

Chinese merchants from the country.¹² A Chinese national and head of the Chinese/Malaysian oil firm Petrodar, Liu Yingcai, had the distinction of being the first person ever expelled from the newly formed country of South Sudan in early 2012, after he was pulled into a dispute between South Sudan and Khartoum over alleged oil theft.¹³ In the summer of 2013, Ghanaian officials ordered the arrest and deportation of hundreds of Chinese nationals who were engaged in illegal gold mining within the country, leading to strained relations between the two countries.¹⁴ In some countries, opposition politicians have benefited from “playing the China card.” They have tapped into popular anxiety about the impact of China’s involvement in local economies and the sudden arrival of large numbers of foreign nationals to mobilize popular support and achieve electoral success. In the late 2000s, the late Zambian President, Michael Sata, famously applied this strategy to unify a diverse cross-regional and cross-ethnic coalition and bring about a shocking end to the long-established single-party rule of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). Such developments have substantially complicated an understanding of Sino-African relations that centers on Africans’ uniformly warm embrace of Chinese engagement.

1.1 Patterns and Variations in African Public Opinion Towards China

Within Africa, public opinion towards China has followed three general trends. First, in agreement with optimists who laud the benefits of Chinese engagement, opinion towards China and its growing involvement has overall been more positive than negative. According to a Pew Research survey conducted in ten African countries in 2007, an average of 72 % of respondents held favorable views of China across the cases. When the survey was repeated in seven of these countries in 2014, the average favorability towards China dropped to 66 %. However, the later poll excluded the cases of Mali and Ivory Coast, each of which had had extremely high favorability towards China (92 % in each). Their absence in the 2014 survey largely explains the variation between the two studies. BBC World Service and Globe Scan (see Table 1.1) conducted cross national surveys on views of China in three cases: Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya, over a span of 7 years, as well as 1 year (2011) in which South Africa was included in the sample. This study yielded similar results to those

¹² *IRIN*, “Southern Africa: Increasing Hostility towards Chinese Traders,” September 7, 2012, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/96266/southern-africa-increasing-hostility-towards-chinese-traders> (accessed 1/12/2015).

¹³ *BBC News*, “South Sudan Expels Chinese Oil Firm Boss,” February 22, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17126340> (accessed 1/12/2015).

¹⁴ Adam Nossiter and Bree Feng, “Ghana Arrests Chinese in Gold Mines,” *New York Times*, June 6, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/07/world/africa/ghana-arrests-chinese-in-gold-mining-regions.html> (accessed 1/15/2015).

Chapter 4

The Contours of Complexity Between China and South Africa

...Africa's commitment to China's development has been demonstrated by supply of raw materials, ...This relationship is unsustainable in the long term...¹

President Jacob Zuma, South Africa's president

As one of the most celebrated transitions to democracy, South Africa's political evolution continues to amaze the world. The political twists and turns of the country's liberation from apartheid rule have further captured the attention of many who referred to this process as rather "miraculous" given the unpredictability and turbulent events witnessed in the pre-democratic era. Before its born-again status in the 1990s, South Africa has seen over a generation of tumultuous and violent struggles, which saw a sharp escalation in the late 1980s toward the end of white minority rule. With a mixture of courageous leadership and persistent international pressure throughout the twentieth century, the transition to democratic rule and the rise of the Mandela led African National Congress (ANC) have been significant ingredients in a democratically free and economically vibrant South Africa. This emergence as a political model as well as South Africa's economic dynamism—marked by its recent ascension to the BRICS club—on a continent that is dominated by less-free and unfree political systems that are economically challenged, has been historically shaped by both domestic and external variables. The 1994 elections were just but a result of the pile-up of several complex factors in the country's historical course.

South Africa's current democratic stature—characterized by periodic free and fair elections, a reasonably inclusive parliament, a coherent executive branch and an often-assertive judiciary²—is a product of historical inequities grounded in the politics of white supremacy, segregation, and most notably apartheid. These traumatic

¹Leslie Hook, "Zuma Warns on Africa's Ties to China," *Financial Times*, July 19, 2012, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/33686fc4-d171-11e1-bbbc-00144feabdc0.html#axzz36Nh7aZgz> (accessed 12/20/2013).

²Timothy D. Sisk "South Africa: Enabling Liberation" in Kathryn Stoner and Michael McFaul, eds, *Transitions to Democracy: A Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013):168–191.

and turbulent experiences collectively contributed to revolutionizing the political landscape of South Africa,³ and bequeathed a rather resolute yet complex contemporary sociopolitical culture. The evolution of the political landscape has come along with the maturity of South Africa's economy—the most industrialized and developed on the African continent. China has remained a stable contributor to the economic development. Even though the Sino-South African relationship is in a nascent stage, the two states have had deep and abiding ties dating back to the mid-seventeenth to early twentieth century. From the unpopularity of the introduction of indentured Chinese laborers in the early twentieth century to the current onslaught of Chinese labor and businesses in South Africa, the economic and diplomatic stories of these two polities have evolved through the apartheid system to a current age of co-equal partnership politics. With recognition of South Africa's middle power ambitions⁴ along with China's beckon to ascend the BRICS,⁵ the stage has been set for a partnership that continues to be rewarding, yet complex. Behind the increasing trade figures and infrastructure projects, as well as the diplomatic engagements, popular reactions toward China's expanding influence in South Africa have not been as positive as recorded in many parts of Africa. However, in spite of the sporadic outbursts of anti-Chinese populism, sometimes grafted on South Africa's known problem of xenophobia, this has not translated into a broad political movement that threaten the current dominance of the African National Congress (ANC) or the democratic political atmosphere.

4.1 South Africa's Celebrated Political Evolution

From the rise of the National Party (NP) in the 1940s through the victory of the African National Congress (ANC) to a post-Mandela South Africa, the political system has been contending with the nexus between discriminatory arrangements and the continuous determination to resist any form of domination. In effect, the celebration of every milestone in South Africa's modern political path has unsavory ties to the past, which is paramount to any attempt to reflect and construct “the new South Africa.”⁶

White supremacy as a form of discrimination is a recognizable part of South Africa's tempestuous political history. Though there are varied accounts about when white domination began in South Africa, it is undeniably true that political-economic

³Iain Smith, “The Revolution in South African Historiography,” *History Today* 38 (February 1988): 8–10.

⁴Janis van der Westhuizen and Sven Grimm, “South Africa's Middle Power Ambitions: Riding the Dragon or Being its Pet?” in Bruce Gilley and Andrew O'Neil, eds., *Middle Powers and the Rise of China* (Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2014): 171–191.

⁵Naidu Sanusha, “South Africa's Accession to the BRICS: Towards the 2013 Summit,” in Xing Li and Farah Abdulkadir Osman, eds., *China-Africa Relations in an Era of Great Transformations* (London, Ashgate, 2013): 185–203.

⁶Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy, 4th Edition* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

considerations from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries persistently exhibited bifurcated politics and economics that advantaged the whites over other races. With legal classifications such as free burghers (settlers), Hottentots or Khoisan, slaves and free blacks, “by the late eighteenth century race and class had overlapped for so long... that to many Europeans this social structure appeared to be natural or God-given.”⁷ The blacks were the slaves and laborers; landowners and employers were white. Legal arrangements further sustained this racially discriminatory framework—as blacks, Hottentots and slaves had to carry passes and in certain cases lanterns as they moved around Cape Town.⁸ At the advent of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, laws like Ordinance 50 of 1828 removed pass restrictions but still upheld racial categorizations that saw blacks and Khoikhoi as coloreds in contrast to whites and native inhabitants. As discriminatory and clear racial controls by the whites permeated into every fiber of society, especially in land and labor arrangements, justifications and motivations for the status quo were embedded in insincere attempts to “protect” the interests of Africans or coloreds. For instance the Shepstone system (named after Theophilus Shepstone, then in charge of native affairs), which seemingly allocated unclaimed land by white farmers to Africans who were supposed to cultivate these lands undisturbed. Conversely, these Africans and the lands were under the direct control and taxation by white resident magistrates and administrators who were charged with enforcing Native Law in Natal.⁹

Linked to white supremacy and its concomitant discriminatory ways is segregation, which Worden (2007) argues should not be simply observed as the perceptions of racial difference but rather consider its underlying principle of “enforced separation, not just subordination, of blacks and whites in the spheres of work, residence, and government.”¹⁰ Like white supremacy, segregationist agenda and policies that litter South Africa’s historical landscape from early twentieth century served as crucial determinants to its political and public life. A case in point were policies and legislations under Hertzog’s Pact administration—a coalition between the Hertzog National Party and the Creswell Labor Party, which saw the leader of the later replacing Africans with whites in prominent areas of government such as the railways, harbors, and post offices.¹¹ Furthermore, such practices were manifested in variety of policies and legislations like the 1926 Mines and Works Amendment Act, which vested the government with powers to use color in as a measure in private industry.¹² Hence, color was a recognized determinant of wages. The response to such gross prejudiced structures was a broader and more coordinated black political organization, especially

⁷ Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, “The Origins and Entrenchment of European Dominance at the Cape, 1652-c. 1840,” in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840* (London and Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989): 521–66.

⁸ Worden (2007).

⁹ David Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845–1910* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹⁰ Worden (2007): 81.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

between the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Most of such political organizations such as the Native Educational Association and Union of Black People functioned through mass gatherings, presentation of petitions, and media campaigns.¹³ From the tumult of the struggles against economic and political segregation rose the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in Bloemfontein, 1912—which would be rechristened the African National Congress (ANC) over a decade later. The emergence of the SANNC was supported by noble and counter-segregation objectives enshrined in its first constitution, which aimed to:

Encourage mutual understanding and to bring together into common action as one political people all tribes and clans of various tribes or races and by means of combined effort and united political organization to defend their freedom, rights and privileges [Karis and Carter (1973)¹⁴ as quoted in Worden (2007:91)¹⁵].

With the SANNC mainly made up of some elites and a large number of middle class individuals, the unrepresentative nature of the movement became a known Achille's heel. Furthermore, as governments and the fortunes of the black majority changed so did the revival, reorganization, and strategic approach from passive resistance to militancy in the ANC. Through the decades from the early twentieth century, some of the leaders from the Youth League of the ANC like Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela grew into known stalwarts of the organization, which steered through the chaos of discriminatory policies from white-dominated governments, the mass mobilization of the people against such bigoted arrangements, and going up against apartheid—another characteristic element of this tortuous journey to democratic freedom.

The third of this politico-historical trinity is the known apartheid rule which became synonymous with all aspects of life in pre-independent South Africa. The idea and practicality of apartheid, which dates back to the 1940s, was encapsulated in series of propositions in the Sauer Report of 1946, to the National Party (NP). As historians and political scientists wrestle to distinguish apartheid from the segregation, some scholars see the former as a more ruthless system of labor control.¹⁶ Despite the common character of white supremacy and bolstering segregationist policies, apartheid was not represented by a single coherent policy throughout the decades. This was evidenced by the intellectual discourse that ensued between the “total” and “practical” apartheid. Advocates of the “total” variant of apartheid called for total segregation with the exclusion of Africans from white towns and also from political power. Conversely, the rationale behind “practical” apartheid, which was

¹³ Christopher Saunders, “The New African Elite in the Eastern Cape and Some Late Nineteenth Century Origins of African Nationalism,” in *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 1* (London: University of London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1970): 44–55.

¹⁴ Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964, 4th vol.* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1973).

¹⁵ Worden (2007): 91.

¹⁶ Ibid: 103. Also see Harold Wolpe, “Capitalism and Cheap Labor Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid,” *Economy and Society* 1 (1972): 425–56.

largely supported by the landowners and business people, was to allow mobility of black labor, which would be controlled by the state.¹⁷

Prefaced by prior segregationist policies and acts pre-1940s, apartheid was a further imposition and manifestation of racial division and discrimination. Prime Minister D.F. Malan and his administration facilitated the further racial categorization—white, colored, Asiatic (Indians and Chinese), and Native (Bantu or African)—with the Population Registration Act of 1950, which went along with other legislative pieces like the Immorality Act meant to discourage and incriminate any form of sexual relations between whites and the “others” (coloreds, Asiatics, Africans). As apartheid evolved with several legislations governing all aspects of life, which was intended to keep the separation between the whites and other South Africans formal, some like the Group Areas Act enforcing separate racial residential areas, and Reservation of Separate Amenities Act which segregated the use of public amenities amidst numerous of such regulations drew social and political opposition. With antiapartheid defiance growing over the decades from the 1950s, along with the political organization and strategic maturity of the ANC and its other functional wings like the youth and women; the end to apartheid was only a matter of time and sustained protestations. Additionally, with the drafting and unanimous enunciation of the Freedom Charter as a somewhat ideological guidepost for the ANC's resistance of apartheid well into the 1990s, internal fault lines developed between Charterists and Africanists within the party. Charterism espoused ideas that envisioned a strong multiracial South African democracy and aligned with the fact that:

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people...the rights of the people shall be the same regardless of race, color or sex [Williams (1988)¹⁸ as quoted in Worden (2007:116)¹⁹].

On the other hand, the Africanists rejected notions of the Charterists and continued to advocate the use of massive protests and sustained antiapartheid resistance to assert the belief of “Africa for the Africans”—a clarion call for the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) formed in 1959. Over decades of violent resistance, with some significantly epic ones like the Soweto protest in the 1970s, both the ANC and PAC were outlawed organizations but still altered the mode of operation such as operating as exiled organizations. Additionally, leaders and members of these two organizations (including Mandela) were arrested and jailed. Obviously, these actions by the National Party did not quiet down the opposition that had gained the needed momentum and continuously renewed the fervor of the struggle against apartheid. Myriad domestic and external factors contributed to the downturn and subsequent fall of apartheid, which gave way to a new South Africa. Mandela's release from prison in 1990, the 1994 elections, and the successive inauguration of the Mandela

¹⁷Deborah Posel, “The Meaning of Apartheid Before 1948: Conflicting Interests and Forces within the Afrikaner Nationalist Alliance,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14 (1987): 123–39. Also see Worden (2007).

¹⁸Gavin Williams, “Celebrating the Freedom Charter,” *Transformation* 6 (1988): 73–86.

¹⁹Worden (2007): 116.

Table 4.1 Results of the 1994 national election in South Africa

Political Party	Seats won (%)
African National Congress	312 (63.7)
National Party	99 (20.2)
Inkatha Freedom Party	48 (9.8)
Freedom Front	14 (2.8)
Democratic Party	10 (2.0)
Pan-Africanist Congress	5 (1.0)
African Christian Democratic Party	2 (0.04)

Source: Sisk (2013):173

as president in 1994 were all iconic steps toward the ebbing of the apartheid policy and the assumption of a free and democratic South Africa.

The 1994 elections were particularly celebrated for its pivotal role in South African political history. The significant precursors to the April 1994 election—the lifting of the ban on political opposition by President F.W. de Klerk, the freeing of Mandela from prison and the ensuing negotiations for the process of democratization—captured the world’s interest in what has been described in short as a political miracle. The political theatre, which began with negotiations between Mandela and his ANC and the National Party led by F.W. de Klerk, was later broadened to include all the other opposition parties and their leaders. Building on the Groote Schuur Minute—an agreement to renounce armed struggle, release political prisoners, embrace returnees from exile, and guarantee the spectrum of political freedoms including full enfranchisement and elections—the parties worked together to achieve inclusivity and to quell the intermittent violence that threatened to toss the nation into civil disarray. Areas like KwaZulu Natal and Johannesburg that were hotspots of political violence epitomized the anarchic and bloody nature of this rather long-awaited and suffered political process. The sheer political hustle and jostle prior to the 1994 liberation elections necessitated a transitional Government of National Unity as power sharing became the pragmatic way to get good results from a rather chaotic situation. With a dominant ANC after the 1994 election (see Table 4.1), there was a unilateral withdrawal of the National Party from the government. Apart from the remarkable nature of the 1994 election, given the historical turbulence of segregation and apartheid, this rather mundane democratic feature also represented a landmark event for two important reasons.

First, this election, which symbolized the end of apartheid, represented the potency of pressure from the international community. At the advent of Huntington’s third democratic wave,²⁰ which saw most sub-Saharan African countries experimenting with democratic rule after decades of autocratic rule, major international influences prodded and pressured incumbent African regimes to embrace democracy. However, neither the era of African anticolonial struggles, which witnessed the political liberation of countries from various colonial dispensations, nor the early waves of democratization overturned South Africa’s stubborn apartheid rule. As aptly described by

²⁰ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

Sisk (2013), the external pressures on apartheid South Africa changed the environment and decision making dynamic of the apartheid era elite and their supporters. Most effectively, this undergirded the architecture of the global antiapartheid movement,²¹ which ranged from placard bearing school children to antiapartheid sanctions unleashed by Western governments. The antiapartheid campaign, which dates back to notable features like the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's speech of "Winds of Change" delivered in Cape Town and efforts by Nobel Peace Prize awardee Albert Luthuli, in the 1960s ratcheted throughout the decades. With one international event or movement after another, the global rally around the cause of antiapartheid was given a hopeful lift as the world witnessed the end of the Cold War and the gradually dissipation of bipolarity in the international system.²²

This was particularly true as the divisiveness of the Cold War in the international community gave way to the hope of achieving collective action in lowering the curtain on apartheid, which had inauspiciously thrived under the prolonged Cold War era.

Second, the 1994 election also broadly revealed the impressive list of architects behind this historic feat, but most distinguishably, the pivotal role of Nelson Mandela. As the antiapartheid discourse became intertwined with Mandela's story of resistance, resilience, and reinvention, so was the promise of the immediate post-apartheid era buoyed by the relevance of Mandela's leadership of the ANC. Most importantly, his ability to help navigate the then palpable antiapartheid anger, and to manage expectations especially among the Africans and coloreds in the population. Whether it was negotiation with the National Party's F.W. de Klerk or assuaging other actors like the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) Buthelezi, the presence of Mandela was crucial to ensure the continuance of the political process that was fraught with tension and incremental violence. Prior to the 1994 election, the festering conflict and outright breakdown in dialogue that ensued between IFP and the ANC threatened to derail the political process, even after high-level diplomacy by Lord Carrington and Henry Kissinger. Nonetheless, an unexpected deal was reached under an unknown Kenyan professor—Washington Okumu—who was part of the Carrington–Kissinger negotiation team. The agreement, which was reached 8 days before the election, was wistfully steered with Mandela and Ramaphosa standing in for the ANC. In what will later become known as a defining character of Mandela, he withdrew from the mediation and critiqued the IFP for using the mediation as a last minute ditch to push for its political concessions, despite the decisive role of the election in the political future of South Africa as well as the closing of the chapter on apartheid.²³

South Africa's tumultuous political past which considerably provides a framework for the current and yet-to-come democratic gains, has also drawn in many stakeholders (both foreign and domestic). Like the Chinese (the focus of this book),

²¹ Timothy Sisk, "South Africa: Enabling Liberation" in Kathryn Stoner and Michael McFaul, eds., *Transitions to Democracy: A Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013): 168–191.

²² Sisk (2013). Also see Giliomee Hermann, "The Rise and Possible Demise of Afrikaans Language," *PRASEA Occasional Papers* 14 (Cape Town: PRASEA, 2003).

²³ Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of a New South Africa* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).

some of the stakeholders have always been part of the South African story, and many others from around the world have been drawn in to share in this well-known political narrative.

4.2 Chinese Involvement in South Africa

China's relationship with South Africa is one of the most fascinating Sino-African relationships to be documented. An intriguing relationship that spans centuries—from the trickling-in of Chinese slave convicts to South Africa in the mid-to the late seventeenth century to an equally capable economic partnership, as two of the world's five well-known emerging economies, i.e., BRICS, in the twenty-first century—thus making the Sino-South African relationship a transformative and instructive political economic case in sub-Saharan Africa. With a rather complex history that witnessed over 63,000 contract miners imported from China to South Africa between 1904 and 1910, the earlier records and reportage of the Chinese in South Africa were clear on the hostility towards the new arrivals. The Chinese laborers were generally treated poorly and tagged with suspicion of undermining then colonial whites.²⁴ This eventually contributed to the enacting of a race-based legislation meant to outlaw and discourage Asian migration to South Africa.²⁵ The nature of the relationship did not change as the Chinese and other Asian migrants were faced with harsh racism and discrimination under the apartheid regime from the mid-twentieth century. For the Chinese Nationalists among the migrants, their defeat by the Chinese Communists in Mainland China forced them to flee and hence seek haven in South Africa. Under apartheid, the Chinese were initially classified as “non-whites” and later as “honorary whites.” Although the latter designation accorded them a range of concessions and benefits, there was a continuous pushback against such apartheid classifications purposed for discrimination.²⁶

The NP white-ruled South Africa, embracing an ardent anti-communist stance, had hostile relations with the newly formed People's Republic of China upon its founding in 1949. South Africa recognized China and Taiwan, and provided military support to United Nations forces against North Korea and China in the Korean War. With battle lines drawn between capitalist and communist blocs, South Africa, like other political hotspots around the world became an ideological battleground for a Sino-Soviet contest, which held sway into the latter part of the twentieth century. As was the case during colonial struggles across Africa, South Africa's struggle for majority rule saw a split in the ANC as it pushed toward majority rule and

²⁴Yoon Jung Park, *A Matter of Honor: Being Chinese in South Africa*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2008). Also, see Rachel Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902–1910: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

²⁵Melanie Yap, *Colour, Confusion, and Concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996).

²⁶Park (2008) and Bright (2013).

the end to apartheid. The emergence of PAC in 1959 also provided an alternate political organization that China could switch allegiances to as it fell out of favor with the ANC, in competition with the Soviet Union. Up until the 1980s, diplomatic relations between China and South Africa were topsy-turvy and closeted as Beijing publicly claimed an end to trade and economic ties even though there was evidence to the contrary, and its continuous support for the rather weak PAC did little to assuage the influence of the Soviet Union. China sent signals of the unhealthy diplomatic rapport with white-ruled South Africa. In 1973, Beijing voted against the South Africa's credentials in the UN and then followed that with a vote to exclude its representatives from the world body. As relations improved between China and the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the former inched closer to making amends with the ANC and promising to equally support all liberation movements in the southern African region.

The release of Mandela from prison in 1990 also symbolized a new sense of life for Sino-South African relations as warm diplomatic gestures between the released ANC leader and the China, gradually filtered into diplomatic and economic relations with the white minority government. Trade between the two countries reached \$250 million in 1992 together with several high level diplomatic visits including the Mandela's visit to China and meeting with Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin in 1992. After the 1994 elections, China's contribution to the ANC was recognized, and Beijing moved to deepen its relationship with South Africa and particularly the elected ANC party. After persuading the Mandela administration to switch recognition from Taipei to Beijing, which materialized in the jettisoning of Taiwan-South African relations for an even stronger relationship with majority ruled South Africa in 1998. Since a post-apartheid black majority has ruled South Africa, economic and diplomatic ties with China have grown exponentially in tandem with China's continent-wide expansion. Though Chinese investments in South Africa started unimpressively, they have grown in leaps and bounds over the span of a decade. The total value of Chinese investments in the country, which was only \$600 million in 2007,²⁷ showed immense growth by 2011 as South Africa's imports and exports with China stood at \$45.4 billion.²⁸ Recently, highlights of this Sino-South African relationship may range from the mundane, like a high profile visit to or from China, such as the first visit of Xi Jinping as president; to the sensational, such the refusal of visa to the Dalai Lama in 2011. As the ANC has dominated contemporary South African politics, even with the demise of Mandela, China has continued to develop and maintain closer ties due to the essentials of this relationship, which could also conversely serve as formal triggers for anti-China sentiments in South Africa.

First, the relationship between South Africa and China has a deep and contentious history. Contemporary relations between the two countries may have received a lot of attention, but buried in the sordid and infamous past of modern South Africa

²⁷David Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 349.

²⁸2012 *China Statistical Yearbook* (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2013): 243.

is the known use and abuse of Chinese labor in the early twentieth century. The first documented Chinese arrivals to South Africa in the mid-seventeenth century were made up of convicts and company slaves of the Dutch East India Company. After years of servitude, some returned to their homeland, whereas others settled into petty trading, shopkeeping, and tending to ships. The bitter tales of the indentured labor from China to be used in South African gold mines—especially in the Transvaal—have been retold against the backdrop of the racial hostility that greeted them based on an earlier distaste of South Africa toward Indian contract labor, brought in the 1860s.²⁹ In one account after another, the struggles of these Chinese workers continued, and there remained a core Chinese constituent population even though most were returned or relocated back to China.

As the veil of apartheid lifted and gave way to a democratic dispensation in the 1990s, the Chinese population in South Africa also strengthened their desire to be part of an all-inclusive free majority governed South Africa. This sometimes came with protestations and contestations of the status quo, which continued to discriminate against the Chinese. Significant among these was the legal challenge to the government's alleged exclusion of the Chinese from two post-apartheid legislations on affirmative action—the Employment Equity Act (No. 555 of 1998) (EEA) and the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act (No. 53 of 2003) (BBBEE). This legal contest by the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA) in December 2007 was perceived as a far-reaching protest against the general discrimination against the Chinese. As enunciated by the chairperson of CASA:

The [Chinese] community's struggle has not been about economic opportunism, but about [the] lack of the recognition and clearing up of misconceptions of the historical injustices the South African Chinese faced.³⁰

Through the politics of discrimination manifested through identity challenges, South Africa still remains one of the three (including Mauritius and Madagascar) African countries with native born Chinese population. In 2008, the estimates of Chinese in South Africa stood at 300,000—a number that surpasses the amount of Chinese living and working anywhere in Africa (Park 2008). This large population has made China's contribution to one of Africa's strongest economies apparent. Nonetheless, this means that the Chinese population is not only contributing to South Africa's economic growth but also helping to carve out and maintain one of Africa's racial diverse social landscapes.

Second, Sino-South African relations have been persistently economic based. From the seventeenth to twentieth centuries when Chinese labor streamed into South African gold mines as slaves and indentured labor, through the era of apartheid when China continuously traded with the white minority administration behind the glare of anti-apartheid struggles, to the formal invitation into the coveted group of emerging economies—BRIC, both countries have been connected through economic transactions.

²⁹ Bright (2013); Park (2008).

³⁰ Yoon Park, *Living In Between: The Chinese in South Africa*, January 4, 2012 <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/living-between-chinese-south-africa> (accessed 1/10/2015).

Being Africa's most advanced economy, South Africa is a very attractive market base that can equally serve as a reliable catalyst for economic activity in the subregion (especially among the 15-member Southern African Development Community—SADC) as well as the rest of Africa. Chinese companies have invested in the various sectors of the South African economy—including mining and metallurgy, textiles, telecommunications, banking, automobile industry, construction and other light manufacturing. Some of the outstanding deals include the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China's purchase of South Africa's Standard Bank for \$5.5 billion in 2007; the \$440 million investment by Sinosteel in the production of ferrochrome and chromium ore, in 2008; and in 2010, Jinchuan Group and the China–Africa Development Fund purchased 51 % stake in the Wesizwe Platinum for \$288 million with an additional \$650 million in loan packages to support platinum production.³¹ With such resource and market potential, and a role as a fulcrum in the SADC, South Africa's inclusion into the BRIC forum was a natural course to complete the geopolitical strategy of the emerging economies, but most notably, this invitation materialized upon China's behest. Hence, in spite of the critics' disagreement over South Africa's inclusion in this august group of economic performers,³² support came from where it mattered most, as the BRIC's embrace of the addition is captured in the statement from Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry:

[South Africa's inclusion is] in line with the sustainable trends of global development, including the emergence of a polycentric international system. The entry of [South Africa], an active participant in the G20 and the largest economic power in Africa, will not only increase the total economic weight of our association but also will help build up opportunities for mutually beneficial practical cooperation within Bric.³³

With such international affirmation in the South African economy by Beijing and other emerging economies, economic arrangements between any of these emerging economies and South Africa moved away from the known monolithic discourse of a strong and economic savvy China plundering and perpetuating colonial exploitation in another African economy to a tale of equal economic partnership. This way of doing business with Beijing may either be a targeted challenge to the known and pervasive account of a second scramble for African resources or a directed step in the amassing of a geopolitical coalition to aid and sustain China's rise and near future dominance in global affairs. Sanusha Naidu (2013) recounts President Zuma's voyage to tout the geo-strategic significance of a South Africa with a permanent seat on the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) to the BRIC

³¹ Shinn and Eisenman (2012): 349.

³² See Shira Dezan and Associates "South Africa Joins Bric Nations at Chinas Request," December 29, 2010. Available at <http://www.2point6billion.com/news/2010/12/29/south-africa-joins-bric-nations-at-chinas-request-8291.html>.

³³ Keith Campbell "Bric Becomes Brics, But Will This be Good for South Africa?" *Polity.org.za*. January 14, 2011, <http://www.polity.org.za/article/bric-becomes-brics-but-will-this-be-good-for-south-africa-2011-01-14> (accessed 1/30/2015); as quoted in Sanusha Naidu, "South Africa's Accession to the BRICS: Towards the 2013 Summit," In Xing Li and Farah Abdulkadir O., eds., *China-Africa Relations in an Era of Great Transformation* (London: Ashgate, 2013): pp. 185–203.

members.³⁴ To receive the needed attention, President Zuma had to clearly present the economic imperatives of having South Africa as a partner in the global economic transformation. If that argument won Pretoria a seat next to Beijing on the BRIC club, then there remain enough economic reasons for China to continue fostering Sino-South African engagement.

Third and one of the notable motives for this relationship is South–South allegiance, which has invariably been used by Beijing as an outreach mantra for its business in the developing world. With its origins back in the 1950s during the Asia-Africa conference at Bandung, Beijing has continuously sought for ways to extend solidarity through diplomacy, and more recently through aggressive economic engagements with fellow countries in the global South. In a post-apartheid South Africa, South–South relations have continuously found a place in its foreign policy especially given the role that it played in antiapartheid struggles and the worldwide campaign for the release of Mandela from prison. After his release from prison in 1990, Mandela showed public appreciation for China’s support by meeting with the Chinese ambassador to Zambia. This gesture preceded later efforts by both the Mbeki and Zuma administration to reshape foreign policy ideals and priorities to reflect the processes to advance justice for Africa and the South as a whole.³⁵ China’s adherence and touting of the South–South diplomatic objectives have also concurrently altered the balance of the global economic landscape. As Beijing has scooted to become Africa’s most vital trading partner, the value of South–South trade now exceeds North-South trade by some \$2.2 trillion—over one quarter of global trade. Additionally, the amount of South–South foreign aid has also surged, as China, India, and Brazil have become major contributors to global foreign aid.³⁶ Beijing may also be reaping the benefits of the South–South solidarity in its recent upswing in economic engagements in Africa, with pro-China sentiments sometimes shrouded in anti-Western rhetoric as expressed by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe. To embrace Beijing and rebuff the West, Mugabe avowedly stated during the 25th independence anniversary of Zimbabwe “we have turned east where the sun rises, and given our backs to the West where the sun sets.”³⁷

Nonetheless, in recent Sino-African relations, such brazen and unbridled support for Beijing’s economic overtures and policies toward Africa is not a broad based norm. As more Chinese citizens and business interests descend and dwell on African soil, complex interactions between them and their African hosts have stirred up and increased anti-Chinese fervor among different populations across the continent.

³⁴ Sanusha Naidu (2013).

³⁵ Chris Alden and Garth Le Pere, “South Africa in Africa: Bound to Lead?” *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 36:1: (2004): 145–170.

³⁶ *The Washington Post*, “What the New Bank of BRICS is All About,” July 17, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/17/what-the-new-bank-of-brics-is-all-about/> (accessed 1/30/2015).

³⁷ Robert Mugabe, “Speech Marking the 25th Anniversary of Zimbabwe’s Independence,” April 18, 2005, quoted in Andrew Meldrum, “Mugabe Turns Back on West and Looks East,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 2005.

South Africa is one case in point. In spite of a seemingly checkered historical path and the near ubiquity of the Chinese in diverse economic endeavors in South Africa, most research and perception studies reveal that anti-Chinese cynicism is very present among South Africa's rainbow population. Recently, elites in South African society and members of the ANC have been wary of espousing any form of unrestrained pro-China rhetoric, and in few cases, have scrutinized Beijing's motives in South Africa, and Africa as a whole.

4.3 Popular Reactions to Chinese Engagement

The Chinese feature prominently in South Africa's history, particularly from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. During this epoch, Chinese labor was introduced into different South African economic activities, mainly the mines at Transvaal and Natal. Most fascinatingly was the response of the highly stratified South African population, which was largely unfavorable towards any settlers or indentured labor.³⁸ This reaction towards the Chinese is a contemporary recognizable feature as some recent Sino-African accounts and surveys indicate a general disfavor for the parts of the engagements fostered by the Chinese in South African society. As more Chinese call South Africa their home, either through previous generations of migrants or through the recent wave of Chinese and companies who harkened to the charge to "go global" there is bound to be deepening conflicts among this increasing diversity. There are over 300,000 residents of Chinese descent in the midst of a South African society that is racially and ethnically diverse, co-residing in a relatively new democratic system—the post-apartheid black majority government. This as background to the current nature of Sino-South Africa relations has been a recipe for unpopularity with Chinese labor arrangements, balance of trade, quality of products, environmental and policies amongst a host of other issues. In spite of the cordial diplomatic relations that exist between both countries, the uncertainty and skepticism dogging this relationship is cautiously reflected among the leadership and much evidently in the general population. President Zuma's recent remarks about Chinese balance of trade with its African counterparts mirrored his predecessor, Mbeki who commented on the "unequal relationship" between China and African economies.³⁹ Mostly, perceptions of Chinese engagement across Africa have been favorable except for three countries—South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt—which tend to be apprehensive toward the expansion of Chinese economic endeavors.⁴⁰ This is particularly interesting given that China's

³⁸ Bright (2013).

³⁹ TradeMark Southern Africa, "Win Win Partnership—China, Southern Africa and the Extractive Industries, n.d.:" <http://www.trademarksa.org/publications/win-win-partnership-china-southern-africa-and-extractive-industries> (accessed 1/5/2015).

⁴⁰ Pew Research Center, "Global Unease with Major World Powers," June 27, 2007, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2007/06/27/global-unease-with-major-world-powers/> (accessed 12/18/2014); Pew

trade in Africa, which represents only 4 % of its total global trade, are essentially dominant in few countries including the aforementioned three—South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt. In 2007, the Pew Survey on Global Attitudes reported 47 % of South African respondents had an unfavorable view of China—the most in any of the African countries surveyed.⁴¹ This was largely unchanged in the 2013 Pew Survey, which also saw a dint of unfavorability, in contrast to a largely favorable picture of the Chinese in Africa.⁴² Another 2014 report on Sino-Africa perception prepared by the Pretoria based Ethics Institute of South Africa (EthicsSA) undoubtedly concurs with the Pew surveys as South Africa generally led SSA countries in the proportion of respondents who viewed Chinese engagement negatively.⁴³ Evidently, South Africa's political history and the evolution of its institutions in the democratization process have contributed to the complexity of Sino-South African relations. However, these factors have still not posed a credible threat to the evolution of Sino-South Africa relations, and no major political actors have to the present drummed up anti-Chinese populism as a means to victory in a major political competition.

First, South Africans do not necessarily see China as a positive model for their development. Over the past six decades, most African countries have perceived China as a partner in their struggle—whatever that struggle may be. China's presence on the continent during the anticolonial struggles, lending moral and physical support to different movements and groups in their cause to end colonial rule became noteworthy. Most significant in China's connection to its African counterparts was at the 1955 Bandung Conference, which functioned as a watershed event to the solidarity between Asian and African countries. In spite of various setbacks to China's relationship with individual countries at different points in history, such leadership and fraternity have earned Beijing an exemplary status, especially at a time that China's economy is flourishing while Africa's is still in an undulating economic transition. Conversely, South Africa diverges from this pattern of recognition in its engagement with China, as it sees its relationship as a positive one but not

Research Center, "Obama More Popular Abroad than at Home," June 17, 2010, <http://www.pew-global.org/2010/06/17/chapter-5-views-of-china/> (accessed 12/18/2014); Pew Research Center, "China Seen Overtaking U.S. as Global Superpower," July 13, 2011, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/07/13/china-seen-overtaking-us-as-global-superpower/> (accessed 12/18/2014); Pew Research Center, "Global Image of the United States and China," July 18, 2013, <http://www.pew-global.org/2013/07/18/global-image-of-the-united-states-and-china/> (accessed 12/18/2013); Pew Research Center, "Global Opposition to U.S. Surveillance and Drones, but Limited Harm to America's Image," July 14, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/07/2014-07-14-Balance-of-Power.pdf> (accessed 12/20/2014). Barry Sautman and Hairong Yan, "African Perspectives on China-Africa Links," *The China Quarterly*, 199 (2009): 728–759.

⁴¹ Pew Research Center, "Global Unease with Major World Powers," June 27, 2007, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2007/06/27/global-unease-with-major-world-powers/> (accessed 12/20/2014).

⁴² Pew Research Center, "Global Image of the United States and China," July 18, 2013, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/07/18/global-image-of-the-united-states-and-china/> (accessed 12/20/2014).

⁴³ Ethics Institute of South Africa. Africans' perception of Chinese Business in Africa: A Survey. February 2014, http://www.ethicsa.org/phocadownloadpap/Research_Reports/AfricanPerceptionSurveyChineseBusinessWEBSITEVERSION.pdf (accessed 12/24/2014).

essentially as a blueprint to economic self-determination. While most African countries included in a 2009 survey registered confidence in China as a useful path to development, only 3 % of South African respondents saw China as a model for development (this is in comparison to Ghana's 44.4 %).⁴⁴ This vote of low confidence could be attributed to historical linkages and a typical sense of co-equality in this partnership. As tales of the Chinese indentured labor in South African mines in earlier centuries are passed from generation to generation, in a system that has been famed as a notoriously discriminatory society, present generations may struggle to accept the notion of the Chinese projecting worthy development strides to be emulated. This face-losing image is further compounded by the recognition that South African respondents truly perceive China as a co-equal or co-competitor in economic development. For the past decade, South Africa has posted slightly higher GDP per capita than China and one cannot discard such a puzzle piece from the whole Sino-South African picture.⁴⁵ In spite of this argument, anti-Chinese populism has not been adopted and used as campaign banner for a political party's activities due two main reasons. First, the ANC has dominated and won all the post-apartheid presidential elections and to maintain the popularity and international respect accorded to the black majority rule, every attempt to provide opportunities for the majority poor African population and other disadvantaged minorities is welcome. China's economic and trade ties contribute to the health of the South African economy, even if the Beijing is not necessarily a role model. Second, in a post-apartheid era in South Africa, spewing any form of anti-China populism in an open political platform may be equated to a formal reinstatement of the past evils of discrimination, segregation and profiling—all apparitions of apartheid. With an entrenched Chinese population, some of who are born and bred South Africans, stirring of anti-Chinese populism for political gain in democratic South Africa may turn out as a political *faux pas*.

Second, the depth and breadth of anti-China sentiment in South Africa is directly linked to what might be generally tagged as "China's reputation in doing business in Africa." Across Africa, Chinese investments have been noted as possessing both complementary and competitive elements, as the benefits of providing infrastructure and serving as a catalyst for the manufacturing sector are often paralleled by the anger directed at the ever-increasing presence of Chinese individuals and business operatives that compete with locals over resources and market. Intriguingly, both ends of this Sino-African spectrum contribute to different levels of anti-China sentiments. In South Africa, the general anti-Chinese fervor is simply tied to issues pertaining to both the complementary and competitive aspects of Sino-South African relations. In their survey, Sautman and Yan (2009) reveal the dissatisfaction that accompany the work of Chinese companies on large projects in South Africa. Of the 197 respondents in the survey in South Africa, 51.3 % see small Chinese invest-

⁴⁴Sautman and Yan (2009): 736.

⁴⁵According to World Bank data, between 2005 and 2013, South Africa posted GDP per capita, ranging from \$5,186 to \$7,831, whereas China's ranged between \$1,731 and \$6,807, within the same period.

ments as useful parts of their local economies as well as the source of problems.⁴⁶ Similarly, the report by the Ethics Institute of South Africa reveals that of the 15 African countries surveyed, South Africans generally have the most negative perception about Chinese businesses in their country.⁴⁷ With a sample size that is largely educated and literate, it is clear that South Africa's anti-China sentiments may feature remnants of historical perceptions of the Chinese as competitive labor as well as evidence of a society that possess pro-Western elements that might be difficult to persuade to join the increasing pro-China bandwagon. To further exacerbate this nature of things, the Chinese tend to isolate themselves from the communities where they run their businesses. This engenders and fosters negative conceptions against Chinese entrepreneurs and businesses due to the obvious lack of cultural immersion.⁴⁸ Additionally, the anti-China sentiments tied to the operation of Chinese businesses in South Africa also emanate from a disregard for labor unions and workers' rights. This has been variedly attributed to their lack of understanding for the labor union system that Chinese workers are not use to in their homeland.⁴⁹ Thus, instead of acquainting themselves with the workings of these unions, the Chinese businesses rather defer to standards that may be inherently Chinese in their business operations.⁵⁰ As in Zambia, and other parts of Africa, this reputation has often generated a toxic working atmosphere that has led to deadly disagreements between South African workers and their Chinese employers or coworkers, as well as in neighborhoods and communities.

Linked to China's nature of doing business in South Africa is the quality of Chinese products and services. The general ridicule that has been associated with Chinese products and services in various parts of Africa such as in neighboring Zimbabwe where cheaply made Chinese goods are irreverently referred to as *zhing zhong*, is also the case in South Africa—China's most significant trading partner on the African continent. The low quality of Chinese brands and the purported shoddiness that accompany Chinese services have been caricatured in the South African *kwaito* hit by the Hunger Boyz—"Fong Kong,"⁵¹ which clearly underscores the pervasiveness of this "inferior products" discourse. In the Ethics Institute of South Africa (2014) survey, only 9 % South African respondents agreed with the fact that Chinese products are of high quality, the lowest among that African countries surveyed. Again, in terms of satisfaction with infrastructural projects built by the

⁴⁶ Sautman and Yan (2009): 742.

⁴⁷ Ethics Institute of South Africa (2014).

⁴⁸ Terence McNamee, Greg Mills, Sebatso Manoeli, Masana Mulaudzi, Stuart Doran, and Emma Chen, "Africa in Their Words: A Study of Chinese Traders in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia and Angola," The Brenthurst Foundation Discussion Paper 3 (2012).

⁴⁹ Stephen Chan, "The Middle Kingdom and the Dark Continent: An Essay on China, Africa and Many Fault Lines," in Stephen Chan, ed., *The Morality of China in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2013).

⁵⁰ Ethics Institute of South Africa (2014).

⁵¹ Erin Conway-Smith, "China's Autos Suffer the Fong Kong Curse," *Global Post*, May 18, 2012, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/south-africa/120517/china-africa-cars-autos> (accessed 12/28/2014).

Chinese, respondents from South Africa scored the least among the sample of African states, registering 13 % satisfaction with these projects.⁵² The cheapness and poor quality of the products and services go hand in hand with the problem of de-industrialization and competitiveness with small and medium scale enterprises in the South African market. A well-known tension in the market pertains to the garment and textile industry, which has borne the heavy brunt of the unbridled importation of cheap Chinese textiles, leading to massive job losses. The South African government's initiative through the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2006, to push Beijing to institute a voluntary export restraint was still not enough to control the onslaught of cheap textiles from Beijing as wholesalers and importers redirected their orders through other countries like India, Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates (UAE).⁵³ This textile industry saga and other Chinese related trade and labor disputes in the steel, construction, and motor industries often result in a clash between government and the labor unions. The Ispat Iscor and CITIC-ARCE (a Chinese consortium) contract that saw the latter import labor from China under the pretext of very limited skilled South African labor, is one such case that caught the attention of industry watchers as well as ruffle the feathers of South African labor unions.⁵⁴ The tensions between South Africans and the Chinese in these economic avenues practically become sources of anti-Chinese disagreements as they fester with government inaction or continuous challenge from the labor unions. Again, this nature of disagreements is associated with specific economic sectors, which are mostly related to general trading and light manufacturing. Like the case of Ghana, and other African economies, the cheap Chinese made products are largely consumed by a burgeoning middle class, which also plays an important role in the political elections and depends on these jobs, so though the made-in-China products compete with the locally made, it may be equally challenging to achieve a broad based political support by whipping up anti-China sentiments. Additionally, South African traders and business operatives are also complicit in this affair as they import and trade in the cheaper, in-demand Chinese products.

Another issue that is connected to the increase in disfavor of the Chinese in South Africa is the disregard for environmental responsibility demonstrated by Chinese companies. Across Africa, Chinese businesses have often been described as non-responsive to environmental issues that affect African countries and their economies. This disregard for environmental standards and laws have often advantaged Chinese firms in winning contractual bids, which are often located in environmentally sensitive locations and eschewed by Western companies limited by environmental assessment reports. Sometimes the Chinese demand for wildlife products endangers protected species as they increase poaching and the illegal

⁵² Ethics Institute of South Africa (2014).

⁵³ Naidu Sanusha, "Balancing a Strategic Partnership? South Africa-China Relations," in Ampiah Kweku and Naidu Sanusha, eds., *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Africa and China* (Cape Town: KwaZulu Natal Press, 2008): 167–191.

⁵⁴ *All Africa*, "South Africa: Chinese Consortium 'Best for the Job,'" February 28, 2005, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200502280886.html> (accessed 1/10/2015).

smuggling of the wildlife products from South Africa.⁵⁵ In the survey by Ethics Institute of South Africa, 56.6 % of South African respondents (again representing the most negative) disbelieved that Chinese businesses are environmentally responsible.⁵⁶ This is a belief that has dogged Chinese companies from their homeland where they are known as flouters of environmental standards to the continent of Africa where development needs often eclipse environmental norms. Anti-China resentment often results from Chinese-executed projects in communities that often lead to the displacement of people and wildlife, as well as the impacts of authorized and unauthorized resource extraction, which further degrades these eco-sensitive areas. South Africa, like most developing economies, persistently struggles with the task of improving the wellbeing of its population while also preserving environmental resources for future generations. Thus, tapping into such anti-China anger propelled by environmental irresponsibility on the part of Beijing may in turn set unreachable expectations for the governments in power.

The local reactions toward the Chinese and Chinese businesses can also be a concomitant of the known xenophobic outbursts that have come to characterize post-apartheid South Africa. Though xenophobic violence in South Africa often tends to be directed at migrants from other African countries such as Zimbabwe, and Nigeria, research also indicates that the Chinese and other Asians have been caught in such situations. This sometimes manifests in robberies, car hijackings and kidnappings for ransom.⁵⁷ Poverty and other social inequities, which abound in South Africa, foster such xenophobic surges. However, fascinatingly, South Africa's exceptionalism—as an economic oasis in a Sub-Saharan Africa—sometimes drives xenophobia⁵⁸ as local populations have the pride to push the Chinese and other economic interests to treat South Africa differently from other African economic destinations.

Recently, the general embrace of Beijing by the leaders and elites in South Africa have been measured and cautious, compared to most countries in Africa. Gauging by the general rhetoric of South African leaders, and South African respondents as they largely score high in terms of disagreement with most of China's policies and approaches in both economic and diplomatic engagements in South Africa. From the Mandela administration, which was trademarked by human rights agenda, through the Mbeki government to Zuma's presidency that have both been poised to position South Africa in a leadership role within the international system, relations with China has been rather complex. As post-apartheid democratic South Africa has been called upon to fix intra-African challenges as well as reaching across to countries like Myanmar to deal with political crisis as an emerging middle power, the

⁵⁵ Paul Burkhardt, "South Africa Selling Rhinos to Buyers to Thwart Poachers," *Bloomberg News*, January 13, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2015-01-13/south-africa-to-sell-rhinos-to-private-buyers-to-thwart-poachers.html> (accessed 1/18/15).

⁵⁶ Ethics Institute of South Africa (2014).

⁵⁷ Park (2012).

⁵⁸ Michael Neocosmos, "The Politics of Fear and the Fear of Politics: Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43:6 (2008): 586–594.

relationship with China, which has vast economic implications, has become politically nuanced. The leaders and elites admire China's economic growth and with its cozy relations with the ANC, which has some elites within the party taking every opportunity to unfairly, benefit from Chinese resource explorations,⁵⁹ have mostly rendered South Africa's foreign policy submissive to the whims and dominance of Beijing. This image and accompanying rhetoric has been further strengthened by first, the complicated and politically messy response to the Dalai Lama's visa request to visit South Africa for Desmond Tutu's eightieth birthday. The visa issue coincided with one of ANC's study tours to China along with the visit of the deputy president. These also ensued shortly after South Africa was invited to join the BRICS at the behest of China. Additionally, South Africa's diplomatic appeal to stall the execution of South African Janice Linden, charged with smuggling 3 kg of methamphetamine in 2008 had no clear import on the case since Beijing went through with the death penalty.⁶⁰ To avoid the diplomatic ridicule of tagging along China's coattails, South Africa would have to accentuate its own foreign policy agenda exclusive from any Beijing consensus. To achieve this goal, the ascendancy to BRICS and quest for middle power recognition, South African leaders and elites would have to offset these negative experiences with well-organized responses.

South Africa has been revered as a political force that has experienced a painful past, but through reconciliation, and reorganization, Africa's most developed economy is defined by promise. China has played different roles in the historical and present day situation of South Africa—pre- and post-apartheid. This makes for a complex journey for Sino-South Africa relationship with both complementary and competitive elements. These features have been contributory factors to growing anti-Chinese dissent among sections of the South African population. Though different surveys have revealed this, there is yet to be a broad based anti-Chinese populist movement with wide ranging political implications. For any South African political party or interest that might be weary of ANC's dominance along with other political problems, tapping into any form of anger toward China and the Chinese in South Africa may border on political expediency. However, given the growth and gains of this relationship, doing otherwise may be choosing political prudence over pragmatism. Sino-South Africa relations share some of the same challenges that resonate with other relationships China have across the African continent, however, the uniqueness of this particular engagement lies in South Africa's exceptional sociopolitical journey, and the complex and sometimes contentious history that connects both countries.

⁵⁹Anthony Butler, "Why is China so Influential over ANC Politicians?" *Business Day*, October 7, 2011.

⁶⁰Van der Westhuizen and Grimm (2014):184–185.