiet about what lies behind the country’s commitment to multilateralism and related implications. As such, “hardly any debate occurs about the broader framework in which the government’s obvious commitment to multilateral diplomacy can be understood and evaluated”³⁷. Quite generally, scholars working on issues related to South African policy tend to agree that too little attention has been paid to the normative principles that underlie the country’s interactions with the international community³⁸. In this sense, it is appropriate to understand a “rationale”, or what Van der Westhuizen et al. describe as a “*reasoned exposition or a listing of the reasons why something was done or preferred, and can also refer to the desirability or the appropriateness of an action*”³⁹. As such, this concept gives the opportunity to introduce a normative or critical element, as it enables to ask about the reasons that would explain South Africa’s ambiguous form of multilateralism, as well as to evaluate them and their conceptual underpinnings⁴⁰. Furthermore, it is defended that South Africa’s contemporary foreign policy cannot be understood without a focus on its post-apartheid political transition⁴¹. Multilateralism can be considered as a “tenet” understood as “*the ideas or opinions that governments hold as true and are supposed to guide their actual conduct*”⁴². These would be informing South African foreign policy since the appearance of a non-racial democracy in 1994.

³⁵ Habib, *op cit.*, p.146-148.

³⁶ Muller, M.: “The Institutional Dimension: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Overseas Missions”, in W Carlsnaes & M Muller (eds), *Change and South Africa’s External Relation*, Johannesburg: International Thomson publishing, 1997, p.69.

³⁷ Van der Westhuizen J., Nel P., Taylor I. : “Multilateralism in South Africa’s Foreign Policy: The Search for a Critical Rationale”, *Global Governance*, 6 (2000), p.43.

³⁸ Jordaan, Eduard : « South Africa, Multilateralism and the Global Politics of Development », *European Journal of Development Research*, 24, 2012, p.285.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.43

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.43

⁴¹ Habib, *op cit.*, p.143,144.

⁴² Geldenhuys: “Political Culture in South African Foreign Policy”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 18, October 2012, p. 31.

b. Main hypothesis

Departing from the assumption that understanding post-apartheid South Africa's foreign policy decisions can only be possible by looking at the democratic transition that occurred in the 1990's, one can hypothesize that the main "rationale" is linked to an identity shift, to the emergence of an "emerging South African national identity"⁴³, as of a renewed foreign policy identity. The use of constructivist identity theory and Critical Discourse Analysis as methodology would enable the establishment of agency regarding South Africa's nearly schizophrenic multilateralism within the UN Security Council. In this sense, one would suppose that these inconsistencies are reflective of two realities. On the first hand, the one of competing perceptions of national identity (understood as nation-state identity). On the other hand, the one of the conscious pursuit of an African identity freed from apartheid, yet still haunted by numerous variant forms of repression, violence and human rights abuses⁴⁴.

The post-apartheid democratic transition has indeed reopened a debate about identity, as this process has embodied the abolition of one of the most grievous institutionalized systems of human rights abuses in the second half of the 21st century⁴⁵. The resulting "human rights approach" advanced by Nelson Mandela has seemingly been gradually buried by the "pan-Africanist approach" of his successors Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. South Africa's ambiguous foreign policy may be the inevitable result of the search for a new national identity, of what can be called "an identity crisis in its external role"⁴⁶. Controversies over the country's state identity indeed appear to have created tensions in its role on the international scene⁴⁷. In this sense, it is arguable that identities can be institutionalized in states, and are the result of changes both in the domestic and international context. Moreover, the discourse of identity can be argued to shape domestic interests into a "national interest"⁴⁸. Overall, the direct post-apartheid period has seen a shift from a "apartheid era isolation" to globalization. This kind of social and political change compels

⁴³ Williams, R.: "The South African national identity and its key postulates", Monograph No 50, Franco-South African Dialogue, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000.

⁴⁴ Mahant Edelgard : « South Africa's foreign policy : National Interest versus National Identity », University of Botswana, Centre for Continuing Education, 21st March 2012.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ Bischoff, P.: "External and domestic sources of foreign policy ambiguity: South African foreign policy and the projection of pluralist middle power", *Politikon*, 30, no.2, p. 183-201.

⁴⁷ Klotz, A.: « State Identity in South African Foreign Policy », *South African Foreign and Security Policies in the Post-Apartheid Era*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Deon Geldenhuys and Philip Nel (Ashgate, forthcoming), 2004.

⁴⁸ Bukovansky, Mlada.: « American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the war of 1812", *International Organization* 51 (2), Spring 1997, pp. 209-43.

individuals to reevaluate their alliances with particular groups, as identity is a communal concept. Hence, since 1994, South Africans have overlooked changes that have had drastic consequences for identity structures⁴⁹. Moreover, the interface between subnational groups (mostly ethnic and racial), nation-state identification and supranational power blocs has led the country to be troubled between contending and multiple social identities. The interaction between these different identity levels has been all the more complicated by the changes associated to globalization⁵⁰. It is in this sense arguable that understanding the unsettlement of South African “nation-state identity” requires sensitivity to social context⁵¹. Moreover, a strand of constructivist theorizing considers identity as a role which emerges out of strategic interactions. In this sense, a consistent identity should foster consistent foreign policy choices, and vice versa. On the opposite, if identity is in flux or ambiguous, foreign policy decisions and stances will be contested⁵².

It is in this sense that the tensions found within South African multilateralism in the UNSC can be expected to have been caused by multiple and sometimes contradicting identities. The inability for South Africa to define its overall national identity and interests has led it to argue internally about its priorities and vision⁵³. From an exogenous perspective, this identity unsettlement has also led its foreign policy identity to be disputed by numerous scholars and by the larger international community. As the country has rediscovered the premises of democracy, the aim will be to demonstrate that its multilateral inconsistencies within the Security Council between 2007 and 2008 are related to numerous and heterogeneous identity struggles that have resulted in a blurry national identity. Hence, the main hypothesis goes as follows: “The unsettled identity transformations resulting from the post-apartheid democratic transition would embody the “rationale” of South Africa’s ambiguous and inconsistent form of multilateralism within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008”.

c. Structure of the Thesis

In order to assess whether South Africa’s multilateral ambiguities within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008 are related to an unsettled national identity, the following thesis will be

⁴⁹ Bekker, S.: “Introduction: Recent development in identity studies.” In S. Bekker & R. Prinsloo (Eds.), *Identity, Theory, politics, history*, Pretoria, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999.

⁵⁰ Bauman, Z.: “Globalization: The human consequences.” Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1998.

⁵¹ Klotz, Audie, *op cit.*, p.3.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K.: “Explaining Post-Apartheid South African Human Rights Foreign Policy: Unsettled Identity and Conflicting Interests.” *Journal of Human Rights*, 10 (1). pp. 76-98. ISSN 1475-4835.

structured in four main parts. First, dealing with the rationalist-constructivist debate will enable to set constructivism as the main theoretical framework and to set Critical Discourse Analysis as the main methodology. This will also justify a thorough conceptual and historical inquiry. Second, deepening into the conceptual understandings of 'identity' will enable to better grasp the identity struggles that are preponderant in defining post-apartheid South Africa's national identity. Third, exploring the country's multilateral ambiguities within the UNSC in regard to its foreign policy commitments will permit to have a better understanding of the resulting contradictions and confusion. Finally, recurring to Critical Discourse Analysis will enable to set a causal and interdependent relationship between South Africa's unsettled national identity and its multilateral practices.

I) Theoretical Approach and Methodology

a. Introduction

International relations theory can help explain the South African case within the U.N. However, going through an extensive list of theoretical currents does not appear relevant for this study. As such, understanding South Africa's controversial and often contradictory foreign policy regarding multilateralism on the basis of identity unsettlement is related to a question of expected foreign policy behavior. This question has most recently been framed by the "rationalist-constructivist metatheoretical debate"⁵⁴.

On the one hand, the so-called rationalists defend that states interests are fixed. In this sense, they pursue these interests in a rational manner, in order to maximize their achievement. There is however a debate among different strands of rationalists, who have different conceptions of the anarchical nature of the international system towards the possibility of cooperation. While some exclude cooperation as a possibility⁵⁵, others believe it may be the most rational path to achieving national interest. For the latest, institutions themselves however have a very limited effect on changing state behavior⁵⁶. Both these strands nonetheless agree on the fact that states have alike and predetermined interests,

⁵⁴ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., *op cit.*, p.4.

⁵⁵ Waltz, Kenneth : « Theory of International Politics », London, Mc Graw Hill, 1979.

⁵⁶ Glaser, Charles: "Realists and Optimists: Cooperation and Self-help", in *International Security*, 19 (3), 1994, p.50-90.

leading them to act within the frame of the “logic of consequences”⁵⁷. In this sense, consequences of states actions prevail over any coherence with international norms⁵⁸.

On the other hand, constructivists rather defend that state preferences are not fixed and alike, but are related to a state’s identity. This identity may change as well resulting from socialization in the international realm as from domestic changes⁵⁹. As such, states will be expected to pursue their national interest, which is interpreted differently among them. Each state’s interest is different and may change over time, mainly depending upon changes in the perceived identities. Consequently, states are not acting according to a “logic of consequences”, but rather within a “logic of appropriateness”, acting in a way that is determined by expectations⁶⁰. These expectations may as well be the ones of the international community as the one of the state’s own perceptions of its identity.

In the case of South African multilateralism, both theoretical frameworks seem to lack of an adequate explanation about how the country acts internationally. However, portraying them in absolute conflict the one with the other is not always entirely adequate⁶¹. Both rationalist and constructivist explanations can interact in a same situation. Consequently can appear what Mills has called a “concurrent” logic ordering⁶². It is the result of the interactions of both appropriateness and consequences logics in the determination of state action in peculiar circumstances. In this sense, both defined state interests and external expectations seem to have an impact on states actions. However, in the case of unsettled state interests, one may introduce what Risse has portrayed as the “logic of arguing”⁶³. Within this theoretical framework, the goal for states and other actors is to find a reasoned consensus, as their preferences, interests and perceptions of situations are subject to discursive challenges rather than fixed. Therefore, actors of the international system are ready to change their interests and perceptions of the world in the light of the better argument⁶⁴. This is relevant to the South African case as there appears to be a conflict between norms. According to the “logic

⁵⁷ Finnermore, Martha: “National Interests in International Society”, Cornell University Press, 1996, p.28.

⁵⁸ Keohane, R. : “Neorealism and its Critics”, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

⁵⁹ Risse, Thomas : “Constructivism and International Institutions: Toward Conversations Across Paradigms”, in Political Science: The State of The Discipline, Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (eds.), New York, 2000, 597-623.

⁶⁰ Finnermore, Martha, *op. cit.*, p.29.

⁶¹ Mills & Lott: “From Rome to Darfur: Norms and Interests in U.S. Policy towards the International Criminal Court”, in Journal of Human Rights, 6 (4), 2007, p. 497-521.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ Risse, Thomas.; “Let’s Argue!”, Communicative Action in World Politics, in International Organization, 54 (1), p.1-39.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

of arguing”, this would lead the country to feel this conflict between norms and to move between them in unpredictable ways. In this sense, the evolving conflicting nature of norms complicate the relationship between states, as they are at they constitute their decision-making environment⁶⁵.

Therefore, South Africa’s behavior within the UN seems to be guided by internal and external expectations of what it should do. Moreover, these expectations seem to be conflicting among themselves, hence leading the country to a confusing, apparently paradoxical and schizophrenic form of multilateralism⁶⁶. Howsoever, a line of conduct determined by traditional state interests is not to be excluded, as it could be a partial explanatory factor. It is nonetheless clear that the country’s international conduct has been at odds both with its domestic international development and the international milieu in which it took place. The “rationalist-constructivist metatheoretical debate” is to be deepened. Hence, by deepening the research into some of the traditional theories of international relations, one can demonstrate that although both models have a degree of relevance, constructivism is the most relevant methodological framework to explain South Africa’s multilateral inconsistencies.

b. Identity and Foreign Policy: The theoretical debate

Realism

To begin with, a focus can be made on Realism. Following the path put forward by Edelgard Mahant, three strands will be taken into account. These are Classical Realism, Structural Realism, and Neo-Classical Realism⁶⁷. Classical Realism can be considered to the extent that one can question South African multilateral diplomacy as a pursuit of power aiming at an enhancement of the country’s capability and economic development. Structural Realism can then be considered as one may question the state’s multilateralism as a tool aiming for regional hegemony. Finally, Neo-Classical Realism can be considered to the extent that South Africa may have used multilateralism as a lever for economic gain and security.

⁶⁵ Borer, T.A., and Mills,K, *op cit.*, p.5.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.23-25.

Nonetheless, all of these realist strands are founded on materialist principles and on the assumption of a high degree of rationality concerning decision makers⁶⁸.

First, Classical or Offensive Realism is best embodied by Hans Morgenthau⁶⁹. According to him, there is a will from States to increase their national capability. As such, these are “interests defined in terms of power”, with an emphasis made on military capabilities. However, Morgenthau stressed the importance of tangible and intangible factors as other capabilities, including as well the quality of a government as a “national morale”⁷⁰. Moreover, one can simplify the potential ambiguity of the concept of “national interest” by defining it as being limited to “*material, economic and security interests*”⁷¹. Classical Realism would analyze states as unitary and rational actors, seeking a maximization of their expected utility⁷². In the case of South Africa, it can be defended that multilateral positions and decisions towards Zimbabwe and Sudan were evidenced by attempts to expand trade with both countries. In this sense, the foreign policy goals pursued were in some ways driven by security and economic interests. Moreover, the policy of “quiet diplomacy” as a response to the Zimbabwean crisis can be considered as a preventive measure against the harmful downturn that would have negative effects on South African economy⁷³. A supplementary security challenge still is today the influx of refugees fleeing from Zimbabwe. Hence, quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe makes sense from a classical realist perspective. However, this may only be in the short term, as South Africa’s “African solidarity” predicates its “constructive engagement” towards Sudan and Zimbabwe⁷⁴.

Second, Defensive or Structural Realism considers the state’s relative position within the international system as the most likely factor to shape its foreign policy. In this sense, a greater emphasis is made on systemic factors than others such as domestic politics⁷⁵. Although some realists stress the importance of a state’s position in the international system towards the development of a balance of power, one caution must be pointed out. Indeed,

⁶⁸ Wendt Alexander : « Collective Identity formation and the international state », American Political Science Review, 88 (2) : 238-396.

⁶⁹ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.23.

⁷⁰ Morgenthau, Hans Joachim: “Politics Among Nations: the struggle for power and peace”, New York: McGraw Hill. Brief Edition, 1993.

⁷¹ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.24.

⁷² Keohane, R., *op cit.*

⁷³ Adelman, M. : “Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki’s Zimbabwe Policy”, Africa Spectrum 39, no.2, 2004, p.249-276.

⁷⁴ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.31.

⁷⁵ Rose, G.: “Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy”, World Politics 51: 144-172, 1998.

not all governments possess identical raw capabilities in relation to that of other states, and not all governments have the same degree of willingness to mobilize their raw capabilities for foreign policy purposes⁷⁶. In the case of South African foreign policy, this last precision has great relevance. Indeed, the post-apartheid period highlighted the need to face serious social and reconstruction problems. Therefore, the “rationale” of South Africa’s decisions in the UNSC can as well be explained in structural realist terms. The debate about its foreign policy identity does not impede it to have acted according to its international position. May it be considered an “emerging middle power” or a “regional hegemon”, South Africa could have voted on grounds that were rather political than ethical⁷⁷. By considering what can be called a post-bipolarity or ‘polypolar’ world and multilateral system, structural realism has a certain degree of relevance⁷⁸.

Finally, Neo-Classical Realism embodies some kind of in between classical realism and constructivism⁷⁹. According to this current, the influence of structural factors is not always obvious to political actors⁸⁰. Consequently, there is a need for demonstration when it comes to evaluate the extent to which central decision-making authorities of states aim at acquiring power or acting within the international system. As such, the international system is considered by neo-classical realists to play an important role in the shaping of countries foreign policy. However, other factors such as domestic politics are also considered to be taken into account⁸¹. In the case of South Africa, this paradigm may be of significance in regard to its foreign policy as the country has not been wholly informed by Realpolitik. As such, a certain fading of humanitarian oriented and rather idealistic impulse of the post-apartheid Mandela years has not prevented the search for a new identity⁸².

Nonetheless, rationalist accounts generally do not consider possible for states to drastically change their understandings of their interests, or most importantly of themselves. As such, realism may have been at the very least tempered by a search for a new identity of South Africa. Its foreign policy would in this sense have been based on an amalgam of domestic

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ Bischoff, P, *op cit*.

⁷⁸ Spies Y.K.: “South Africa’s Multilateral Challenges in a ‘Polypolar’ Wrold”, *The International Spectator*, 45:4, 2010, 73-91.

⁷⁹ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.25.

⁸⁰ Rose, G, *op cit*.

⁸¹ Lobell, S.E., Norris M. Ripsman & J.W. Taliaferro.: “The statesmen, the state and the balance of power: Neoclassical realism and the politics of grand strategic adjustment.” Paper Delivered to the International Security and arms control annual conference, Montreal, Canada, 19/20/2007.

⁸² Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.36.

identities that would have combined to form a national identity⁸³. Moreover, its interactions in the international system would be argued to have also shaped this national identity, as the world of international relations can be considered as intersubjective, a result of human action and cognition⁸⁴. An entirely materialist model and conception of power does not seem fully adequate, as it must be deconstructed in the light of these assumptions.

Constructivism

Constructivism is to be taken into account as it has most certainly established itself as the main contender of mainstream approaches to the discipline of International Relations in recent years. This current goes beyond material definitions of power in international politics as a crucial aspect of power is considered to be the imposition of meanings on the material world⁸⁵. As for realism, different strands of constructivism exist. However, two main assumptions are here to be highlighted. First of all, one may consider that South African multilateralism within the UN has been the reflection of post-apartheid foreign-policy makers will to express an African identity. Most importantly, one may consider that multilateral inconsistencies were based on an amalgam of domestic identities that have combined to form a national identity. Hence, constructivism can be looked upon in two ways: as being identity based and as being based on national political culture⁸⁶.

To begin with constructive identity theory stresses the importance of identity in relation to foreign policy. In this sense, identities and foreign policy are considered to be mutually constitutive or destructive⁸⁷. As such, identity constructions forge the very basis of the paradigms and principles that underpin a foreign policy framework. The application and/or operationalization of these to concrete situations allow the reconstitution of state identities. According to Alexander Wendt, this structural theory of international politics considers the key structures in the state system to be inter-subjective rather than material. Hence, state identities and interests are largely determined by these structures, without however denying

⁸³ *Ibid.* p.27

⁸⁴ Carlsnaes, W.: "Foreign Policy", in: W. Carlsnaes, T.Risse, and B.A. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* (London: SAGE), p.340.

⁸⁵ Adler, E.: "Constructivism and International Relations", in W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B.A. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* (London: SAGE), 2003, pp. 95-118.

⁸⁶ Mahant Edgard, *op cit.*, p.27-28.

⁸⁷ Howarth, A. : "Foreign policy, identity and the media", *Contestation over Zimbabwe*, in *Power, politics and identity in South African Media*, eds. Halland et al., Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008.

the role of domestic politics and human nature⁸⁸. In this sense constructivism does not consider state identities and interests as being constant, promoting a sociological approach of state theorizing over an economic one⁸⁹. Moreover, the adoption of common norms is for Wendt linked to the creation of a common identity⁹⁰. South Africa can thus be considered as an anthropomorphic being, that seeks to achieve a sense of identity and belonging as individuals do. It is in the same line of logic that the orientation of foreign policy decisions influence identity, while it is in parallel being searched⁹¹. Change in international politics thus mainly occurs because of agency when actors redefine their interests and identities, rather than because of structure⁹². Howsoever, identity is a concept mainly defined as being communal. Identities are not entirely individualistic or divorced from a social setting, as a state cannot identify with itself alone, as it coexist with others within an international community⁹³. This context leads states and other actors to see themselves as reflections of how they are considered by others. This can be introduced as the principle of “reflected appraisals”⁹⁴.

Furthermore, another branch of constructivism is one based on national political culture. In this mindset, a state’s identity is constructed by its own domestic political culture⁹⁵. An important contributor to the question of political culture in South African foreign policy has been Deon Geldenhuys⁹⁶. He defines political culture as “*a pattern of shared values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations, and attitudes that relate to politics and its social context*”⁹⁷. In the case of South Africa, it can be defended that the country has displayed several political “sub-cultures”, understood as “*political cultures that deviate from the dominant culture in key respects.*”⁹⁸. According to Geldenhuys, a link and even convergence between South Africa’s foreign policy decisions and elements of political culture is undeniable. Political

⁸⁸ Wendt, A.: “Identity and Structural Change in International Politics”, in Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil (eds.), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers), 1996, pp. 47-64.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p.62-63.

⁹⁰ Wendt, A. : “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics”, *International Organization*, 46 (2), 1992, pp. 391-425.

⁹¹ *Ibidem.*

⁹² Wendt, 1996, *op cit.*, p. 336.

⁹³ Lawson, S.: “*International Relations*”, Oxford: Polity, 2003.

⁹⁴ Wendt, 1999, *op cit.*, p.341.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁹⁶ Geldenhuys, Deon : « Political Culture in South African Foreign Policy », *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.2 No. 18, October 2012, p.29-38.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.29.

⁹⁸ Sodaro, M. : “*Comparative Politics, A Global Introduction*”, 2nd edition, McGraw Hill, Boston, 2004.

culture is thus seen as being an important determinant of foreign policy decisions⁹⁹. Moreover, and however excluding multilateralism from his inquiry, the author identifies seven tenets revealing aspects of an “elite political culture” from foreign official statements. These are: “*democracy and human rights; sovereignty as responsibility and accountability; an African Renaissance; solidarity with the Global South; liberatory solidarity, developmentalism; good international citizenship*”¹⁰⁰. All these tenets have been at stake during South Africa’s first seat within the UNSC. Geldenhuys defends that the country’s longing to be a good international citizen is concordant with aspects of an elite political culture, bringing mass political culture to a lesser importance. Among others, core values of human rights and democracy are argued to have been reflected in the South African government’s ‘good global citizenship’¹⁰¹. It is however defended by Edelgard Mahant that the case for a link between the political culture of post-apartheid South Africa and its foreign policy is almost impossible to determine. On the one hand, because political culture is still in the making, and on the other hand because political culture has not been sufficiently studied¹⁰².

Finally, constructivism has its relevance in the case of South African multilateralism, as the country’s interests and identity/identities can be considered as being partly constructed by its environment, as Wendt also identifies several degrees of identity building¹⁰³. As such, constructivism would explain how the reshaping of the country’s national foreign policies has been due to a reshaping of beliefs and opinion related to the post-apartheid democratic transition. There have indeed been several competing perceptions of national identity since the end of apartheid¹⁰⁴. South Africa attempted to develop a foreign policy that would promote a renewed conception of its identity. Seeing identity as the result of a construction process also implies a differentiation between “self” and “other”. Identity then becomes “*a relational concept insofar as it only makes sense to talk about Self when a relationship with the Other is present*”¹⁰⁵. It is this erection of boundaries between Self and Other that the ‘identity-making tool’ defines what the national interests are. For South Africa, the “other”

⁹⁹ Geldenhuys, op cit, p.36.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p.31.

¹⁰¹ Geldenhuys, op cit, p.35.

¹⁰² Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.34.

¹⁰³ Wendt, 1992, *op cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Mahant Edelgard, *op cit.*, p.28.

¹⁰⁵ Messari, N. : « Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Islam in US Foreign Policy », in V. Kubalkova (ed), *Foreign Policy in Constructed World*, (London, ME Sharpe), 2001, p.227-246.

can be argued to have been its own apartheid past, more importantly than any other international actor¹⁰⁶. This can thus be seen as a reflective form of “Othering”¹⁰⁷. Here, “*The Self of the Present is also the Other of the past*”¹⁰⁸. The “other” of the apartheid can be used as an indicator with which one can define and measure the degree of progress made in present time. This can be argued to forge an ‘emergent identity’. This identity marks the rupture with the apartheid past and makes an emphasis on certain values such as justice, freedom, equality and democracy¹⁰⁹. Nonetheless, the defining of a post-apartheid identity goes beyond the negation of former South Africa as it goes through identifying with the identities of other state actors.

Relevance of theories

Taking into consideration both rationalist and constructivist theorizing has permitted to bring out a certain degree of relevance from both accounts. As such, an eclectic use can be made of both approaches. Hence, one may again take into consideration Mill’s “concurrent” logic ordering, where both rationalist and constructivist explanations can interact in a same situation¹¹⁰. Moreover, Risse’s “logic of arguing” can also be brought back up as South Africa’s interests do not seem to be settled¹¹¹. As such, the state’s preferences, perceptions and interests can be seen to be subject to discursive challenges rather than being fixed.

Nonetheless, South Africa’s behavior within the UNSC has been at odds with what was expected. Its domestic historical development towards a democratic transition and the international milieu in which it took place brought expectations towards a particular way of acting¹¹². Yet, as it has been framed by Peter Vale and Ian Taylor, a debate can be introduced as if to know if South Africa’s foreign policy reflects the image of “something special” or “just another country”¹¹³. In order to do so, the democratic transition from an “apartheid era” to a “post-apartheid era” can be considered to have had an impact on the

¹⁰⁶ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, “Foreign Policy Ambiguity on the Part of an Emergent Middle Power : South African Foreign Policy through other Lenses”, *Politikon*, December 2009, 36 (3), p.363-380.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ Diez, T.: “Constructing the Self and Changing the Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”, *Millennium : Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), p.613-636.

¹⁰⁹ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, *op cit.*, p.370.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹¹ Risse, Thomas, *op cit.*, p.1-39.

¹¹² Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., *op cit.*, p.6.

¹¹³ Vale, Peter & Taylor, Ian: “South Africa’s Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy Five Years On- From Pariah State to ‘Just Another Country’?”, in *The Round Table*, 352, 1999, p.629-634.

defining of South Africa, both domestically and internationally¹¹⁴. Howsoever, rationalist accounts of state behavior would not consider states to change their interests, neither their understanding of themselves. Yet, South Africa's main party, the African National Congress (ANC), came into power in 1994. This coming to power was the occasion for the party to implement drastic transformations by constructing a nonracial South Africa. As it had been the party's dedication since its creation in 1912, this domestic struggle embodied the vision of enhancing human rights. It can thus be argued that South Africa's newly elected government was seeking the creation of a new international identity that would reflect both domestic and international struggles related to the post-apartheid democratic transition¹¹⁵.

Therefore, a constructivist based paradigm would facilitate the comprehension of South Africa's behavior. As such, the country's interests, perception and identity can be seen as (at least and partially) domestically generated, based on the new understanding of itself arising from the historical context of the end of apartheid¹¹⁶. The emphasis made on the ideational and on the importance of ideas and perceptions in shaping reality is of most significance. South Africa can be argued to have reconfigured itself by the use of different and competing foreign policy personalities¹¹⁷. As Serraõ and Bischoff argue, there is a necessity at making an emphasis on the role of identity in South Africa's foreign policy¹¹⁸. Moreover, the country's attempts to reform the UNSC are emblematic of a will to reshape the structure of international relations. This ascertainment gives the opportunity to introduce two new constructivist concepts. First, the concept of 'structuration' argues that the intersubjective structure of world politics helps in defining the interests and identities of individual actors. At the same time, interactions between these actors help to determine the very structure of world politics¹¹⁹. Second, the concept of 'bilateral supervenience' argues that the identities, properties and interactions of states are sharpened by the structure of the international system. To the same extent, the structure of the international system shape states interactions. This kind of interdependence would allow a clarification of structural changes in world politics regarding identity change¹²⁰. It is on the basis of these two last concepts

¹¹⁴ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., *op cit.*, p.6.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁷ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, *op cit.*, p.375.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*. p.376.

¹¹⁹ Barnett, M.: "Social Constructivism", in J. Baylis & S. Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.255.

¹²⁰ Wendt, A, 1996, *op cit.*, p.49.

that South Africa's attempt to reform the international system can be considered as an indirect result of its identity reshaping¹²¹.

Hence, although both theoretical approaches may help explain South Africa's multilateral paradoxes and ambiguities within the United Nations Security Council, constructivism seems to allow a more meaningful insight. In appearance, South Africa is yet profoundly embedded in the process of wrestling with its identity construction. Conflicting identities that are inherent in the composition and dynamics of South African history, culture and politics can help explain the country's stated aims and foreign policy projection¹²². A constructivist lens will enable to reveal the competing perceptions of national identity that have emerged since the end of apartheid. Most importantly, it will have explanatory value vis-à-vis the ambiguous practice of South African foreign policy towards multilateralism in the UNSC.

c. Methodology

A dominantly constructivist approach towards national identity implies that *"the relationship between inside and outside, and identity and difference, is permanently constructed and reconstructed through the use of language and discourse"*¹²³. Moreover, in the case of South Africa, officials tend to construct a favorable domestic and international image through the use of 'Rhetorical Practice'¹²⁴. This form of strategy entails that calculated actions and statements are implemented in ways that would satisfy the "Self's" interests and objectives. It also implies the creation and sustainment of mutual identities by state actors¹²⁵. Perceptions of national identity that have driven South African multilateralism can therefore be examined by making use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As a methodology, CDA has gradually gained importance in contemporary political science as it places an emphasis on exploring the connections between identities, power and politics¹²⁶.

¹²¹ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, *op cit.*, p.377.

¹²² *Ibidem*.

¹²³ Messari, *op cit.*, p.231.

¹²⁴ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, *op cit.*, p.375.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁶ Mottier, Véronique: "Discourse Analysis and the politics of identity/difference", *European political science*, autumn 2002, p.58.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis will here have relevance as it is arguably considered as the contemporary dominant approach to the study of national identity. It indeed presupposes that a nation is produced and reproduced discursively as it is seen as an imagined community¹²⁷. It is therefore a methodology that is at the same time constructionist, qualitative and interpretive. Most importantly, CDA considers national identity as being the result of competing perceptions of identity that clash with one another all the time in everyday speech acts. This implies for national identities to be fragile and often diffuse and ambivalent¹²⁸. The attention brought to the political role of 'pre-existing' identities has increased the stress made on the ways in which political identities are shaped and challenged by political actors¹²⁹. Referring to Fairclough, it is arguable that as discourse is shaped in language, it is as well constitutive as constituted by social reality¹³⁰. It is therefore that there is a double-way process, as language shapes and is shaped by the construction of an external social world. Critical discourse analysis aims at consistently exploring relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices and practices within wider cultural or social structures. More specifically, it is about critically analyzing written or spoken texts in the form of discussions, interactions or communications of topics under study¹³¹.

Reflection on Method of Analysis as a two-fold approach

It is generally defended that because Critical Discourse Analysis is an interpretive and deconstructing reading, there are no specific guidelines to follow¹³². Nonetheless, CDA works on public texts. It is in this sense that it does not sense to uncover secret or hidden intentions but stays at the level of discourse, and uses its sources for what they are instead of indicators of something else¹³³. Therefore, critical discourse analysis aims at uncovering the way reality is produced. Having this in mind, two important considerations are to be taken

¹²⁷ Kvetina, Jan: "Polish Aristocratic Identity as a Discourse of Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach", Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, DOI : 10.14746/pp.2015.20.4.15. p. 207

¹²⁸ Wodak R., De Cilla R., Reisigl M., Liebhart K.: « The Discursive Construction of National Identity », Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2009. p.4.

¹²⁹ Mottier, 2002, *op cit.*, p.59.

¹³⁰ Fairclough, Norman: "Discourse And Social Change", Oxford: Polity Press, 1992, p.63.

¹³¹ Mogasha, Tebogo: "Understanding Critical Discourse Analysis in Qualitative Research", International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education, volume 1, Issue 7, July 2014, p.107.

¹³² *Ibid.* p.110.

¹³³ Waever, Ole: "Identity, Communities and foreign policy: Discourse analysis as foreign policy theory", in European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States, Routledge, 2001. p.21.

into account. First, understanding discourses means understanding the underlying logic of the political and social organization of a particular arena¹³⁴. In our case, this arena will be the United Nations Security Council. Second, political arguments made and political issues decided are constructed over time. Therefore, meanings can only be apprehended by focusing on a portion of discourses that is not only analogous but also prior to the question we are interested in¹³⁵. Therefore, it will be adequate to also analyze some discourses that are preceding South Africa's 2007-2008 non-permanent membership in the Security Council. Finally, Critical discourse analysis is constantly about power and politics. Because discursive practices involve power relations, they entail struggles over interests, knowledge, and most importantly identity¹³⁶. As these struggles are to be linked to an ambiguous form of multilateralism within the UNCS, it will be useful to consider the national identity that elites have tried to express through their discursive practices. Keeping in mind that different representations of the world involve different identities will enable to grasp conflicting identities¹³⁷.

Furthermore, Critical discourse analysis is heterogeneous in its theoretical approaches, as it is multifarious and derived from diverse theoretical backgrounds¹³⁸. For this reason, a 'critical' account of discourse requires an extensive description and theorization of both the social processes and structures that create meaning in the interaction of individuals or groups as socio-historical subjects with the text¹³⁹. According to Caballero Mengibar, any researcher must understand the chronological and historical context at its fullest in order to fully disclose the meaning contained in discourses¹⁴⁰. As South Africa presents a unique historical opportunity to question issues of representation in identity formation, it will be adequate to comprehensively understand the post-apartheid legacy in order to uncover the social, ideological and economic forces that influence identity and the larger context in which discourses are produced. While CDA is an approach that is multidisciplinary and

¹³⁴ Crawford, Neta C.: "Understanding Discourse: A Method of Ethical Argument Analysis", in *Qualitative Methods*, Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 2004, p.22.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p.23

¹³⁶ Weldes, JE; Laffey, M.: "Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis.", In: *Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 2 (1), 2004, p. 28 - 30.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p.28.

¹³⁸ Wodak, Ruth: "Aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis", In: *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik*, Vol. 36, 2002, p.7.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p.12

¹⁴⁰ Mengibar, Caballero A.: "Critical discourse analysis in the study of representation, identity politics and power relations: a multi-method approach", *Communication & Society* 28(2), 2015, p. 40.

problem-oriented, the Historical context must always be analyzed and integrated into the interpretation of discourses and texts¹⁴¹. Discourses have no intrinsic meaning in themselves and must be located historically and socially in order to understand their constructive effect¹⁴². Hence there is a necessity to look at the larger social, political and economic context in which the issue of South African national identity is embedded. Quite evidently, it is impossible to strip discourse from its broader context¹⁴³.

Therefore, using Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology will have a two-fold approach. As such, analyzing discourses emanating from South African Elites will have relevance in grasping identity struggles as possible source of multilateral ambiguity. Nonetheless, a preliminary and thorough conceptual and historical background will be necessary in order to do so. Arguably, grasping any identity issues in text proves to be challenging process and advocates for a multi-methods design¹⁴⁴. This will here justify a dualistic method and what may seem a deceivingly shorter analytical part. First, deepening into the conceptual and historical understandings of the post-apartheid identity struggles will be done through the use of existing scientific literature. This will then enable to interpret the conceptual meaning of language use in the discourse production of South African Elites.

II) Identity in post-apartheid South Africa

a. Introduction

South Africa's post-apartheid democratic transition has led to numerous controversies on the account of identity. This has been especially emphasized as the end of apartheid took place within the general context of globalization. This process usually associated with economic and financial integration also embodies changes on the cultural, social and political grounds¹⁴⁵. Globalization also involves contradictory processes, entailing homogenization and universalization as well as localization and differentiation. As argued by Elirea

¹⁴¹ Mogasha, Tebogo, 2004, *op cit.*, p.110-111.

¹⁴² Hardy, C: "Researching organizational Discourse", International Studies in Management and Organizations, 31(3), p.28.

¹⁴³ Fairclough, Norman: "Critical Discourse Analysis: The critical study of language", London: Longman, 1995.

¹⁴⁴ Mengibar, Caballero A, 2015, *op cit.*, p.44.

¹⁴⁵ Bornman, Elirea : « Struggles of identity in the age of globalization », Communicatio Vol.29 (1&2), 2003, p.24-47.

Bornman, these often contradictory processes of globalization have created a broad panel of changes in the processes of identity configuration¹⁴⁶.

Moreover, the author argues that one can distinguish five main levels of identity discourses. These are the individual, subnational, national, supranational, and global levels¹⁴⁷. By taking a mainly constructivist stance, one can defend that all identity levels are interrelated and interconnected. It is in this sense that identity formation on one level would have extensive consequences on other levels. Controversies and tensions within an identity level would be transposed and replicated within the others. Nonetheless, the age of globalization has strikingly accentuated 'struggles for identity', as it has become one of the most prominent characteristics of the cultural, social and political scene¹⁴⁸. As such, the 1990's have witnessed what can be called a 'discursive explosion' around the concept of "identity"¹⁴⁹. According to the works of the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, this 'discursive explosion' has been at the basis of an increasing degree of interest towards identity studies. Bauman argues that the current world's circumstances have added new dimensions to both personal and collective identity¹⁵⁰. Hence, not only has the processes of identity formation have changed, as globalization and related changes have eroded most of the basis on which identities used to be anchored. The implication of continuity within *identity* is being more than ever put at stake. It is therefore that Bauman argues that identity issues are more complicated than they used to be, as the identity discourse has gained consequent centrality. The acquiring of identity is seen as having become a quest and the result of struggles waged on various levels¹⁵¹.

The very concept of *identity* has become the window for the studying of many aspects of contemporary life. It has indeed become an integral part of the social and political scene. Identity struggles can thus be argued to have primordial and extensive implications for policy making on all levels¹⁵². The democratic transition that occurred in South Africa in 1994 is highly representative of a discontinuity process, nested in globalization. Therefore,

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p.24

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.25

¹⁴⁹ Hall, Stuart: "Who needs identity?", in Questions of cultural identity, ed. S Hall and P du Gay. London: Sage, 1996.

¹⁵⁰ Bauman, Z.: "Globalization: The human consequences." Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1998.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*

¹⁵² Bornman, Elirea, *op cit*, p.25.

this part will be divided into three main sections. The first will explore the understandings of 'identity' as a concept. The second will aim at highlighting the relevance of 'national identity' for this inquiry. The last will finally aim at theoretically grasping the contemporary evolutions of South Africa's identity struggles and related implications.

b. Defining Identity and its Implications

Identity has at first been highlighted by psychologist Erik Erikson in 1968. He defined identity as a personhood, understood as a continuity of the self across space and time¹⁵³. For individuals who have lost this sense of continuity, Erikson refers to the term of '*identity crisis*'¹⁵⁴. Moreover, Erikson stresses the importance of the social environment in the development of identity. The author refers to the term of '*psychosocial identity*' to describe someone's awareness of who he is as an individual and as part of a social group. This brought to the awareness of the role of social groups in identity formation. Therefore, identity has been considered by going beyond an exclusively psychoanalytic point of view.

From a social science perspective, Brewer characterized social identification as some kind of compromise in order to resolve the conflict occurring between two contradictory needs¹⁵⁵. The first is the need for uniqueness and differentiation. The second is the need for assimilation and security, understood as the one of belonging to a particular group. Furthermore, cultural studies have permitted to go deeper within the history, culture and origins of peculiar communities¹⁵⁶. Hence, cultural studies give us the opportunity to introduce the concept of '*cultural identity*'. According to Stuart Hall, it has a double interpretation¹⁵⁷. On the one hand, cultural identity is associated with the sharing of common historical experiences and cultural codes. It is therefore the reflection of a group identification that is shared among people with a common ancestry and history. On the other hand, cultural identity also takes into account elements of discontinuity. Cultural identity thus undergoes constant transformation, although it is rooted in history. Therefore, the course of history reveals a differentiation between 'what we are' and 'what we have become', involving a process of 'becoming' as well as 'being' rooted in various

¹⁵³ *Ibidem*

¹⁵⁴ Erikson, E. : "Identity: Youth and Crisis", New York: Norton, 1968.

¹⁵⁵ Brewer, M. : « Social Identity, distinctiveness, and in-group homogeneity », *Social Cognition*, 11 (1), 150-164, 1993.

¹⁵⁶ Bornman, Elirea, *op cit.*, p.26.

¹⁵⁷ Hall, Stuart: "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *Contemporary postcolonial theory*, ed. P Mongia. New York: Arnold: 110-121, 1996.

temporalities¹⁵⁸. Finally, Barth defines identity in terms of boundaries¹⁵⁹. These boundaries can be of different nature as they can be socially, politically or culturally defined. Moreover, these boundaries implicate that some individuals are included as members of a group while others are simultaneously excluded. It is in this sense that identity is perceived as “ *a dynamic process in which the characteristics, cultural practices, symbols and traditions of a group might change due to interaction with the physical, social, cultural, economic and political environment*”¹⁶⁰. What matters in defining identity is here the presence of boundaries between groups rather than the content of a particular identity in itself¹⁶¹.

Furthermore, by referring to Bornman’s five main levels of identity discourses, studying South African multilateralism within the UN would imply the focus to be on the national level of identification. Nonetheless, considering identity as a construction implies a prominent role of all these levels. The concept of state identity is to be defined while keeping an open mind. As such, two critical international dimensions of identity are to be taken into account¹⁶². First, identities can be institutionalized in states. This is particularly the case of post-apartheid South Africa’s new non-racialism. Second, identities can vary because of changes in the international context. Identity variation is thus not solely limited to domestic factors. For South Africa, this is illustrated by ‘African identity’ evolutions. Moreover, one strand of constructivist theorizing considers identity as a role that comes out of strategic interactions. It is in this very sense that South Africa might be considered a regional hegemon, a balancer or a middle power¹⁶³. In this set of mind, Bukovansky argues that these roles are rooted in broader philosophical discourses¹⁶⁴. She defends that Leaders debate in this broader language and consequently articulate collective principles, notwithstanding possible disagreements over specific policies. Domestic divisions are thus dampened as the discourse of identity is argued to shape domestic interests into a ‘national interest’¹⁶⁵. Nonetheless, Bukovansky’s framework allows only a limited consideration of international cooperation, as her conceptualization of the international system is based on

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*

¹⁵⁹ Barth, F.: “Ethnic Groups and boundaries: the social organization of cultural differences”, Bergen-Oslo: Universitets Forlaget/London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969.

¹⁶⁰ Bornman, Elire, *op cit.*, p.27.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*

¹⁶² Klotz, A.: « State Identity in South African Foreign Policy », South African Foreign and Security Policies in the Post-Apartheid Era, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Deon Geldenhuys and Philip Nel (Ashgate, forthcoming), 2004.

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁴ Bukovansky, Mlada: “American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812”, *International Organization* 51 (2), Spring 1997, p.209-43.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

the supremacy of great powers. In this sense, it can be argued to underplay the constitutive effects of international institutions such as the United Nations¹⁶⁶. Finally, Barnett has conceptualized a notion of role that incorporates international institutions¹⁶⁷. This author defines international institutions as sets of rules that define roles. In this sense, a state would have multiple and potentially conflicting roles if operating within several institutional contexts. Instabilities may thus be resulting if these roles diverge.

Finally, it can be argued that identity and its discourses are not restricted to the hermitage of the academia, as struggles of identity have become a complete part of intra-individual processes, and most importantly of the social and political scene¹⁶⁸. The implications are important at all levels of policy-making, as identity is growingly associated with the social struggles of numerous repressed groups. These can include ethnic, racial minorities, people of color, religious minorities as well as feminist groups¹⁶⁹. These struggles can serve at introducing the concept of '*identity politics*', which embodies the collective and public process of such pursuits¹⁷⁰. According to Calhoun, the outcomes of identity politics are partly determined by power, although power relationships are also modified by struggles. These struggles have led Bauman to reconsider the term *identity*, as he proposes to replace it by *identification*¹⁷¹. This concept implies a process that is never-ending, an open-ended activity that is in constant construction and never finishes. This perpetual search for identity can be seen as a side-effect of several contemporary tendencies. Among others, these are especially localizing, individualizing and globalizing, as their combination is at the basis of concomitant tensions¹⁷². It is consequently possible to assess that identity has become probably the most important medium for understanding discourses on the relationship between the cultural and the political as well as between the group and the state¹⁷³.

As such, globalization can be argued to have had a disturbing effect on the interface between different identity levels. Modifying the interface between identification with subnational

¹⁶⁶ Klotz, A, *op cit.*, p.2.

¹⁶⁷ Barnett, M.: "Institutions, Roles and Disorder: The Case of the Arab State System", *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (3), September 1993, pp.271-296.

¹⁶⁸ Bornman, Elirea, 2003, *op cit.*, p.27.

¹⁶⁹ Rouse, R.: "Questions of Identity: Personhood and collectivity in transnational migration to the United States", *Critique of Anthropology*, 15(4), 1995, p.351-380.

¹⁷⁰ Calhoun C.: "Preface", in *Social Theory and the politics of identity*, ed. C Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994, p. 1-7.

¹⁷¹ Bauman, Z.: "The individualized society." Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001.

¹⁷² Bornman, Elirea, *op cit.*, p.44.

¹⁷³ Rouse, R, *op cit.*, p.351-380.

groups, the nation-state, and supranational blocs and entities is dangerous for social and political stability in heterogeneous states. Most importantly, these states face the risk of having several and often contending social identities. It is in this sense that heterogeneous states lack on a common agreement on social identity or common nationhood¹⁷⁴. This is especially the case for South Africa as the term *nation-state* embodies a contradiction. Being derived from the Greek *natio*, it is analogous to ethnicity and common culture¹⁷⁵. Howsoever, the 1994 democratic transition enlightened significant identity struggles that had been embedded for more than forty years of segregation. These identity struggles at all levels can arguably be apprehended by focusing on ‘national identity’.

c. Relevance of national identity

Taking a constructivist stance, one can argue that identity must be seen as a construction, as the interface between the subnational and supranational identification processes are looked upon as crucial to the formation of a national identity. In recent years, a growing number of scholars working on the issue of identity and foreign policy have deepened their research on this very question. While post-apartheid South Africa has been confronted to numerous domestic and external changes, some academic works seem highly relevant. Focusing on issues of multiculturalism and of international roles, I will attempt to link internal and external changes to the formation of a national identity. Then, by going deeper into the way foreign policy is shaped and constrained in a modern changing world, the aim will finally be to associate it to national identity formation.

First, and as it will be discussed later, South African social identities are highly conflicting and are linked to the domestic sources of foreign policy. Although the diversity of civil society has rarely been considered relevant to foreign policy, changes brought about in recent decades have gradually altered this perspective. These include economic globalization, information technology, the end of the Cold War and migration¹⁷⁶. Of significant importance for South Africa is most importantly the post-apartheid democratic transition, as it has highlighted issues related to ‘multiculturalism’. This later concept lacks of precise meaning as it has several definitions. In this case, it may however be defined as “*the fact of cultural diversity, with many groups defining themselves separately from the*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁵ Bornman, Elirea, 2003, op cit., p.33.

¹⁷⁶ Hill, Christopher: “The National Interest in Question: Foreign Policy in Multicultural Societies”, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

nation-state, and perhaps asserting their right to a higher loyalty”¹⁷⁷. Such a definition can enlighten difficulties and ambiguities that arise in international politics. Christopher Hill argues that it has become essential to frame domestic society and foreign policy together, as talking about ‘democracy and foreign policy’ is argued to be too general¹⁷⁸. He moreover argues that the blurring of the boundary between internal and external policy has led them to be constituent of each other. Issues evolving around multiculturalism and foreign policy can be seen as the development of an historical process in which civil society is gradually drawn into the politics of international relations¹⁷⁹. Thus, the possibility of incoherence in foreign policy making is omnipresent in a system subject to diversity and pluralism. Although no “multiculturalist theory of foreign policy” currently exists, a constructivist way forward offers promising avenues for inquiring links “*between multiculturalism at home and cosmopolitanism abroad*”¹⁸⁰, between conflicting social identities and ambiguous foreign policy stances. According to Hill’s perspective, both foreign policy and multiculturalism should be systematically brought together. It is also his view that governments should recognize that foreign policy is inseparable from issues of domestic society and identity, as cultural diversity embodies a wide range of views that go beyond traditional dichotomies¹⁸¹.

Secondly, national identity brings about a question of classification to characterize foreign policy behavior. This classification would suggest that states have a role and that their governments undertake recurrent and patterned actions¹⁸². There seems to be a consensus at relating the term *role* to behavior, as emphasized by role theory. Focusing on ideology has relevance in this regard as foreign policy analysis stresses the importance of the self-conception of policy-makers as determinants of behavior, understood as the national interest¹⁸³. Therefore, and as Kalevi Holsti suggests, the fact of sovereignty in international politics suggests that foreign policy decisions and actions derive from policymakers’ role conception. Nonetheless, national role conceptions are also linked to the role prescriptions

¹⁷⁷ Barry, Brian: “Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism”, Cambridge, Polity, 2001, p.22-23.

¹⁷⁸ Hill, Christopher: “Bringing War Home: Foreign Policy-Making in Multicultural Societies”, *International Relations*, 2007, vol.21 (3), p.261.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p.262.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p.277.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.278.

¹⁸² Holsti, K.J.: “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.14, no.3, September 1970, p.233.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* p.241.

emanating from the external environment¹⁸⁴. It is in this sense that the international system, the expectations of states, “world opinion” and multilateral treaties all sources of these role prescriptions. Role theory thus seems to make the assumption that foreign policy decisions and actions are congruent with the national role conception given to a state both at a subnational and supranational level. However, states can operate according to several national role conceptions at the time. As defended by Holsti, every aspect of foreign policy cannot be dictated by role conceptions and prescriptions. It is thus seen as wiser to expect some foreign policy decisions not to be consistent with the expectations of public opinion and foreign governments or with a stated national role¹⁸⁵. Nonetheless, identities have an important part to play in foreign policy as they define the self-understanding of international roles. These identities arise from the historical interaction of domestic and international experiences and social change. Not to be left out of the picture are general circumstances and the ascription of roles given by outsiders¹⁸⁶. To quote Prizel, “*national identity serves not only as the primary link between the individual and society, but between a society and the world*”¹⁸⁷.

Finally, it is arguable that the very concept of identity is primordial at understanding the relationship between domestic society and the state towards foreign policy. Identities, as preferred to identity, can be seen as fundamental as they are at the basis of a state’s behavior¹⁸⁸. National interest being considered as an aggregate of both internal and external factors is seen as a process of never-ending interplay between dominant ideas and material factors. These material factors are to be considered in a broad sense as they may include geography, ecology, social trends and political forces¹⁸⁹. The interpretation of their meaning is influenced by the “psychological environment” of decision-makers¹⁹⁰. The concept of identity thus has a high degree of relevance in understanding change and the relationship between the two levels. Moreover, Christopher Hill underlines the need to consider a national identity understood as “*an aggregate of intersubjective understandings which evolve on the basis of experiences- social, political and international*”¹⁹¹. Because of the

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.245.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p.298.

¹⁸⁶ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.144.

¹⁸⁷ Prizel, Ilya.: “National Identity and Foreign Policy”, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.19.

¹⁸⁸ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.133.

¹⁸⁹ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.134.

¹⁹⁰ Jervis, Robert: “Perception and Misperception in International Politics”, Princeton; NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.

¹⁹¹ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.137.

constant reconstitution of identities in the light of inherent resources, history, present needs and future aspirations, national identity is bound to be impacted by both social diversity and foreign policy¹⁹². National identity can thus be impacted by changes in society, in conceptions of international relations (or ideologies) and in the place a country has in the world. As for South Africa, the apparent weakness of social bonds highlighted by the end of apartheid may have “pre-eroded” any political consensus on which resting a consistent foreign policy. Moreover, the recovering from a segregation domestic regime and international exclusion may have highlighted the need to re-establish an international regime while nurturing the vulnerable premises of democracy, explaining a commitment to multilateral frameworks¹⁹³. Consequently, foreign policy shaped by national identity constitutes a major means by which the internal and external are brought together. States such as South Africa that have a conflicted sense of themselves because of painful recent history are especially vulnerable to foreign policy complications¹⁹⁴. This is all the more emphasized by its multiculturalist nature.

While the idea of national interest and national identity are often intertwined, both are nonetheless distinguishable as identity corresponds to a deeper process than calculations of interest. Identity can as such not be preserved or promoted by strategic actions domestically or abroad¹⁹⁵. Moreover, depicting both multiculturalism and role theory has permitted to underline the importance of domestic and international factors in the shaping of a national identity. These issues indeed raise new questions about identities and their relation to foreign policy. They have highlighted that changes in society, ideologies regarding international relations and the defining of a country in the international realm all have a part to play in the defining of a states’ national identity. As it is arguably resulting from the interaction of several identity levels, it can be apprehended in the South African case by centering ones attention on these impacting factors. Different identity struggles on different identity levels seem to interplay, resulting in a blurry national identity formation.

¹⁹² Bhikhu, Parekh: “The Concept of National Identity”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 2: British National Identity in a European Context, 1955, p.268.

¹⁹³ Fatih, Tayfur: “Semiperipheral Development and Foreign Policy: The Cases of Greece and Spain”, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

¹⁹⁴ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.157.

¹⁹⁵ Hill, Christopher, 2013, *op cit.*, p.138.

d. The South African Identity struggles

It is on the 27th of April 1994 that South Africa's first democratic election was held, this after a series of negotiations and years of liberation struggle. The advent of this new democratic dispensation led the country to be once again accepted into world society, and by extension to become part of the globalizing world. Howsoever, dealing with globalizing related issues has led the new government to a new identification with the international community, negotiating its national identity in the act of its international relations¹⁹⁶. It is thus a fact that the post-apartheid transition has reopened a debate about identity. *De facto*, the apartheid past matters in the post-apartheid articulation of South Africa's national identity¹⁹⁷.

The political transformation brought up to the invention of the "new South Africa" as a central concept in the nation-building initiative. Being an ideal, this concept embodied renewed national symbols and the metaphor of the "Rainbow Nation", emphasizing unity among the diversity of South Africans¹⁹⁸. As such, identity formation during the apartheid era was mainly fixed on the official system of racial classification. This was ascribed to individuals at birth and recognized four population groups. These were 'Blacks', 'Whites', 'Colored' and 'Asian/Indian'¹⁹⁹. Moreover language, cultural and ethnic differences were recognized within these major racial groups. Most appalling, the construction of South African national identity during the apartheid was based on racial divisions in which groups of color were excluded from being granted formal citizenship²⁰⁰. This is certainly one of the main reasons why the country's new national identity became the topic of animated debate during the democratic transition. As such, the country seemed to lack a generally accepted national identity. An ideology of nation building was thus seen as common sense in order to possibly regain a sense of nationhood, and thereby fill the gap left by several dozens of years of apartheid rule²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁶ Bornman, Elirea, 2003, *op cit.*, p.43.

¹⁹⁷ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.371.

¹⁹⁸ Bornman, Elirea: "Emerging Patterns of Social Identification in Postapartheid South Africa", *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 66, Issue 2, June 2010, p.237-254.

¹⁹⁹ Horowitz, D.L.: "A democratic South Africa?: Constitutional engineering in a divided society", University of California Press, Oxford, 1991.

²⁰⁰ Eaton, L.: "South African national identity: A research agenda for social psychologists", *South African Journal of Psychology*, Volume 32, Issue 1, Mar 2002, p. 45 – 53.

²⁰¹ Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 237-254.

Howsoever, South Africa did not come to define its post-apartheid identity only through a negation of its former self, but also through identifying with the identities of other state actors²⁰². As other governments worldwide, the South African one has been constrained to build new alliances. In doing so, it has been reconstructing its identity on the basis of what Messari calls '*positive approximation*'²⁰³. This concept designates a process in which national identity is formed through the interaction a state has with other states. These are as well allies as enemies, as they are of relevance in an international order that is socially constructed²⁰⁴. Nonetheless, South Africa struggled to define its identity and interests, arguing internally about its vision and priorities. In the latter years of the democratic transition, a tension gradually increased. On the one hand, there was the aim to live up to the world's expectations of putting human rights as a priority of the country's foreign policy. On the other hand, there was the aim to pursue policies based on more traditional state interests²⁰⁵. South Africa's identity struggles did in many ways originate from a scuffle between competing ideas regarding foreign policy.

South Africa's national identity struggles related to the post-apartheid transition thus seem to have originated from both a sub-national and a supra-national level. The seemingly blurry interface between these levels seems related to social and political changes since the 1990's²⁰⁶. Hence, the relations that both these levels have towards national identity have led it to be ambiguous and unsettled. As such, sub-national and supra-national levels of identity play an important role in the life of South Africans. Their importance has especially been emphasized not only by the South African context, but also by the context of a larger globalized world of which the country has become a fully-fledged participant²⁰⁷. These identity struggles can be looked upon as fostered by conflicting social identities, by conflicting ideologies, and finally by ambiguous considerations from other states and actors at the international level.

²⁰² Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.371.

²⁰³ Messari, N., 2001, *op cit.*, p.227.

²⁰⁴ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.372.

²⁰⁵ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K.: "Explaining Post-Apartheid South African Human Rights Foreign Policy: Unsettled Identity and Conflicting Interests." *Journal of Human Rights*, 10 (1), 2011, p.18.

²⁰⁶ Malan, J., Korf, L.: "Threat to ethnic identity: The experience of White Afrikaans-speaking participants in post-apartheid South Africa", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 142, 2002 - Issue 2, p.149-169.

²⁰⁷ Mattes, R. : "Survey unpacks April '94", *Democracy in Action*, 1994.

1. Discontinuity and conflicting Social Identities

Within the borders of the newly constituted “nation-state” of South Africa, new images have been advanced. These emphasized certain values and principles such as democracy, individual rights and liberties, technocratic rationality in public policy and universal values. However, the country’s society still remained deeply heterogeneous and divided, as it is constituted by numerous linguistic, cultural, racial, socio-economic and religious differences²⁰⁸. Decades of apartheid rule had led South Africa to be all the more divided than by intrinsic differences. The segregation based regime accentuated ethnic, racial and class differences as it set different societal groups against each other. Not only were the whites set against the black, but also the colored against Indians, and some blacks against other blacks²⁰⁹.

In the advent of the new political dispensation, nation-building became an important preoccupation for the newly elected government. The reconciliation of heterogeneity and citizenship needed to be negotiated by the new political dispensation. Citizenship thus implied loyalty to the state rather than towards cultural, ethnic or religious groups²¹⁰. However, this reconciliation of heterogeneity was most difficult as social identification during apartheid was split among a multitude of sub-groups within same cultural or linguistic groups. First, there was a division between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking individuals within the larger White Community²¹¹. There is a profound legacy of conflicting ideals between both groups that was brought up during the apartheid era. While the Afrikaans-speaking were mostly in favor of the apartheid rule, the English-speaking were mostly opposed²¹². As for the Black community, nine language groups are officially acknowledged. These are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu²¹³. While for the White Afrikaans-speaking community the identification process was associated to the broader White community, the English-speaking

²⁰⁸ De la Rey: « Intergroup relations : theories and positions », in *Social psychology in South Africa*, ed. D Foster & J Louw-Potgieter. Johannesburg: Lexicon, 1991, p.27-53.

²⁰⁹ Coetzee, J and Wood, J.: “Understanding Group formation amid eroding identities and neotribalism: alternative narratives”, *Acta Academia*, 25 (2&3), 1993, p.65-91.

²¹⁰ Le Pere, G & Lambrechts, K: “Globalization and national identity construction: Nation building in South Africa.”, in *Identity? Theory, politics, history*, ed. By S Bekker and R Prinsloo. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999, p.11-38.

²¹¹ Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 238.

²¹² Finchilescu & Dawes: “Adolescents’ socio-political perspectives on South African society: An investigation into the effects of social change between 1992 and 1996.”, Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, South Africa, 1999.

²¹³ Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 238.

whites were rather identifying to a broad South-Africanism²¹⁴. As for the Black community, racial identification was important but was supplanted by ethnic characteristics, advancing the importance of their culture and language²¹⁵.

These aspects of social identification were all the more highlighted by the 1994 democratic transition, as most of the supporters of Black political parties and the National Party indicated their belonging to a peculiar ethnic group. While the blacks preferred to identify themselves as “Africans”, whites usually referred to themselves as being “South Africans”²¹⁶. Moreover, the immediate period after the political dispensation, blacks and whites were still respectively each other’s strongest ‘anti-identity’²¹⁷. However, and quite paradoxically, a study conducted by Finchilescu and Dawes in 1996 indicates that there was an increase in both a South African and an ethnic identification among most “racial” groups²¹⁸. As such, a number of changes due to the social and political changes of the 1990’s have been noticed within the identity structures of South Africans²¹⁹. The studies presented by Elireza Bornman show that the identities of these specific ‘racial’ groups have shifted again in the new millennium²²⁰. First, the blacks identify strongly with the notion of South African Rainbow Nation, and have a strong commitment towards African culture. They thus seem to favor engagement with Africa rather than with the West. This has been all the more emphasized by the end of apartheid as it is assimilated to a reaffirmation of African cultural roots²²¹. On the other hand, Afrikaans-speaking whites went back to the confinements of their ethnic group, identifying less with national and supra-national identities and to the notion of Rainbow Nation. As for English-Speaking whites, they have been found to have rediscovered profound roots within Europe and the United Kingdom, being the group with the strongest western and global orientation²²². Finally, Indians and

²¹⁴ HSRC Investigation into Intergroup Relations. Main Committee.: “The South African society : realities and future prospects”, Human Sciences Research Council, New York : Greenwood Press, 1987.

²¹⁵ Mattes, R. : “Survey unpacks April ’94”, Democracy in Action, 1994.

²¹⁶ Gibson, J. & Gouws, A.: “Social Identities and Political Intolerance: Linkages within the South African Mass Public”, American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Apr., 2000), pp. 278-292.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁸ Finchilescu & Dawes, *op cit.*, 1999.

²¹⁹ Malan, J., Korf, L.: “Threat to ethnic identity: The experience of White Afrikaans-speaking participants in post-apartheid South Africa”, The Journal of Social Psychology, Volume 142, 2002 - Issue 2, p.149-169.

²²⁰ Bornman, Elireza, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 246.

²²¹ Mattes, R. : “Survey unpacks April ’94”, Democracy in Action, 1994.

²²² *Ibidem*.

Colored group both appear to have an identity oriented towards the South African nation. Indians are however split between a nationalistic attitude and their own ethnic group²²³.

It is consequently noticeable that race and ethnicity have not faded away in the social identification process of the so-called new South Africa. It can thus be argued that South Africans still rather built their identity around an ethnic and racial dimension rather than around social classes. It is thus noticeable that South African society remains highly heterogeneous regarding social identification. Moreover, the impact of social identities towards the attitudes and behavior of individuals has important consequences towards intergroup relations, as to political stability and consistency²²⁴. Social identification is thus to be taken into account as to apprehend a state's national identity. Nonetheless, the confusion of the past-apartheid era has not been restricted to conflicting social identities, as different ideologies have gradually flourished.

2. Discontinuity and conflicting Ideologies

The negotiations for ending apartheid that lasted from 1990 until 1993 embodied the process of a transition from a segregation regime to a democratic one. The negotiations took place between the governing National Party, the African National Congress and several political organizations²²⁵. The resulting democratic transition led South Africa to be once again admitted into world society and to be entirely part of the globalizing world. Nonetheless, these negotiations have also highlighted a number of competing ideologies emanating from the frustrating constraints of the apartheid regime. Being freed from decades of discrimination, South Africa was confronted to having to rebuild a national identity. The resulting trauma and unsettled socio-historical legacy however led to important discontinuity and contradictory ideologies, as much among as within themselves²²⁶. The optimism resulting from the immediate political liberation would soon have to be confronted to the harsher realities of building a consistent national identity. It will here be shown that South Africa is confronted to an ongoing debate within and between ideologies.

²²³ Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 246.

²²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²²⁵ Freund, Bill: "South Africa: The End of Apartheid & the Emergence of the 'BEE Elite'", Review of African Political Economy, Volume 34, 2007 - Issue 114, p.661-678.

²²⁶ Borer, T.A., and Mills,K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13.

The advent of Nelson Mandela as president on the 10th of May 1994 spurred optimism about the democratic transition, has he pledged for human rights and the pursuing of peace. Moreover, Mandela encouraged cooperation through the promotion of institutions, with the idea of making a safer world for diversity²²⁷. The country's foreign policy thus seemed to be built on high moral values and a profound sense of identity that originated both from South Africa's historical legacy and from the vision of a new charismatic leader²²⁸. Mandela's leadership was thus highly idealist, and based on several beliefs regarding foreign policy. These were mainly related to the promotion of human rights, democracy, and global peace²²⁹. This general framework was all the more reflected by a number of initiatives taken by South Africa in the 1990's. Reinforcing the country's commitment to an ethical foreign policy, they improved its international reputation²³⁰. To begin with, South Africa dismantled all its nuclear arms, thereby becoming the first denuclearized state. Its participation in the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been of significant importance, as much as the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty in 1996. It was at the basis of the creation of a nuclear free weapons zone in Africa²³¹. Moreover, South Africa took part in the Ottawa Process against land mines in 1997. Its success has permitted for world society to agree to a ban on the production and use of landmines. It is for this reason that the Ottawa Process has been largely credited for conducting an era of "complex multilateralism"²³². Most importantly, participation to the Process embodied a first clear manifestation of defiance towards Washington and other major powers. This can be looked upon as a leaning towards an anti-imperialist identity. Finally, Mandela condemned Nigeria's disdain towards human rights and democratic principles. He thus called for sanctions and the exclusion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth²³³. Although most northern and western countries supported South Africa's stand towards human rights, they disapproved such a strategy. As such, the USA, Britain, France, and Germany all continued to encourage economic and business relations with Nigeria²³⁴. Hence, South Africa's foreign policy towards Nigeria was Mandela's biggest challenge, as the country was paradoxically criticized for betraying Africa while being a

²²⁷ Klotz, A., 2004, *op cit.*, p.9.

²²⁸ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.3.

²²⁹ Mandela, Nelson : « South African foreign policy », *Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. (1999), Opening sessions of Parliament, Cape Town, 5th February 1993.

²³⁰ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.4.

²³¹ *Ibidem*.

²³² Van der Westhuizen J., Nel P., Taylor I. : "Multilateralism in South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for a Critical Rationale", *Global Governance*, 6 (2000), p.51.

²³³ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.5.

²³⁴ Adelman, M, 2004, *op cit.*, p.264.

lackey of the west²³⁵. Although Nelson Mandela's foreign policy got confronted to the realities of *Realpolitik*, it remained profoundly based on ethics and idealism.

However, Mandela's successor Thabo Mbeki reinforced an anti-imperialist posture and identity²³⁶. President from 1999 to 2008, he embraced African solidarity and democracy, putting forward South Africa's continental role. Yet, the notion he had of "African Renaissance" was founded on several competing frameworks. These could include globalism, socialism, pragmatism, liberal internationalism and pan-Africanism²³⁷. Moreover, Mbeki adopted *Black Consciousness* as his main ideology. Wanting to detach from Northern and Western values, he wished to break from the apartheid government's vision that South Africa was some European outpost²³⁸. Thabo Mbeki took a great personal interest in foreign policy and adopted aggressive stances at putting Africa first. It is thus by 2001 that him and other leaders had linked pan-Africanism to liberalization through the "New Economic Partnership for African Development" (NEPAD) and its Peer Review Program²³⁹. The aim of NEPAD was to restructure the African continent's relationship with industrialized countries, with the idea that an African renewal would be possible by coupling a neo-liberal economic growth and a commitment to institutional accountability²⁴⁰. The pledge was mainly to spread human rights and democracy and good governance within Africa while securing western investment and support. Moreover, Mbeki's foreign policy based on "African identity and Africa first" led to stronger South-South solidarity. An emphasis was made on the fight against poverty, the support for national liberation struggles and for several so-called rogue states²⁴¹. The ANC leadership under president Mbeki thus gradually moved off from the nation-building discourse of the Mandela Era and rather embraced Africanism, with an increasing use of the terms "African Renaissance" and "African

²³⁵ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.5.

²³⁶ Klotz, A., 2004, *op cit.*, p.10.

²³⁷ Black, David & Wilson, Zoe: "Rights, Region and Identity: Exploring the Ambiguities of South Africa's Regional Human Rights Role", Paper presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, New Orleans, 2002.

²³⁸ Landsberg, Chris: "Thabo Mbeki's Legacy of Transformational Diplomacy", in Mbeki and After, Reflections on the Legacy of Thabo Mbeki, edited by Daryl Glasar. Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2010, p.209-241.

²³⁹ Van der Westhuizen, Janis : « How (not) to sell big Ideas : Argument, Identity and NEPAD », International Journal 58 (3), June 2003, p.369-394.

²⁴⁰ Alden, C. & Le Pere, G.: "South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy: from reconciliation to ambiguity?", Review of African Political Economy, 2004, Vol. 31, n100, p.283-297.

²⁴¹ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.8-9.

century”²⁴². Therefore, an important tension seems to arise between democratic and pan-African identities²⁴³.

Moreover, and as Laurie Nathan argues, Mbeki’s foreign policy priorities have been based on five main pillars that are: Afrocentrism (1), commitment to democracy and human rights (2), good governance and development (3), peace (4) and finally the promotion of multilateralism in the international system (5)²⁴⁴. The author argues that discontinuities arose as the pillars were not only informed but also often in conflict with Mbeki’s own ideological commitments. The three main ideological paradigms in which his outlook was rooted were democracy, Africanism and anti-imperialism. It is therefore that the president’s foreign policy and ideological commitments often stood across purposes with each other²⁴⁵. Within Mbeki’s philosophy germed potential contradictions as his ‘African Renaissance’ was anti-colonial, anti-imperial and pro-democratic. This was demonstrated in the Zimbabwean case of the new millennium as the South African president adopted a ‘quiet diplomacy’ policy²⁴⁶. South Africa indeed took a stance legitimizing Mugabe’s controversial land appropriation and electoral irregularities. The country’s approach to Zimbabwe has resulted in relentless human rights abuses. Mugabe’s framing of the issue as settling colonial-era wrong appealed to Mbeki’s anti-imperial ideology²⁴⁷. As such, Thabo Mbeki preferred to comfort himself in his own ‘confirmation bias’ by attributing Zimbabwe’s problems only to the legacy of colonialism rather than to bad governance on the part of Mugabe²⁴⁸. It is in this sense that Mbeki’s support for democracy –the third strand of his ideological outlook- was constrained to be neglected. Hence, there was already an important conflict with the 1994 ANC Working Group statement emphasizing the need to address human rights issues, even if South African interests were to be negatively impacted²⁴⁹. The foreign policy stances defended towards Zimbabwe are puzzling and are merely a reflection of inconsistencies at a larger scale. Mbeki’s foreign policy had clearly ‘schizophrenic’ aspects, as it embodied democracy and accountability, but also African and Third World

²⁴² Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 240.

²⁴³ Klotz, A., 2004, *op cit.*, p.12.

²⁴⁴ Nathan, Laurie: “Consistency and inconsistencies in South African foreign policy” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume, 81, Issue 2, March 2005 , p.361–372.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.363.

²⁴⁶ Klotz, A., 2004, *op cit.*, p.11.

²⁴⁷ Borer, T.A., and Mills,K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.11.

²⁴⁸ *Ibidem.*

²⁴⁹ ANC Working Goup: “Views from the practitioners: Foreign policy in a new democratic South Africa”. In *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990–1994*, Edited by: Mills, Greg. Johannesburg: South Africa Institute of International Affairs, 1994.

solidarity²⁵⁰. As it will be discussed later, this ‘schizophrenia’ was particularly present within multilateralism, and especially within the United Nations.

It is finally arguable that South African ideologies are the product of peculiar conception of South African national identity, resulting from an unsettled socio-historical legacy. As such, South Africa’s ideologies and ideas are prominent in defining South African foreign policies²⁵¹. This part has permitted to highlight a double contradiction. On the one hand, there is a discontinuity between Mandela’s “*transformist idealism*” that is mainly based on ethics and Mbeki’s “*reformist ideology*” defending Africa²⁵². On the other hand, Mbeki’s ‘African Renaissance’ in itself is inconsistent, leading South Africa to “argue” with itself on which vision to defend. At times, there is a prevalence of the “democratic element”, while at others there is a prevalence of the “anti-imperial and Afrocentric element”²⁵³. Quite clearly, there is an ongoing debate within and between ideologies, as South Africa has and is still attempting to reflect a new sense of its own identity. Nonetheless, identity building as a result of state interaction also has its importance, as the country’s socialization in the international realm is not to be neglected.

3. Identity construction in the international realm

Being readmitted to world society in the advent of a new political dispensation, South Africa had to confront a tremendously fast-globalizing world, characterized by many paradoxical impulses and tendencies²⁵⁴. The government has thus been forced to forge new allegiances in order to negotiate its national identity within the international realm. As such, the intensification of engagements with the world has most certainly left South Africa’s national identity formation to contend with the possibility of multiple identities in the context of a new world order that is continuously more complex²⁵⁵. Several issues indeed seem to have had an effect on the country’s identification process. Not only did a supranational identification with Africanism enhance a high commitment towards the African Union, the

²⁵⁰ Mahant Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.10.

²⁵¹ Borer, T.A., and Mills,K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13.

²⁵² Alden, C. & Le Pere, G.: “South Africa’s post-apartheid foreign policy: from reconciliation to ambiguity?”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 2004, Vol. 31, n100, p.295.

²⁵³ Borer, T.A., and Mills,K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13.

²⁵⁴ Le Pere, G & Lambrechts, K: “Globalization and national identity construction: Nation building in South Africa.”, in *Identity? Theory, politics, history*, ed. By S Bekker and R Prinsloo. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999, p.11-38.

²⁵⁵ Bornman, Elirea, 2010, *op cit.*, p. 240.

domination of the Western world in the global system seems to have created a partial and paradoxical identification to the West. Nonetheless, several continental and global constraints seem to explain discontinuities and contradictions regarding South Africa's identification with the international community²⁵⁶. The result is an unsettled foreign policy identity, as well from the part of South Africa as from the part scholars and other actors of the international realm.

To begin with, Mbeki's African Renaissance ideology has led South Africa to have a particular foreign policy behavior towards the African continent. This has been persistently associated to the idea of non-interference from the West. It is thus associated to a "circling of wagons" approach among African countries, seen as free from former colonial influence²⁵⁷. It is also in this sense that Mbeki linked African Unity to African self-sufficiency. He indeed supported the idea that Africa had to unite in order to ensure the demise imperialism and colonialism²⁵⁸. Thus, first contradictions arose as South Africa chose unity with human-rights abusive and authoritarian regimes in the name of this ideology. It is in this sense that prioritizing solidarity politics over rights-based politics can be perceived as a 'continental constraint', embodying a gap between South Africa's rhetoric and foreign policy realities²⁵⁹. Alden and le Pere argue that this gap can be partially explained by what they call the "*paradoxical legacy of the apartheid state and the liberation movement*"²⁶⁰. What they highlight is that fact that the country had to face contradictory tensions as it was tempting to build an activist role in foreign policy. Fact was that there was a deceiving belief in the compatibility of human rights, solidarity politics and South Africa's own development needs²⁶¹. In other words there was a tension between the will to project a moral foreign policy and the will to stand in solidarity with states that had inter alia supported the ANC. Bischoff argues in this sense that the idea of an African Renaissance resulted in a situation where human rights have persistently been "*subsumed under the need for states inclusively to seek unity of purpose*"²⁶². Finally, this constraint of 'continental unity' can be argued to be hardly overcome due to South Africa's own historical and

²⁵⁶ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13-16.

²⁵⁷ *Ibidem.*

²⁵⁸ South African Department of Foreign Affairs. Speech at the Launch of the African Union Vol. July 9th 2002.

²⁵⁹ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13.

²⁶⁰ Alden, C. & Le Pere, G., 2004, *op cit.*, p.283.

²⁶¹ *Ibidem.*

²⁶² Bischoff, P, 2003, *op cit.*, p.191.

contemporary role in Africa. The country's African partners indeed show skepticism about its aspirations for continental leadership, as it does not have to be too assertive because of fears of domination. South Africa is constrained at not having to show excessive domination in order to maintain its power²⁶³.

Furthermore, the larger global environment in which South Africa has been reintegrated and within which it evolves also has a constraining effect on the country's foreign policy. Most especially, this concerns the 'second generation' economic and social rights. Mbeki's African Renaissance indeed included a commitment to global wealth redistribution and highlighted a new tension. South Africa found itself torn between the activist role of pushing human rights globally and a need to ensure its own economic development²⁶⁴. This important tension between ethical foreign policy and economic development can partially be explained by the fact that Mbeki thought that globalization would assimilate economic rights for states, while issues of democracy and peace would be addressed by correcting the inability of the market to do so through conscious interventions²⁶⁵. This misconception led the government to adopt neo-realist and neo-liberal principles that would fit the global economic climate²⁶⁶. It is nonetheless a fact that South Africa has often sacrificed socialism in favor of pragmatism. While South Africa stands for a reformist multilateral platform that would argue for a safeguard against the gloomiest effects of globalization, it has embraced the neo-liberalist discourse. Moreover, the aftermath of the 11th of September 2001 and the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq can be argued to have strikingly changed the global political environment. While the focus was renewed on issues of "hard power", South Africa was marginalized as it best champions issues of "soft power"²⁶⁷. Arguably, a tendency of the international system to lean towards American-led unilateralism and to diminish multilateralism has had consequences for South Africa. Its ability to potentially play the role of bold reformer and facilitator is diminished, and so is its role as a possible transformative power²⁶⁸. Global realities thus seem to constrain the directions that South African foreign policy can take and to highlight certain confusion about the role(s) played by the country in the international arena. This all the more emphasizes ambiguities about its foreign policy identity.

²⁶³ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., 2011, *op cit.*, p.13.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p.15.

²⁶⁵ Bischoff, P, 2003, *op cit.*, p.185-186.

²⁶⁶ Williams, Paul. "South African foreign policy: Getting critical?", *Politikon*, 27(1), 2001, p. 73.

²⁶⁷ Bischoff, P, 2003, *op cit.*, p.186.

²⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

Finally, South Africa's foreign policy identity is still debated, as it is the result of an unclear rivalry between competing interests and ideological positions. On the one hand, some consider South Africa to be defined as a 'regional power' or 'regional hegemon'²⁶⁹. Adam Habib argues that this status implies for South Africa to be confronted to a series of obligations, responsibilities and privileges that separate it from its African counterparts. A regional hegemon may moreover be defined as "*a state that is part of a delineated region, is connected to it culturally, economically and politically, influences its identity and affairs, defines its security, and aspires to provide it with leadership [...] and acts as a representative*"²⁷⁰. However, authors such as David R. Black and David J. Hornsby argue that South Africa is more of an "emerging middle power", as it is still struggling to consolidate its democratic norms and practices²⁷¹. Most importantly, an emerging middle-power would be expected to seek an extension of its influence in multilateral decision-making, as it would be interested in promoting global order and cooperation through multilateral organisations such as the UN²⁷². In this regard, Serraõ and Bischoff argue that being an "emergent para-Western middle power", South Africa rejects rights to power and leadership as it calls for the devolution of power to multilateral bodies²⁷³. This is opposed to Black and Hornsby's vision that on the contrary underlines the importance of regional integration and leadership for emerging middle powers. They defend that it offers the opportunity to accelerate development and the means to enlarge influence and power in international affairs. Emerging middle powers would thus be '*reformist*' oriented rather than '*status quo*' oriented as they would be pursuing change in global economic rules and structures²⁷⁴. Nonetheless, confusion persists over the nature of South Africa's foreign policy identity, as it is certainly looked upon considering the country's peculiarly layered history and the various normative influences on its history of struggle²⁷⁵.

That is to say, both the depiction of an "emerging middle power" or "regional" hegemon lack the nuance needed to understand the different and contradictory levels at which South

²⁶⁹ Habib H.: "South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation", South African Journal of International Affairs, Vol.16, No.2, August 2009, p.144.

²⁷⁰ Nolte, D.: "How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytic Concepts and Research Topics", Paper presented to the ECPR Joint Session of Workshops, Helsinki, 2007, p.15.

²⁷¹ Black David R. & Hornsby David J, 2016, *op cit.*, p.153.

²⁷² *Ibidem.*

²⁷³ Serraõ, O & Bischoff P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.378.

²⁷⁴ Black David R. & Hornsby David J, 2016, *op cit.*, p.153.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.154.

Africa operates internationally. As the interaction with countries at the continental and global level matter in the framing of the country's identity and interests, South Africa can be argued to display signs of several and sometimes contradictory "archetypes" of foreign policy identity. The country can be argued to be pulled in different directions due to its layered history, ideological positioning and competing interests²⁷⁶.

Hence, subnational identification and competing ideologies as instruments for national identity formation need to contend not only with inherent differences but also with the possibility of multiple supranational identities in a complex world order. It has thus been demonstrated that history, memory, ideas, interests, norms and institutions all play a prominent role in the shaping of a state's identity. Both domestic and international influences seem to shape attitudes and behavior²⁷⁷. South Africa, of a newly democratic character, is seemingly in an ongoing state of tension between the need for a coherent national identity and the diverging definitions it makes of a "national interest" on a wide panel of issues.

III) Case study: South African Multilateralism within the UNSC

a. Introduction

After 1994, South Africa adopted a foreign policy that prioritized multilateralism as a normative centerpiece of its international relations, making it the *sine qua non* of an internationalist state²⁷⁸. There was a strong will to promote cooperation among a multitude of actors. The struggle against apartheid had indeed been a global effort as well as a cause that outrivaled the ideological divide of the Cold War²⁷⁹. Seen as a "new South Africa", the country found itself in the need to be 'present and voting' within the international realm, and the multilateral fora a constituted the most relevant opportunities to do so. Advancing the transformative potential of multilateralism, South Africa's policymakers projected the country's democratic transition onto a global level, hence committing to achieve rule-based and equitable global governance²⁸⁰.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p.159.

²⁷⁷ Wendt, A.: "Social Theory of International Politics", Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.160-161.

²⁷⁸ Bischoff, P-H.: "Reform in Defence of Sovereignty: South Africa in the UN Security Council, 2007-2008", in: Africa Spectrum, 44(2), 2009, p.95.

²⁷⁹ Spies Y.K.: "South Africa's Multilateral Challenges in a 'Polypolar' World", The International Spectator, 45:4, 2010, 73.

²⁸⁰ *Ibidem.*

While being an outstanding adherent to international regimes and global governance structures, South Africa was devoted to equitable development, human rights, constitutional democracy and the expansion of international humanitarian law²⁸¹. Not only had the country adhered to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to the Ottawa Treaty, it had engaged in sanctions against the excesses of the Abacha regime in Nigeria and promoted a membership ban on military dictatorships at the Organization of African Unity (OAU). All these measures spread hope for a commitment to a foreign policy guided by ethical considerations, especially by supporting individuals and civil society in contending authoritarian regimes²⁸². Howsoever, foreign policy during the Mbeki presidency gradually became primarily state-centered. The ‘African Renaissance’ project was all the more accentuated by an economic neo-liberal guideline, in some ways neglecting individuals and civil society at the expense of private multinationals and financial investors. While working with other African governments and states from the developing world, South Africa wished for gaining influence as a leader towards the building of some form of pan-Africanism. Finding support from a large number of States did not necessarily go in hand with issues of democratic legitimacy. Consequently, the use of ethical foreign policy principles such as justice and human rights were more selective²⁸³. Among other multilateral frameworks, the UN embodied certainly the most emblematic institution in which these contradictions took place.

As South Africa had participated vigorously in all aspects of the work of the organization, the end of the apartheid quickly led to a normalization of relations. The country had indeed been suspended from the UN due to the international opposition to the segregation regime²⁸⁴. Nonetheless, South Africa was elected by the members of the General Assembly in October 2006 to serve for the first time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2007-2008. It was globally a warmly received ascension as many anticipated South Africa to play a positive role advocating human rights and to adopt a conduct that would be concordant to the anticipation of a democratic and responsible member of the international world community²⁸⁵. South African officials celebrated the seat as a turning point in deepening the country’s role in global governance and to “*serve the*

²⁸¹ Bischoff, P-H, *op cit.*, p.96.

²⁸² *Ibidem.*

²⁸³ *Ibidem.*

²⁸⁴ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony : « A Critique of South Africa’s Role on the UN Security Council », *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 14 (1), 2007, p.61.

²⁸⁵ Habib, Adam, 2009, *op cit.*, p.143.

people of the African continent and indeed the world”²⁸⁶. However, a tension has been at stake between progressive/Africanist orientation and an alignment with the Western and European World view. This has as well shifted to the perception of South Africa’s role within the UN, leading it to what many observers have called a “confused” or even “disappointing” behavior within the Security Council²⁸⁷.

South Africa’s term as a member of the United Nations Security Council thus has highlighted a series of tensions, as it has acted both as a reformer and a conserver²⁸⁸. First, there was a tension between a moral identity and the premises made on South-South solidarity. Second, there was a tension between a “Western identity orientation” and the bridge position taken between center and periphery. Most importantly, a tension persisted between an appeasement strategy and an anti-imperialist posture. By concentrating on multilateralism and by deepening our research into some of South Africa’s most controversial positions within the UNSC, the aim will here be to best apprehend the context and complexity of South Africa’s “schizophrenic” multilateral behavior.

b. South Africa’s commitment to Multilateralism

While designing its foreign policy, “New South Africa” chose multilateralism as an approach that would be the regulating foundation of its international relations²⁸⁹. The nature and the implications of a polarity reconfigured by the end of the cold war implied the prognosis to be of uncontested unipolarity. This prediction was apprehended by most scholars and statesmen, as they feared ‘neo-empire’ and hegemonic implications. This could at best be countered by multipolarity, having advantages as it would embody a strong systemic balance²⁹⁰. South Africa embraced this vision as multilateralism was considered the best moral means to achieve rule-based and equitable global governance. However, the reality of the unfolding world order has proven to be greatly more complex than anticipated. As defended by Richard Haas, this new world order is “diffuse” and “nonpolar”, corresponding to “*a world dominated not by one or two or even several states, but rather by numerous centres possessing and exercising various kinds of power*”²⁹¹. By exploring the

²⁸⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa: “South Africa assumes non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council”, Media Statement, Pretoria, 2nd January.

²⁸⁷ Van Nieuwkerk, 2007, *op cit.*, p.62.

²⁸⁸ Bischoff, P-H, *op cit.*, p.98.

²⁸⁹ Spies Y.K, *op cit.*, 2010, p.73.

²⁹⁰ *Ibidem*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* p.74

nature of multilateralism in relation with the challenges of a new systemic world (dis)order, one may best apprehend the implications of the South African case.

‘Multilateralism’ as such denotes “multi levels” or “many sides” and has become a preferred method of state interaction within international organizations such as the United Nations²⁹². It implies the involvement of a minimum of three actors that are collaborating and cooperating together in order to find solutions to international problems²⁹³. It may moreover be defined as “*the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions*”²⁹⁴. As Nel *et al.* argue, it is a concept that is based on three main norms. First, states accept to interact among themselves on the basis of a series of accepted rules. Second, states all share the benefits and costs of these interactions. Finally, states commit to patience towards their expectations and to compromise regarding several issues²⁹⁵. From a constructivist perspective, states engage in multilateralism as they can thereby have an active role in the development of principal international norms²⁹⁶. The increase in the practice of multilateral diplomacy has moreover become the main change in the field of modern diplomacy in recent decades, as it contends the use of bilateralism²⁹⁷. As such, it implies that officials of states are practically involved in institutions that facilitate cooperation between at least three states²⁹⁸. The most emblematic example of the institutionalization of this type of diplomacy is the UN, as it is the world’s largest multilateral institution. Its 193 member states and their interactions bring it to resemble to a permanent international conference²⁹⁹. The evolutions of the end of the 20th century and of the new millennium have led South Africa to commit to this kind of diplomacy. In the context of the end of the Cold War, combined with the emergence of a “post-11 September 2001 era”, South Africa became a strong advocate of multilateral

²⁹² Kegley, C.W.: “World Politics: Trend and Transformation”, Wadsworth: US, 2009, p.119.

²⁹³ Mingst, K.A.: “Essentials of International Relations”, fourth edition. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2008, p.203.

²⁹⁴ Keohane, R.: “Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research”, International Journal, vol.45, issue 4, autumn 1990, p.731.

²⁹⁵ Nel, P.; Taylor, I.; Van der Westhuizen, J.: “Reformist initiatives and South Africa’s multilateral diplomacy: a framework for understanding”, Nel *et al.* (eds.), South Africa’s multilateral Diplomacy and Global Change: The Limits of Reformism. Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001. p.11.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p.5.

²⁹⁷ Smith, C.B.: “Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance”, Lynne Rienner Publishers: London, 2006. p.2.

²⁹⁸ Nel *et al.*, 2001, *op cit.*, p.9.

²⁹⁹ Appathurai, E.R.: « Permanent Missions in new York », in Berridge, G.R., Jennings (eds.), McMillan Press/ London, 1985. p. 94.

practices. The country assured itself numerous positions within continental structures and international organizations³⁰⁰.

South Africa's commitment to multilateralism was all the more important as it presented a platform for the country to have a voice and agency. It was moreover considered as an effective safeguard against hegemonic tensions³⁰¹. However, this commitment also paradoxically seemed to reflect the position of an economically aggressive "subimperial role" in the exploitation of Africa³⁰². As will be discussed later, the prioritisation of an African agenda was often at the basis of ambiguous multilateral projects. It is nonetheless a fact that all post-apartheid governments have defended multilateral diplomacy as a *modus operandi* and as main strategy behind diplomatic efforts³⁰³. The promotion of rule-based multilateralism had indeed become considered as the most appropriate institutional form of carrying out international affairs. This new normative role was of greatest importance in what Mandela called "an interdependent world"³⁰⁴. It was indeed the governments' belief that the democratic transition had given the country sufficient international credibility to gather votes and have influence in the multilateral fora³⁰⁵. As Carlsnaes and Nel argue, South Africa's commitment to multilateralism was all the more crucial as it opened avenues for developing strategies regarding several objectives. Among others, these included as well the reform of global financial institutions as the promotion of humanitarian measures or the strengthening international criminal law³⁰⁶. For South Africa, multilateralism has since 1994 been considered as the *sine qua non* medium and international instrument to help resolve global problems. Having this in mind, it has been long defended by South African policy makers that the United Nations and its Charter should most ideally be placed in the middle of world governance. It is in defence of this position that the Mbeki government that lasted from 1999 to 2008 had continuously been emphasizing "*the importance of multilateralism and the urgent need to revitalise and reform the UN.*"³⁰⁷. Therefore, the

³⁰⁰ Spies Y.K., *op cit.*, 2010, p.78.

³⁰¹ Petrovski, V.: "Diplomacy as an instrument of Good Governance", Ed. by J. Kurbalija, 1998.

³⁰² Bond, P.: «Talk Left, Walk Right: South Africa's Frustrated Global Reforms», (2nd ed.), Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2003, p.4.

³⁰³ Landsberg, Chris., *op cit.*, 2015, p.43.

³⁰⁴ Carlsnaes, W., Nel, P.: "Introduction.", in *In Full Flight, South African Foreign Policy After Apartheid*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes and Philip Nel. Mirdrand: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006, p.21.

³⁰⁵ Landsberg, Chris., *op cit.*, 2015, p.44.

³⁰⁶ Carlsnaes, W., Nel, P., 2006, *op cit.*, p.16-21.

³⁰⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa: "A Strategic Appraisal of South Africa's Foreign Policy in Advancing the Agenda of Africa and the South.", Draft Discussion Paper, Policy Research and Analysis Unit, Heads of Missions Conference, Cape Town, February 2005, p.16.

importance given to the UN as having to assume a pre-eminent role in global affairs was conditioned by South Africa's will to reform it, this in concordance with a self-attributed "moral authority" championing a need for democratization.

While multilateralism has been at the heart of South African diplomacy since 1994, the UN was from then perpetually considered as a means for international cooperation and at the heart of its preoccupations. It was indeed the country's preferred strategy of multilateralism that international organizations and forums would constitute its main means of work³⁰⁸. It is consequently in this sense that upholding the sanctity of the Charter of the UN and observing its rules became forefront priorities. Moreover, as South Africa considered itself a voice and "spokesperson" for Africa as well as an "anchor state" of the continent, it felt responsible for defending the case for African representation³⁰⁹. It was (and still is) the country's vision that the 'Permanent 5' of the Security Council (USA, Britain, Russia, France, China) think of non-permanent members as "mere extras" in the broader picture of international relations³¹⁰. According to Dumisani Kumalo, South African ambassador at the UN from April 1999 to March 2009, the P5 has major control over the agenda as it decides both of the identification of threats as of the appropriate actions to be taken regarding these threats. It is also his view that Africa is under-represented³¹¹. It is in this state of mind that the UN's 60th anniversary World Summit of 2005 had tremendous consequences as a hope for structural reform spread worldwide. The African Union's (AU) "Ezulwini Consensus" of that same year demanded a reformed Council with two permanent African seats³¹². This proposal formed the basis of the Common African Position on the UNSC. It moreover insisted on an expansion of the Council from 15 to 26 members, adding 6 new veto-wielding members (including two for Africa) and five non-permanent rotating seats (also including two for Africa)³¹³. However, three competing proposals on UNSC reform respectively from the AU, the G4 and the "Uniting for Consensus group" prevented from gathering the two-thirds majority vote required from the UN General Assembly. Any Security Reform was all the more dead on arrival as America and China had joined efforts into preventing any

³⁰⁸ Landsberg, Chris., *op cit.*, 2015, p.46.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p.47.

³¹⁰ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony : « A Critique of South Africa's Role on the UN Security Council », *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 14 (1), 2007, p.64.

³¹¹ *Ibidem.*

³¹² Spies Y.K., *op cit.*, 2010, p.80.

³¹³ Kagwanja Peter : "Cry Sovereignty : South Africa and the UN Security Council in a hegemonic world, 2007-2008", *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, vol.3 (1), p.44.

expansion³¹⁴. Nonetheless, South Africa's efforts were not in vain, as its election as non-permanent Security Council Member for 2007-2008 opened the way to a reformist and unusually peculiar form of multilateralism.

Finally, South Africa had certain priorities and an idea of the legacy it should promote during its term within the institution. Most certainly, expectations were fuelled that this new entry would drastically strengthen Africa's influence in decision making in the Security Council. South Africa focused both its presidencies of March 2007 and April 2008 on the matter of enhancing the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations³¹⁵. The most promoted of these was particularly the AU, as initiatives emphasized the need for better and stronger coordination of efforts in peacekeeping and peace-making issues related to Africa³¹⁶. It is in this line of conduct that South Africa convened a high-level Security Council meeting leading to the adoption of SC resolution 1809 that called for an effective partnership with the AU in order to respond to emerging crises on the African continent³¹⁷. While South Africa continued to pursue UN reform with a conflict-prevention drive in Africa, it nonetheless sought to link these goals with the business of the UNSC³¹⁸. South African officials soon realized the need to focus on what were considered rather volatile situations like the Middle East and Occupied Palestinian Territory that have had great repercussion towards Africa. Moreover, the changes in perceptions of threat and in the nature of power relations in global politics related to September 11, 2001 had put forward issues such as non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. It was also South Africa's view that the hegemonic character of the UN was comforted by developed countries' acting as "lead nations" towards certain issues on the Security Council agenda. This tended to encourage "colonial-like" situations that were seen as undermining the sovereignty of smaller nations³¹⁹. It is in this sense that South African participation within the UN Security Council was constructed by the pursuit of a rule-based multilateralism and by a quest for the sovereignty of smaller states and regions in defiance of the unilateralism of greater global powers. South Africa most certainly used its influential position as the chairperson of the larger G77+China Group for 2007. Defining and taking

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.46.

³¹⁵ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.17.

³¹⁶ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony : "South Africa's National Interest.", *African Security Review*, 13 (2), 2004, p.80-101.

³¹⁷ Bischoff, P-H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.100.

³¹⁸ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.47.

³¹⁹ *Ibidem.*

advantage of its own moral authority, it fought all the more for the reform of the UN and other multilateral bodies³²⁰. Nonetheless, and as will be discussed later on, South Africa had a first contentious tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, as it defended positions or actions countering the narrative of itself being a “moral actor”, leading to sharp controversy domestically and abroad³²¹.

It is consequently arguable that South Africa’s commitment to multilateralism has been at the very least oriented by the place that ‘sovereignty’ and ‘regionalism’ have both taken in a post-Cold War and post-9/11 globalizing world. The rethinking of these two concepts by South Africa underpins what some scholars have theorized as a “new hegemonic world”³²². South Africa has sought to transform a world based on ‘hegemony’ considered as ‘domination’. It has in this sense a multilateral inclination to promote structural change and the legitimacy of global governance rather than its efficiency³²³. As argued by Yolanda Kemp Spies, the newly democratic regime may have prioritized the *form* of multilateral fora (including the UN Security Council) over the *substance* of their agenda (including human rights, non-proliferation and other moral high-grounds)³²⁴. While South Africa took a foreign policy orientation that was based on cooperation rather than coercion, it did not prevent it from acting in a way that proved to be perceived as ambiguous and ‘confused’³²⁵. The moral and ostensible normative foundation of its multilateralism was more than ever put into question. This will next be uncovered with a focus on of South Africa’s first controversial tenure within the UNSC.

c. South African ambiguities within the UNSC: 2007-2008

1. Foreign Policy orientation

During its controversial two-year (2007-2008) seat as non-permanent Security Council member, South Africa advocated the sovereign right of states to conduct their domestic affairs without interference, as it strongly positioned itself against the hegemonic nature of the Council. Howsoever, its voting behavior has especially been accused of an orientation

³²⁰ Landsberg, Chris., *op cit.*, 2015, p.52.

³²¹ Black David R. & Hornsby David J, 2016, *op cit.*, p.156.

³²² Baron. A & Lechini, G.: “Politics and social movements in a hegemonic world: Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America”, Buenos Aires, CLACSO Books, 2005.

³²³ Spies Y.K, 2010, *op cit.*, p.88.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* p.89.

³²⁵ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.62.

defending rogue behavior among “similar” and like-minded states in the global South, and particularly Africa³²⁶. The country thus seemed to be placing a higher premium on solidarity than on morality, somehow undermining the very foundation of its multilateralism³²⁷. Moreover, the opposition from the part of the South African government to have issues such as Myanmar, Zimbabwe and Global warming from being included on the agenda of the Security Council by Western powers has been at the basis of numerous controversies³²⁸. As such, multilateralism had seemed to have at least partially overshadowed a moral authority at the expense of a tension between competing ideological positions and pragmatic-economic drivers³²⁹. This can be best apprehended by deepening into the foreign policy orientation of the Mbeki government during the years of the UNSC presidency.

As highlighted previously, a double contradiction existed regarding South African ideologies. On the one hand within the discontinuity between Mandela’s “*transformist idealism*” that is mainly based on ethics and Mbeki’s “*reformist ideology*” defending Africa³³⁰. On the other hand, a contradiction maintained itself within the inconsistencies defining Mbeki’s ‘African Renaissance’. This second point can be deepened as Mbeki, president during South Africa’s first term at the UNSC, is also one of the most prominent figures of the so-called “second generation” nationalists³³¹. Keeping in mind the idea of a correlation between foreign policy and national identity, and stressing once again the importance of ideologies towards the formation of the latest, UNSC ambiguities from the part of South Africa must necessarily go through an understanding of a general contradictory positioning. As such, “second generation” nationalists consider the mistakes of the earlier nationalist leadership as the consequence of machinations from ex-colonial powers as well as from the Cold War bloc oppositions³³². It is in this sense that their anti-colonial agenda is seen as only realisable within a transformation of the balance of power in the global order³³³.

³²⁶ Spies Y.K, 2010, *op cit.*, p.80.

³²⁷ Geldenhuys, D.: “South Africa’s Role as International Norm Entrepreneur”, in *In Full Flight: South African Foreign Policy After Apartheid*, edited by W. Carlsnaes and P. Nel: 97-106. Midrand: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006.

³²⁸ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.62.

³²⁹ Alden, C. & Le Pere, G: “South Africa in Africa: Bound to Lead?”, *Politikon* 36, no.1 (April 2009), 145-169.

³³⁰ Alden, C. & Le Pere, G., 2004, *op cit.*, p.195.

³³¹ Habib, A.: “South Africa’s foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation”, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.16, No.2, August 2009, p.146.

³³² Lee, MC. : « The 21st century scramble for Africa », *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24.3, 2006, p.107-121.

³³³ Habib, A., 2009, *op cit.*, p.146.

Undeniably, “second generation” nationalists such as Thabo Mbeki are aware of South Africa’s relative weakness in the international system.

The three responses that have emerged from this have given birth to three seemingly contending foreign policy orientations³³⁴. First, an appeasement strategy has been adopted. The aim to the international system was mainly reconciliation with existing power holders in order to win political and economic concessions. While obtaining significant economic and political benefits, entering into alliances with the U.S. or other Western countries would enable to get the best deal out of the latest global circumstances. Secondly, the adoption of an aggressive, militant and anti-imperial posture is to be taken into account. As it is in contradiction with the previous foreign policy strategy, it makes an emphasis on sovereignty and anti-colonialism³³⁵. This also leads to a third strategic orientation that is the reflection of a cross between pragmatism and principle, with at its basis the need to reform the global world order. This orientation howsoever recognizes that’s such an outcome would neither emerge from only appeasement nor from only delinking from the international system³³⁶. It is rather consistent with the idea of understanding power relations within the international system in order to subvert it, also focusing on reforming the global order. Recognizing that power is always relational, this strategic orientation has been referred by scholars as “soft-balancing”³³⁷. In the South African case, the practice of this strategy would have involved both appeasement and subversive engagement.

During its tenure within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008, South Africa’s practice of the three latest strategic foreign policy orientations has most certainly unveiled a resulting practice of multilateralism that has been perceived as unprincipled, incoherent or even arbitrary³³⁸. As such, discerning South Africa’s foreign policy orientation leads to question its political positions on various issues on the Security Council³³⁹. These multilateral ambiguities can at best be apprehended by focusing on South Africa’s participation in UN Security Council decisions. It is indeed a fact that criticism of the country’s tenure in the UNSC is mostly established on its position on four controversial decisions. South Africa

³³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³³⁵ Bischoff, P-H.: “Reform in Defence of Sovereignty: South Africa in the UN Security Council, 2007-2008”, in: *Africa Spectrum*, 44(2), 2009, p.95-110.

³³⁶ Habib, A., 2009, *op cit.*, p.147.

³³⁷ Paul, T.V.: “Soft balancing in the age of US primacy”, *International Security*, 30.1, 2005, p.46-71.

³³⁸ Habib, A., 2009, *op cit.*, p.147.

³³⁹ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.62.

indeed worked alongside Russia and China (among others) to prevent the adoption of resolutions condemning and imposing sanctions on Iran, Sudan, Myanmar and Zimbabwe. Moreover, it will be relevant to mention that South Africa opposed a discussion on climate change in April 2007. Along with China, Indonesia, Russia and Qatar, it argued that the UNSC was not a suited forum for discussing the issue. Paradoxically, it had supported the struggle on climate change at the G8 Heiligendamm summit³⁴⁰.

2. Controversial decisions

While South Africa has made multilateral diplomacy a priority, the normative direction of its international involvement remains unclear and often contradictory. Identifying the principles that underlie the country's foreign policy has proven to be challenging, as it has already previously been described as vacillating and characterized by '*ad-hoc-ery*',³⁴¹. It is nonetheless arguable that the idea of *foreign policy* in itself implies a measure of agency, as policymakers make choices regarding which course of action to undertake³⁴². Keeping in mind that there are tensions between several foreign policy orientations, the aim will here be to identify the country's multilateral contradictions within the Security Council. While a great proportion of the UNSC's decisions reflect the alterations that emerge from its structure, South Africa stood out as a decidedly recalcitrant member of the Council. Its ploys aimed at obstructing Western powers from using the Security Council as an "influence extender" are visible in its four most controversial stances³⁴³.

Myanmar (/Burma)

On the 12th of January 2007, ten days after South Africa took its seat, the Security Council voted on a resolution that aimed at condemning the human rights situation in Myanmar. It sought to call on the military junta to put an end to military attacks against civilians in ethnic minority regions. The result on the vote of the draft resolution was of nine in favor and three against (Russia, China and South Africa), with three abstentions (Qatar, Indonesia, Congo)³⁴⁴. South Africa had thus already attracted domestic and international critics, as it

³⁴⁰ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.17.

³⁴¹ Evans, G. : "South Africa's foreign policy after Mandela: Mbeki and his conception of an African Renaissance", *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 88(352): p.624.

³⁴² Jordaan, Eduard : « South Africa, Multilateralism and the Global Politics of Development », *European Journal of Development Research*, 24, 2012, p.285.

³⁴³ *Ibidem.*

³⁴⁴ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.69.

joined Russia and China in preventing possible substantive dialogue that may have led to a “genuine democratic transition”³⁴⁵.

During the debate on the vote, the ambassador and leader of the South African delegation Dumisani Kumalo stated that the country’s negative vote was justified by three interlinked premises³⁴⁶. First that the text would put the “good offices” of the Secretary General in jeopardy when dealing with delicate issues of security, peace and human rights. Second that the issues dealt with in the text should be best left to the Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Thirdly that the draft was arguably not fitting in the mandate granted to the Council by the Charter³⁴⁷. Moreover, Kumalo stated that the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had demonstrated that Myanmar did not constitute a threat for its neighbors. This vote was supported by Thabo Mbeki who responded on the same day, advancing that the decision was in some ways embodying a protest against the Security Council’s transgressions of international law³⁴⁸. The vote thus seemed to be based on principle, as it extensively embodied a step towards the preservation of the sovereignty and integrity of the UN and its organs. Finally, it was South Africa’s feeling that the draft resolution would have shut any window of communication that had been established with the junta in Myanmar. This was in view of the fact that the UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari had previously been appointed in order to establish channels for confidential and private communication with the parties in Burma and had managed to do so to a certain extent³⁴⁹.

Despite these justifications, South Africa never took the matter to the UNHRC³⁵⁰. When the issue was actually brought up in the Human Rights Council following a violent response from the part of Myanmar’s military junta to peaceful protests in September 2007, South Africa was not among the 53 countries calling for a special session on the issue³⁵¹. Domestic critics such as Archbishop Tutu thus advanced that the vote brought South Africa to position itself against the human rights of the people of Myanmar. In some sense, it was

³⁴⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa: “South Africa assumes non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council”, Media Statement, Pretoria, 12th January 2007.

³⁴⁶ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.48.

³⁴⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa (DFA): Notes following the briefing by the deputy minister, Aziz Pahad. Pretoria, 3rd August 2007.

³⁴⁸ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.69.

³⁴⁹ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.48.

³⁵⁰ Bischoff, P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.103

³⁵¹ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.18.

seen as inconsistent with South Africa's History as it made use of similar arguments that the ones from the apartheid regime to oppress its victims³⁵². It was thus in Desmond Tutu's view that to be in line with its own History, South Africa was meant to have sided with the Burmese people³⁵³. Some analysts also accused South Africa of aligning with Russia and China in the UNSC. Although the country did affirm its support of Gambari's attempts to ease dialogue and improve the human rights condition in Myanmar, South Africa surprisingly never managed to reach consensus with other African countries in the UNSC around the issue of Myanmar. It was in the view of countries such as Ghana and Congo that grave human rights abuses ultimately constituted a threat to international peace and security³⁵⁴.

As an outcome, public perception world-wide was that the South African government was willing to give up its moral authority regarding the promotion of human rights. This is all the more disturbing as it is one of the key pillars of its foreign policy principles³⁵⁵. South Africa can therefore be argued to have been sacrificing human rights in favor of sovereignty and non-western interference. Nonetheless, and as San Suu Kyi has become an international symbol of resistance against oppression, the question of knowing why South Africa did vote against this resolution persists³⁵⁶.

Iran

On the 24th of March 2007, Germany, Britain, France and the U.S. introduced resolution 1747 before the Security Council. This resolution dealt with the question of the international community's response to Iran's nuclear program, and particularly called on the country to respect obligations stipulated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Treaty on Non-Proliferation³⁵⁷. While most U.N. members had important doubts about the peaceful intentions of this program, South Africa seemingly did not as it threatened to abstain in the vote of the resolution.

³⁵² Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.104.

³⁵³ Bischoff, P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.103

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.49

³⁵⁵ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.71.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p.70.

³⁵⁷ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.18.

The resolution in itself was ultimately adopted unanimously and imposed sanctions aimed at persuading Iran to limit any further development of its nuclear program³⁵⁸. The four chief sponsors of the resolution did manage to secure support from Russia and China, howsoever by giving up on a number of the most rigid measures. As for South Africa, they managed to overcome any opposition by adding provisions that made an emphasis on the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle-East and by highlighting the role that would be given to the IAEA in dealing with the nuclear dispute regarding Iran. These provisions also secured backing from Qatar and Indonesia³⁵⁹. It was indeed South Africa's position that a negotiated settlement of the quarrel should be achievable, without having recourse to coercive measures. This was based on a double assumption. On the one hand, that countries should have the right to exploit nuclear technology for peaceful uses within the framework of appropriate safeguards. On the other hand, that all countries have the obligation of disarmament and of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons³⁶⁰. It is in this regard important to mention that within the IAEA, South Africa had attempted to assert a global consensus on the meanings of 'nuclearity'. It had moreover made several and heterogeneously formed attempts to set boundaries between "the political" and "the technical". As such, South Africa had become a "poster child" of nuclear non-proliferation, as it committed to dismantling its nuclear capacities in 1993. The political redemption had been accompanied by a nuclear redemption³⁶¹.

As South Africa finally voted in favor of UNSC resolution 1747, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo stated that this was since "*although far from ideal, it is a consequence of concern about the need to build international confidence in Iran's nuclear program*"³⁶². As he stipulated that South Africa's principled position was the suppression of all weapons of mass destruction, he acknowledged that it was also against the development of a nuclear arsenal by Iran. It was nonetheless also in his view that the coercive measures the Security Council was in right to impose had to be used cautiously, as he believed in the continuation of negotiations and political dialogue with the aim of achieving a peaceful solution³⁶³. South

³⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁵⁹ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.69.

³⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

³⁶¹ Hecht, Gabrielle : "Negotiating Global Nuclearities: Apartheid, Decolonization, and the Cold War in the Making of the IAEA", *Osiris*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Global Power Knowledge: Science and Technology in International Affairs (2006), p. 47-48.

³⁶² Statement by Ambassador DS Kumalo, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Security Council on non-Proliferation, March 24th, 2007.

³⁶³ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.69.

Africa also expressed its disappointment, still arguing that the Security Council was not the appropriate forum to handle Iran's nuclear program³⁶⁴. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Deputy of International Relations and Co-operation, furthermore stated that South Africa had been forced to vote for the resolution. According to him, the country did not understand U.N. protocol dictating that a country cannot vote against or abstain from a resolution in which's drafting it had previously been involved in. Ebrahim declared, "*We voted for it in the end, but we wanted to vote against it. We had to explain this to the Iranians*"³⁶⁵.

Although other Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) states in the IAEA yielded to pressure and eventually favored reporting Iran to the Security Council, South Africa remained overall deeply opposed, despite its positive vote on the resolution concerning Iran's nuclear program³⁶⁶. While it wanted a significant weakening of the proposed sanctions and a 90-day intermission to permit farther negotiations with Iran, the final resolution was adopted unanimously and quite alike to its original form. Nonetheless, South Africa continued to express its disappointment and to argue against dealing with Iran's nuclear program within the Security Council³⁶⁷. Once again, the reasons underpinning this controversial attitude seem unclear.

Sudan

In July 2007, South Africa backed Sudan and opposed a draft resolution that raised the possibility of imposing sanctions against combatants who attack civilians and obstruct peace efforts. It also raised the option of imposing these sanctions against specific parties to the conflict that refuse to cooperate with UNAMID, the UN-AU hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur³⁶⁸. Kumalo defended that any mention of sanctions would be 'totally unacceptable'. What followed was an enhancement of international observers' disappointment, as South Africa was already expected to make bigger efforts in addressing what is seen as one of the worst humanitarian crises of the contemporary world³⁶⁹.

³⁶⁴ Jordaen, Eduard, 2002, *op cit.*, p.291.

³⁶⁵ Rossouw, M: "Bungled Iranian Sanctions", Mail & Guardian. October 15 to 21, 2010.

³⁶⁶ Ogilvie-White, T: "International Responses to Iranian nuclear defiance: The non-aligned movement and the issue of non-compliance.", *European Journal of International Law* 18(3), 2007, p.453-476.

³⁶⁷ Jordaen, Eduard, 2002, *op cit.*, p.291.

³⁶⁸ Nathan, L.: "Anti-imperialism trumps human rights: South Africa's approach to the Darfur Conflict", CSRC Working Papers, London, 2, paper 31, 2008. p.1.

³⁶⁹ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.19.

It is first important to mention that South Africa's relations with Sudan date back to the apartheid regime. It is indeed in the 1990's that the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had forged a relationship with the ANC while seeking support against threats of military campaigning from an adverse Sudanese Party. While the SPLA had split into two factions in 1991, its reunification in 2003 led to the signing of a new 'memorandum of political understanding' with the African National Congress. While under Mandela, South Africa's foreign policy towards Sudan had been marked by the solidarity with its people, Mbeki's presidency led to a foreign policy rather informed by the African agenda. It is in this sense that normalizing relations with the SPLA and working toward a stabilization of region had become priorities, as Mbeki refused to become directly involved in mediating the conflict³⁷⁰. Nonetheless, South Africa continued to play a prominent role both as chair of the AU Committee on Post Conflict Reconstruction Process in Sudan and as participator to the AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur³⁷¹. South Africa's involvement in efforts to resolve diverse aspects of the violent conflict in the region had led it to consistently pull the problems in Sudan towards the jurisdiction of the AU³⁷².

When opposing itself to the draft resolution to impose sanctions against Sudan in July 2007, South Africa once again got to apply its soft diplomatic touch intended at challenging the West and as an effort to hold them back³⁷³. South Africa had as such remained engaged in the peace process in Sudan only at a regional level, as it sought to obstruct debates about Sudan's human rights transgressions in the global fora. South Africa had in fact repeatedly tried to undermine efforts addressing the Darfur human rights crisis within the UNHRC³⁷⁴. In a pursuit of institutionalizing pan-Africanism, the wish to regionalize the issue of Sudan minimized the role of the U.S. and the West in defining and consequently shaping political events on the African continent. In a way, it was a manifestation of leadership from the part of South Africa, as well amongst African States as amongst the developing world in general³⁷⁵. Moreover, South Africa sided with the AU and the Arab League in 2008 asking for the resolution renewing UNAMID to include a call on the ICC to defer for 12 months

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p.20

³⁷¹ Adebayo, A.: "South Africa and Nigeria in Africa: An Axis of Virtue", South Africa in Africa. The Post-Apartheid Era, edited by Adebajo Adekeyen Adebayo Adeji and Chris Landsberg. Cape Town: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 2007.

³⁷² Jordaan, Eduard, 2002, *op cit.*, p.291.

³⁷³ *Ibidem.*

³⁷⁴ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.21.

³⁷⁵ Bischoff, P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.104.

any possible indictment of Sudan's president Al-Bashir. Although this was refused by the Security Council, language taking note of the AU request was included, stating the desire to reconsider the issue in the Security Council at a later time³⁷⁶. This set of actions is nonetheless in line with the consistent lack of criticism Pretoria has shown towards the excessive and systematic use of force against civilians from the part of Khartoum³⁷⁷.

The positive relationship South Africa has historically had with Sudan since the end of apartheid is inconsistent with a commitment to democracy and human rights. While a fair deal of intentional inaction towards the Darfur catastrophe is reflective of an anti-Imperialist posture, it remains hard to see how the strategy of blocking international cooperation against a dictatorial regime alters the inequalities of the international system or yields benefits to the Global South³⁷⁸. South Africa's position towards Sudan has once again led many to accuse the country of conciliating Karthoum and authorizing the continuation of oppression towards the Sudanese people. Given South Africa's historical wrestle against apartheid, granted moral authority and commitment to democracy and human rights, its position on the Sudanese resolution(s) is especially troubling³⁷⁹.

Zimbabwe

On the 28th of March 2007, Britain urged the UN Security Council to reprimand Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, as a political crisis arose because of the government security forces' crackdown on the political opposition. It was indeed the UK's vision that the Security Council's action on Zimbabwe should be accelerated in order to match the ones of regional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC)³⁸⁰. Nonetheless, the UNSC soon became a theatre of contestation between main Western powers and African representatives led by South Africa. Pretoria's management of the crisis situation was thrust into the international spotlight as it opposed any intervention in Zimbabwe, arguing that the matter did not constitute a threat to international peace and security³⁸¹.

³⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷⁷ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.22.

³⁷⁸ Nathan, L, 2008, *op cit.*, p.10.

³⁷⁹ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.22.

³⁸⁰ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.71.

³⁸¹ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.50.

Relations between Zimbabwe and the World had already been a source of tension after Mugabe's 1980 internationally supervised elections, as his ruthless and autocratic tendencies soon became evident³⁸². Moreover, the renewed crisis that took place in the country shortly after Mbeki took office led Zimbabwe to be in economic freefall. The macroeconomic mismanagement of the early 2000's was being all the more aggravated by a corrupt and clientelist ruling elite. Mugabe's use of increasingly illegal and violent means such as racial politics and political repression to remain in power did not prevent Thabo Mbeki from adopting a "quiet diplomacy" strategy towards Zimbabwe³⁸³. The resulting "cognitive dissonance",³⁸⁴ was apparent as the South African government regularly called on the international community to drop the 'smart sanctions' against Mugabe's regime. It has also been suggested that South Africa remained silent on the Zimbabwean issue in return for its vote within international organizations³⁸⁵. Quite evidently, a substantial amount of evidence was to show that South Africa had been protecting Mugabe's regime from international sanctions and criticism³⁸⁶. It may then seem less troubling to consider that Dumisani Kumalo called the March 2009 British request 'surprising', as he defended that the Zimbabwean matter was an internal affair that did not call for the UNSC's attention. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans had been constrained to mass migrate to South Africa, as their country of origin embodied repression and an inflationary free-fall of the economy³⁸⁷.

Furthermore, the efforts put in by Britain to put the issue of Zimbabwe on the table in the Security Council encouraged the already broad suspicion in Africa that it was at the root of the Zimbabwean crisis. Already in 2005, several countries including the US, Denmark, France and Japan supported a provision invoked by Britain in order for the Council to be briefed about a UN Special Envoy report on Zimbabwe. Opposed to the move was the whole African contingent of the UNSC, together with Russia and China³⁸⁸. The veto of these two latest countries was constantly counted on by South Africa in order to block any Western efforts to bring the Zimbabwean crisis onto the UNSC agenda, even though pressure groups

³⁸² Gevisser, Mark: "A Legacy of Liberation. Thabo Mbeki and the Future of the South African Dream", New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* p.298-299.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.272.

³⁸⁵ Brysk, Alison: "Global Good Samaritans: Human rights as foreign policy", New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. p.178.

³⁸⁶ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.15.

³⁸⁷ Bischoff, P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.102.

³⁸⁸ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.50.

were advancing that crimes against humanity were being perpetrated in the country. While South Africa repeatedly opposed Western powers and their attempts to bring the issue within the Security Council, it nonetheless defended that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was the best environment to solve the crisis³⁸⁹. It is indeed a fact that while media images of police brutality were spreading around the world in March 2007, the SADC convened an ‘extraordinary’ meeting of Heads of states and governments to talk over security matters in the region³⁹⁰. Although Thabo Mbeki had directly been appointed by the SADC to facilitate dialogue between the Zimbabwean government and the opposition, the organization failed at achieving quick results ahead of the controversial 29th March 2008 elections in Zimbabwe³⁹¹. In the following of these elections and in the same line of conduct, South Africa, together with Russia, China, Libya and Vietnam successfully opposed a draft resolution that aimed at imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe as a result of Mugabe’s reelection and of a worsening of the human rights situation. While this resolution was supported by 10 Council members led by the USA, South Africa’s position amplified the contested character of the Zimbabwean case between African nations and the West³⁹².

Quite evidently, the Zimbabwe case has been an example of South Africa’s preference for political stability over democracy, and of an effort to protect the sovereignty of an African and developing country³⁹³. While it seems clear that the UK played politics and that South Africa’s response was formulated with this in mind, it is hardly deniable that the Zimbabwean population suffered outraging human rights abuses³⁹⁴. Question of the reasons underpinning such decisions arise. As advanced by observers, Mbeki’s policy on Zimbabwe remains puzzling³⁹⁵.

3. Final assessments and Conclusion

In all four cases considered, South Africa sided with illiberal and authoritarian regimes. This has been motivated on the grounds that the US, European countries and the “Western World” in general were adopting a behavior that encouraged a hegemonic posture. Or these countries were violating existing rules of the UN system by tabling issues in structures that

³⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁹⁰ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.71.

³⁹¹ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.50.

³⁹² Bischoff, P-H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.102.

³⁹³ Jordaan, Eduard, 2002, *op cit.*, p.292.

³⁹⁴ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.71.

³⁹⁵ Mahant, Edelgard, 2012, *op cit.*, p.22.

were not appropriate, or they were targeting specific countries towards which they had hostility³⁹⁶. Nonetheless, South Africa found itself reluctantly accused of betraying its own legacy of human rights struggle, as the country arguably opposed the strategies and traditions that had allowed it to free itself from apartheid abuses³⁹⁷. Although South African foreign policy could now be described as rather anti-imperialist in tenor, it remained highly criticized for being fundamentally hypocritical and confused³⁹⁸. The unclear and often contradictory normative direction of South Africa's international involvement within the UNSC will best be apprehended by focusing on the country's conflictual relationship with liberal principles, both from a subnational and supranational perspective. Finally, focusing on the issues of climate change and counter-terrorism within the UNSC will broaden the scope of South African departures from liberalism.

To begin with, while some of the contradictions of South African foreign policy and their expression within the United Security Council have been identified, one must keep in mind that the idea of *foreign policy* implies a degree of agency. Policymakers thus have a certain liberty in choosing the course of action they will pursue. These choices have a degree of normativity as they embody expressions about what actions should be relegated or foregone³⁹⁹. As we will attempt to link foreign policy and national identity, one can present South Africa's foreign policy contradictions as torn by different identity struggles on different identity levels. Considering national identity formation as being the result of the interplay between a subnational, national and supranational scale will have relevance. Indeed, and as it has been reiterated by several scholars, too little attention has been paid "*to the overall thrust of South African foreign policy: the normative principles that underlie Pretoria's interaction with the international community*"⁴⁰⁰. Hence, and as defended by Eduard Jordaan, one can focus on the way in which liberal aspects of South African foreign policy have been strained both at a domestic and at an international scale. Therefore, multilateralism within the UNSC will be looked upon as a deviation from liberalist principles, with a focus on the prescriptive aspects of liberalism⁴⁰¹. It is in this sense that

³⁹⁶ Habib H.: "South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.16, No.2, August 2009, p.153.

³⁹⁷ Taljaard R. : « South Africa lacks human rights based foreign policy », *The Times*, 15th July 2008.

³⁹⁸ Alden, Chris.: "South African Foreign Policy and the UN Security Council: Assessing its Impact on the African Peace and Security Architecture", *Policy Insights, Foreign Policy Programme*, June 2015.

³⁹⁹ Jordaan, Eduard , 2002, *op cit.*, p.284-285.

⁴⁰⁰ Vale, Peter & Taylor, Ian, 1999, *op cit.*, p.632.

⁴⁰¹ Jordaan, Eduard , 2002, *op cit.*, p.285.

‘liberalism’ will be considered as “*a perspective on what is morally correct*” rather than as “*a theory that explains international interactions*”⁴⁰². Although an entire book could be dedicated to an extensive definition, liberalism considers human rights as universally applicable, and has in recent years been leaning towards acceptance of state sovereignty violation in order to preserve these rights⁴⁰³.

From a domestic perspective, the identity struggles around an ethnic and racial dimension previously highlighted come to play as a source of pressure on the liberal aspects of South Africa’s foreign policy. While citizens are mainly excluded from the process of implementing foreign policy decisions, domestic debates and political beliefs are to be found in South Africa’s external actions⁴⁰⁴. Eduard Jordaan identifies three main domestic political battles that offer a frame for a fair amount of the country’s foreign policy. These are respectively debates concerning the role of the state in the economy, the nature of democracy and the issue of race⁴⁰⁵. First, the debate around the role of the state in the economy has arguably been revived by the end of apartheid as the ANC adopted the ‘Growth, Employment and Redistribution’ plan (GEAR). This was a neoliberal response to globalization and its economic pressures. Nonetheless, expectations were mainly that the party would pursue interventionist and redistributionist economic policies in view of its leftist leanings. While such liberalization has been pursued by Mbeki, it nonetheless highlighted a tension between externally oriented Capital and the ANC’s economic left⁴⁰⁶. The post-apartheid democratic transition also had a fair role to play in the second domestic debate, as it reinvigorated confrontations concerning the nature of democracy. The fight against apartheid indeed implied the idea of equality among people, as liberal principles were at the basis of the new democracy. In the line of ideas of the slogan ‘one person, one vote’, elements such as the rule of law, a liberal constitution and independent media were strong markers. Nonetheless, the Mbeki years have witnessed the upcoming of several attacks on these liberal components, such as the undermining of judicial independence⁴⁰⁷. Finally, the debate about the issue of race also offers a frame for South Africa’s foreign

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* p.286.

⁴⁰³ Smith, Karen : « R2P and the Protection of Civilians : South Africa’s Perspective on Conflict Resolution », Policy Briefing 133, Global Powers and Africa Programme, March 2015.

⁴⁰⁴ Friedman, S.: “‘We met the enemy and he is US’: Domestic politics and South Africa’s role in promoting African democracy”, *African Journal of International Affairs* 11(2), 2008, p.38-43.

⁴⁰⁵ Jordaan, Eduard , 2002, *op cit.*, p.288.

⁴⁰⁶ Taylor, I. : “Stuck in Middle GEAR : South Africa’s Post-Apartheid Foreign Relations”, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001.

⁴⁰⁷ Jordaan, Eduard , 2002, *op cit.*, p.288.

policy. While it is a fact that the end of apartheid has been based on a fight against oppression, Mbeki's has postured himself as a 'non-racialism promotor' while at the same time promoting one racial group through "positive discrimination". This has revealed being most delicate⁴⁰⁸.

From an international perspective, the ambiguities existing around South Africa's foreign policy identity can also serve as a framework for discerning the country's departures from liberalism. The uncertainties around defining it as a "regional hegemon", "middle power" or "emerging middle power" did nothing but highlight a foreign policy that has been pulled in heterogeneous directions. While these contradictions have been depicted in the chapter concerning 'Identity construction in the international realm', it is nonetheless useful to remind that South Africa has persistently been torn between the West and several developing country groupings. From an economic perspective, Pretoria has indeed had to conciliate the interests of global capital with the ones of marginalized groups. A certain degree of loyalty to groupings such as the African Union can thus be argued to have pulled South Africa away from entirely championing typically Western liberal postures⁴⁰⁹. According to Eduard Jordaan, South Africa's characteristics as a "middle power" have led it to pursue strategies that paradoxically sought to endorse and at the same time delegitimize the values of a Western-led international order⁴¹⁰. Therefore, Jordaan also argues that "*South African middlepowership frequently breaks out of the liberal normative band*"⁴¹¹. Adam Habib's conception of South Africa being a "regional hegemon" also highlights this incongruity. The author indeed argues that this status implies for South Africa to be confronted to a series of obligations, responsibilities and privileges that separate it from its African counterparts⁴¹². In this sense, South Africa has been confronted to a number of imperatives that have led it to be torn between acting as an African representative and fully adhering to liberalism. While the interactions with countries at the continental and global level matter in the framing of the country's identity and interests, South Africa can once again be argued to display signs of several and sometimes contradictory "archetypes" of foreign policy identities. These would have led the country to be pulled in different directions and to exercise significant pressures on its adherence to liberalist principles.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹⁰ Jordaan, Eduard, 2002, *op cit.*, p.287.

⁴¹¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹² Habib H, 2009, *op cit.*, p.144.

Finally, the four cases presented are not exhaustive multilateral examples of South Africa's conflictual relationship with liberal principles. In this line, one may also take into consideration two further issues regarding South African multilateralism during its first tenure at the UNSC. First, the Security Council discussed climate change and related security issues on the 17th April 2007⁴¹³. It was the UK's view that this debate had a place in the Council as it was *"about the world recognizing that there is a security imperative... for tackling climate change and for our beginning to build a shared understanding of the relationship between energy, climate and security"*⁴¹⁴. The aim was consequently to securitize climate change as it was considered likely to drive conflict in world politics⁴¹⁵. Howsoever, South Africa opposed the UK's view alongside Russia, China, Qatar and Indonesia. It was their vision that the issue of climate change did not find its place within the UNSC. Nonetheless, South Africa had endorsed battling climate change at the G8 summit of Heiligendamn the very same year⁴¹⁶. Quite evidently, bringing climate change on the table of the Security Council revived the North-South divide⁴¹⁷. The second issue to be accounted for is the one of 'the war on terror'. While South Africa had been opposed to the military-heavy approach especially preferred by Washington after September 11, US-South African diplomatic relations on the issue of terrorism strained all the more in January 2007⁴¹⁸. Indeed, the US Treasury named two South Africans as Specially Designated Global Terrorists and submitted their names (Junaid and Farhad Dockrat) to the Sanctions Committee on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban for designation by the UNSC. The South African response was to implore the 1267 committee (in charge of imposing sanctions against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda) to postpone the UN designations. While the country pushed for defending the rights of its citizens, South Africa has been robustly accused by Western powers of being too soft on counter-terrorism⁴¹⁹.

While South African multilateralism during its first tenure in the United Nations Security Council has been periodically marked by contradictions and apparent confusion, it has

⁴¹³ Bischoff, P-H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.102.

⁴¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, 5663rd Meeting, 17 April 2007.

⁴¹⁵ Bischoff, P-H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.102.

⁴¹⁶ Brauch, H.G.: "From a state centered security dilemma towards a human centered survival dilemma", Paper, Second World Conference on International Studies, Slovenia, 23-26 July 2008, p.14.

⁴¹⁷ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2007, *op cit.*, p.72.

⁴¹⁸ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.53.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.54.

frequently been unstable in its commitment to liberal principles. The role that national identity construction has towards these departures from liberalism is not to be neglected as both domestic and international levels of identification seem to interplay. South Africa had indeed been following a neo-liberal script in tune with the economic ties it has with the USA and Europe. Nonetheless, the country simultaneously aligned with others in search of a “stable, post-liberal social world”⁴²⁰. South Africa’s attempts to associate the African Agenda with the work of global peace, governance structures and security have been conditioned by the role of UN multilateralism as the hallmark of the post-apartheid era. Strikingly, the ‘post 9/11’ world made way for unilateralism and a doctrine of pre-emption championed by great powers⁴²¹. By consequently intending on a rule-based system and seeking to defer matters elsewhere than to the Security Council, South Africa acted out of character and often inconsistently. This unpredictability has been all the more troubling as the country has human rights at the core of its foreign policy. Undeniably, this persistent image of irregularity has imperiled South Africa’s credibility as possible facilitator regarding North-South dialogue and overall cooperation⁴²².

IV) Using Critical Discourse Analysis

As required by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), we have now successfully deepened our understanding of the conceptual and historical contexts of the post-apartheid identity struggles. We also have better grasp on the multilateral ambiguities of South Africa in the UNSC during its 2007-2008 tenure. This part will consequently aim at analyzing discourses from South African Elites. Using Critical discourse analysis will here enable to further explore a relationship of causality between discursive practices linked to a blurry national identity formation and ambiguous multilateral practices.

Because the aim is here to analyze ways in which national identity can be interpreted discursively, one have to keep in mind a view of identity as being at the same time *structured* and *unstable*⁴²³. Therefore, and as I have previously tried to demonstrate, the

⁴²⁰ Martin, W.: “South Africa’s Sub-Imperial Futures: Washington Consensus, Bandung Consensus or a People’s Consensus?”, Africa Files, 2009. p.3.

⁴²¹ Kagwanga, P, 2008, *op cit.*, p.54.

⁴²² Bischoff, P-H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.106.

⁴²³ Waever, Ole: “Identity, Communities and foreign policy: Discourse analysis as foreign policy theory”, in European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States, Routledge, 2001, p.22.

basic assumption will be that “*there is no such thing as the one and only national identity in an essentializing sense*”⁴²⁴. As defended by Wodak, nations can be considered as mental constructs, or ‘imagined communities’, in which national identities are produced, transformed or dismantled by the use of discourse⁴²⁵. Moreover, because CDA assumes that discourse is central to social and political life, understanding discursive practices is in this logic analogous to understanding the underlying logic of the social and political organization of a specific arena⁴²⁶.

a. Empirical Sources

As the method here used is based on analyzing speech acts and the performative nature of language, it seems important to focus on texts that have been expressed at some point. Moreover, I will take into account the fact that there is a need to examine discourses that are analogous but also prior to the question of multilateral ambiguities in 2007 and 2008. This will arguably enable to have a fuller understanding of the way in which certain aspects of national identification have become dominant. There is thus in choosing the empirical sources a question of delimitation of *time* but also of *genre*⁴²⁷. In my view, one can add the question of delimitation of *space*.

Regarding the question of *genre*, one has to keep in mind that critical discourse analysis works on public texts. Therefore, and as defended by Ole Wæver, one stays at the level of discourse. This implies that there is no intention to uncover thoughts or hidden intentions. The objective is merely to work on open sources and to use them as what they are instead of indicators of something else.⁴²⁸ Moreover, CDA claims that language only gains power by the use that powerful people make of it. As claimed by Ruth Wodak, this is why critical discourse analysis preferably analyzes the language of individuals in power⁴²⁹. This latest assessment will have relevance in our case as South African leaders are the ones that have a degree of agency in framing foreign policy orientations and by extension, multilateralism within the UNSC. Regarding the question of *space*, one has to keep in mind that the

⁴²⁴ Wodak R., De Cilla R., Reisigl M., Liebhart K.: « The Discursive Construction of National Identity », Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2009, p.154.

⁴²⁵ Kvetina, Jan, 2015, *op cit.*, p.208-209.

⁴²⁶ Crawford, Neta C, 2004, *op cit.*, p.22.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.* p.23.

⁴²⁸ Wæver, Ole., 2001, *op cit.*, p.26.

⁴²⁹ Wodak, Ruth: “Aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis”, In: *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik*, Vol. 36, 2002, p.10.

constructive nature that we have given to South Africa's national identity implies that it is the product of identity struggles at several levels. Therefore, discursive practices implying national identity are not restricted to the single frame that is the United Nations Security Council. South African officials have indeed mostly invoked identity related issues outside of the organization during their first tenure as non-permanent member.

Therefore, the Empirical Sources have been chosen by delineating a peculiar *genre timeframe*, and *spaceframe*. First, the *genre* implies that the texts chosen will thus be the ones of South African Elites, and peculiarly the leaders that have had a degree of agency in framing South Africa's national interest, identity and consequent decisions and votes within the United Nations Security Council. These will be public and available discourses from influential figures such as President Thabo Mbeki, his late 2008 successor Kgalema Motlanthe, the Minister of foreign affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, Ambassador A.S. Minty, Ambassador George Nene, the Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, the Deputy Minister to the Human Rights Council Johnny de Lange, the Minister of Social Development Dr Zola Sidney Themba Skweyiya, Deputy Minister Sue van Der Merwe, Minister Jan Kubis, Chief Director Xolisa Mabhongo and public statements released by the South African Government. Second, the *timeline* will be the one going from January 2006 to December 2008. This indeed takes the 2007-2008 non-permanent tenure into consideration, and as discussed, enables to examine a slice of discourse that is prior to our question. As meanings are created over time, this will arguably allow a better understanding of national identity conceptions⁴³⁰. Finally, the *spaceframe* will not be limited to discourses and statements made within the Security Council. As Identity is seen as the result of a construction, it implies that is expressed both at a subnational and supranational level. While "*identities emerge in turn from the historical interplay of domestic and international experiences and social change, with circumstances and the ascription of roles by the outsiders as powerful factors*"⁴³¹, it will also be appropriate to consider discourses addressed at a domestic public and discourses addressed at an international public outside of the UN Security Council. Discussions with actors that are exogenous to South African politics will also have their relevance in this analysis.

⁴³⁰ Crawford, Neta C, 2004, *op cit*, p.22.

⁴³¹ Hill, Christopher, "The National Interest in Question.", 2013, *op cit*, p.144.

Hence, the Empirical Sources will primarily be public discourses emanating from South African Elites, whilst certain of these include discussions and statements made by external actors. The discourses considered will be the ones addressed between the years 2006 and 2008 in a wide range of domestic and international *fora*, as identity can arguably only be grasped by taking into account a broader context than the one framed by the question. The database that these discourses constitute is retrievable in annex 1.

b. Method of analysis

Critical discourse analysis implies a deconstructing and interpretative reading. Therefore, it is often defended that there are no specific guidelines to follow⁴³². Nonetheless, Ole Wæver's constructivist approach to discourse analysis will here have relevance as it implies to detect small constellations of concepts that form a "nucleus of meaning" from which most of a national discourse can be produced⁴³³. Hence, Wæver also defends that because identity is a relational concept, it is (re)produced by the means of a juxtaposition between selves and others. It is therefore that it is seen possible and necessary to identify specific concepts that have historically taken great importance as "vehicles of identity production"⁴³⁴. By delimiting a core constellation, one can critically explore patterns of language use and discern the nature of a constructed national identity⁴³⁵. Moreover, resorting to the subcategory of 'thematic analysis' will arguably enable to identify relevant categories of themes in a body of data⁴³⁶. 'Themes' are here to be considered as a bunch of linked categories transmitting similar meanings and generally emerging through an inductive analytic process. It is this inductive process that characterizes the qualitative paradigm.

Each discourse will consequently be read by keeping in mind a search for identity related arguments. As I have previously deconstructed South African national identity as the result of identity struggles on several levels, it will have relevance to identify language use that testifies of these struggles, mostly inherited from apartheid. Namely, the aim will be to read and identify arguments that are related to the three dimensions that are conflicting social

⁴³² Mogasha, Tebogo, 2014, *op cit.*, p.110.

⁴³³ Although defending himself of being a post-structuralist, Ole Wæver promotes a constructivist/structuralist approach to discourse analysis: Wæver, Ole., 2001., *op cit.*, p.23-26.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.* p.24.

⁴³⁵ Mengibar, Caballero A.: "Critical discourse analysis in the study of representation, identity politics and power relations: a multi-method approach", *Communication & Society* 28(2), 2015, p. 51.

⁴³⁶ Mogasha, Tebogo, 2014, *op cit.*, p.109.

identities, conflicting ideologies and identity construction in the international realm. The analysis will be guided by a search for the articulations presented in the following Table.

Semantic Areas	Inherent Contradictions/Ambiguities	Examples
1. Conflicting Social Identities	X Heterogeneous nature of South Africa's <i>social identities</i> . Strong ethnic and racial dimension inherited from apartheid.	X 'Race'; 'Color', 'Ethnicity'; 'Social division/imbances'; 'Reconciliation'; 'Nation Building.'
2. Conflicting Ideologies	<p>X Contradiction between Mandela's <i>transformist idealism</i> and Mbeki's <i>reformist ideology</i>.</p> <p>X Inherent inconsistency within Mbeki's <i>African Renaissance</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Democracy' vs. 'Anti-Imperialism', 'Pan-Africanism' and 'South-South solidarity'. - Simultaneous Aggressive and Appeasing strategy towards the West. 	<p>X 'Human Rights'; 'democracy'; 'global peace' vs. 'reformism'; 'African orientation'.</p> <p>X - 'equitable multilateral reform' vs. 'South-South solidarity'; 'sovereignty'; 'regionalism'; 'Africanism'.</p> <p>- 'Criticize'; 'denouncing' vs 'dialogue'; 'cooperation'; 'friendship'</p>
3. Identity Construction in the international realm	<p>X <i>Continental Constraints</i>:</p> <p>'Moral foreign policy' vs. 'Solidarity with African and ANC supporting countries'.</p> <p>X <i>Global Constraints</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Socialism' vs. '(neo)-liberalism/pragmatism'. - Globalization, end of Cold War and "post-9/11 era" as constraints 	<p>X 'democracy'; 'global peace' vs. 'African Identity'; 'continental integration'; 'African independence'.</p> <p>X - 'social equity'; 'wealth redistribution' vs. 'liberalization'.</p> <p>- 'world change consciousness';</p>

	towards consistent FP. X <i>International Identity</i> : Defining South Africa as an 'emerging middle-power' vs. 'regional hegemon'.	'globalization' and related events X 'global cooperation'; 'multilateralism' vs. 'regional leadership'; 'leadership recognition'
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c. Analysis

This part will present an analysis of the 53 speeches that have been selected to constitute the database. All these texts have been publicly released by the International relations and cooperation section of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa⁴³⁷. While these all incorporate declarations or discussions involving South African officials, they differ in regard of circumstances and of the public to which they are addressed. As a matter of fact, these speeches are for some addressed to the South African population and/or other South African representatives through the General Assembly. Others are addressed to foreign officials in the context of bilateral events/negotiations, with an emphasis on discussions with the permanent 5 of the UNSC. Finally, some are addressed to foreign officials through multilateral institutions such as the AU, the Group of 77 or the United Nations bodies. The diversity of the selected *spaceframe* will arguably enable to have a sharper grasp on South African identity struggles as they are constructed and not solely limited to the Security Council. I will here attempt to select the most salient linguistic fulfilments that embody the key narratives of identity struggles in the dimensions referred to in the above Table, or what we can call the three main semantic macro-areas related to national identity construction.

1. Discourse and conflicting Social Identities

The first main semantic area is the one of conflicting social identities. Indeed, I have previously highlighted that race and ethnicity have not faded away in the social

⁴³⁷ <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/index.html> (International relations and cooperation section of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa).

identification process of the “post-apartheid era”⁴³⁸. This issue arises in South African officials’ discourses as they seem to acknowledge that nationals still rather built their identity around racial and ethnic dimensions, in a way that is analogous to the process of social class formation but also surpasses it. This can easily be deduced by analyzing the following paragraphs from Mbeki’s 9th February 2007 State of the Nation:

*For too long our country [...] was a place in which **to be born black** was to inherit a lifelong curse. It was a place in which **to be born white** was to carry a permanent burden of fear and hidden rage... [...] We are greatly encouraged that our General Elections of a fortnight ago confirmed the determination of all our people, regardless of **race, colour and ethnicity**, to work together to build a South Africa defined by a **common dream**... [...] A critical leg of these social interventions should be the intensification of joint efforts among all South Africans to **improve social cohesion**. [...] the issue of **our variety of identities** and the overarching **sense of belonging** to South Africa **needs to be better canvassed across society**, in a manner that **strengthens our unity as a nation**.⁴³⁹*

In this extract, Thabo Mbeki recognizes that the ethnic and racial divisions of the apartheid still loom on the supposedly newly democratic South Africa in which he speaks. While addressing the nation, the South African President commits to nation-building, has he speaks of a ‘common dream’ in his pursuit for social unity. Six days later, he reiterated his vision, strongly admitting confusion in the social process of South African identification:

*I am still **uncertain** as to whether we have developed sufficient **national cohesion** enabling all of us to speak in a common vocabulary that we share, whatever language we use. [...] After all, **whereas, daily we proclaim ourselves a nation**, that we are a nation, which can **share in a national interest**, or **are we merely a collection of communities** that happen to inhabit one geopolitical space! [...] The new nation cannot come into being on the basis of the perpetuation of the extraordinary **imbalances** we have **inherited from the past**. It cannot be founded on the entrenchment of the **apartheid legacy**. [...] But we rarely speak about the **change or the absence of change** in our minds [...] I must repeat that we have been reluctant to ask ourselves the critically important **question about what has happened to the South African mind** during these 13 years of freedom⁴⁴⁰.*

Here again, Thabo Mbeki makes an emphasis on the social inequalities inherited from the apartheid past. Moreover, he insistently expresses uncertainty about the South African social

⁴³⁸ See: ‘Discontinuity and Conflicting Social Identities’, p.33 of the Thesis.

⁴³⁹ Mbeki, Thabo: State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa: Joint Sitting of Parliament, February 9, 2007.

⁴⁴⁰ Mbeki, Thabo: Response of The President of South Africa to the debate on the State of the Nation Address - National Assembly, Cape Town, 15 February 2007.

identification process, as there is confusion about the way in which society has transformed since the political dispensation of 1994. This confusion seems to be justified by a “jam between two ages”. As expressed in the following discourse from 26th February 2007 by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the South African society seems to be confronted to difficulties in detaching itself from its segregationist past:

*[...] we still face challenges. These emanate from **attitudes and stubborn racial stereotypes born of nostalgia for apartheid** and in some cases **resistance to and fear of change**. It therefore becomes **difficult to change attitudes** in this environment. [...] Real **reconciliation** and **nation building** can only happen when the **South African people, black and white**, through their own initiative, without any prompting from government, take visible and decisive steps to break down the **racial walls that still define us**.*⁴⁴¹

Dlamini Zuma reiterates the need to promote reconciliation in an effort towards nation building. There is evidently the acknowledgement that the attitudes and identifications of the apartheid era are still prominent. Moreover, these seem to be so profoundly anchored that there is a difficulty in enhancing social cohesion. South Africans are depicted as being defined by racial categorizations. Finally, the following discourse extract of Mbeki's address to the Nation from 21 September 2008 will deepen the understanding of these linguistic processes:

*We have sought to advance this **vision** precisely because **we understood that we would fail in the struggle** to achieve the **national and social cohesion that our country** needs, as well as the national unity we require to enable us to act together to address the major challenges we face. [...] South Africa belongs to all who live in it, **black and white**, and that **no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people**. [...] we all have an equal obligation to build a society that is **united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist** and prosperous.*⁴⁴²

It is therefore apparent in these Leaders' discourses that race and ethnicity have not faded away in the social identification process of the so-called new South Africa. It is noticeable that over 14 years after the end of apartheid these officials do not only recognize that South Africans still rather built their identity around an ethnic and racial dimension but also admit to a certain degree of confusion. This confusion is all the more accentuated in the light of the

⁴⁴¹ Zuma, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini: Opening Remarks by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs at Human Rights Seminar, Pretoria, 26 February 2006.

⁴⁴² Mbeki, Thabo: Address to the Nation by President Thabo Mbeki, 21 September 2008.

duration of the struggle for national cohesion. The effort made towards inclusion and Nation-building is therefore admitted to be difficult in the light of a long lasting heterogeneity in the social identification process. Mbeki and Zuma acknowledge that regarding society, the post-apartheid 'democratic transition' is in many ways merely at its premises. As to quote adv. Johnny de Lange, at the time South African Minister for Justice at the High-level segment of the Human Rights Council: *"Our ultimate ideal is to create economic and political space [...] where all of our citizens can enjoy in the prosperity of our country. This is the national identity we are striving to achieve"*⁴⁴³.

2. Discourse and conflicting Ideologies

The second main semantic area is the one of conflicting ideologies. As I have previously highlighted, one can depict a double contradiction⁴⁴⁴. On the one hand, Mbeki's 'reformist ideology' marks in many ways a discontinuity with his predecessor Mandela's 'transformist idealism'. On the other hand, Mbeki's own ideology of 'African Renaissance' is marked by inconsistencies. While it promotes democracy and reformism towards an equitable multilateral system, it is at the same time anti-Imperialist and Africa/Global South oriented. It is therefore inter alia simultaneously appeasing and aggressive towards the Western world. The aim will thus be to uncover these contradictions from South African leaders' discourses.

First, the issue of discontinuity between Mandela's and Mbeki's respective ideologies can be brought to light by revealing their concurrent existences. One can therefore uncover a tension between Mandela's heritage of 'ethics and idealism' and Mbeki's reformist aspirations. The following discourse extracts directly refer to the first:

*[...] our former President Nelson Mandela had this to say: "[...] The choice of our nation is not whether the past should be revealed, but rather to ensure that it comes to be known in a way which promotes **reconciliation and peace.**" [...] was a crucial component of our country's transition to **full and free democracy.** [...] Based on our historical experiences and **commitment to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms**, there exists a scope between our governments to co-operate in shaping the **international human rights agenda and discourse.***⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ Statement by Adv Johnny De Lange, MP South African Deputy Minister for Justice and Constitutional Development to the High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 12 March 2007

⁴⁴⁴ See: 'Discontinuity and conflicting Ideologies', p.35 of the Thesis.

⁴⁴⁵ Zuma, Dr. Knosazana Dlamini: Opening Remarks by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs at Human Rights Seminar, Pretoria, 26 February 2006.

*Today, Friday 18 July 2008 we join the peoples of our country, the region and indeed the entire universe in **celebrating** a life that epitomises the **struggle for peace, democracy and justice in our country** – Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. [...] We ourselves who continue to **strive for a better South Africa, in a better Africa and a better world**, do so inspired like Nelson Mandela by none other than the commitment and dedication on the cause of **humanity, freedom and justice!**⁴⁴⁶*

Both these discourse passages explicitly advocate in favour of the values that had been advanced during Mandela's time. In the first dating from 26th February 2007, Mbeki directly refers to his predecessor's commitment to human rights, global peace and democracy, with the idea of reemphasizing these issues within the international human rights discourse and agenda. This is also the case in the second extract dating from the 18th July 2008, in which Dlamini Zuma reiterates this general commitment. In this same line, South African officials also have often expressed their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, maintaining these moral grounds⁴⁴⁷. Nonetheless, the contradicting "Anti-Western" reformist aspirations of the Mbeki period are to be found in the following quotations:

*[...] South Africa shall continue to work with all members of the United Nations General Assembly in pursuit of the **comprehensive reform of the United Nations** including the **reform and expansion** of the **United Nations Security Council**.*⁴⁴⁸

*Together with other countries we continue to advance the **collective agenda of the South** through **pushing for UN reform** and the conclusion of the Doha Round of trade talks in a manner that it ensures that it meets the **needs of the developing world**.*⁴⁴⁹

*When we went into the Security Council one of **our priority mandates** was to **ensure that issues that are of importance to countries of the South, particularly Africa** are issues that do not fall behind the agenda of the Security Council.*⁴⁵⁰

These paragraphs testify of the prominence of a reformist orientation towards multilateral institutions within South Africa's foreign policy. What here seems to be discordant with the 'transformist idealism' inherited from Mandela is that the transformative agenda advanced by South Africa somehow undermines the idealist nature of International cooperation in favour of Africa and the Global South. The ambiguities of the coexistence of two ideologies

⁴⁴⁶ Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma's Message on Nelson Mandela's 90th Birthday. 18th July 2008.

⁴⁴⁷ Kumalo DS: Statement in Explanation of Vote by Ambassador DS Kumalo of South Africa at the United Nations Security Council Vote on Non-Proliferation (Iran Resolution) 3 March 2008

⁴⁴⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: South Africa assumes Non-Permanent Seat on UN Security Council, 2nd January 2007

⁴⁴⁹ Zuma, Nkosozana Dlamini: Keynote Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the Graduation of Diplomatic Trainees, Presidential Guesthouse, Pretoria, 30 August 2007

⁴⁵⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes following Briefing on South Africa's Presidency of the UN Security Council by Ambassador George Nene, Wednesday 2 April 2008, Union Buildings, Pretoria

are here disclosed as the limitations of an idealism that has been embedded in a post-apartheid South-Africa come to light.

This latest finding is directly related to the second question that is the one of inherent inconsistencies within Mbeki's own 'African Renaissance' as it is at its premises. This ideological commitment is indeed characterized by an outlook based on paradigms that are democracy, anti-Imperialism and Africanism⁴⁵¹. As these latest arguably lead foreign policy decisions to stand across purposes with each other, it has been possible to identify them within some of the selected discourses. This first extract from the 23rd of May 2007 directly refers to the democratic and inclusive nature of South Africa's commitment to the "African Renaissance":

*Certainly we can all agree that the vision of the African Renaissance is an all-embracing vision that draws its inspiration from the rich and diverse history and cultures of Africa. It acknowledges Africa as the cradle of humanity, whilst providing a framework for the modern Africa to re-emerge as a significant partner in a world characterised by co-operation not conflict, sharing not greed, multi-lateralism not unilateralism, democracy and good governance not autocracy, equality and social justice not inequality, respect for fundamental human rights [...]*⁴⁵²
*[...] the need for a multilateral system is today, as was envisaged by Tennyson, the only way to save nations from destroying one another. The United Nations is the global primary instrument by which the world should solve its problems.*⁴⁵³

Regarding the first extract, it is in the context of describing the (re)emergence of an "African Identity" that Deputy minister Aziz Pahad here directly refers to a vision that is all-embracing. While it does refer to Africa as being at the root of Humanity, it is nonetheless committing to Global cooperation, multilateralism, human rights and democracy. The second extract from Dlamini Zuma's 13 February 2007 national Assembly address moreover insists on the role of the United Nations a main multilateral instrument. While the "democratic" paradigm is here preeminent, the following extracts however give another perspective on the issue, as they are rather anti-Imperialist and make an emphasis on a prioritization of Africa.

⁴⁵¹ Nathan, Laurie, 2005, *op cit.*, p.361-372.

⁴⁵² Pahad, Aziz: Towards An African Identity Characterized by Peace, Democracy And Development Through Partnerships by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, Durban, 23 May 2007

⁴⁵³ Zuma, Dlamini Nkosoza: Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs at the State of the National Debate, The National Assembly, Cape Town, 13 February 2007.

*To defeat this neo-colonial stranglehold, we have developed our own path of development as reflected in the Constitutive Act authorising the establishment of the African Union (AU) and the AU development and reconstruction programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). [...] The voice of the African masses must be heard in the ongoing process to strengthen African co-operation and unity.*⁴⁵⁴

*South Africa's strategic interests, however, cannot be separated from Africa's strategic interests.*⁴⁵⁵

*Unless the ideals of freedom, justice and equality become the character of the UN- the dominant will continue to dictate to the dominated while the dream of the dominated will forever be deferred.*⁴⁵⁶

What is mainly noticeable in these latest discourse citations is that the inclusive nature of multilateral cooperation at first pointed out is replaced by a commitment to a so-called African Identity that is strongly anti-colonial, reiterating the importance given to the African Union. The Pan-Africanist nature of Mbeki's 'African Renaissance' is thus all the more unveiled by the anti-Imperialist posture adopted, peculiarly in regard to the United Nations. Also consolidating this latest point is a strong allegiance to 'Third World' Solidarity. This will be inquired in the following excerpts:

*[...] South Africa wishes to pay tribute to the Member States of the Group of 77 and China whose solidarity and collective spirit ensured that the Group was able to reach important outcomes [...] while protecting the interests of developing countries.*⁴⁵⁷

*Yet another defining moment in our relations came as part of the birth and development of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Movement in the 1950s, as Africa and Asia entered the period of decolonisation. [...] we must also express our sincere appreciation of Indonesia's solidarity with us [...] friendship and solidarity of the people of South Africa for their Indonesian brothers and sisters.*⁴⁵⁸

[...] we in South Africa will never forget the Non-Aligned Movement's unwavering support in our struggle against apartheid in the multilateral arena, in particular in the United Nations. [...] It is therefore an honour for me to

⁴⁵⁴ Mbeki, Thabo: Address of the President of the South Africa at the 38th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - Africa Region Conference (CPA), Cape Town 27 July 2007

⁴⁵⁵ Van der Merwe, Sue: Reflections on 10 Years of Bilateral Relations, South Africa and the PRC: A View from South Africa, Deputy Minister van der Merwe, 19 August 2008, Parliament

⁴⁵⁶ Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Monday 29 September 2008, New York

⁴⁵⁷ Zuma, Nkosazana Dlamini: Statement by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa H. E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chair of the Group of 77 on the Occasion of the Handing over Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77, New York, 10 January 2007

⁴⁵⁸ Mbeki: Thabo: Toast Remarks of the President of the Republic of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the State Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono: Tshwane, 17 March 2008.

*address you at this Conference with its theme: “Solidarity for peace, justice and friendship.”*⁴⁵⁹

All of these latest discourses have been addressed directly to developing countries of the Global South. While the first and the third are addressed within the respective frameworks of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement, the second one is directly addressed to the president of Indonesia. Strikingly, the rhetoric of solidarity is highly recurrent. This comes out as being due to a common historical understanding regarding the fight against apartheid and overall colonization. The use of terms such as “brothers and sisters” testifies of a strong identification with the Global South.

Finally, these inconsistencies have arguably also brought about a conflicting relationship with the Western world. As highlighted previously, Mbeki’s will to detach from Western values has been in tension with a quest for neo-liberal economic growth and a restructuration of South Africa’s relationship with industrialized countries⁴⁶⁰. Hence, leaders’ discourses contain both appeasing and aggressive postures towards the West:

*As the **divide between the rich and the poor** widens and becomes a serious **global crisis** we see an increase in the concentration of economic, military, technological and media power. **Something is wrong** when many Africans traverse, on foot, the harsh, hot and hostile Sahara Desert to reach the **European shores**. **Something is wrong when walls are built to prevent poor.***⁴⁶¹

*South Africa has always criticised the **permanent members of the Security Council** for remaining silent on the need for complete disarmament and for being selective regarding which cases of proliferation by States the Security Council addresses.*⁴⁶²

*It is **important also to dialogue with the West**, so that they invest in our youth. They must **contribute** to the skilling of our youth.*⁴⁶³

*Let us continue to **work together to cleanse the future of the past**, to ensure that the problems between the world's people can be solved through **dialogue and negotiations.***⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁹ Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma’s Statement to the XV Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, 29 July, 2008 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁴⁶⁰ Landsberg, Chris. 2010 , *op cit.*, p.209-241.

⁴⁶¹ De Lange, Johnny: Statement by Adv Johnny De Lange, MP South African Deputy Minister for Justice and Constitutional Development to the High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 12 March 2007

⁴⁶² Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Transcript copy: Briefing to media on the UN Security Council by Deputy Director-General Ambassador George Nene, Tuesday 29 April 2008, Union Buildings, Pretoria

⁴⁶³ Zuma, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini: Keynote Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the National Consultative Conference on the African Diaspora, Johannesburg, 17 April 2007

*The same democratic principles inform both SA and US policy formulation and actions. [...] Bilateral relations have reached a level of maturity that enables us to non-antagonistically tackle differences that might arise in multilateral institutions.*⁴⁶⁵

What is here apparent is that the Western World is depicted both as competitor and associate. While on the one hand South African officials tend to criticize the West in regard to migration and imperialist postures, they nonetheless put a high emphasis on the importance of dialogue, negotiation and cooperation.

It is therefore apparent in these Leaders' discourses that elements testifying of conflicting ideologies are to be found. The constraints of the apartheid regime have bequeathed ideological commitments that are often in clash with each other. Not only does the heritage of Mandela's high moral grounds disrupt with his successor Mbeki's reformist and African-oriented commitments, the latest's vision of the 'African Renaissance' is in prone to inconsistencies as the advancement of democracy clashes with anti-imperialism and the prioritization of Africa. Resulting is a relationship that is solidary with the Third World and ambiguous with the West. Here again, the extracts analyzed seem to acknowledge the struggle that South Africa undergoes as it is in the attempt of reflecting a new sense of its national identity, this as there is an open-ended scuffle within and between ideologies.

3. Discourse and Identity construction in the international realm

The last main semantic area analysed is the one of identity construction in the international realm. As previously underlined, several continental and global pressures account for discontinuities and contradictions as regard to South Africa's identification with the international community⁴⁶⁶. First, a series of continental constraints related to Mbeki's 'African solidarity' have arguably encompassed the moral grounds that South Africa has sought to advance after the end of apartheid. Second, the larger global environment in which the country had been reintegrated also had a constraining effect on its foreign policy. Not only did South Africa find itself cleaved between ethical standings and the safeguarding of its own economic development, it also acknowledged the changing nature of the global

⁴⁶⁴ Themba Skweyiya, Z. S.: Speech by the Minister of Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, Dr Zola Sidney Themba Skweyiya delivered on behalf of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the Commemorative Dinner marking the 90th Anniversary of the Sinking of the Troopship SS Mendi, London, 19 July 2007

⁴⁶⁵ Pahad, Aziz: Speech by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad to the Business South African and US Corporate Council on Africa Meeting, Tuesday 13 November 2007, Johannesburg

⁴⁶⁶ See: 'Identity construction in the international realm', p.39 of the Thesis.

political environment in the light of the end of the cold war, 9/11 and globalization as constraints to consistent acting. Accordingly, South Africa has been identified in several and often contradicting manners by the international community in a broad sense, leading to confusion in regard to its foreign policy identity.

First, the matter of continental constraints is related to the fact that Mbeki's 'African Renaissance' has associated African Unity and self-sufficiency to external and especially Western non-interference. While most of the decisions analysed within the UN Security Council are related to unity with human-right abusive regimes, the prioritization of solidarity politics towards a "continental consensus" can be regarded as a restraint towards South Africa's presumably strong commitment to ethics. While this latest commitment has been identified while uncovering Mandela's heritage of 'ethics and idealism', the strong commitment to African unity, solidarity and sovereignty can be exposed by deepening research into the following extracts:

*The AU is also grappling with the challenge of how to accelerate the political and economic **integration of our continent**. Whereas all agree on the **ultimate goal of a united Africa**, the vexed question of "how" remains. [...] **we are all Africans**, and have a common interest in **the independence of Africa**.*⁴⁶⁷

*South Africa's **political vision** is predicated on the reality that our fortunes are inextricably **linked to those of our continent***⁴⁶⁸

*The assertion of an **identity against colonial oppression**, discrimination and exclusion [...] is rooted in the **African Renaissance**. [...] builds a **movement of solidarity** fully capable of **challenging both the negative impact of colonialism on the African identity and of challenging Afro-pessimism**. [...] The simple phrase "**We are our own liberators!**" is the **epitaph on the gravestone of every African who dared to carry the vision in his or her heart of Africa reborn**.*⁴⁶⁹

What mainly comes out of these latest sentences is that the 'African Renaissance' is highly embedded in a vision of African solidarity/unity and especially of an African Identity. Although the Pan-Africanist nature of Mbeki's ideology has previously been analyzed, the feature of identity that is prominent here brings a new perspective as it highlights the constraining effects of an African renewal. All three figures here considered indeed make an emphasis on the belonging to the African Continent. As importantly, both Dlamini Zuma

⁴⁶⁷ Zuma, Dlamini Nkosoana: Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs at the State of the National Debate, The National Assembly, Cape Town, 13 February 2007.

⁴⁶⁸ De Lange, Johnny: Statement by Adv Johnny De Lange, MP South African Deputy Minister for Justice and Constitutional Development to the High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 12 March 2007

⁴⁶⁹ Pahad, Aziz: Towards An African Identity Characterized by Peace, Democracy And Development Through Partnerships by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, Durban, 23 May 2007

and Aziz Pahad use a rhetoric that is strongly linked to self-determination and anti-colonialism. This is all the more meaningful as it underlines the erection of boundaries between ‘self’ and ‘other’ as developed in the ‘Theoretical Approach’ part⁴⁷⁰. One can indeed witness a process of “othering” that differentiates Africa from the rest of the World. This process combined with the reformist orientations and western hostile postures analyzed in the previous part arguably seem to accentuate the infringement to moral grounds that characterize South Africa’s first tenure in the United Nations Security Council.

Second, the question of global constraints brings about a tension between ethical standings often based on socialist principles and the advancement of South Africa’s own economic needs through the promotion of neo-liberal principles. Mbeki’s government indeed embraced ‘second generation’ economic and social rights while at the same time committing to the country’s economic development⁴⁷¹. Therefore, a tension between ethics/socialism and pragmatic embracement of neo-liberal discourse can be uncovered from the following excerpts:

*In January 1987, the late President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo [...] said: “[...] our starting point is what any economy should serve - the people. The economy should be so handled that the wealth is equitably distributed.” It is precisely to redress this glaring injustice that we have put in place what we have deliberately entitled **Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment***⁴⁷²
*President Mbeki speaking at the ILO said “poverty constitutes the deepest and most dangerous structural fault in the contemporary world economy and global societies. [...] Logically, this means that the correction of this fault has to be at the centre of the politics, policies and programmes of our thinking. We seek to change this structural fault in conditions of the accelerated pace of globalisation. As you are aware, key characteristics of globalisation have been the liberalisation of international trade, the expansion of FDI, mass cross-border financial flows [...].*⁴⁷³

The first extract directly refers to a commitment to equitable wealth redistribution. Although dating from 19th September 2006 and being prior to South Africa’s seat within the UNSC, it is relevant as it enables to grasp the activist role that the country as sought to achieve in

⁴⁷⁰ Diez, T.: “Constructing the Self and Changing the Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”, *Millennium : Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), p.613-636.

⁴⁷¹ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K 2011, op cit., p.15.

⁴⁷² Mbeki, Thabo: 2006 Speech of the President of South Africa, , at the Africa-America Institute Gala: New York, 19 September 2006.

⁴⁷³ Pahad, Aziz: Speech by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad to the Business South African and US Corporate Council on Africa Meeting, Tuesday 13 November 2007, Johannesburg

pushing towards socialist principles. Moreover, the second extract from 13th November 2007 contains elements that permit to perceive an engagement towards global wealth redistribution. Interestingly, it also directly refers to what has previously been referred to as a misconception, the belief in the compatibility of this ambition with the neo-liberal tendencies of globalization.

This latest assessment offers a gateway towards the second constraining effect of the global environment on South Africa's foreign policy. While globalization, the "post-cold war era" and the aftermath of events such as the attacks of 11th September 2001 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq have decidedly altered the larger global environment, South Africa has explicitly acknowledged them as being at the least constraining:

*[...] we are acutely conscious that the world has fundamentally changed since the end of the Cold War and the terrorist attacks against the USA on the 9th of September 2001. [...] The events of the last ten years have not resolved but sharpened the challenges of our unjust world economy, world order and contempt for human rights and the rule of law.*⁴⁷⁴

In 1994 when democratic South Africa joined the international community we were confronted with an international paradigm that had been fundamentally restructured.

*This was, inter alia, characterised by the: 'Collapse of socialism so starkly manifested by the fall of the Berlin Wall'; and 'The unprecedented spread of globalisation.' As the world sought to come to grips with the new very complex and uncertain international political and economical world order we were confronted by the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001 against United States targets. This led to a marked shift in UN foreign policy and had a further profound impact on international relations.*⁴⁷⁵

In these latest extracts, Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad recognizes the importance that global realities have taken as highly decisive in regard to South Africa's foreign policy. In the first dating from 23rd May 2007, Pahad acknowledges that these have had a constraining effect in areas related to the world economy, world order, human rights and rule of law. In the second extract, the Minister makes an emphasis on the complexity and uncertainty of a new world order. As importantly, he iterates that these changes have caused a shift in UN foreign policy and international relations.

⁴⁷⁴ Pahad, Aziz: Towards An African Identity Characterized by Peace, Democracy And Development Through Partnerships by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, Durban, 23 May 2007

⁴⁷⁵ Pahad, Aziz: Speech by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad to the Business South African and US Corporate Council on Africa Meeting, Tuesday 13 November 2007, Johannesburg

Finally, the synthesis of all the latest contradictions, ambiguities and constraints analysed have arguably led to confusion regarding South Africa's foreign policy identity. As detailed previously, some scholars view the country as an "emerging middle power"⁴⁷⁶ while others view it as a "regional hegemon"⁴⁷⁷. For the first, South Africa would promote global cooperation and seek influence in multilateral decision-making in organizations such as the UN while at the same time struggling with the consolidation of democratic norms and practices. For the second, South Africa would be "*part of a delineated region, connected to it culturally, economically and politically, influence its identity and affairs, define its security and aspire to provide it with leadership, [...] act as a representative and be recognized as such in regional and international quarters*"⁴⁷⁸. While elements confirming both these depictions are to be found in the previously mentioned extracts, the following ones further support this ascertainment:

*It is clear that we need a significant advance in the multilateral negotiations if we want to build a more inclusive, flexible and environmentally effective climate regime under the United Nations.*⁴⁷⁹

We wish to reiterate our belief in the centrality of the United Nations. In the Millennium Declaration we reaffirmed that the United Nations "is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realise our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development. [...] we reaffirm that South Africa [...] shall indeed continue to be a trusted and dependable partner in the common endeavour to strengthen our institutions of multilateralism."⁴⁸⁰

*I think it is important to say, from a British point of view, our governments are joined by strong, shared values as well as strong historical links [...] because we are both conscious of South Africa as a leading member of the African Union and Britain as a leading member of the European Union.*⁴⁸¹

The first two extracts here presented tend to sustain the vision of South Africa being an "emerging middle power". Both Aziz Pahad and Dlamini Zuma make an emphasis on the advancement of multilateral cooperation. Their moreover refer to the United Nations as

⁴⁷⁶ Black David R. & Hornsby David J., 2016, *op cit.*, p.153

⁴⁷⁷ Habib H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.144

⁴⁷⁸ Habib H., 2009, *op cit.*, p.145

⁴⁷⁹ Pahad, Aziz: Speech by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad to the Business South African and US Corporate Council on Africa Meeting, Tuesday 13 November 2007, Johannesburg

⁴⁸⁰ Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Monday 29 September 2008, New York

⁴⁸¹ Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes on Conclusion of South Africa – United Kingdom Bilateral Forum, Presidential Guesthouse, Pretoria, Tuesday, 8 July 2008

being the ‘central’ and ‘indispensable’ forum for achieving universal negotiations. Nonetheless, the third extract sustains the “regional hegemon” depiction of South Africa. What is here striking is that the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom David Miliband recognizes the South African country as a key representative of the African Union, hence supporting the examined definition of what makes a “regional hegemon”. These findings support the assertion of South Africa displaying signs of several and sometimes contradictory “archetypes” of foreign policy identity.

What has been depicted is a double ascertainment. First, the arguments supporting the idea of several international constraints both at a continental and larger global level are to be found within leaders discourses. While the commitment to an ‘African Identity’ turns out to undermine the moral grounds that South Africa had sought to advance, there are clear evidences of the belief in the compatibility of socialist ambitions with the neo-liberal tendencies of globalization. South Africa has also turned out to explicitly acknowledge the latest decades’ major events as leading to a new globalized world order that is at the least confusing. Second, the discourses analysed give evidence supporting at least two “archetypes” of foreign policy identity. It is indeed possible to find discursive elements coinciding both with the depiction of the country being an “emerging middle power” and a “regional hegemon”. It is therefore possible to assert that international constraints resulting from the post-apartheid transition and multiple supranational identity depictions do find expression in leaders’ discourses.

d. Conclusive Discussion

The latest analysis has enabled to discern different identity struggles on different identity levels in the discourses of South African Elites. The used approach as sought to circumvent considering identity as a ‘property’ that is cohesive and stable in characterizing a given group in time. Rather, it has aimed at considering tensions, inconsistencies and re-elaborations of national identity within a community⁴⁸². It is in regard to this understanding that the identity struggles previously theorized as to be found within conflicting social identities, conflicting ideologies, and within constraints and ambiguous considerations at the international level have been uncovered in discourse by the use of Critical Discourse

⁴⁸² Wodak, R., & Triandafyllidou, A.: “Conceptual and methodological questions in the study of collective identities.”, *Journal of Language and Politics*, 2(2), 2003. p.208.

Analysis. Howsoever, several questionings seem to arise from this investigation and are to be clarified. First, one may deliberate about the advancement of a qualitative paradigm and method over a quantitative one such as Content Analysis. Second, a doubt still persists about the causal relationship between the depicted identity struggles and South Africa's multilateral ambiguities within the UN Security Council. Finally, the validity of the use of what can be described as a single-case study could be put into question. The intent will here be to clarify these cross-examinations.

To begin with, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis undoubtedly embodies a range of advantages and disadvantages. CDA indeed has relevance and practical application in the case here studied as it is context specific⁴⁸³. It has also arguably provided a positive critique of the identification phenomenon studied as understanding the function of discourse and language permits positive change⁴⁸⁴. Nonetheless, using Critical Discourse Analysis implies to keep in mind that meaning is never determined and all things are open to negotiation and interpretation. It is therefore that CDA is a deconstructing but also interpretative reading⁴⁸⁵. It is also with this understanding that a reasonable degree of empathy has arguably enabled to sharpen the analysis⁴⁸⁶. Hence, this "subjectivity" can bring about a critique of the methodology here used. Claims can easily be made that analysing discourse involves one's own perceptions and subjective interpretation to the reading of a text⁴⁸⁷. This critique would justify the use of a method and paradigm that are rather quantitative. Nonetheless, and as defended by Karin Fierke, the distinction between 'objective quantification' and 'subjective interpretation' tends to blur with the analysis of a large number of texts⁴⁸⁸. As the data set is here of more than fifty speeches, it is my argument that the analysis has focused on shared language practices that have recurred among them and among different actors. While I have exercised some interpretation by focusing on specific groups of words, these still belong to a grammar of categories that have emerged across the written discourses. Moreover, CDA's basic assumption that language is a social practice that shapes reality for its users has been

⁴⁸³ Morgan. A. : « Discourse Analysis : An Overview for the Neophyte Researcher », Journal of Health and Social Care Improvement. Vol.1, 2010, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸⁵ Mogasha, Tebogo, 2014, op cit., p.110.

⁴⁸⁶ Crawford, Neta C.: "Understanding Discourse: A Method of Ethical Argument Analysis", in Qualitative Methods, Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative. Methods, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 2004, p.25.

⁴⁸⁷ Fierke, Karin.: "World or Worlds? The Analysis of Content and Discourse", in Qualitative Methods, Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative. Methods, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 2004, p.37.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

highly relevant for this study, as representations are thus to be considered central to the study of nation formation⁴⁸⁹. Finally, CDA does not consider words to have the same meaning each time they are expressed, as meaning is bound by context. This is a considerable difference with quantitative methods, as the intersubjective meaning of statements is determined by a broader text⁴⁹⁰. This reasserts the importance of an extensive contextualization, as Critical Discourse is arguably also about the daily conduct in which actors engage to make their way in the social world⁴⁹¹. It is therefore my view that despite its limitations, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis has had high relevance, as discursive representations from South African Elites have permitted to re-imagine an unsettled South African national identity.

Furthermore, a cross-question still arises about the linkage between the uncovered identity struggles and South Africa's foreign policy, and more peculiarly its controversial multilateral decisions within the UNSC in 2007 and 2008. It is therefore first important to keep in mind that Critical Discourse Analysis does not furnish absolute answers to a precise problem⁴⁹². Rather, *"it enables us to understand the conditions behind a specific problem and make us realize that the essence of that problem and its resolution lie in its assumptions, the very assumptions that enable the existence of that problem"*⁴⁹³. In this sense, CDA aims at exploring the usually opaque relationships between discursive practices (here identity related) and wider social relations, structures and processes (here ambiguous acting within the UN Security Council). Although CDA proves to have a significant blind-spot, the intention is not to provide clear-cut answers but rather to approach and think about a problem⁴⁹⁴. Moreover, according to Ole Wæver, the primary motive is to deliver the well-structured and coherent constraints that have been missing in Foreign Policy Analysis by focussing on the structures and discourses that organize it. Consequently, the controversial decisions considered must be linked to the analysed identity struggles as "overall" policies

⁴⁸⁹ Mengibar, Caballero A, 2015, op cit., p.43.

⁴⁹⁰ Hopf, Ted: "Discourse and Context Analysis: Some Fundamental Incompatibilities", in ", in Qualitative Methods, Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative. Methods, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 2004, p.31.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* p.32.

⁴⁹² Olson, B.: « Quantitative 'versus' qualitative research: The Wrong Question », Edmonton., University of Alberta Press, 2007.

⁴⁹³ Mogasha, Tebogo: "Understanding Critical Discourse Analysis in Qualitative Research", *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, volume 1, Issue 7, July 2014, p.106.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p.107

rather than individually⁴⁹⁵. Arguably, what enables to establish a link between the South African unsettled national identity and multilateral decisions within the UNSC is that there is sufficient pressure from the structures for these to follow a pattern of inconsistency. It is therefore that the general structure of South Africa's national identity unsettlements constitutes a core structure that enables to make sense of the country's multilateral ambiguities.

Nonetheless, two points are to be clarified in regard to this assertion. First, the focus that has been made on leading political actors' discourses follows the logic of what Waever calls a 'biais' towards these texts⁴⁹⁶. Because the focus is on the construction of foreign policy from a discourse analysis perspective, concentrating on texts from South African leaders has most likely permitted to grasp all dominant positions that define the identity related structures. Second, what the same author mentions as 'the opposite burden of evidence' has arguably permitted to grasp the entirety of the identity struggles considered. This latest concept corresponds to the idea that the analysis as reached an 'enough' threshold, as one should be able to read a text through the discursive structure that has been constructed⁴⁹⁷. It is in the light these latest reasons that the uncovered identity struggles of South Africa are to be considered as shaping an unsettled national identity that is rooted in a causal relationship towards the country's controversial multilateral decisions as a whole. Nonetheless, and because CDA does not aim at providing definite answers, caution is required as separate ideas and interests have certainly also had role to play in determining multilateral decisions⁴⁹⁸. These have arguably been all the more specific in regard to each decision considered individually. To quote someone in the opposite bench concerning South Africa's government's UN Security Council voting record in May 2007: "*The Department of foreign affairs gave all sorts of technical reasons why they voted as they did. The minister (Dlamini-Zuma) and the department know that international politics is mostly about perceptions and that technical reasons are not understood or appreciated*"⁴⁹⁹. While the main hypothesis of this thesis tends to be confirmed, South Africa's unsettled national identity as determinant towards foreign policy and multilateral decisions is however to be weighed as a non-absolute nor definite answer. Although it does not offer a complete fulfilling of the

⁴⁹⁵ Waever, Ole, 2001, *op cit*, p.28.

⁴⁹⁶ Waever, Ole, 2001, *op cit*, p.42.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹⁸ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., 2011, *op cit*, p.76-98.

⁴⁹⁹ Van Nieuwkerk, Anthony, 2009, *op cit*, p.75.

shortcomings in the understanding of South Africa's multilateral inconsistencies, it is nonetheless highly substantial.

Finally, having analysed South Africa's uncertain national identity in regard to its multilateral inconsistencies within the UNSC assertively stands out as a single-case study. Although several decisions have been taken into account, the inquiry has been narrowed to a study of South Africa's first two-year rotational seat within the institution. Therefore, criticism could be formulated in regard to the use of such a method. Working on this very issue has been Bent Flyvbjerg, who has corrected several common misunderstandings about case-study research⁵⁰⁰. By doing so, he has demonstrated that case-study is not only a sufficient but also necessary method for specific important research tasks in the domain of social sciences. It is arguably a method that maintains pertinence when compared to different ones in the spectrum of social science research methodology⁵⁰¹. Among the common misunderstandings he has worked on, it seems important to mention the commonly spread idea that the case study method contains a bias toward verification. This 'verification bias' is to be understood as the idea that the researcher's preconceived notions would have a tendency to be pre-confirmed by the method, hence leading to a study having doubtful scientific value⁵⁰². This supposition has been dismantled by Flyvbjerg, who argues that case study has its own rigor, as strict as the one of quantitative methods. This is all the more emphasized by the fact that it has a tendency to lead to a falsification rather than verification of pre-conceived assumptions and hypotheses that therefore need to be revised. It is moreover in the author's view that the issues of bias towards verification and subjectivism generally applies to other qualitative methods⁵⁰³. Nonetheless, the single-case study offers a proximity to reality that arguably reveals more information. The choice of analysing South Africa's unsettled national identity regard UNSC multilateralism during the given period can be here described as a *paradigmatic case*, understood as a case that reveals more characteristics of the studied issue. Because there is no standard for the selection of such a case, a certain degree of intuition is required⁵⁰⁴. Therefore, resorting to a single-case study arguably did not contain a greater bias toward verification of the preconceived identity-related notions than other methods of inquiry. Its 'paradigmatic' nature has nonetheless been

⁵⁰⁰ Flyvbjerg, Bent.: "Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research", *Qualitative inquiry*, Volume 12, Number 2, April 2006, p.219-245.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.241.

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, p.234.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid*, p.235.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.232-233.

revealed by the analysis and has permitted to have a fuller understanding of South Africa's identity struggles.

Hence, four main assertions can be made from the latest discussion. First, Critical Discourse Analysis has been relevant in grasping the way in which discursive representations from South African Elites have permitted to re-imagine an unsettled South African national identity. Second, the national-identity related discourses have permitted to form a "core structure" of identity unsettlement that enables to approach South Africa's multilateral ambiguities as a whole. Third, this structure has revealed to be a non-absolute but nonetheless highly substantive answer to the country's controversial multilateral behaviour. Finally, the resort that has been made to a single-case study arguably did not lead to a bias toward verification and enabled to better grasp the inquired national-identity scuffles. While South Africa has been re-elected for a second two-year rotational seat in the UN Security Council for 2011-2012, the limited time and resources allocated for accomplishing this thesis have not enabled to deepen examination into the subject. Whilst this second tenure has in many ways been a continuation of the irregularities of the first, it was nonetheless played out in a different geopolitical environment⁵⁰⁵. It is however my view that such an inquiry would have not been pertinent without an extensive investigation regarding South Africa's first tenure of 2007-2008.

General Conclusion

The purpose of this research has been to answer to the hypothesis that South Africa's multilateral inconsistencies within the Security Council between 2007 and 2008 are related to numerous and heterogeneous identity struggles inherited from the post-apartheid democratic transition, resulting in a blurry and still unsettled national identity. It had indeed been brought up that very little literature existed regarding the 'rationale' of South Africa's commitment to multilateralism and related implications. To attest of the main hypothesis, the inquiry has been following a structure that has enabled to come to a cautious but nonetheless clear-cut conclusion.

⁵⁰⁵ Kornegay, Francis : "South Africa's second tenure in the UN Security Council: A Discussion paper", in South Africa in the UN Security Council 2011-2012: Promoting the African Agenda in a sea of multiple identities and alliances, Research Report, Institute for Global Dialogue, 2012, p.5-25.

First, confronting realist and constructivist accounts within the framework of the “rationalist-constructivist metatheoretical debate” has enabled to assess the more meaningful insight that constructivism allows⁵⁰⁶. Although a combination of realist and constructivist explanations is sometimes relevant within a given situation, the deficiencies of a realist reading did here not authorize such a “concurring” logic ordering⁵⁰⁷. As such, the democratic transition that occurred in South Africa has been considered to have had an impact on both the domestic and international defining of the country. Because rationalist accounts would not consider a country to redefine its interests or introspective understandings, the constructivist paradigm arguably enabled to facilitate the comprehension of South Africa’s behavior as it has been revealed to be still wrestling with its own identity construction. Moreover, this theoretical demonstration has enabled to define Critical Discourse Analysis as main methodology. As it is generally considered to be the dominant approach to the study of national identity, it has also been at the basis of justifying two-fold investigation. Because CDA is heterogeneous, multifarious and derived from several theoretical backgrounds, it has called for a comprehensive conceptual and historical investigation at the expense of a shorter analytical part.

Second, dedicating a part to the study of identity in South Africa has permitted to grasp the importance that the very concept has taken in social sciences. Defining ‘identity’ through an extensive literature review has moreover allowed to perceive the importance of ‘national identity’ in the given case. Staying in a constructivist line, this national identity has been considered for South Africa as the result of the interaction of identity struggles on different levels. In this line, three main dimensions inherited from the post-apartheid democratic transition have been identified and investigated. First, the conflicting social identities resulting from an identification process still based on race and ethnicity in the “new South Africa” have been underlined as determinant. Second, going in depth of conflicting ideologies has highlighted a double contradiction. Not only did the heritage of Mandela’s “*transformist idealism*” turn out to clash with Mbeki’s “*reformist ideology*”, the latest’s ‘African Renaissance’ has also proven to be in itself inconsistent⁵⁰⁸. Finally, South Africa’s identification process in the international realm has revealed to be ambiguous as it as shown several ‘archetypes’ of foreign policy identity. In the light of the later developments, it has

⁵⁰⁶ Borer, T.A., and Mills, K., *op cit.*, p.4.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁰⁸ Alden, C. & Le Pere, G.: “South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy: from reconciliation to ambiguity?”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 2004, Vol. 31, n100, p.295.

been demonstrated that memory, history, norms, institutions, interests and ideas play a prominent role in the shaping of South Africa's national identity, as domestic and international influences have shaped its behaviour and attitudes.

Furthermore, devoting a section to a deep understanding of South Africa's multilateral commitment and to the country's most emblematic controversial positions within the UN Security Council has permitted to incorporate the considered case study. It has indeed been highlighted that South Africa has endorsed a strong commitment to multilateralism that was highly informed by the place that 'sovereignty' and 'regionalism' have found in a post-Cold War and post-9/11 globalizing world. Nonetheless, the moral foundations of this commitment have been seen to be brought into question during the country's first term as non-permanent member of the UNSC. Not only did South Africa's strategic foreign policy orientations turn out to unveil an incoherent and unprincipled practice of multilateralism, it also found expression within several controversial decisions, as South Africa turned out to become a manifestly recalcitrant member of the Council. Most emblematic of these were the decisions regarding Myanmar, Iran, Sudan and Zimbabwe. It has been found that in all four cases, South Africa sided with authoritarian and illiberal regimes, thereby being accused of betraying its own human rights struggle and the strategies and abuses that had enabled it to free itself from its apartheid mistreatments. In the end, it has been established that the instability of South Africa in its commitment to the prescriptive aspects of liberal principles have brought it to act inconsistently and out of character.

Finally, consecrating a last part to the application of Critical Discourse Analysis has enabled to establish a relation between South Africa's post-apartheid unsettled national identity and its inconsistent form of multilateralism during its first tenure in the United Nations Security Council. Working on a data set of 53 speeches from South African and exogenic leaders has indeed permitted to uncover the previously theorized identity struggles. Hence, it has been proven that the semantic areas of conflicting social identities, conflicting ideologies and uncertain identity formation in the international realm all are present within the latest texts. This has been followed by a discussion in order to highlight possible objections and limitations in verifying the main hypothesis. It has therefore first been possible to point out that Critical Discourse Analysis did have the highest degree of relevance for this research despite its limitations. Moreover, recurring to a single-case study has been proven not to necessarily contain a 'bias towards verification' despite a certain degree of subjectivity as it

is of a ‘paradigmatic’ nature⁵⁰⁹. Most importantly, it has been demonstrated that the national-identity related discourses that have been analysed have enabled to form a “core semantic structure” of identity unsettlement that has permitted to offer a non-absolute but nonetheless highly meaningful explanation for South Africa’s ambiguous multilateral behaviour as a whole.

What has consequently been demonstrated in this thesis is that the main hypothesis can be cautiously validated. What is apparent is that the identity struggles that have been theorized are to be found in the considered speeches that are analogous to South Africa’s very controversial multilateral behaviour in the United Nations Security Council during its 2007-2008 tenure. While the indications of a causal relationship between an unsettled national identity and multilateralism have revealed to be relevant and substantial, they did nonetheless not provide a definitive answer. Identity has here been considered as a window and has provided a specific angle in the understanding of the country’s foreign policy decisions. Hence, and despite its explanatory value vis-à-vis the practice of South Africa’s multilateralism, the analysed identity struggles offer a qualitative paradigm that is not to be considered as an exclusive determinant. While constructivism has been pointed out as most relevant for this research, *national interest* can indeed be looked upon as a construction fostered by a dual process of interpellation and articulation and of representations of international politics⁵¹⁰. Nonetheless, purposely leaving materialist accounts out has not been done in order to exclude their explanatory value. These accounts would have arguably lacked of congruity in uncovering the qualitative dimensions that makes ‘multilateralism’ distinct in its definition⁵¹¹.

Therefore, and because the unsettled national identity that South Africa has inherited from apartheid has been uncovered as a significant explanatory factor towards its ambiguous form of multilateralism in the UNSC, future research could help uncover the ways in which *identity* plays a prominent role as determinant of foreign policy behaviour. As the concept has taken gradual importance in social sciences in recent years, uncovering a reciprocal influence between domestic and international factors in the shaping of South Africa’s

⁵⁰⁹ Flyvbjerg, Bent., 2006, *op cit.*, p.232-33.

⁵¹⁰ Weldes, Jutta : « Constructing National Interests », *European Journal of International Relations*, 1996, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, vol.2.(3), p.275.

⁵¹¹ Ruggie, J.G. : « Multilateralism : The Anatomy of an Institution », *International Organization*, Volume 46, Issue 3, Summer 1992 , p. 567.

national identity offers a promising avenue for upcoming research. Light could further be thrown on the complex interaction between subnational and supranational identities in the process of national identity formation.

Annexes

Annex 1: Data Set of Empirical Sources for Critical Discourse Analysis

Source: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/index.html> (International relations and cooperation section of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa).

- The following speeches are classified by chronological order.

1. Mbeki, Thabo: 2006 Speech of the President of South Africa, , at the Africa-America Institute Gala: New York, 19 September 2006.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2006/mbek0919a.htm>

2. Van der Merwe, Sue: Address by Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe on the occasion of United Nations Day, 24 October 2006, Diplomatic Guest House, Pretoria:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2006/merw1024.htm>

3. Zuma, Dlamini: "The United Nations in the 21st Century - London School of Economics and Political Science, 25 October 2006: Speech by Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2006/dzum1025.htm>

4. Department of foreign Affairs of South Africa: South Africa assumes Non-Permanent Seat on UN Security Council, 2nd January 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0102.htm>

5. Zuma, Nkosazana Dlamini: Statement by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa H. E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chair of the Group of 77 on the Occasion of the Handing over Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77, New York, 10 January 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0111.htm>

6. Jintao, Hu: Enhance China - Africa Unity and Cooperation To Build a Harmonious World --- Speech at University of Pretoria, South Africa, Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China, Pretoria, 7 February 2007.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/jintao0207.htm>

7. Mbeki, Thabo: State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa: Joint Sitting of Parliament, February 9, 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0209.htm>

8. Zuma, Dlamini Nkosoana: Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs at the State of the National Debate, The National Assembly, Cape Town, 13 February 2007.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0213.htm>

9. Mbeki, Thabo: Response of The President of South Africa to the debate on the State of the Nation Address - National Assembly, Cape Town, 15 February 2007.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0216.htm>

10. Department of foreign Affairs of South Africa: Conclusion of 6th South Africa - Russia Joint Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade and Economic Co-Operation, 22nd February 2007.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0223.htm>

11. Zuma, Dr. Knosazana Dlamni: Opening Remarks by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs at Human Rights Seminar, Pretoria, 26 February 2006:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0227.htm>

12. Kumalo Dumisani: Statement by H.E. Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo of South Africa to the United Nations Security Council on 'Co-Operation Between the Security Council and International Organisations in the Implementation of Resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006)', 23 February 2007.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/media0228a.htm>

13. Zuma Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma's statement on South Africa's ascendancy to the Presidency of the UN Security Council, 1st March 2007.:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0301.htm>

14. South African Government Statement on the current situation in Zimbabwe, 13th March 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/zim0314.htm>

15. Pahad, Aziz: Statement by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad at the General Debate during the 7th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 7 March 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/paha0314.htm>

16. De Lange, Johnny: Statement by Adv Johnny De Lange, MP South African Deputy Minister for Justice and Constitutional Development to the High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 12 March 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/lang0314.htm>

17. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Minister Dlamini Zuma to Address UN Security Council, 25th March 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0326.htm>

18. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Minister Dlamini Zuma to depart for UN Security Council, 26th March 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0326a.htm>

19. Zuma, Dlamini: Statement to the United Nations Security Council by Minister Dlamini Zuma, President of the Security Council, on the Relationship between the United Nations and Regional organisations, in particular the African Union 28 March 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0329.htm>

20. Zuma, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini: Keynote Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the National Consultative Conference on the African Diaspora, Johannesburg, 17 April 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0418.htm>

21. SABC Africa Interview with President Thabo Mbeki regarding Sudan / Darfur and South Africa - France, 13 April 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0419.htm>

22. Zuma, Nkosazana Dlamini: Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, at the Opening of the Plenary of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Cape Town, 19 April 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0423.htm>

23. Minty, A.S.: Statement by Ambassador A.S. Minty, as Delivered on 1 May 2007 at the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Being Held in Vienna, Austria from 30 April to 11 May 2007.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/npnw0501.htm>

24. Pahad, Aziz: Towards An African Identity Characterized by Peace, Democracy And Development Through Partnerships by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, Durban, 23 May 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/paha0524.htm>

25. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: South African Government Statement on the UN Security Council Vote Regarding Lebanon, 30th May 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0531.htm>

26. Themba Skweyiya, Z. S.: Speech by the Minister of Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, Dr Zola Sidney Themba Skweyiya delivered on behalf of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the Commemorative Dinner marking the 90th Anniversary of the Sinking of the Troopship SS Mendi, London, 19 July 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/skweyiya0720.htm>

27. Mbeki, Thabo: Address of the President of the South Africa at the 38th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - Africa Region Conference (CPA), Cape Town 27 July 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0727.htm>

28. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Pretoria - The South African Government welcomes the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council on Tuesday 31 July of a resolution establishing the AU/UN Hybrid Operation for Darfur in Sudan. 1st August 2007.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/unsc0801.htm>

29. Zuma, Nkosozana Dlamini: Keynote Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the Graduation of Diplomatic Trainees, Presidential Guesthouse, Pretoria, 30 August 2007:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum0830.htm>

30. Mbeki, Thabo: Address by President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the 62nd session of the United Nations' General Assembly, New York, 25th September 2007.:

<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0925.htm>

31. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Deputy Minister van Der Merwe Summons Myanmar Ambassador to Express South Africa's Concern at Developments in the Country, 29th September 2007.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2007/myan0929.htm>

32. Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Remarks by Ministers Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and Jan Kubis at the UN Security Sector Reform workshop, 7th November 2007: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/dzum1107.htm>

- 33.** Pahad, Aziz: Speech by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad to the Business South African and US Corporate Council on Africa Meeting, Tuesday 13 November 2007, Johannesburg:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/paha1115.htm>
- 34.** Mbeki, Thabo: Speech of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the Africa EU Summit Meeting: Lisbon, Portugal, 8-9 December 2007:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbeki1210.htm>
- 35.** Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes following briefing to media on South Africa's Tenure on the United Nations Security Council by Chief Director Xolisa Mabhongo Media Centre, Union Buildings, Pretoria hursday 24 January 2008:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/mabho0124.html>
- 36.** Kumalo DS: Statement in Explanation of Vote by Ambassador DS Kumalo of South Africa at the United Nations Security Council Vote on Non-Proliferation (Iran Resolution) 3 March 2008: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/kuma0306.html>
- 37.** Mbeki, Thabo: Toast Remarks of the President of the Republic of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the State Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono: Tshwane, 17 March 2008.:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/mbek0318a.html>
- 38.** Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes following Briefing on South Africa's Presidency of the UN Security Council by Ambassador George Nene, Wednesday 2 April 2008, Union Buildings, Pretoria:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/nene0402.html>
- 39.** Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma during the Seminar to Celebrate the Occasion of the South Africa-China 10 Year Celebrations of Diplomatic Relations, Peoples Republic of China, Beijin , Wednesday 23 April 2008:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/dzum0423.htm>
- 40.** Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Transcript copy: Briefing to media on the UN Security Council by Deputy Director-General Ambassador George Nene, Tuesday 29 April 2008, Union Buildings, Pretoria:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/nene0429.html>
- 41.** Mbeki, Thabo: Radio and Television Address to the Nation by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, on the occasion of Africa Day, 25 May 2008:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/mbek0525.html>
- 42.** Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes following Signing of Declaration of Intent between South Africa and the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden Partnerships in Africa, Union Buildings, Pretoria, Monday 9 June 2008:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/paha0609.html>
- 43.** Van der Merwe, Sue: Congratulatory Remarks by Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe, on the occasion of the 232nd Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America, Waterkloof Ridge, Pretoria, 3 July 2008:
<http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/merwe0703a.html>

- 44.** Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa: Notes on Conclusion of South Africa – United Kingdom Bilateral Forum, Presidential Guesthouse, Pretoria, Tuesday, 8 July 2008: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/dzuma0709.html>
- 45.** Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma’s Message on Nelson Mandela’s 90th Birthday. 18th July 2008.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/dzum0718.html>
- 46.** Zuma, Dlamini: Minister Dlamini Zuma’s Statement to the XV Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, 29 July, 2008 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/dzum0730.html>
- 47.** Van der Merwe, Sue: Reflections on 10 Years of Bilateral Relations, South Africa and the PRC: A View from South Africa, Deputy Minister van der Merwe, 19 August 2008, Parliament: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/merwe0821.html>
- 48.** Nene, George: Transcript Copy: Media Briefing by Ambassador George Nene, Deputy Director-General Multilateral Affairs on the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly, 11 September 2008, Union Buildings: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/nene0911.html>
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- 52.** Van der Merwe, Sue: Address by Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe on Multilateralism and the Respect for International Law as Strategic Objectives of South Africa’s Foreign Policy at the Conference on Multilateralism and International Law with Western Sahara as a Case Study, Thursday 4 December 2008.: <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2008/merwe1204.html>
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Thesis Summary: Multilateralism and Identity: the case of South Africa in the United Nations Security Council (2007-2008).

- **Main hypothesis:** “The unsettled identity transformations resulting from the post-apartheid democratic transition would embody the ‘rationale’ of South Africa’s ambiguous and inconsistent form of multilateralism within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008”.

Introduction

The following introduction is aimed both at introducing the subject and providing the premises of a state of the art concerning the matters of South Africa’s identity unsettlements and multilateral practices.

It has first been highlighted that in January 2007, South Africa became a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the first time. The election as a member could be regarded as an indirect result of the establishment of a democratic government in May 1994, under the presidency of Nelson Mandela. The country was readmitted within the UN during that same year. South Africa was indeed argued to have superior moral leadership on the African continent and in the global *multilateral fora*. During this mandate, the country sought to make an emphasis on multilateral diplomacy that it had defended since the end of apartheid. One of its main goals has been to reassert a rule-based multilateral system which would constitute the pillar of global governance. South Africa’s diplomats were entirely aware of the moral weight the country carried internationally, intending to have an impact on global governance. Nonetheless, many contradictory tendencies arose during the country’s first two year temporary rotational seat within the organization. The country has indeed been characterized as being a “moral actor”, but has defended positions and actions related to human rights in international affairs that have led to consternation and confusion. Resulting from this was an approach to multilateralism that however engaged and active led to sharp controversy domestically and on the international scene. South Africa mainly motivated these decisions by accusing European countries and the United States of having hegemonic tendencies. However, the academic literature seems remarkably quiet about what lies behind the country’s commitment to multilateralism and related implications.

Hence, the main hypothesis goes as follows: “The unsettled identity transformations resulting from the post-apartheid democratic transition would embody the “rationale” of

South Africa's ambiguous and inconsistent form of multilateralism within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008". In order to verify the latest, the following thesis has been structured in four main parts. First, dealing with the rationalist-constructivist debate has enabled to set constructivism as the main theoretical framework and to set Critical Discourse Analysis as the main methodology. This also justified a thorough conceptual and historical inquiry. Second, deepening into the conceptual understandings of 'identity' enabled to better grasp the identity struggles that are preponderant in defining post-apartheid South Africa's national identity. Third, exploring the country's multilateral ambiguities within the UNSC in regard to its foreign policy commitments have permitted to have a better understanding of the resulting contradictions and confusion. Finally, recurring to Critical Discourse Analysis has enabled to set a causal and interdependent relationship between South Africa's unsettled national identity and its multilateral practices. The conclusion has been that South Africa's unsettled national identity has revealed to be a non-absolute but nonetheless highly substantive answer to the uncovered controversial multilateral behaviour.

I) Theoretical Approach and Methodology

This part has aimed at defining a theoretical approach and a methodology for the purpose of the study. It has therefore been divided in two main parts that have each been concerned with one of the latest.

Theoretical Approach

First, the part dedicated to the theoretical approach has made an emphasis on the most recent framing of the question of South African national identity struggles in the light of the so-called "rationalist-constructivist metheoretical debate". On the one hand, three strands of realism that have a degree of relevance for the inquiry have been presented. These are classical realism, structural realism and neo-classical realism. The first, best embodied by Morgenthau, makes an emphasis on the maximization of expected utility. The second makes an emphasis on systemic factors. Finally, neo-classical realism arguably embodies some in-between realism and constructivism, as it takes domestic and international factors into account, considering countries not to be informed only by Realpolitik. It has nonetheless been pointed out that rationalist accounts do not consider for states to change their understanding about their interests or about themselves. It is therefore arguable that realism is at the least tempered by the search for a new national identity of South Africa, as it would be considered as an amalgam of domestic and exogenous factors. Hence, constructivism has

been taken into account on the other hand, as it is considered the main contender of mainstream approaches in international relations. Moreover, two approaches to constructivism have been accounted for; one identity based and one based on national political culture. While the strand based on identity has enabled to highlight the way in which states and other actors can see themselves as reflections of how they are considered by others, the strand based on political culture has revealed to lack of explanatory value as South Africa's political culture is hard to determine. It has finally been revealed that although both currents had relevance, the realist paradigm lacked of explanatory value in comparison to the constructivist one. Constructivism arguably allows a more meaningful insight as South Africa is yet profoundly embedded in the process of wrestling with its identity construction.

Methodology

Second, the part dedicated to the Methodology has underlined that using a dominantly constructivist approach enables the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodology. It has indeed gained importance in contemporary political science as it places an emphasis on exploring the links between identity, power and politics. It presupposes for nations to be produced and reproduced discursively, as it is at the same time a constructionist, interpretive and qualitative methodology. Most importantly, CDA has been revealed to be aiming at exploring an often opaque relationship of causality between discursive practices and the resulting concrete practices within social structures. Furthermore, this part has brought about a reflection on the use of CDA as a two-fold approach. It has indeed been highlighted that there are no specific guidelines to follow in the use of the method. Nonetheless, the fact that it aims at uncovering the way in which reality is produced has pointed out the need for a heterogeneous and multifarious approach. Hence, the chronological and historical context has been considered to have to be understood at its fullest. It is indeed understandable that discourses could not have intrinsic meaning or constructive effect in themselves if not located historically and socially. These latest considerations have justified a dualistic method, as the structure of the thesis has given importance to an extensive conceptual and historical contextualization at the expense of a slightly shorter analytical part.

II) Identity in post-apartheid South Africa

This second part has aimed at better grasping the identity struggles that have converged to form an unsettled national identity in South Africa since the end of apartheid. To do so, three main sections have been presented. The first explored the understandings of ‘identity’ as a concept. The second aimed at highlighting the relevance of ‘national identity’ for this inquiry. The last has finally aimed at theoretically grasping the contemporary evolutions of South Africa’s identity struggles and related implications.

Defining Identity and its Implications

To begin with, Identity has been extensively defined and contextualized in order to better grasp the concept. It has therefore been uncovered that what matters in defining identity is the presence of boundaries between groups rather than the content of a particular identity in itself. There is hence a distinction between a ‘Self’ and an ‘Other’. Moreover, it has been unveiled that there are several levels at which identity comes to play. Not only can identities be institutionalized in States, they are also variable due to changes in the international context. It has finally been revealed that ‘identity’ is not restricted to the hermitage of the academia as it has become an important part of the intra-individual process and of the social-political scene. It has therefore been uncovered that globalization has generally had a disrupting effect on the interface between identity levels. This has also proven to be especially dangerous for social and political stability in heterogeneous States such as South Africa.

Relevance of national identity

This second sub-section has aimed at demonstrating the relevance of ‘national identity’ for the purpose of the inquiry. By focusing on issues of multiculturalism and of international roles, I first attempted to link internal and external changes to the formation of a national identity. Then, by going deeper into the way foreign policy is shaped and constrained in a modern changing world, I aimed at associating it to national identity formation.

First, focusing on *multiculturalism* has revealed that the multicultural nature of South Africa is to be taken into account as a constructivist way forward offers promising avenues for inquiry in linking conflicting social identities and ambiguous foreign policy practices. Second, by focusing on *Role theory*, it has been emphasized that the international system, expectations of States and multilateral treaties are sources for the role prescriptions that are

assigned and expected from a peculiar State. Finally, taking into account this interplay of a domestic and international level has shown the relevance of ‘national identity’ as it can be impacted by changes in society, ideologies and the place a country has in the international realm. It has thus here been demonstrated that national identity embodies an aggregate of the interplay of identities on different levels.

The South African Identity struggles

This last part has sought to reveal the identity struggles that South Africa has inherited from its “post-apartheid democratic transition”. These struggles have been looked upon as fostered by three dimensions that are conflicting social identities, conflicting ideologies, and ambiguous considerations from other states and actors at the international level.

1. Discontinuity and conflicting social identities:

It has here been defended that race and ethnicity have not faded away in the social identification process of the so-called new South Africa. It has thus be argued that South Africans still rather built their identity around an ethnic and racial dimension rather than around social classes. It is thus noticeable that South African society remains highly heterogeneous regarding social identification. Moreover, the impact of social identities towards the attitudes and behavior of individuals has important consequences towards intergroup relations, as to political stability and consistency. Social identification is thus to be taken into account as to apprehend a state’s national identity

2. Discontinuity and conflicting Ideologies:

Here, it has been shown that South African ideologies are the product of peculiar conception of South African national identity, resulting from an unsettled socio-historical legacy. This part has permitted to highlight a double contradiction. On the one hand, there is a discontinuity between Mandela’s “*transformist idealism*” that is mainly based on ethics and Mbeki’s “*reformist ideology*” defending Africa. On the other hand, Mbeki’s ‘African Renaissance’ in itself is inconsistent, leading South Africa to “argue” with itself on which vision to defend. At times, there is a prevalence of the “democratic element”, while at others there is a prevalence of the “anti-imperial and Afrocentric element”. Quite clearly, there is an ongoing debate within and between ideologies, as South Africa has and is still attempting to reflect a new sense of its own identity.

3. Identity construction in the international realm:

What has been depicted here is that as interaction with countries at the continental and global level matter in the framing of the country's identity and interests, South Africa can be argued to display signs of several and sometimes contradictory "archetypes" of foreign policy identity. The country has been depicted both of an "emerging middle power" and a "regional" hegemon. Nonetheless, these depictions lack the nuance needed to understand the different and contradictory levels at which South Africa operates internationally. The country can be argued to be pulled in different directions due to its layered history, ideological positioning and competing interests

This whole part has thus demonstrated that subnational identification and competing ideologies as instruments for national identity formation need to contend not only with inherent differences but also with the possibility of multiple supranational identities in a complex world order. It has thus been demonstrated that history, memory, ideas, interests, norms and institutions all play a prominent role in the shaping of a state's identity. Both domestic and international influences seem to shape attitudes and behavior. South Africa, of a newly democratic character, is seemingly in an ongoing state of tension between the need for a coherent national identity and the diverging definitions it makes of a "national interest" on a wide panel of issues.

III) Case study: South African Multilateralism within the UNSC

This third main part has sought to concentrate on 'multilateralism' as South Africa's term as a member of the United Nations Security Council has highlighted a series of tensions. It has indeed acted both as a reformer and a conserver. First, there was a tension between a moral identity and the premises made on South-South solidarity. Second, there was a tension between a "Western identity orientation" and the bridge position taken between center and periphery. Most importantly, a tension persisted between an appeasement strategy and an anti-imperialist posture. This part has been divided in two sub-sections. The first has deepened the understandings of South Africa's commitment to multilateralism while the second has uncovered its inconsistent acting in the UNSC during its first term as non-permanent member.

South Africa's commitment to Multilateralism

The purpose of this subsection has been to uncover South Africa's commitment to multilateralism in the light of the challenges of a new systemic world (dis)order. First, it has been highlighted that from a constructivist perspective, states engage in multilateralism as it enables them to have an active role in the development of important international norms. It has also been uncovered that states' recourse to multilateralism has increased in a world prone to several changes. The context is indeed the one of a post-Cold war, post-9/11 and generally globalizing world. Moreover, it has been uncovered that South Africa's commitment to multilateralism is since 1994 considered as a *sin qua non* international medium to solve global issues. In this regard, the UN has been considered by the country as the center of world governance. Nonetheless, the hegemonic nature of the permanent 5 of the Security Council has long been seen by South Africa as a continuation of colonialism at the detriment of the Global South and Africa. Hence, the country's election as non-permanent member for 2007-2008 has been marked by a will to reform the UN Security Council. Finally, it has been revealed that South Africa hoped for a strengthening of Africa's influence in decision making within the Council.

It has thus been argued that South Africa's commitment to multilateralism has been at the very least oriented by the place that 'sovereignty' and 'regionalism' have both taken in a post-Cold War and post-9/11 globalizing world. The rethinking of these two concepts by South Africa underpins what some scholars have theorized as a "new hegemonic world". South Africa has sought to transform a world based on 'hegemony' considered as 'domination'. It has in this sense a multilateral inclination to promote structural change and the legitimacy of global governance rather than its efficiency. It has moreover been argued that the newly democratic regime may have prioritized the *form* of multilateral fora (including the UN Security Council) over the *substance* of their agenda (including human rights, non-proliferation and other moral high-grounds). While South Africa took a foreign policy orientation that was based on cooperation rather than coercion, it did not prevent it from acting in a way that proved to be perceived as ambiguous and 'confused'. The moral and ostensible normative foundation of its multilateralism was more than ever put into question.

South African ambiguities within the UNSC: 2007-2008

This second part is aimed at uncovering the ambiguities and inconsistencies that characterized South Africa's first rotational seat in the UNSC in 2007-2008. To do so, two aspects of the question have been explored. First, a focus has been made on the country's foreign policy orientation. Second, a focus has been made on specific controversial decisions taken by South Africa during the tenure. Finally, an emphasis has been made on the departure from liberalism that the decisions have embodied.

First, it has been highlighted that the undertaken foreign policy orientation was contradicting as "second generation" nationalists considered the mistakes of the earlier nationalist leadership as the consequence of machinations from ex-colonial powers as well as from the Cold War bloc oppositions. Three responses have consequently emerged. First, an appeasement strategy has been adopted. The aim to the international system was mainly reconciliation with existing power holders in order to win political and economic concessions. Secondly, the adoption of an aggressive, militant and anti-imperial posture is to be taken into account. As it is in contradiction with the previous foreign policy strategy, it makes an emphasis on sovereignty and anti-colonialism. This has also led to a third strategic orientation that is the reflection of a cross between pragmatism and principle, with at its basis the need to reform the global world order. Hence, during its tenure within the UNSC between 2007 and 2008, South Africa's practice of the three latest strategic foreign policy orientations has most certainly unveiled a resulting practice of multilateralism that has been perceived as unprincipled, incoherent or even arbitrary.

Second, focusing on specific controversial multilateral decisions has unveiled that South Africa stood out as a decidedly recalcitrant member of the Council as its ploys aimed at obstructing Western powers from using the Security Council as an "influence extender". The four main decisions taken into account were the ones regarding Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Iran and Sudan. While they all differed in their details, it has nonetheless been uncovered that South Africa sided with illiberal and authoritarian regimes. This has been motivated on the grounds that the US, European countries and the "Western World" in general were adopting a behavior that encouraged a hegemonic posture. Or these countries were violating existing rules of the UN system by tabling issues in structures that were not appropriate, or they were targeting specific countries towards which they had hostility. Nonetheless, South Africa found itself reluctantly accused of betraying its own legacy of human rights struggle, as the

country arguably opposed the strategies and traditions that had allowed it to free itself from apartheid abuses. Although South African foreign policy could now be described as rather anti-imperialist in tenor, it remained highly criticized for being fundamentally hypocritical and confused.

The unclear and often contradictory normative direction of South Africa's international involvement within the UNSC has finally be apprehended by focusing on the country's conflictual relationship with liberal principles, both from a subnational and supranational perspective. It has been uncovered that South Africa has frequently been unstable in its commitment to liberal principles. The role that national identity construction has towards these departures from liberalism is not to be neglected as both domestic and international levels of identification seem to interplay. South Africa had indeed been following a neo-liberal script in tune with the economic ties it has with the USA and Europe. Nonetheless, the country simultaneously aligned with others in search of a "stable, post-liberal social world".

IV) Using Critical Discourse Analysis

This las main part has aimed at uncovering the identity struggles that can be found in the discourses of South Africa's leaders. The use of Critical Discourse Analysis has enabled to further explore a relationship of causality between discursive practices linked to a blurry national identity formation and ambiguous multilateral practices. The part has therefore been divided in four sections. First, a selection of the empirical sources has meticulously been made. Second, a reflection has been made on the method of analysis. Third, the selected speeches have been analyzed in order to uncover identity struggles in the previously uncovered dimensions. Finally, a conclusive discussion has enabled to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the latest attempt to answer the main hypothesis.

Empirical Sources

To begin with, a reflection has been made on the selection of empirical sources for the case study. It has been uncovered that there was a need for a delimitation of *time*, of *genre*, and of *space*. Therefore, the empirical sources selected have primarily been public discourses emanating from South African Elites, whilst certain of these include discussions and statements made by external actors. The discourses considered have been the ones addressed between the years 2006 and 2008 in a wide range of domestic and international *fora*, as

identity can arguably only be grasped by taking into account a broader context than the one framed by the question.

Method of Analysis

This second section has aimed at advancing Ole Wæver's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis as relevant for this thesis. It has thus been advanced that it would be relevant to critically explore patterns of language use and to discern the nature of a constructed national identity. Moreover, recurring to the subcategory of 'thematic analysis' has enabled to identify relevant categories of themes within the analyzed texts. 'Themes' are here to be considered as a bunch of linked categories transmitting similar meanings and generally emerging through an inductive analytic process. Each discourse has consequently be read by keeping in mind a search for identity related arguments. The aim has been to read and identify arguments that are related to the three dimensions that are conflicting social identities, conflicting ideologies and identity construction in the international realm. The analysis has moreover been guided by a search for the articulations presented in the Table on page 70 of the thesis.

Analysis

This part has presented an analysis of the 53 speeches that have been selected to constitute the database (available on annex 1 of the thesis). I have here attempted to select the most salient linguistic fulfilments that embody the key narratives of identity struggles in the dimensions referred to in the table of the previous part, or what we can call the three main semantic macro-areas related to national identity construction.

1. Discourse and conflicting Social Identities:

It has here been uncovered that the analyzed speeches have unveiled that race and ethnicity have not faded away in the social identification process of the so-called new South Africa. It has been noticeable that over 14 years after the end of apartheid these officials do not only recognize that South Africans still rather built their identity around an ethnic and racial dimension but also admit to a certain degree of confusion. This confusion is all the more accentuated in the light of the duration of the struggle for national cohesion. The effort made towards inclusion and Nation-building is therefore admitted to be difficult in the light of a long lasting heterogeneity in the social identification process. Mbeki and Zuma acknowledge

that regarding society, the post-apartheid 'democratic transition' is in many ways merely at its premises.

2. Discourse and conflicting Ideologies:

It has here been unveiled that there are discourses testifying of conflicting ideologies. The constraints of the apartheid regime have bequeathed ideological commitments that are often in clash with each other. Not only does the heritage of Mandela's high moral grounds disrupt with his successor Mbeki's reformist and African-oriented commitments, the latest's vision of the 'African Renaissance' is prone to inconsistencies as the advancement of democracy clashes with anti-imperialism and the prioritization of Africa. Resulting is a relationship that is solidary with the Third World and ambiguous with the West. Here again, the extracts analyzed seem to acknowledge the struggle that South Africa undergoes as it is in the attempt of reflecting a new sense of its national identity, this as there is an open-ended scuffle within and between ideologies.

3. Discourse and Identity construction in the international realm:

What has here been depicted is a double ascertainment. First, the arguments supporting the idea of several international constraints both at a continental and larger global level are to be found within leaders' discourses. While the commitment to an 'African Identity' turns out to undermine the moral grounds that South Africa had sought to advance, there are clear evidences of the belief in the compatibility of socialist ambitions with the neo-liberal tendencies of globalization. South Africa has also turned out to explicitly acknowledge the latest decades' major events as leading to a new globalized world order that is at the least confusing. Second, the discourses analysed give evidence supporting at least two "archetypes" of foreign policy identity. It is indeed possible to find discursive elements coinciding both with the depiction of the country being an "emerging middle power" and a "regional hegemon". It is therefore possible to assert that international constraints resulting from the post-apartheid transition and multiple supranational identity depictions do find expression in leaders' discourses.

Conclusive Discussion

Concluding the analysis by a discussion has here enabled to assess the strengths and limitations of the latest inquiry. More specifically, it has aimed at answering several questioning that had been raised. First, one could deliberate about the advancement of a

qualitative paradigm and method over a quantitative one such as Content Analysis. Second, a doubt still persisted about the causal relationship between the depicted identity struggles and South Africa's multilateral ambiguities within the UN Security Council. Finally, the validity of the use of what can be described as a single-case study could be put into question. These cross-examinations have nonetheless been clarified, has it finally turned out that four main assertions could be made from the latest discussion. First, Critical Discourse Analysis has been relevant in grasping the way in which discursive representations from South African Elites have permitted to re-imagine an unsettled South African national identity. Second, the national-identity related discourses have permitted to form a "core structure" of identity unsettlement that enables to approach South Africa's multilateral ambiguities as a whole. Third, this structure has revealed to be a non-absolute but nonetheless highly substantive answer to the country's controversial multilateral behaviour. Finally, the resort that has been made to a single-case study arguably did not lead to a bias toward verification and enabled to better grasp the inquired national-identity scuffles. It had also been acknowledged that the limited time and resources would have not permitted to deepen an inquiry into South Africa's re-election as non-permanent member in the UN Security Council for 2011-2012.

General Conclusion

The purpose of the research had been to answer to the hypothesis that South Africa's multilateral inconsistencies within the Security Council between 2007 and 2008 were related to numerous and heterogeneous identity struggles inherited from the post-apartheid democratic transition, resulting in a blurry and still unsettled national identity. It had indeed been brought up that very little literature existed regarding the 'rationale' of South Africa's commitment to multilateralism and related implications. To attest of the main hypothesis, the inquiry had been following a structure that has enabled to come to a cautious but nonetheless clear-cut conclusion. Hence, after recalling the main structure and reflective proceeding of the Thesis, the main conclusion has been the main hypothesis can be cautiously validated. What is apparent is that the identity struggles that have been theorized are to be found in the considered speeches that are analogous to South Africa's very controversial multilateral behaviour in the United Nations Security Council during its 2007-2008 tenure. While the indications of a causal relationship between an unsettled national identity and multilateralism have revealed to be relevant and substantial, they did nonetheless not provide a definitive answer. Identity has here been considered as a window

and has provided a specific angle in the understanding of the country's foreign policy decisions. Hence, and despite its explanatory value vis-à-vis the practice of South Africa's multilateralism, the analysed identity struggles offer a qualitative paradigm that is not to be considered as an exclusive determinant. While constructivism has been pointed out as most relevant for this research, *national interest* can indeed be looked upon as a construction fostered by a dual process of interpellation and articulation and of representations of international politics. Nonetheless, purposely leaving materialist accounts out has not been done in order to exclude their explanatory value. These accounts would have arguably lacked of congruity in uncovering the qualitative dimensions that makes 'multilateralism' distinct in its definition. It has finally been acknowledged that light could further be thrown on the complex interaction between subnational and supranational identities in the process of national identity formation.