

**An activist or a toothless Parliament?
South African Parliament's National Assembly Portfolio
Committee on International Relations and Cooperation**

by

Roseline Mpho Monnakgotla

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)



at the

University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor:

Professor Scarlet Cornelissen

December 2019

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my original work, that I am the owner (except to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that production and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in part, or its entirety submitted it for another degree or in any university.

December 2019

Copyright © 2019 Stellenbosch University
All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa grants strong powers to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation. This enables the Committee to play a fundamental role in overseeing the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), including its implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

This study applied groupthink as a theoretical framework to examine the role of the Portfolio Committee in overseeing the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO. In particular, based on the individual experiences of Portfolio Committee members, the study provided a definition of the nature of parliamentary oversight, identified the different oversight mechanisms used by members as well as highlighting the challenges that undermine Parliament's oversight role.

The findings revealed that holding the executive accountable, ensuring that the executive fulfils its mandate, making sure that funds allocated by Parliament are used responsibly by the executive, and serving the country's best interests are all aspects of parliamentary oversight. The findings further suggest that Portfolio Committee members use several oversight mechanisms, including inviting the Department to make a presentation on a particular matter, putting questions to the Minister, making statements in the House, as well as making budget speeches to oversee DIRCO. The findings further revealed that Portfolio Committee members submitted 191 written questions to DIRCO Minister for the 2011 – 2012 period on foreign policy matters. Of the 191 questions, findings show that there were four associated written questions on the two identified case studies. Further examination of these questions showed that the majority sought clarity on peace and security, particularly South Africa's role and support to in Zimbabwe and BRICS and its influence on South Africa's foreign policy decisions, particularly at the UN Security Council.

The findings also revealed factors that have hindered the Portfolio Committee from effectively carrying out its oversight role. These factors included the absence of the Minister in the Committee and the House proceedings to take oral questions and the inability of DIRCO senior officials to speak with absolute authority and clarity on given issues. Lastly, the presence of groupthink symptoms was detected in the Committee, namely, cohesiveness and insulation of the group from external expertise.

Based on these findings, the study recommended areas of improvement to reinforce the Portfolio Committee's oversight over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, this thesis would not have been possible without the presence of the Almighty, who granted me my inner strength.

To my supervisor, Professor Scarlett Cornelissen, I am grateful for her valuable guidance and support throughout this thesis. Without her tireless assistance, this work would not have been possible

To my interviewees, distinguished Members of Parliament – thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to meet me in person, talk on the phone and to answer my questions by email. Your input provided a wealth of information, which enriched my analysis.

A huge thank you also goes to my wonderful husband, Alfred Monnakgotla, for his unwavering support, particularly during difficult times. To my parents, Refilwe and Reikane Montshiwa, and my sister, Matshidiso – thank you for always believing in me.

Lastly, to my colleagues Natalie Leibrandt-Loxton, Thea Louw, Sadeck Casoojee, and Tom Schumann (may his soul rest in eternal peace) – thank you for your much-appreciated support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
FIGURES	viii
TABLES	ix
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	x
CHAPTER 1	1
1. Introduction and rationale for the study	1
1.1 Review of existing research on Parliament’s oversight role	3
1.1.1 South Africa’s re-admission to the global system of governance	6
1.1.2 Parliament and the process of foreign policy decision-making	7
1.2 Groupthink as a theoretical framework for examining foreign policy decision-making	7
1.2.1 Symptoms of groupthink	8
1.2.2 Preventing groupthink	10
1.2.3 Limitations of groupthink	11
1.3 Research methodology	12
1.3.1 Sample size	12
1.3.2 Identified sample case studies	14
1.3.2.1 The UN Security Council	14
1.3.3 Case study method	16
1.4 Data collection	17
1.4.1 Semi-structured interviews	17
1.4.1.1 Profile of the interviewees	18
1.4.1.2 How were the interviewees accessed?	19
1.4.2 Written questions submitted to DIRCO Minister on identified cases	19
1.4.3 Portfolio Committee reports on identified cases	20
1.4.4 Qualitative content analysis	20
1.5 Reliability and validity	20
1.6 Ethical considerations	21
1.7 Limitations of the study	22
1.8 Study outline	22
1.9 Conclusion	23

CHAPTER 2	24
2. Introduction.....	24
2.1 Parliamentary oversight.....	24
2.1.1 Parliamentary oversight and foreign policy.....	25
2.2 Parliament's oversight framework.....	28
2.2.1 Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model: Asserting Parliament's Oversight Role in Enhancing Democracy.....	30
2.2.1.1 Parliament's monitoring of foreign policy.....	34
2.2.1.2 Role and mandate of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation.....	34
2.3 Evaluation of Parliament's oversight framework on foreign policy from the perspective of the reviewed literature.....	35
2.3.1 Comparative summary: Parliament and Foreign Policy in Namibia, Canada, United Kingdom, and India.....	38
2.3.2 Comparative summary analysis.....	39
2.4 Conclusion.....	40
CHAPTER 3	41
3. Introduction.....	41
3.1 Foreign Policy Analysis.....	42
3.2 Foreign policy and foreign policy-making actors.....	43
3.3 What is foreign policy decision-making?.....	44
3.3.1 Types of foreign policy decisions.....	44
3.3.1.1 Analysis of foreign policy decision-making at the group level.....	45
3.3.1.2 What is groupthink?.....	46
3.3.2 Preventing groupthink.....	52
3.3.3 Limitations of groupthink.....	54
3.3.3.1 Symptoms of polythink.....	56
3.4 Conclusion.....	57
CHAPTER 4	58
4. Introduction.....	58
4.1 Data analysis.....	58
4.1.1 Qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts.....	59
4.1.2 Interviewee profiles.....	59

4.1.3 The term ‘parliamentary oversight’	60
4.1.3.1 Definitions	61
4.1.3.2 Explanation	61
4.1.3.3 What is the nature of oversight?	61
4.1.3.4 Discussion – Definition and nature of parliamentary oversight	62
4.1.4 Closer examination of parliamentary oversight as it relates to the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy	63
4.1.4.1 How to achieve parliamentary oversight?	63
4.1.4.2 Parliament’s oversight mechanisms	63
4.1.4.3 Portfolio Committee’s oversight role over the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy	64
4.1.5 Participants’ experiences of the Portfolio Committee’s oversight role	65
4.1.6 Participants’ experiences of the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy by DIRCO	65
4.1.6.1 Discussion – Portfolio Committee’s oversight over the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy	66
4.1.6.2 Portfolio Committee’s current process of engagement with DIRCO ..	66
4.1.7 Concluding remarks	69
4.2 Portfolio Committee members’ use of written questions and summoning of the Minister to oversee the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy (based on identified case studies)	69
4.2.1 Interviews of Portfolio Committee members on identified case studies ...	69
4.2.1.1 Participants’ recollection: The action of the Portfolio Committee on ..	69
identified case studies	69
4.2.1.2 Discussion – Action of the Portfolio Committee on the identified case studies	71
4.2.1.3 Participants’ recollection: The action of individual members on identified case studies	72
4.2.1.4 Written questions to the DIRCO Minister on identified cases (2011 – 2012)	73
4.2.2 Closer examination of questions on the identified case studies	74
4.3 Portfolio Committee’s report on identified case studies	76
4.4 Focus areas of Portfolio Committee members’ oversight other than the identified case studies	78
4.4.1 Review and benefits of South Africa’s missions	79
4.4.2 Peace and Security: Zimbabwe	81
4.4.3 BRICS formation and its influence on South Africa’s foreign policy	84

4.5 Conclusion.....	86
CHAPTER 5.....	89
5. Conclusion, summary, and recommendations.....	89
5.1 Conclusion.....	89
5.1.1 How members defined the nature of legislative oversight.....	89
5.1.2 Parliament’s use of existing oversight mechanisms to monitor South Africa’s foreign policy.....	90
5.1.3 Portfolio Committee’s current process of engagement with DIRCO Minister and top officials.....	91
5.1.4 How the Portfolio Committee members have used oversight mechanisms to monitor the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy in identified case studies.....	91
5.1.5 Portfolio Committee’s report on the identified case studies.....	92
5.1.6 Focus areas of members’ oversight role other than the identified case studies.....	92
5.1.7 Presence of groupthink symptoms.....	93
5.2 Participants’ suggestions to improve the oversight function over South Africa’s foreign policy.....	94
5.2.1 Practical implications of the study.....	95
5.3 Further research opportunities.....	96
6. REFERENCES.....	98
7. APPENDIX.....	108
Appendix A – Coding Agenda.....	108
7.1 Coding agenda.....	108
7.2 Category system.....	111

FIGURES

Figure 1: Data collection tools	17
Figure 2: South African Parliament's Oversight Framework.....	29
Figure 3: Groupthink theory.....	49
Figure 4: Sample of the five participants	60
Figure 5: Portfolio Committee members' oversight focus areas 2011 – 2012	79

TABLES

Table 1: Profile of interviewees	19
--	----

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATC	Announcements, Tabling and Committee Reports
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MPs	Members of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction and rationale for the study

As globalisation advances, the distinction between the domestic and international sphere is increasingly blurred. This has inevitably forced parliaments¹ to move beyond the traditional executive privilege in international relations, subjecting governments to the same degree of oversight as national affairs. The oversight function has meant that the executive² branch is no longer an autonomous player in international relations. The presence of legislatures in international relations serves as a deterrent for the executive, which must be careful and cautious when making foreign policy decisions (Amin, 2004:7; IPU, 2006:157).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 has ensured the presence of the legislature in international matters. This was done by dividing the power to conduct foreign policy among the three branches, namely, the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, to ensure the independence of each arm of government. The Executive formulates, promotes, and implements the policy; Parliament, in addition to its legislative function, oversees and scrutinises formulation and implementation while the Judiciary interprets the Constitution if disputes arise between the executive, the legislature, or any organ of the state. This separation ensures a system of checks and balances, where no branch can act independently. The text of the current Constitution does not explicitly refer to the separation of powers. However, section 41 of the Constitution clearly states that all organs of the State must cooperate by, amongst others, informing and consulting one another on matters of common interest as well as coordinating their actions with one another. This section further states that no organ of the State may assume any function except those conferred on them by the Constitution or exercise their respective duties in a manner that does not infringe on the functional integrity of another organ.

Over the years, the South African Parliament has put in place various mechanisms, including an *Oversight and Accountability Model*, in an attempt to ensure a system of checks and balances, as stipulated by the Constitution. The Model spells out several tools and processes to effect the oversight function over the formulation and the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. The extent to which these committees, including Parliament itself, have discharged their oversight function remains a highly contentious issue. In 2010, during the debate on Parliament's budget, the National Assembly Speaker Max Sisulu noted that "Parliament continues to hold the executive to its promises and is the central institution through which the government is held accountable" (People's Assembly, 2010). Several years later, opposition parties

¹ The terms 'legislature', 'parliament', 'institution' and 'assembly' are used interchangeably throughout the study.

² The terms 'executive' and 'government' are used interchangeably throughout the study.

complained about Parliament's failure to hold the executive, including the president, accountable and disparaging statements were made such as "the integrity of Parliament, is destroyed", "treason has been committed", "the shielding of the executive has continued unabated", and "parliament must not be a lame-duck institution" (Gerber, 2017).

This study focuses on parliamentary oversight, particularly on how members of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation utilise oversight mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the South African foreign policy by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO³).

The significance of this study lies in the fact that while much has been written on South African parliamentary oversight over the country's foreign policy, there is limited research on the individual members' oversight experience, areas of oversight focus and the oversight mechanisms used by members of the Portfolio Committee⁴ on International Relations and Cooperation, as enshrined in the Constitution and stipulated in the *Oversight and Accountability Model*. The main research question for this study therefore is:

- How have the Portfolio Committee members utilised the existing oversight mechanisms (written questions to DIRCO Minister) to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation?

Given that the study focuses on parliamentary oversight as exercised by Committee members, their individual experience is taken into account. Hence, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

- Are there differences in the meaning of parliamentary oversight for various members?
- What has been the experience of each member's parliamentary oversight over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy?
- What has been the experience of each member in their engagement with DIRCO, including the Minister and top officials?
- Do the members desire to change the current oversight system?
- What other areas did members' oversight focus on other than the identified case studies?

Moreover, the study sheds light on the following challenges that undermine Parliament's oversight role:

³ The terms 'DIRCO' and 'Department of International Relations and Cooperation' are used interchangeably throughout the study.

⁴ The terms 'Portfolio members' and 'members of the Portfolio Committee' are used interchangeably throughout the study, referring to members of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation.

- Members have limited interest in foreign policy issues and consequently pay little attention to such issues.
- A large number of members serving on more than one portfolio committee prevents the majority of them from being subject specialists.
- Limited staff is available to provide information to members on critical issues occurring in the international environment.

Since the enactment of the new Constitution in 1996, which carved out an active oversight role for Parliament, this new role has come under the spotlight, resulting in an impressive body of research on the topic. This research is reviewed in the following section.

1.1 Review of existing research on Parliament's oversight role

This section reviews selected works on the oversight role of Parliament and its Portfolio Committee over the country's foreign policy. In particular, the section seeks to identify any gaps or omissions in the literature.

Masters research (2015:78,82), entitled *South Africa's Emerging Parliamentary Diplomacy and Soft Power*, maintains that parliamentary debates on international relations have focused primarily on procedure questions or the review of the Executive chosen decision taken. According to the research, this opinion is supported by Van Wyk's research that reveals a perception among MPs that foreign policy is an executive function. However, an analysis of the written questions on international relations to the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation indicates otherwise. These questions, as published in parliamentary Hansard, show that between 2011, 2012, and 2013, individual members of the Portfolio Committee submitted a total of 280 written questions on foreign policy matters.

Further analysis of these questions indicates that the majority were not retrospective, nor were they procedural. The majority were about peace and security on the African continent, funding provided by the government to foreign missions and embassies, agreements that the government signed with Angola and China, prisoner transfers and progress regarding BRICS and the New Development Bank. The following is a synopsis of some of these questions put to the Minister on foreign policy matters in 2015:

- What agreements did the government sign during the President's state visit to the People's Republic of China at the invitation of President Xi?
- How many deals has South Africa signed with Angola in the past five years?
- What are the prospects for peace-building, peace enforcement and stability on the African continent since the establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises on 5 November 2014?

- Does the government intend to support the people of Palestine by forcing Israel to free the people of Palestine?
- Did the government provide any funding to the foreign embassies for the 2014 – 2015 financial year?
- What substantive progress has been made regarding the New Development Bank?
- What is the current status of the Reunification Agreement signed by the various factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and what are key tenets of the agreement?
- What is the government's position on the Burundi elections given that the African Union will be not be observing the elections?

In summary, these written questions dispute the perception that foreign policy is an executive function. As can be seen through the use of oversight mechanisms such as written questions, parliamentarians can play a significant role in the execution of foreign policy.

Master's research also points out that all 490 members of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces face elections every four years. As a result, it is claimed that their interest in foreign policy issues tends to be short-lived. According to section 47 (1) of the Constitution, NA members face elections every five years and not every four years (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This situation also applies to members of the National Council of Provinces. However, the 280 questions posed by the NA Portfolio Committee members dispute the notion that the interest and attention of MPs to foreign policy issues are short-lived.

The research also states that a large number of MPs serve on more than one portfolio committee, which prevents them from being specialists on issues addressed by those committees. This challenge is compounded by limited staff available to support and provide information to MPs on critical international issues. An analysis of the National Treasury's Estimates of National Expenditure (2010) shows that parliamentary committees, including the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, comprised a content advisor, researcher, secretary and language interpreters to support the oversight functions of committees (National Treasury, 2010) support and information (Masters, 2015:80).

Master's research also claims that it is not clear how many of the MPs serve on more than one portfolio committee and how this prevents them from being knowledgeable on committee issues. It is worth noting that members of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation interviewed for this study did not mention having to serve on more than one committee as a challenge preventing them from interrogating issues dealt with in their committees.

In a 1997 study entitled *Parliament and Foreign Affairs: Continuity or Change*, van Wyk concludes that despite transformed parliamentary procedure and committee systems in both the National Assembly and the Senate, input into the foreign policy

decision-making process remains limited. The study further reveals that during 1996 and early 1997, the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs held only 16 meetings and failed to vote on any foreign policy issues or related matters during 1996. However, van Wyk (1997) omitted to mention crucial information and events that took place during 1996 and early 1997 which may have contributed to the Committee's performance. The omitted information is also critical in providing comprehensive research on parliamentary oversight. For instance, an examination of Parliament's publication entitled *Parliament Since 1994: Achievements and Challenges* highlights the following crucial issue that van Wyk (1997) did not consider. The publication states there was:

...a sense of relief that the difficult constitution-making process was over, that Parliament was finally able to resume its work in 1997. There were only two years left of the first democratic Parliament's term of office and much work still to be done (Parliament of South Africa, 2006:25).

This cumbersome constitutional process was in addition to the new parliamentary rules, procedures, mechanisms, and capacities that were needed to carry out the work of the First Parliament. Moreover, new working methods were created to adhere to the central value of participatory democracy and modern traditions of opening committee meetings to the public were introduced, according to Parliament's Strategic Plan for Third Parliament 2004 – 2009.

Further examination of the Strategic Plan for Third Parliament 2004 – 2009 reveals that Parliament's strategic objective focused on building members' capacity to enable Parliament to engage with international relations issues optimally. This information omitted by van Wyk (1997) provides an alternative perspective and explains the Portfolio Committee's limited meetings and voting on foreign policy issues during the research period. Parliament's Strategic Plan shows that the strategic objective focused more on eradicating discriminatory legislation than giving effect to the oversight function (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2008).

According to Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model (2007), Parliament only started to work on this Model in 1999. A Task Team on Oversight and Accountability consisting of parliamentarians of both Houses was established to develop a model for oversight function that would "produce the resultant realignment of resources to fulfil Parliament's mandate with greater efficiency and effectiveness" (Oversight and Accountability Model, 2007:4). During South Africa's fourth national and provincial elections, calls were reiterated for *an activist Parliament* that exercises its constitutional mandate with robustness and fearlessness from the President and Members. This spirit of an 'activist Parliament' was evident in the Fourth Parliament's 2009 – 2014 Strategic Plan objectives:

- Strengthening the oversight function and establishing an influential culture of overseeing Executive action.
- Increasing participation in multilateral, regional, and international structures.

- Improving and extending the role of Parliament in international co-operation and engagement.
- Building an effective and efficient institution.

1.1.1 South Africa's re-admission to the global system of governance

Transition to democracy in the early 1990s paved the way for South Africa to become part of the global governance system. This shift coincided with the country's increased involvement in decision-making at the international level, including the United Nations (UN), particularly the Security Council (Graham, 2008). Due to these changes in the system, the lines between what is national and international policy areas became increasingly blurred, resulting in a greater impetus for political engagement in international relations. To this end, it was necessary to democratise international decision-making and subject the Executive to the same degree of oversight as for domestic matters.

The South African Parliament participates in international relations through the ratification of international agreements, participation in bilateral and multilateral engagements, as well as through parliamentary committees dealing with foreign affairs, that is, the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation and the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations. Both these committees oversee the work and action of DIRCO, as the implementer of the country's foreign policy at the international level, including the UN. Parliament has put in place various mechanisms, including an *Oversight and Accountability Model* in an attempt to sharpen the Committees' oversight teeth, as required by the Constitution. The Model spells out several tools and processes to give effect to the oversight function, including questions, budget votes, and member statements. Using identified cases, this study provides an answer to the main research question:

- How have the Portfolio Committee members utilised the existing oversight mechanism (i.e., written questions to DIRCO Minister) available to them to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy?

Qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts provides answers to the subsequent sub-questions. Philip Mayring (2014:12), pioneer of qualitative content analysis explains that qualitative oriented studies regularly work with small samples, including interview transcripts, with single case studies as long as the researcher has been to describe and give arguments for the sample size, as done by this study in 1.3.1. (Philip Mayring, 2014:12).

1.1.2 Parliament and the process of foreign policy decision-making

The increased desire for prosperity and development of states as well as the need to foster relations among them has led to the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Foreign policy refers to an adopted strategy designed by the executive to engage with other countries politically, socially, economically, and militarily. For South Africa, this function is exercised by the President as the executive authority, together with the other members of the Cabinet (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:48). Khara (2018:105) explains that foreign policy is a process of decision-making among actors, including parliaments, aimed at protecting and promoting the values, interests, integrity, and sovereignty of a country. In most states, these actors are a small group of approximately 15 persons or less (Hudson 2014:73,74), who are influenced by the dynamics of decision making (Khara, 2018:107). The decision-making is influenced by members' different interests, political manipulation, rivalry, and preferences, which tend to complicate group decision-making (Majeski, n.d).

Khara (2018:107) submits that for stability and progress, foreign policy decision-making has to be credible and have authority with citizens of a country. As the elected political representatives of the people, parliaments' role in foreign policy-making must have credibility, both at home and abroad, and ensure that commitments and decisions are sound and will stand the test of time (Hill, 2003:252). Masters (2015:84) states that South Africa's approach to international relations is based on its legitimacy, gained through its peaceful transition to democracy, as a means of persuading others, particularly in the global governance system. The South African Parliament is a useful instrument that can be used in demonstrating the country's democratic credentials and credibility in the participation in the global governance system (Masters, 2015:84), which includes the UN.

1.2 Groupthink as a theoretical framework for examining foreign policy decision-making

This study uses groupthink as a theoretical framework to explore the methods and dynamics of a small group such as the Portfolio Committee in overseeing South Africa's foreign policy decision-making at forums such as the UN Security Council. Small groups are an essential focus area of any policy-making in modern states, according to Stern and Sundelius (1994:101), who states:

...the small decision unit is usually an important area of foreign policymaking. Small group discussions involve every stage of the decision process, ranging from information gathering and evaluation to option identification and suggestions to implementation and post-decision analysis. In the majority of cases, the small decision group is the first and final decision body itself" (Stern and Sundelius, 1994: 101).

The term 'groupthink' was coined most by Janis (1972,1982) and refers to the method of thinking that group members engage in when they are influenced by the 'concurrence-seeking' tendency associated with foreign policy failures (Janis, 1972;

Stern & Sundelius,1994:101). According to Janis (1972:21), the groupthink concept occurred to him while he was observing the foreign policy failures that happened during the administrations of different presidents of the United States of America. The case studies he observed were the Bay of Pigs invasion under John Kennedy, the attack on Pearl Harbour under Franklin Roosevelt, the seizure of North Korea under Harry Truman, and the upsurge of the Vietnam War. Each of these cases displayed a similar trait of concurrence-seeking, which is the strict adherence to group rules as well as pressures toward homogeneity, even when the preferred policy choice had inconsistent results that went against members' integrity.

Group members consider devotion to the group as the highest form of conduct. That devotion necessitates each member to refrain from raising any controversial issue. Herek, Janis, and Huth (1987) are of the view that in all these real-life situations, decision-makers did not determine whether the decision-making procedure they used was of high quality. They failed to:

- Properly examine all the available range of policy alternatives.
- Consider all possible consequences and impacts of the chosen policy.
- Acquire suitable information to evaluate alternative strategies.
- Deliberate on the costs and benefits of each alternative prudently.
- Take into consideration information that contradicted their beliefs and preferences.
- Re-assess all known options, including discarded ones.
- Establish adequate and comprehensive plans for implementing the chosen policy, as well as a contingency plan in the event of a known and unknown crisis.

Due to the aforementioned, policy outcomes were guaranteed to fail due to the "grossly inadequate way the policymakers carried out their decision-making tasks" (Tetlock, 1979:1315). At the same time, however, Janis (1972) does acknowledge that not all foreign policy fiascos are a result of groupthink as in some instances it may be due to the mistakes of an individual.

1.2.1 Symptoms of groupthink

Janis (1972) lists the following eight symptoms he observed in the above foreign policy fiascos. Each sign was informed by historical records, observers' accounts of conversations and participants' memoirs:

- *An illusion of invulnerability*: this refers to the delusion of being invincible to any harm that may come from a risky course of action that the group has decided to undertake. It essentially means any plan is bound to succeed if the leader and everyone else is happy with it. During this period, members are ecstatic with their newfound 'feeling of togetherness.' They share a feeling of belonging to a powerful, protective group that opens up doors and new possibilities for

everyone. This feeling is typically accompanied by “boundless admiration for the leader” (Janis, 1972:36).

- *Trust in the inherent morality of the group*: Members of the group feel that they are wiser, more influential, more informed, and more righteous than non-group members (Hudson, 2014:78).
- *An illusion of unanimity*: Members choose to concur with the view of the majority. Members unconsciously prevent any “disagreement from surfacing when they are about to initiate a risky course of action (Janis, 1972:39).
- *Suppression of personal doubts*: During discussions, members impose self-censorship. Due to fear of condemnation, members become reluctant to raise critical questions that may cast doubt on the group’s plan that is accepted by the majority of members, thus fearing (Janis, 1972:41).
- *Self-appointed mind-guards*: In this scenario, members suppress any dissenting viewpoints by putting pressure on any member who expresses a different view from the group. A non-conforming member may be dehumanised, particularly those seen as competing with the group. Members place a high value on cohesiveness, cooperation, and harmony, which may be detrimental to the quality of decision-making (Hudson, 2014:78).
- *Direct pressures on dissenters*: Members of the group make every effort to crack down on dissenters/nonconformists.
- *Docility fostered by suave leadership*: In this scenario, a leader of the group unconsciously produces subtle constraints, which prevent members from exercising independent thinking and from openly expressing doubts when the majority of the group has reached a decision (Hudson, 2014:76).
- *The taboo against antagonising*: In this case, the group members avoid saying anything that may be interpreted as an attack on the group’s plan. Voicing criticisms is taboo (Janis, 1972:46).

The groupthink hypothesis can be surmised as follows: the more amicable the group and the higher the camaraderie among the members of the policy-making in-group, the higher the danger that critical and independent thinking will be substituted by groupthink, which generally results in attacks against out-groups as well as poor policy decisions (Janis, 1972). Psychological pressures tend to arise when group members work closely together, share the same ideals and ethics, and are subject to the same stress and crisis that generates a strong need for attachment. In these situations, as consensus pressures emerge to influence and dominate, groupthink and the group members’ dubious decision-making ensue. The higher the threat to the in-group members’ confidence, the higher the propensity to concurrence-seeking at the expense of independent thinking. Moreover, groupthink symptoms increase when a decision questions an individual’s conscience when the plausible course of action requires policymakers to breach their code of conduct. However, not all cohesive groups suffer from groupthink. For instance, a group with clearly defined roles is in a better position of making an informed decision than groups where individuals work on the problem alone.

1.2.2 Preventing groupthink

Janis (1972:21) asserts that there are several ways of preventing groupthink. First, he encourages leaders on a rotational basis to appoint a member to act as devil's advocate –that is, a person will question group decisions and assumptions (Hudson, 2014:81). The institutionalisation of the devil's advocate creates a sense among members that they have considered all sides of the issue, and the chosen policy option is plausible and acceptable within the decision-making group.

Second, the invitation of experts and outsiders to openly challenge group decisions and assumptions (Hudson, 2014:81). This practice is likely to counter any complacency about risky decisions. Third, leaders should avoid stating their preferences and expectations at the onset. The potential benefit of this practice includes avoidance of establishing a group norm that will induce conformity with the leader's views.

Fourth, Janis (1972:21) recommends role-playing, simulating possible scenarios as well as observation and study of competitors. This practice is likely to counter shared illusions of invulnerability among members and “their tendency to ignore warning signals that interfere with complacency” (Hudson, 2014:81). This requires the leader jointly with the group to put more effort into making a detailed contingency plan for possible risks that may arise.

Fifth, once a group reaches a consensus about the best policy alternative, members should hold a second meeting, in which every member will be allowed to vividly express any doubts about the chosen action plan before making a final choice. This arrangement will prevent a policy decision based on “unwarranted expectations of invulnerability” (Janis, 1972:218), bias, and other ill-informed assumptions shared by members of the group. In these meetings, members should be encouraged to challenge their arguments and examine all the risks associated with their views (Janis, 1972:218).

Sixth, the organisation should adopt an administrative practice of establishing numerous independent policy groups to work on the same policy questions under different leaders. This practice will prevent senior management of the group from “challenging information and independent judgments by well-qualified outsiders” (Janis, 1972:211).

Lastly, members of the policy-making group should periodically discuss the group's deliberations with trusted associates and report back reactions to the group. This practice is likely to counter “mind-guards” and allow for the free flow of opposing views/ideas while gently pushing members out of their complacency (Janis, 1972:213).

1.2.3 Limitations of groupthink

Since groupthink was first conceptualised, there have been numerous studies that have presented a significant revision of the model of groupthink, including identification of its shortcomings. Some of these studies are 't Hart's *Victims of Group* (1991), Schafer and Crichlow's *Antecedents of Groupthink: A Quantitative Study* (1996), 't Hart, Stern, and Sundelius' *Beyond Groupthink* (1997) and Tetlock's *Identifying Victims of Groupthink from public statements of decision-makers* (1979).

A study by Schafer and Crichlow (1996) highlights shortcomings in the theoretical underpinnings of groupthink insofar as its sample cases limit generalisation. First, the theory is based only on US foreign policy decisions from only five administrations. Therefore, it is possible that different patterns would emerge if the approach were to be applied in other countries.

Second, only crises are used as a sample; thus, more research is required to examine non-crisis situations for evidence of poor decision-making. Third, all the cases occurred during the Cold War; consequently, they were part of the cold war conflict. 't Hart *et al.* (1997:7) state that "Janis concentrated his efforts on a rather specific feature of small group behaviour (groupthink) in foreign policy. Consequently, many aspects of small groups investigated have received little attention in foreign policy analysis". They further argue that there is more to small-group decision-making than the bias that groupthink perpetuates (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010).

According to 't Hart (1991:269) and Longley and Pruitt (1980), symptoms of groupthink such as self-censorship, urging dissenters to curtail remarks, avoiding the influx of outside opinions and even collective rationalisation are not present in the majority of high-quality decision-making processes and groups. These are necessary "mechanisms for consensus-building" ('t Hart, 1991:269) if a group is to reach a decision. If time limits are not put on the duration, scope, and discussions, then, decision groups would never achieve anything. According to them, essential factors involved in determining whether the mentioned-symptoms of groupthink can hinder discussion about policy choice are:

- Timing: If discussions are shortened too early within a group then it is likely to fall into groupthink trap, but if, for instance, symptoms of groupthink are used to avoid repetitive and meaningless discussions, they may improve the quality of deliberations;
- The nature and type of the task the decision-making group is grappling with determines whether it needs innovative solutions that require "elaborate and wide-ranging discussions" ('t Hart, 1991:269).

Mintz and Wayne's (2016:4) study offers a possible alternative to groupthink in the form of 'polythink.' They are of the view that in real decision-making situations, few cases are wholeheartedly groupthink or polythink. Instead, decision-making dynamics

typically lie between the two extremes – group concurrence (groupthink) or group disagreement (polythink) (Mintz & Wayne, 2016:9).

1.3 Research methodology

The study centers on parliamentary oversight as exercised by Portfolio Committee members; therefore, their individual experience is taken into account as oversight function may not mean the same for different individuals. The study used qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation systematically. Written questions, interview transcripts, and committee reports on identified case studies are used to examine how Portfolio Committee members have used the existing oversight mechanisms to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. This study further used the examination of participant's transcripts and information as published on the PMG website to explore the presence of groupthink symptoms in the decision-making process of the Portfolio Committee. The following section provides the rationale for using a small sample. This is followed by an overview of the case studies and the case study method. The data collection methods are then described as well as the profile of the interviewees. Lastly, there is a discussion of the study's reliability and validity, ethical limitations, and study outline.

1.3.1 Sample size

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013:12) maintain that there are no hard and fast rules for sample size in qualitative analysis. The sample size hinges on what the researcher seeks to uncover, the objective of the inquiry, what is at risk, what will be valuable, what will have reliability and credibility, and what can be done with the existing resources and time. Mayring (2014) states that qualitative studies can use smaller samples, with single case studies, as long as the researcher can justify the sample size. The sample can comprise of "persons (interview transcripts), situations (field notes), or broader entities (groups, cities)" (Mayring, 2014:12).

Oppong (2013:202) explains that sample size is influenced by factors including the cost and the impossibility to study all areas of a phenomenon, which places limitations on the researcher. As a result, the researcher is obliged to select a specific proportion as the sample of the study. A sample can be regarded as sufficient "if and only if the sampling errors that result from the use of the stated sample size are so insignificant as not to invalidate conclusions reached by the study" (Oppong, 2013:202).

In qualitative research, smaller sample sizes are typical because the general objective of sampling is to obtain useful information on a phenomenon "rather than to characterise/describe the population as in quantitative research" (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbin (2015:1782). Gentles *et al.* (2015) further add that small samples are used because the general purpose is to acquire information that is important for

understanding the “complexity, depth, variation or context surrounding a phenomenon”. Saunders *et al.* (2016:7) go further by submitting that if the purpose of the study is to establish whether something is possible or to provide a rich account, a single qualitative case is argued to be suitable. However, if the purpose of the study is to establish “commonalities or allow comparison, a larger number is likely to be required” (Saunders *et al.*, 2016:7). Sandelowski (1995) further states that determining suitable sample size is eventually a matter of judgment and experience in examining the quality of data collected against the “the uses to which it will be put, the specific research method and the purposeful sampling strategy employed, and the research product intended” (Sandelowski, 1995).

In terms of saturation, Rijnsoever (2017) indicates that this is at the discretion of the researcher, who uses their judgment to decide whether saturation has been reached. Saturation refers to a point at which the information collection process contributes nothing new or little to the study. Rijnsoever (2017) adds that:

...there are no guidelines for sample size in qualitative exploration. Hence, the rules for judging the sample size are often tacit. The explanation for this is that the majority of qualitative studies are primarily interpretative endeavors that require experience, creative thinking, and tacit knowledge. (Rijnsoever (2017).

Omona (2013) indicates that the sample size should not be too small, however, as it will not be possible to achieve saturation, nor should the sample be too large as it will be challenging to obtain in-depth data. Oppong (2013) contends that to obtain credible findings, the sample size must be sufficiently large to ensure that the broadest possible coverage of research is accounted for. Some of the limitations of small sample size are that the smaller the size, the more likely the perceptions gathered would be limited or may bias the findings.

This study addressed bias by interviewing ‘elites,’ that is, the members of the Portfolio Committee. According to Lilleker (2003:207), elites refer to those “with proximity to policy-making,” and include elected representatives such as Portfolio Committee members. Lilleker (2003) states that interviews with elites tend to produce rich insight into people’s experiences and opinions that are critical in empirical research. These interviews shed light on events that are little known to the general population as these events take place behind closed doors, outside of the media and the public eye. They also provide greater insights on the “inner workings of the political process, the machinations between influential actors, and how the sequence of these events was viewed and responded to within the political machinery” (Lilleker, 2003:208).

Finally, it is essential to note that the Portfolio Committee comprised 13 members, which is the standard number for all parliamentary committees. Numerous attempts were made by the researcher to increase the sample, including walking to members’ offices, follow-up emails and calls requesting an interview, but in the end, only five participants agreed to be interviewed.

1.3.2 Identified sample case studies

Two case studies were chosen, namely, South Africa's voting on a draft resolution condemning the Syrian Arab Republic's attack on anti-government protestors and its voting on Resolution 1973 authorising "all necessary measures to protect civilians in the State of Libya." This is because they represented "a major faux pas on the part of South Africa" and were deemed "very controversial," implying policy uncertainty on the part of South Africa (van Heerden, 2018). The action – or inaction, as the case may be – of the Committee members on these two issues determined the extent to which they fulfilled their constitutional obligations. It also demonstrated how members ensured that the activities of the Minister were aligned with the values expressed in South Africa's Constitution and foreign policies, including *the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030* and *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu*.

1.3.2.1 The UN Security Council

The UN Security Council is the most powerful structure of the UN and the only organ with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Council investigates disputes, recommends binding resolutions, calls upon member states to apply economic sanctions and takes military action on identified aggressors. UN member states are decided by votes of the Security Council's member states hence membership to this organ is fundamental. Of all the UN organs, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions which the Member States are obliged to follow and implement (The Economic Times, 2018).

The Security Council comprises 15 members. Five are permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – who also possess the power to veto any proposed resolution. There are ten non-permanent members, who are elected for two-year terms. Of these, three are from Africa, two members from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Western Europe. Eastern Europe has one member and one alternate member for the Arab countries from Asian and African quotas. Each UNSC member has one vote (The Economic Times, 2018).

- **South Africa voting at the UNSC**

In 2006, South Africa was elected, for the first time, to serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the period 2007 – 2008. During this period, South Africa's representatives (from DIRCO) took foreign policy decisions on security and human rights issues that were regarded as controversial, both domestically and internationally. For instance, South Africa's stance on the situation

in Burma/Myanmar, Zimbabwe and Iran was widely criticised to the extent where South Africa was accused of losing its “moral compass” (Baker & Lyman, 2008:4).

In 2010, South Africa was re-elected by the UN General Assembly to serve as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the 2011 – 2012 period. It received 182 of the 191 votes of member states. Its term as a non-member started in January 2011. According to Serrão (2011), South Africa’s candidacy to the UNSC was endorsed by the AU at its 14th Ordinary Session in 2010 and SADC. According to DIRCO (2016:18), South Africa’s tenure was informed by its national interest and “belief that South Africa’s prosperity [was] intrinsically linked to peace and stability on the [African] continent and the world in general.” It also mirrored South Africa’s commitment to the international rule of law. However, as was the case with its previous term, South Africa was criticised for some of the positions it had taken during its UNSC tenure.

For instance, in 2011, South Africa voted in favour of Resolution 1973 authorising “all necessary measures” to protect civilians in Libya (Serrão, 2011:4). The Resolution was adopted by a vote of ten in favour, none against, with five abstentions (Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia). According to Moore (2011), South Africa’s stance surprised many observers, as it contradicted numerous critical elements of the country’s foreign policy. These include non-intervention in the domestic matters of other states, particularly African states, agreement to the use of force in resolving international crises, particularly in the absence of a cease-fire and host government approval, as well as blocking UNSC resolutions aimed at events in third countries not considered to be threats to international peace and security. Since then, the Resolution on Libya has had far-reaching consequences for humanity. This Resolution was followed by increased reports of “gross and systematic human rights violations, including indiscriminate armed attacks against civilians, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of peaceful demonstrators in Libya (du Plessis & Louw, 2011:1).

In October 2011, South Africa abstained from voting on a draft resolution condemning Syria’s attack on anti-government protestors. The South African representative, Mr. Baso Sangqu, noted that the country was concerned that punitive measures imposed on Syria had been designed “*as a prelude to other action*” (Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN, 2011); therefore, the Council should not be part of any hidden agenda for regime change. Three months later, in February 2012, South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution on Syria supporting the League of Arab States’ proposed Peace Plan. The fact that South Africa abstained from voting in 2011 and voted in favour of the draft resolution in 2012 could be interpreted as the country’s foreign policy being inconsistent or unclear (researcher’s emphasis).

Without apportioning blame to countries and the members of the UN, particularly the Security Council, the failure to address the challenges of Syria continues to drive the refugee crisis in the world, with approximately 5.4 million Syrians in the Middle East. Around 92% of Syrian refugees live in squalid conditions that forced some families to

resort to harmful practices such as early/forced child marriages (United Nations Children's Fund, 2017).

In 2017, *Times Live* online publication reported that South Africa's President Jacob Zuma would be embarking on a 'charm offensive' at the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly taking place from 19 – 25 September 2017 as he campaigned for South Africa's third turn as a non-permanent of the UN Security Council for 2019/2020 period. Indeed, South Africa secured a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the third time from 2019 - 2020. Human Rights Watch (2018) submits that this seat offered South Africa a chance to restore its human rights-based foreign policy.

1.3.3 Case study method

The nature of this study is exploratory (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) who identify three methods for this type of research:

- A review of the related social science and other pertinent literature.
- A survey of people who have had practical experience of the problem being studied.
- An analysis of 'insight stimulating' examples.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) identify the lack of a conclusive answer to the research questions as one of the significant shortcomings of exploratory studies.

A case study is regarded as an exploratory or an in-depth analysis of a "bounded system" (bounded by time and place) over some time (de Vos, Strydom & Fouche, 2005:272). According to Willis (2014), bounded refers to "an intensive study of a single unit observed at a single point in time" (Willis, 2014). It may also refer to a period rather than a particular group of people. Case study research provides an opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge of the researched case (de Vos *et al.*, 2005).

A case study allows in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information including interviews, primary and secondary documents, and observations or archival information (Yin, n/d: de Vos *et al.*, 2005). Zainal (2007) explains that these methods enable the researcher to comprehend the behavioural conditions through the subject's perspective.

Secondly, a case study allows an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2004). Thirdly, it is best suited for this study, which addresses descriptive questions such as (what, why and how) aimed at producing a first-hand understanding of events (Yin, 2004).

In this study, the primary unit of analysis was members of the Portfolio Committee (case), who are covered as part of the related case study. Single-case embedded units

often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis, therefore enhancing the insights into the single case (Yin, 2004).

Why a single case study? According to Gustafsson (2017), a single case study, firstly, allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and secondly, its data can result in the identification of patterns and relationships to create, extend or test a theory. According to Ridder (2017):

...theory is about the connection among phenomena, a story about why acts, events, structure, and thoughts occur. The theory emphasise the nature of causal relationships, identifying what comes first as well as the timing of such events or is a statement of concepts and their interrelationships that shows how/and why a phenomenon occurs.

However, a potential vulnerability of the single-case design is that a case may later turn out not to be the case; it was thought to be at the outset. Therefore careful investigation of the potential case is required to minimise the chances of misrepresentation (Yin, n.d.:40). Another weakness is its inability to produce a generalised conclusion, mainly when the event being studied is rare. Zainal (2007) adds that one way of overcoming this deficiency is through triangulation to confirm the validity of the process and results.

1.4 Data collection

Figure 1 below depicts the data collection tools used in this study.

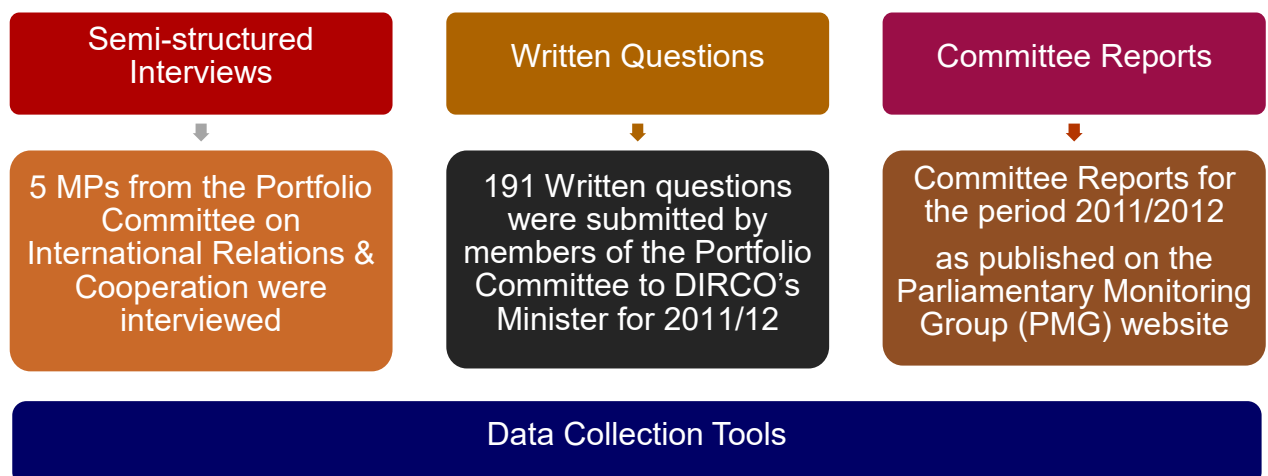


Figure 1: Data collection tools

Source: Researcher's work

1.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The first form of data gathering was through semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were identified based on their current involvement in the area of the study. These

interviewees were members of the Portfolio Committee, who were selected based on their expertise in the subject matter being investigated.

Four of the five interviews were conducted face to face and ranged from ten minutes to one hour in length, while one involved written input submitted via email. These interviews allowed the participants to tell their own story and describe their experiences in overseeing the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The focus of the interviews was on foreign policy decisions in the 2011/2012 period during South Africa's second term at the UNSC as a non-permanent member. The semi-structured questions were as follows:

- Based on your view, what is parliamentary oversight, and what does it entail?
- What is your experience of the Committee's oversight role over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by the Department?
- In your recollection, what was the reaction of the Committee to South Africa's voting in favour of Resolution 1973 authorising "all necessary measures to protect civilians" in Libya? In its indecisive voting on Syria, did the Committee summon the Minister to explain these voting decisions, or did the Committee hold a plenary debate on these decisions?
- In your recollection, did Committee members individually request clarity, through written questions, from the Minister about these decisions?
- What are the challenges (if any) with the current process of engagement with the Department?
- Any other thoughts or comments?

The purpose of these open-ended questions was to ascertain the experience of each member of parliamentary oversight. It also sought to determine the extent to which each member of the Committee used available oversight tools to hold the Department accountable for some of the more 'questionable' decisions that South Africa took during its second term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Furthermore, the questions to determine any other areas that members asked about other than the two identified cases and what was the response of the Department on these issues. Lastly, the questions sought to obtain insights on any challenges that may undermine Parliament, including the Portfolio Committee oversight function.

1.4.1.1 Profile of the interviewees

In total, five members of the Portfolio Committee, including opposition members, were interviewed. Table 1 below shows a substantial body of institutional memory spanning the Second Parliament to the Fifth Parliament. Of the five parliamentarians interviewed, two have 19 years' experience as MPs, and one had 14 years' experience while the remaining two had five years' experience each.

Term of Parliament	Term of Parliament in Years	Terms of Parliament worked by MPs		
		2 MPs	2 MPs	1 MP
1 st Parliament	1994-1999	Two MPs have worked in Parliament since the 2 nd Parliament to date. The MPs have worked in four successive terms of Parliament and therefore have solid institutional memory.	One interviewed MP has been in Parliament from the 4 th Parliament - from 2009 to 2019.	Two MPs have worked in Parliament from 2014 to 2019 (5 th Parliament).
2 nd Parliament	1999-2004			
3 rd Parliament	2004-2009			
4 th Parliament	2009-2014			
5 th Parliament	2014-2019			
The above indicates a substantial body of knowledge (institutional memory) spanning from the 2nd to the 5th Parliament.				

Table 1: Profile of interviewees*Source: Researcher's work*

1.4.1.2 How were the interviewees accessed?

The researcher had access to the participants through her place of employment. There was no apparent risk in accessing the participants for the interviews. The researcher was granted permission by the Acting Secretary of Parliament before contacting the intended respondents. This process involved the researcher signing a Research Agreement between the researcher and the Acting Secretary of Parliament. Once the Agreement was signed, the researcher was able to contact the sample through emails, calls, and walk-ins requesting an interview.

1.4.2 Written questions submitted to DIRCO Minister on identified cases

The second form of data collection was members' written questions to the Minister of DIRCO on the two identified cases. A total of 191 written questions relating to the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy were submitted to the Minister by individual members of the Portfolio Committee for the 2011/2012 period. Chapter 4 indicates how many of these questions related to the selected cases.

Members of Parliament, including those of the Portfolio Committee, are constitutionally empowered to hand in signed questions to the Parliamentary Questions Office marked for oral or written attention of the President or the Minister. These questions are edited under the authority of the National Assembly's Speaker to conform to parliamentary rules and conventions. Questions must relate to matters that fall within the official

responsibility of the Minister. All the questions are published as part of parliamentary Hansard. Questions for written reply are limited to three questions per member per week (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2004; Rules of the NA, 2016).

1.4.3 Portfolio Committee reports on identified cases

The third form of data collection was the examination of Portfolio Committee reports on identified cases, as published verbatim on the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) website for the period under review. Some of the strengths of using documents are that they can be viewed repeatedly and cover an extended period, events, and settings. However, weaknesses include bias reporting and access to these documents may be deliberately blocked (Yin, 2003:16).

1.4.4 Qualitative content analysis

The qualitative research method was deemed appropriate for this study due to its ability to produce a detailed description and interpretation of each participant's experiences and opinions (Rahman, 2016). This is because the way in which Portfolio Committee members define legislative oversight may be connected to individual experience.

The qualitative content analysis aims to systematically examine fixed or recorded text information (documents, transcripts, documents). This method seeks to preserve and strengthen the advantages of quantitative content analysis for a comprehensive data interpretation such as:

- Step by step analysis of the material.
- Checks for reliability and validity.
- Assigning categories to text and analysing frequencies of categories.

1.5 Reliability and validity

The concepts of reliability and validity are prerequisites for achieving rigor in research, regardless of the chosen methodology. Reliability refers to the extent to which the different researchers investigating the same issue or working with the same information could come to the same conclusion. It relates to consistency, stability, and replicability of results (Ali and Yusof, 2011:34 and Bashir et al., 2008:37). Validity relates to truthfulness, accuracy, or authenticity of the research results (Bashir et al., 2008:370). It determines whether the study truthfully measured what it intended to measure (Bashir et al., 2008:37). The majority of researchers including Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Bashir, (2008, 41) agree triangulation is one way of improving the validity and the reliability of research findings. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods to counter the deficiencies of each method. In practice, this involved

the combination of open-ended interviews, written questions, official documents, reviewed literature, and qualitative content analysis of written questions. This practice increases the credibility and validity of the results of the study.

1.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics in research relates to the “principles of right and wrong that a particular group accepts” (Babbie and Mouton, 1998:520). These principles address individual rights to dignity, privacy, and confidentiality as well as avoidance of harm. According to Bresler (1995:29), qualitative methodology emphasises ethics due to its commitment to a “reflective stance on the research process and its intellectual/emotional/political outcomes including the power relationship between researcher and researched.” It is, therefore, vital that a researcher does not search for the truth at the expense of the rights of other individuals. The best way to protect the participants’ interests is by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity means ensuring that even the researcher cannot identify specific information about the individuals they describe. Confidentiality indicates that the researcher must keep information private (Babbie & Mouton, 1998).

No ethical implications were foreseen in this study. First, the researcher had to apply to the workplace via a formal memo that had to be signed by the researcher’s immediate manager. This application included permission to contact participants for the interviews and permission to use workplace information for the study. This process was meant to protect participants and to ensure that the study adhered to accepted ethical standards. Approval to undertake research was duly granted.

The participants were informed of the purpose of the study via email and during the interviews. They were informed that the interviews would be recorded, and the records would be used for the study. The interview questions did not elicit personal information but the expertise of the interviewees.

The study also went through the University of Stellenbosch’s ethical approval process aimed at safeguarding the dignity and well-being of all the participants. This process entailed uploading all the relevant documentation for the attention of the University’s Research Ethics Committee for an independent review of the ethical risks related to the research proposal. Appropriate documentation included:

- Research Agreement signed by Professor Anthony Leysens, Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, on 18 April 2019.
- Consent forms of participants.
- Letters requesting interviews with participants.
- The proposal of the study.
- The security information about the storage of participants’ data
- The researcher’s supervisor, Professor Scarlett Cornelissen, was also required to sign an online consent form for the study.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study is described by Bogdan and Taylor (1975:9) as the “truth versus perspective” where one person may describe an experience in one way, and another person may describe that same experience in quite another. Both may be ‘telling the truth,’ according to their perspective: their interpretations, rationalisation, fabrication, prejudice, and exaggerations. As a result, the conclusion of the study is likely to be based on people’s perspectives.

Another limitation is the high turnover of members from the Fourth Parliament (2011-2014) to the Fifth Parliament (2014-2015), which limited the available number of participants to provide an opinion on South Africa’s voting on selected cases in the 2011/12 period. However, this shortcoming was addressed by other methods, including the examination of the written questions to the DIRCO Minister on the identified cases for the 2011/12 period as well as the examination of the Committee reports as published verbatim on the PMG website on the identified selected cases. Furthermore, the consistent responses of the participants, including on the identified cases, offered credence and validity to the results and findings of this study. Finally, the study did not incorporate the views of the following key stakeholders in South Africa’s foreign policy, namely:

- The Select Committee on Trade and International Relations, which also oversees DIRCO.
- The Department of International Relations as the formulator and the implementer of South Africa’s foreign policy.

1.8 Study outline

Chapter 1 presents a background to the study as well as the research question and objectives.

Chapter 2 is divided into two sections. The first section provides an overview of parliamentary oversight as it relates to foreign policy. The second section evaluates the South African Parliament’s oversight framework, with a focus on foreign policy from the perspective of the reviewed literature.

Chapter 3 provides an analytical framework for the study as well as defining key concepts. It also provides an analysis of foreign policy decision-making at the group level.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of key findings in relation to the research question and sub-questions. Lastly, recommendations are made for possible future research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the context and purpose of the study. It highlighted the methodology to be used as well as the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

2. Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides the context to parliamentary oversight. This concept is defined, and the related mechanisms are described. Emphasis is placed on monitoring as it relates to foreign policy, particularly in the South African context.

The second section evaluates the South African Parliament's oversight framework on foreign policy from the perspective of the reviewed literature. This section concludes with a comparative summation of Parliaments of South Africa, Namibia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and India in terms of similarities as well as differences in the practice of foreign policy.

2.1 Parliamentary oversight

Parliament is the only body with the political mandate from the people to oversee the administration of the state by the government. Parliamentary oversight is how parliamentarians hold the government accountable for their administrative actions. This function begins with parliamentarians, individually or collectively, taking specific steps such as posing a probing question to a minister, a committee establishing an inquiry or decision by a parliamentary leader to support an investigation. An opportunity to steer government policy, reduce corruption and ensure proper implementation of the law are some of the key incentives for parliamentarians or the committee to engage in oversight (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017:13). Effective oversight is reliant on the full understanding by parliamentarians and the members of the Executive of the constitutional justifications and rationale behind accountable government and the purpose it serves (Corder, Jagwanth & Solta, 1999:5). Essentially, "there needs to be a common understanding that it is right and proper for parliament to question the government, and that [effective] oversight delivers better government policy" (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015:1).

Lees (1977:193) defines oversight as behaviour by legislators and their staff, which results in an impact, intended or not, on bureaucratic behaviour. Lees (1977:196) asserts that the following resources strengthen oversight: legal authority, staff resources, decentralised committee structure where monitoring occurs, the desire among legislators to oversee, high political payoffs and poor executive-legislature relations.

For the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2017:13), parliamentary oversight is "the means by parliaments and parliamentarians, on behalf of the citizens, hold the government to account." The IPU further states that oversight and accountability have three interlocking obligations, namely:

- i. The responsibility of public officials, mainly the government, to avail information about their decisions and actions, as well as their justification to parliament and the citizens.
- ii. The responsibility of the parliament to examine the decisions and actions of the government as well as to provide appropriate recommendations.
- iii. The responsibility of those accountable to answer constructively and appropriately to parliament's conclusions/recommendations about the matter under investigation (IPU, 2017:13).

According to Gilley (2002), effective oversight is made up of four main components, namely, (i) detailed examination of the budget or allocation by legislators and their staff; (ii) comprehensive methods such as investigations, hearings, committees and audits; (iii) in-person element which allows for a greater understanding of an entity operations; and (iv) court decisions which result in legislative action.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union 2017 survey based on the views of 350 parliamentarians from more than 120 parliaments revealed 557 challenges to oversight. These challenges are grouped into four categories: (i) a hostile political environment, which makes any attempt to hold the government accountable futile; (ii) insufficient financial resources for oversight, for instance, the lack of funding for committees to carry out oversight activities; (iii) lack of formal powers to hold government accountable, for example, the non-binding recommendations of committees make their legal powers ineffective. Collectively these categories have an impact on the fourth category, which is the will of parliamentarians to engage in oversight (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017: 25,27).

2.1.1 Parliamentary oversight and foreign policy

Parliament's monitoring of foreign policy constitutes one of the seriously contested questions of modern history. This question lies at the crux of the doctrine of separation of powers, which divides authority among the executive and the legislature, including in the foreign policy realm (Lumen Learning, n.d.). The intention is to prevent the concentration of power and also to provide for checks and balances (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017). Parliamentary oversight is, therefore, fundamental in checking the excess on the part of the executive. The question of whether legislative oversight extends to foreign policy was answered in the late 1780s by the provisions of the Constitution of the United States of America (USA), which read:

He, the President, shall have power, by, with the guidance and agreement of the Senate, to make agreements, provided two-thirds of the Senators present approves; and he shall nominate and, by and with the consent Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors.... The Senate shall completely have the power of declaring war. No accord shall be made without their advice and consent (Lingelbach, 1927:655, 657, 672).

According to Lingelbach (1927:673), these constitutional provisions reinforced legislative checks upon the Executive power over foreign policy and afforded the earliest statutory rules for the control and direction of foreign policy.

Götz (2015:266) explains that the First World War is often described as the real catalyst that broke down the old system of international relations based on opposing great alliances and secret bilateral negotiations. Götz (2015) argues that given the new destructive capacity of humankind which came to the fore during this war, for the sake of peace, the international system of old had to give way to a new global order. As regards the domestic handling of foreign relations, they were extended to the principles of popular representative government. Thus proposals were made for the close supervision of government action by parliament in general and the establishment of parliamentary foreign affairs committees in particular. As a result, legislative control of the executive in matters of foreign affairs was strengthened considerably in most countries (Götz, 2005: 266, 267). This “new pluralism of international actors” challenges the traditional assumption that external relations are privileges of the executive (Batjaj, 2015:7).

Forums such as the IPU submit that for parliaments to be effective in their oversight role:

- They must have a clear legal basis for a parliamentary involvement;
- Be informed early of the executive policies and negotiating positions together with correct background information on these policies;
- Have the necessary resources to address the issues, including sufficient expertise among the individual parliamentarians involved through their work in specialised committees;
- Have the opportunity to put questions to ministers and negotiators, and thus be able to express its political views to the government; and
- Be part of government delegations to international forum meetings (IPU, 2006:157).

Parliaments and parliamentary committees are involved in the process of foreign policymaking (Smith, Hadfield & Dunne, 2008:86). Hudson (2010:111) asserts that the interests of domestic constituencies such as parliament, political parties, and business impact foreign policy-making significantly. In the words of Hudson (2010:111), “it is at this level where democratisation can lay a foundation for a more ethical foreign policy.” Spies (2009:271) contends that it was South African domestic factors that accorded South Africa its moral high ground in its post-apartheid period. Hudson (2010:111) adds that if the people that the government represents are not consulted in the foreign policy-making process, an ethical foreign policy dies as it first starts at home.

The IPU 2004 survey of 88 parliaments revealed that parliaments are involved in varying ways in international affairs, including through applying various oversight instruments at their disposals (Yamato, 2007). The majority of them have constitutional

roles in ratifying international agreements and monitoring as well as following up on government-led international negotiations (Bajtay, 2015). The critical functions of these oversight instruments are as follows:

- To detect and prevent abuse, irresponsible behavior and illegal conduct on the part of the government.
- To hold the government accountable in respect of how the taxpayers' money is utilised.
- To ensure the implementation of government policies as approved by parliament. This function involves monitoring the achievement of agreed goals and programmes of government.
- To enhance public trust in the government, which is itself a condition of effective policy delivery and improving the transparency of government operations (Yamamoto, 2007).

In most countries, including South Africa, these oversight instruments are stipulated in the constitution and parliamentary rules of procedure. Through these instruments, parliamentarians may ask the government for information or clarification of policy, obtain information from sources outside the government, and express their views to the government and the public. Oversight, in general, is aimed at holding the executive responsible for policy decisions and their implementation. In some cases, parliamentarians can raise questions with possible consequences, including sanctions for the executive (Bajtay, 2015:12).

According to Hill (2003: 252), although parliaments are potent symbols of political control, they still have limited constitutional powers in foreign policy-making due to the belief that the executive needs leeway if the state is to be protected. The interpretation of the law has a bearing, as it is partly influenced by the political culture and circumstances. This is particularly for parliaments with powers but does not assert themselves when it comes to scrutinising the foreign policy budget allocation or termination of signed and ratified international treaties.

At the same time, Hill (2003) argues that parliaments with a significant role in foreign policy-making create certainty, both at home and abroad, that commitments entered into are legitimate and will stand the test of time. Parliaments' capacity to constrain and participate is likely to grow as foreign policy becomes more central to everyday political life "and as the presumption of bipartisanship breaks down" (Hill, 2003: 256). In the meantime, parliaments relate to foreign policy through the exercise of formal powers, including supervision, scrutiny, and investigation (Hill, 2003: 256).

The majority of parliaments have some means of questioning the executive on its activities. For instance, in the Westminster model applied in countries such as South Africa, this occurs through scheduled question and answer sessions in the independent foreign affairs committee. Hill (2003: 256) maintains that foreign affairs committees have only become more common in the past 20 years. However, more

often than not, they are perceived as “a nice club of honoured personalities who are satisfied to have regular exchanges of views with the foreign minister without claiming directly to control and influence the government’s strategy” Hill (2003: 256). During plenary debates on foreign policy in national assemblies, often only a small proportion of members is informed and interested in international affairs.

Despite these shortcomings, Hill (2003: 257) argues that foreign affairs committees remain the most viable tool of exerting pressure on an executive as they are better able to build expertise with which to challenge the diplomatic specialists. They have the power to summon or insist on the presence of the minister, release documents, and expose errors through cross-questioning as well as written analysis. Their reports tend to enjoy legitimacy from both the public and scholars, particularly if they provoke controversy that is undesirable to decision-makers but important for quality control and shows that they are doing their work.

Most parliaments have come to the realisation that foreign affairs committees need resources in the form of personnel to ensure detailed forensic work important for vibrant plenary debate and upholding democratic control (Hill, 2003: 257).

2.2 Parliament’s oversight framework

The South African Constitution (1996) divides Parliament into two Houses - the National Assembly (NA) with 400 members, and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) with 90 provincial delegates (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2018). The Constitution is South Africa’s supreme law and provides Parliament with strong powers that enable it to play a fundamental role in overseeing executive action and shaping public policy (Mathisen & Tjønneland, 2001). It also prescribes to Parliament to establish mechanisms to ensure that the executive is accountable to it (Constitution, 1996).

The powers of Parliament can, in principle, only be overruled by the courts. Only the judiciary can review legislation and decisions of Parliament and declare them null and void. The Constitutional Court has the authority to decide on whether Parliament or the President has failed to comply with a constitutional duty (Mathisen & Tjønneland, 2001:3). Figure 2 shows the South African Parliament’s oversight framework - the Constitution (1996), Parliament’s Rules of Procedure and Oversight Model as well as Court Judgements.

The Constitution mandates the South African Parliament and its committees to scrutinise and oversee Executive action and any organ of the state (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, n.d.). This mandate resides with the entire Parliament, regardless of party affiliation (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2009:19).

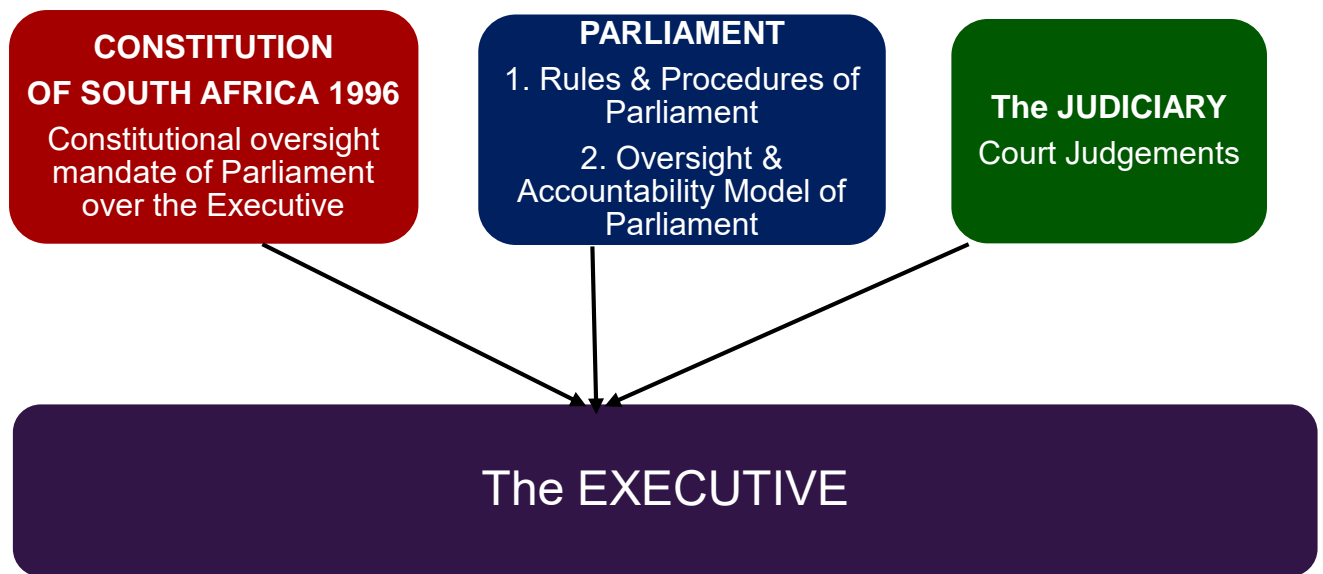


Figure 2: South African Parliament's Oversight Framework

Source: Researcher's Work

Under the Constitution, the NA is elected to represent the people and to ensure government by the people. It does so by selecting the President, providing a forum for public deliberation, passing legislation, and overseeing executive action. The NCOP members are the representatives of the nine provinces who ensure that provincial interests are considered in the domestic sphere of government. The NA does this by partaking in the national legislative process and by providing a forum for public deliberation of matters affecting the provinces (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2007).

Section 55 (2) (b) (ii) of the Constitution compels the NA to provide mechanisms to maintain oversight of the implementation of legislation and any organ of the state. This oversight function emanates from the separation of powers. Although the Constitution tasks the NA with an oversight role, for the NCOP, this function remains vague (Corder *et al.*, 1999:2). Section 92 (2) of the Constitution provides for additional oversight provisions by stating:

- Cabinet members are accountable collectively and individually to Parliament for the exercise of their powers and the performance of their functions.
- Cabinet members must act per the Constitution.
- Parliament must be given full and regular reports concerning matters under their control.

Sections 56 and 69 of the Constitution (1996;34, 41) further state that the NA and NCOP committees may summon any person to appear before them to give evidence

on oath or affirmation or to produce documents. These constitutional provisions are given effect through Rule 158 of the Rules of the NA (2016) and Rule 103 of the Rules of the NCOP (2008b). These Rules empower the committees in the respective Houses to subpoena an individual to appear before them to give evidence under oath or affirmation or to produce documents.

The Constitution, read with the Rules of Parliament, mandates Parliament to oversee Executive decision-making and actions. This mandate is not limited to monitoring Executive activities in the domestic sphere, but also extends to the foreign affairs realm. Thus, Members of Parliament, as the elected representatives of the people, have a responsibility to engage the Executive on matters of international relations to ensure that the views of the electorate find expression in the manner in which the Executive conducts itself in the international arena, within the prescripts of the country's foreign policy objectives.

Several Constitutional Court judgments reiterate these oversight provisions. In 2016, the Constitutional Court Nkandla judgment *Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and others: Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others* [2016] ZACC 11 stated that:

...the National Assembly, and extension Parliament... bears the responsibility to play an oversight role over the Executive and State organs and ensure that constitutional and statutory obligations are executed. For this reason, it fulfils a pre-eminently unique role of holding the Executive accountable for the fulfilment of the promise made to the populace through the State of the Nation Address, budget speeches, policies, legislation, and the Constitution.

In 2017, the Constitutional Court's secret ballot judgment *United Democratic Movement v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others* [2017] ZACC 21 stated that the:

...[a]ccountability, responsiveness and openness urge the President, Deputy President, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers to report fully and regularly to Parliament on the execution of their obligations. It falls on Parliament to oversee the performance of the President and the rest of the Cabinet and hold them accountable for the usage of State power and the resources entrusted to them. And, sight must never be lost that all constitutional obligations must be performed diligently and without delay.

2.2.1 Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model: Asserting Parliament's Oversight Role in Enhancing Democracy

The South African Parliament developed an *Oversight and Accountability Model: Asserting Parliament's Oversight Role in Enhancing Democracy*, which is continuously amended to remain on par with emerging oversight issues (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, n.d.). The Oversight Model dates to 1999 when Parliament commissioned research on its oversight function. An Oversight and Accountability Task Team comprising parliamentarians of both Houses was established. Its main

objective was to develop a model for Parliament's oversight function that would realign resources to fulfil Parliament's mandate with greater efficiency and effectiveness (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2009:37). The Model establishes the following mechanisms for Parliament to fulfil its oversight mandate enshrined in the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure:

- *Portfolio and Select Committees*: Through their Rules, the NA established portfolio committees and NCOP established select committees that mirror portfolios and clusters in government. The Rules of each House mandate of these committees. Committees provide a setting that facilitates detailed scrutiny of legislation, oversight of government activities, and interaction with the public. Also, the work of a committee includes study visits to do a physical assessment, engaging with people, evaluating the impact of service delivery, and compiling reports for approval by committees which include recommendations for the Houses to consider. In exercising oversight, committees often get first-hand knowledge from people involved in the implementation of specific programmes and who are directly responsible for service delivery. To assess the work of government from a broader perspective, a committee may invite external specialists to offer alternative background knowledge and analysis on relevant issues. A committee may submit a report with recommendations on any matters within the scope of its mandate to its House for consideration and adoption. Once the report is adopted, the NA Speaker/NCOP Chairperson communicates the recommendations of the House to the relevant Minister for a response. The chairperson of the Committee is included in the NA Speaker/NCOP Chairperson communication to the Minister.
- *Plenary Processes*, which entail the following:
 - *Members' statements*: This process allows parliamentarians to make statements on any matter in their respective Houses.
 - *Budget Votes*: After the presentation of the national budget by the Minister of Finance, each parliamentary committee has hearings with the department it respectively oversees to check whether the department achieved the objectives of the previous year and has spent taxpayers' money properly.
 - *Questions*: Questions can be oral or written reply to the President, the Deputy President, and the Cabinet Ministers on matters they are responsible for. These questions afford parliamentarians with the valuable opportunity to question members of the executive on any policy or action that fall within their departments. On written question reply, Rule 146 (3) of the NA Rules of Procedure states if a response to a written question is not received within 10 working days or the period of an extension approved by the Speaker and the Question Paper had stipulated that the inquiry has not been replied to, the Speaker must inform the Leader of Government Business accordingly.

- Statements by Cabinet members: Ministers for not more than 20 minutes may make a factual policy statement about government policy or on similar matters that the House ought to know about.
- Notices of motion: Notices of motion are a tool used by parliamentarians to bring matters of political importance before the House for a debate or a decision.
- Plenary debates: Plenary debates are aimed at drawing the attention of the Executive to the concerns of parliamentarian's constituents and include question time, the consideration of committee reports, as well as examining and discussing the implementation of policy and budget votes.
- *Plenary/Committee debates*: Plenary debates are a further means to bring valuable information to the attention of the Executive regarding specific Government programmes or legislation required to improve service delivery. In plenary sessions mechanisms such as question time; the consideration of committee reports; scrutinising and assessing the implementation of policy; and, through Member statements, drawing to the attention of Members of the Executive the concerns of their constituencies are used (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, n.d.: 17, 21).

The Model recommends that Parliament develop rules that will further sanction Cabinet members for non-compliance after all established existing avenues have been exhausted (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, n.d.: 32).

However, it is worth highlighting that the oversight function of Parliament was not always prioritised by Parliament. For instance, during the establishment of the first democratic Parliament, the institution was undergoing an unprecedented and fundamental transformation as required by the interim 1993 Constitution. A complete and wholly new Parliament was to be established, on both political and administrative levels. New parliamentary rules, procedures, mechanisms, and capacities were needed to affect the work of the new Parliament. One of the changes included the establishment of a new House of Parliament, the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2008), which replaced the Senate that existed under the interim constitution from 1994 to 1996 (Mathisen & Tjønneland, 2001:2). The NCOP was established to ensure that provincial interests would be considered. New working methods were created to adhere to the central value of participatory democracy, and modern traditions of opening committee meetings to the public were introduced. Moreover, during this period (1994 to 2004), Parliament focused mainly on eradicating discriminatory legislation rather than on the oversight function (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2008).

The Third Parliament (2004 – 2009) focused on building members' capacity to optimally enable Parliament to engage with international relations issues. Capacity included a content-based executive development programme to develop ability in

international relations, the establishment of specialist areas of work within International Relations and monitoring the implementation of international agreements by the legislature (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2008).

However, following the fourth democratic national and provincial elections, calls for an “activist Parliament” that exercises its constitutional mandate with robustness and fearlessness were reiterated by the President and Members.

For instance, in 2009, Member of Parliament Ben Skosana stated the following on an ‘activist Parliament’:

A decade and a half later in 2009, the call by the President and subsequently by the NA Speaker, Hon. M. Sisulu for the emergence of the activist Parliament and the State demands of this fourth Parliament a new paradigm, an ongoing evaluation of how parliament responds to the needs of the citizens who continue to toil under the yoke of grinding poverty....The new model should mean that the sovereignty of Parliament and State, the actions of the executive should reflect the activities and liberties of all citizens (Polity.org, 2009).

The same sentiments were reiterated during the 2011 African National Congress Caucus Lekgotla when the governing party stated that:

...we have recommitted ourselves to continue building a truly activist and people-centered parliament that is well placed, capacitated, and prepared to deliver on the fervent aspirations of the people - particularly the poor and the vulnerable. Continuing to review and transform the structures of this institution is, therefore, paramount if parliament was to continue to remain relevant to the needs and desires of the people it represents (Politicsweb, 2011).

These calls created the opportunity for discussion among members and officials about reviewing the Parliament’s role in international relations.

This spirit of an ‘activist Parliament’ was in line with the Fourth Parliament’s 2009 – 2014 Strategic Plan objectives:

- Strengthening the oversight function and establishing an influential culture of overseeing Executive action.
- Increasing participation in regional and international multilateral forums.
- Improving and extending the role of Parliament in international co-operation and engagement.
- Building an effective and efficient institution.

The period of 2009 – 2014 was accompanied by massive recruitment of content support for parliamentary committees. The 2010 Estimates of National Expenditure outlined an additional allocation of more than R440 million over the medium term to accommodate the additional support for the oversight role of committees including researchers, content specialists and language interpreters (National Treasury, 2010).

The Fifth Parliament 2014 – 2019 Strategic Plan objectives reinforced the efforts of the Fourth Parliament by prioritising the following:

- Strengthening oversight and accountability.
- Enhancing public involvement and participation.
- Deepening participation in international forums.

The Fifth Parliament Strategic Plan stressed that oversight would be enhanced by effective and efficient administrative support, as well as providing Parliament with research and analytical resources.

2.2.1.1 Parliament's monitoring of foreign policy

The President is responsible for developing the country's foreign policy and has the prerogative to appoint heads of diplomatic missions, receive foreign heads of diplomatic missions, conduct inter-state relations and enter into international agreements. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, in line with their cabinet portfolio, is responsible for formulating, promoting, and implementing South Africa's foreign policy. Overall, the Minister is responsible for all aspects of South Africa's international relations in consultation with the President. Oversight and accountability for the conduct and formulation of South Africa's foreign policy are vested in the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2015-2020), and the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations.

2.2.1.2 Role and mandate of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation consisted of thirteen members, including the Chairperson of the Committee. Seven of the thirteen political parties in Parliament were represented on the Committee. The ruling party had a majority representation with five members, including the Chairperson.

The Committee oversees all activities of the Department, including its operations and functions. South Africa's foreign policy is primarily conducted and operationalised outside the borders of the country, and the key implementers are the various missions abroad. Therefore, the Committee's oversight mandate extends to the activities of the Missions and , according to the Content Advisor of the Committee, Lineo Mosala (2017).

The mandate of the Portfolio Committee is twofold. Firstly, it aims to ensure that South Africa's international relations policy is based on democratic values aligned with the country's domestic priorities and national interests. Secondly, it seeks to ensure that DIRCO enhances international relations and partnerships for the development of

South Africa and the African continent as a whole. According to the Committee's five-year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020, its mandate includes:

- Monitoring adherence to the National Development Plan 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063.
- Monitoring all activities of South Africa's missions.

In terms of Rule 167 of the NA Rules of Procedure, in conducting its oversight function, the Committee may:

- Subpoena any person to appear before it to give evidence under oath or affirmation or to produce documents.
- Receive petitions, representations, or proposals from interested persons or institutions.
- Conduct public hearings.
- Allow oral evidence on petitions or submissions from any other persons or institutions.

Members of the Committee may individually put questions for oral or written reply to the President and DIRCO's Minister on foreign policy matters.

2.3 Evaluation of Parliament's oversight framework on foreign policy from the perspective of the reviewed literature

In evaluating the South African Parliament's oversight framework over the implementation of foreign policy, this section relied on a number of works. Suttner (1995), in his study entitled *Parliament's Role in Foreign Policy*, argues that Parliament should be involved in the process of foreign policy-making through a committee empowered to summon people, procure documents and receive representation to ensure the legislature's role in government's operations.

In work entitled *Parliament and Foreign Affairs: Continuity or Change*, van Wyk (1997) claims that even with the existence of the relevant National Assembly and Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs and instruments, foreign policy decisions are still driven by the Executive or the Minister. In a subsequent work titled *Parliament and the Foreign Policy Process*, van Wyk (1998) contends that Parliament's role in foreign policy process should be restructured through, amongst others, tabling of Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs reports in Parliament and the possible move of Parliament to Pretoria to ensure access to the foreign policy decision-makers.

Geldenhuis (1998) maintains in *The Foreign Relations of South Africa's Provinces* that South Africa's rebirth in 1994 was accompanied by a new group of official South African actors, including the NCOP, which was inaugurated in 1997 and is yet to prove

its worth. However, at least on paper, it has the capacity to involve provinces in international matters.

In a 2015 study entitled *Intergovernmental Relations on Foreign Affairs in South Africa: A Twenty-Year Review*, Nganje submits that the NCOP has been proven to be ineffective in fulfilling its constitutional mandate to engage with the foreign policy-making process. Instead of engaging, it defers to the national executive or the NA. In the few instances where the NCOP's Select Committee on Trade and International Relations has shown interest in overseeing international agreements, it is constrained by the 'overwhelming majority' that the ruling party enjoys in the House. Nganje (2015) points out that 9 of the 13 members of the Select Committee, who belong to the ruling party, vetoed objections or proposed amendments to foreign bills debated in the House. Nganje's argument is based on section 231 (1) of the Constitution, which affirms the power to negotiate and sign international agreements to the Executive. Moreover, article 231 (2) states that an international agreement binds the Republic only after it has been approved by resolution in both the NA and NCOP unless it is an agreement of a technical, administrative or executive nature which does not require either ratification or accession. However, such an agreement must be tabled in the NA and the NCOP within a reasonable time.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: South Africa Office (2014) is of the view that during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, when it came to foreign policy decision-making, neither the Department of Foreign Affairs nor the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs dominated or set the agenda, even though Parliament was the appropriate structure to formulate and transfer national interests into foreign policy.

Ahmed (2009), in *The Role of Parliament in South Africa's Foreign Policy Development Process: Lessons from the United States' Congress*, claims that mechanisms such as the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation and the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations failed to ensure sufficient engagement on foreign policy issues. This was due to the lack of political will and effective leadership. Parliament was therefore complicit insofar as it failed to exercise its authority in the foreign policy domain.

Hughes (2011), in *Parliament: Reclaiming its Position*, submits that South Africa's second term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the hosting of the 17th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change provided an opportune time for Parliament to assert itself, deliberate and oversee international relations and co-operation.

Continuity and Change: An Evaluation of the Democratic-Foreign Policy Nexus in Post-Apartheid South Africa (2010:114,115) by Hudson argues that Parliament's core function of conducting oversight of the executive has been "systematically watered down in South Africa" (Hudson, 2010:114). The Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs had difficulties in ensuring that its oversight and review function was executed during the Mbeki's administration. In theory, it was empowered to assess the conformity of

South Africa's foreign policy with the Constitution, particularly the Bill of Rights Chapter. Challenging foreign policy issues was hardly on the agenda, and the debate was left to the opposition. During the Zuma administration, Parliament was marginalised in the foreign policy process, mainly due to the Department's clear focus on "policy setting rather than implementation" (Hudson, 2010:115). In this light, Hudson recommends that Parliament should be included as a player in the negotiation phase.

In his work, *Democratic Foreign Policymaking and the Thabo Mbeki Presidency: A Critical Study*, Siko (2014) claims that in both pre- and post-1994 Parliament had no impact on the South African government's foreign policy. This was mainly due to the:

...constitutional dispensation that consolidates power over foreign policy to the Executive, rigid ruling party discipline, a broad consensus on foreign affairs among the ruling party and opposition MPs; and a general disinterest in the topic among parliamentarians. (Siko, 2014:190).

Siko's 'disinterest statement' is based on the research conducted by van Wyk in 1997. Her study showed that of the 2,910 questions tabled in Parliament, only 58 from 13 MPs were related to foreign policy. Furthermore, Tjemolane (2011) in *South Africa's Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 1994-2010: Partner or Hegemon*, submits that the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation has had a limited role in determining state action when it comes to the implementation of foreign policy.

A 2014 study entitled *Whose policy and why is it foreign?* by Smith and Tadesse echo the same sentiments by arguing that the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs has not been effective in overseeing the foreign policy and foreign policy formulation was almost exclusively located within the Presidency. In this regard, Smith, and Tadesse (2014) recommend that the Committee be strengthened to become an essential platform for the public to engage and make submissions on foreign policy issues.

Masters (2015), in *South Africa's Emerging Parliamentary Diplomacy and Soft Power*, asserts that the following factors undermined Parliament, including the Committee's credibility:

- The prioritisation of domestic issues.
- Limited-term of office for MPs.
- Members of Parliament serving on more than one portfolio committee.
- Lack of support staff capacity in International Relations.
- Short-lived interest and attention to foreign policy by members.

From the Outside in Domestic Actors and South Africa's Foreign Policy by Landsburg and Masters (2017) provides some positivity by stating that although the Portfolio on International Relations and Cooperation lacks initiative, it still managed to play an essential role in the formation of South Africa's foreign policy. They suggest that the Portfolio Committee managed to position itself "as a solidarity-driven and solidarity-

promoting foreign policy actor since 2009, just as the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs during Thabo Mbeki's presidential tenure" (Landsburg and Masters (2017).

Bridgman (2002), in *Parliament, Foreign Policy and Civil Society in South Africa*, stresses the importance of civil society participation in the process of influencing foreign policy. Moreover, Headley and van Wyk (2012), in *Debating the Public's Role in Foreign Policy*, expanded on the role of public participation in foreign policy and recommended the use of public hearings to popularise a draft white paper on diplomatic and trade policies.

In summary, the reviewed research highlights several issues that have disadvantaged Parliament and its committee from effectively overseeing the country's foreign policy. Some of these issues are lack of political will and leadership, an overwhelming majority that the ruling party enjoys in the committees and the House, the dominance of domestic problems over foreign policy matters as well as the exclusivity of foreign policy and foreign policy within the Presidency and the Executive.

2.3.1 Comparative summary: Parliament and Foreign Policy in Namibia, Canada, United Kingdom, and India

It is worth pointing out that the issues raised by the reviewed literature are not unique to South Africa, as evident in the following section, which provides a summary of how the South African Parliament compares to parliaments of Namibia, Canada, and India when it comes to the control of foreign policy. These countries were chosen due to their Westminster system of government with some degree of the doctrine of separation of powers, which allocates specific functions, duties, and responsibilities to individual state organs. The separation is mainly among the three spheres of government, namely, the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. Within the constitutional context, the terms legislative, executive and judicial authority mean the following:

- Legislative authority: the power to make, amend and rescind laws;
- Executive authority: the ability to implement and enforce laws;
- Judicial authority: the power, if there is a disagreement in two other spheres, to determine what the law is and how it should be enforced in the dispute (Mojapelo, 2013).

The main goal of the doctrine is the prevention of abuse of power within these three spheres. The essence of the tradition is found in the words of the French philosopher Montesquieu:

All would be in vain if the same person, or the same body of officials, be it the nobility or the people, were to exercise these three powers: that of making laws, that of implementing the public resolutions, and that of adjudicating crimes of disputes of individuals (Mojapelo, 2013: 37, 38).

Overall, this doctrine divides the power to conduct foreign policy among the three spheres of government to ensure the independence of each arm.

2.3.2 Comparative summary analysis

Banjo (2009), in *A Review of Parliament-Foreign Policy Nexus in South Africa and Namibia*, submits that his study of entries concerning documented activities of the Namibian Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs between 2004 and 2008 showed only one item that directly dealt with the issue of foreign affairs. The Portfolio Committee is constitutionally empowered to exercise oversight over Namibia's foreign policy, but in practice, almost all external and international matters were exclusively dealt with by the Executive.

Barnett and Spano (2008), in *Parliamentary involvement in Foreign Policy – Canada*, note that when it comes to treaty-making and treaty implementation, the role of Parliament was only enhanced in 2008 when the government announced a policy to strengthen parliamentary involvement in the ratification process. As a result, all treaties were tabled in Parliament before ratification. Parliament has the power to debate the agreement and to pass a motion recommending, action, including ratification. However, such a proposal has no legal force, and the same policy gives the executive discretionary powers to ratify treaties before their tabling in Parliament.

In his study entitled *Parliament and Foreign Policy: A comparative analysis of the US, UK, and India*, Tahir (2004) found that the Parliament of the United Kingdom (UK) does not have specific powers to restrain the executive. The control of foreign affairs rests with the Crown and the Legislature, but only to the extent that the Crown deems desirable. The executive has the power to negotiate and ratify treaties without parliamentary approval. In India, the executive is responsible for making foreign policy decisions, and such decisions must be accepted by the majority of members of the Lok Sabha (lower house of the Indian Bicameral Parliament). Cabinet can continue in the office as long as it enjoys the confidence of the Lok Sabha. In India, the ratification of treaties is done by the President.

A comparative analysis of the parliaments South Africa, Namibia, Canada, the UK, and India indicates that the South African Parliament enjoys considerable specific powers when it comes to foreign policy matters compared to Canada, the UK, and India. For instance, the Constitution gives the power to ratify treaties to Parliament and goes further to state that an international agreement binds South Africa only after the resolution has approved it in both Houses of Parliament. Moreover, in terms of the Constitution, members of the cabinet are collectively accountable to Parliament for the exercise of their powers and performance, and Parliament has in place oversight tools to ensure accountability. On the other hand, the Parliament of the UK does not have specific powers to restrain the executive.

When it comes to powers to dissolve cabinet, same as the Lok Sabha in India, section 102 (1) and (2) of the South African Constitution empowers the NA by a vote supported by a majority of its members, to pass a motion of no confidence in the President and the Cabinet and any Deputy Minister to resign or for the President to reconstitute the cabinet.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored existing literature underpinning this study and the framework that informs parliamentary oversight in South Africa, particularly as it relates to foreign policy. Through a comparative summary, the study established that the South African Parliament including the Portfolio Committee, compared to the four parliaments of Namibia, Canada, the UK, and India, is relatively empowered to oversee South Africa's foreign policy, including foreign policy decisions and treaty-making. This power was illustrated by Banjo (2009), who indicates that the South African Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs was relatively more active when compared to its counterpart in Namibia, which between 2004 to 2008 had only one item that directly dealt with the issue of foreign affairs. However, the reviewed literature revealed that the oversight function of Parliament and its committees is weakened by the lack of political will and leadership, an overwhelming majority that the ruling party enjoys in the committees and the House, the dominance of domestic problems over foreign policy matters, the exclusivity of foreign policy and foreign policy within the Presidency and the Executive. Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the oversight tools available to members are robust, but this assertion will be tested in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

3. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and contextual framework of the study. It defines concepts such as foreign policy and foreign policy decision-making, identifies the main foreign policy-making actors, the types of foreign policy decisions as well as analysing foreign policy decision-making at the group level.

Having established in the previous chapter that even with the existence of constitutional provisions and oversight tools that enable members, individually or collectively, to oversee South Africa's foreign policy, including making foreign policy decisions, the Portfolio Committee remains ineffective and weak. Some of the critical reasons put forward for this weakness include constitutional powers that consolidate power over foreign policy to the Presidency and the Executive, disinterest in foreign policy matters by members, prioritisation of national issues, lack of political will and leadership. Most concerning, however, is the assertion that oversight has been 'systematically watered down.'

Through groupthink, this chapter examines the methods and dynamics of a small group such as the Portfolio Committee on South Africa's foreign policy decision-making. Groupthink suggests that the presence of antecedent conditions within a decision-making group influences the group to become a victim of groupthink. Once a group becomes a victim, symptoms of groupthink emerge, and ultimately, defective policy outcomes ensue.

Groupthink provides this study with a more grounded understanding of group decision-making within a political environment. It also assists in unearthing potential bias and errors that can lead to ineffectiveness and weakness in group decision-making (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010). This psychological approach to decision-making is used to examine not only outcomes of decisions but also the processes and distortions that may have led to the conclusions and the decision dynamics (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010).

The need to focus on groups and decision-making in the realm of foreign policy can be traced to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) pioneers such as Lewin, who used empirical research to study group dynamics during the 1940s. Lewin stressed "the need for fact-finding and objective appraisal of alternatives to determine whether the chosen means will achieve a group's goals. He warned that the lack of objective standards for evaluating goal achievement allows many opportunities for errors of judgment and poor decisions" (Janis, 1972:4). Furthermore, Bem, Wallach and Kogan, whose 1966 study entitled *Group Decision-Making Under Risk of Aversive Consequences*, found that group decisions tended to be riskier than decisions made by individuals. However, as cited by Hudson (2005:7), critical works such as *Victims*

of *Groupthink* by Janis (1972) suggests that the motivation for maintaining group consensus and in-group loyalty increases poor decision-making.

3.1 Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is a subfield of International Relations theory. In its pure form, FPA “is an investigative process, which primarily aims to examine the behaviour of international units, usually states, towards their external environment, that, is beyond their material borders” (Sekhri, 2009:1). The focus is on the intentions, statements, and actions of actors towards the external environment and “the response of other actors to these intentions, statements, and actions” (Sekhri, 2009:1). Aden and Aran (2017) view FPA as an investigation into decision-making, the individual decision-makers, processes, and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions. Foreign Policy Analysis roots can be traced as far back as the 1950s. According to Kaarbo (2015:191), it refers to:

...a complex, multi-layered course, comprising of goals that the executive pursue in their relations with other governments and their choice of means to attain these objectives.... Thus foreign policy includes complex communications within governments and amongst its diverse agents, plus the perceptions and misconceptions, the images of other countries, and the ideologies and personal characters of all involved. A significant part of the study of foreign policy has been the nature and impact of domestic politics.

FPA challenges the whole notion of the nation-state being unitary actors in the foreign policy decision-making process. It focuses on the people and units that make a state (Hudson, 1995:210). For example, in South Africa, this could mean individuals dealing with foreign affairs matters such as the President, Minister of DIRCO, and the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation. It emphasises foreign policy decision-making as opposed to the consequences of foreign policy. Hudson (1995:210) notes that FPA pioneers Synder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954) are of the view that “if one wishes to probe the ‘why’ questions underlying the events, conditions, and interaction patterns which rest upon state action, then decision-making analysis is undoubtedly necessary.” They go as far as to say that:

...the ‘why’ questions cannot be answered without analysis of decision-making, which requires one to take into account the organisational behaviour - spheres of competence of the actors involved, the flow of communication and information, and the motivation of the various players” (Hudson, 1995:210).

Mintz and DeRouen Jr (2010:5, 6) are of the view that an analysis of foreign policy decisions can reveal mental action or process that leads to foreign policymaking by getting into the minds of key decision-makers. It can also identify unique patterns of choices and “generate insights about leadership styles, personalities, motivations, biases, and perceptions that cannot be revealed through a systematic approach to foreign policy analysis” (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010:5, 6).

3.2 Foreign policy and foreign policy-making actors

Hudson (2008:12) succinctly defines foreign policy as the “strategy or approach chosen by the national governments to achieve its goals in its relationship with external entities, including the decision to do nothing.” Smith *et al.* (2008:16:3) provide another useful definition of foreign policy, namely, “actions expressed in the form of clearly stated goals, commitments pursued by government representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign states” which are “directed towards objectives, conditions, and actors which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy”. Adnan (2014:658) defines foreign policy as “a well-rounded, comprehensive plan, based on knowledge and experience, for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world, aimed at promoting and protecting the interests of the nation”.

Although these three definitions refer only to government and government strategy, Carlsnaes (2009:113) is of the view that foreign policy is a product of several international and domestic actors including heads of state and government, foreign ministers, parliaments. These actors utilise various means, including dispensing financial assistance to political mobilisation to guide policy toward their particular interests (Alden & Aran, 2012:47; Carlsnaes, 2009:113).

Hill (2003:56) asserts that the reason why foreign policy is vulnerable to executive control, including its definition, is two-fold: firstly, the majority of politicians spend their time and energy focusing on domestic issues “and do not wish to waste time on” harnessing foreign contacts from which returns cannot be guaranteed” (Hill, 2003:56)

Secondly, the international environment represents “a steep learning curve for politicians” (Hill (2003:56) keen to learn and understand it. Hill (2003) further argues that unforeseen issues which often arise in foreign policy tend to give those with the power to initiate and response advantage. This point is applicable in the South African context, in which the Constitution provides benefit to the executive in terms of developing foreign policy, including negotiating and signing of international agreements. Parliament, on the other hand, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the foreign policy as well as ratifying international treaties which then binds South Africa to these agreements as well as monitoring their implementation (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 48,123).

According to the South African Parliament’s Legal Adviser, Mr. M. Vassen, several legal opinions were sought on the negotiation of international agreements, and all concurred that it was the prerogative of the National Executive alone to negotiate such treaties. In this regard, Parliament does not have an official role in the negotiation and signing of agreements (Leibrandt-Loxton, Montshiwa, *et al.*, 2010:6). According to Ahmed (2009:302), the former Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Job Sithole, MP, was of the view that parliamentarians need to develop a deeper understanding of the international negotiations process and should limit their involvement to observing, as opposed to participating, in the process. He further noted that the President has to take into account that there is an institution called Parliament

and that this Institution holds individual opinions and assumptions that need to be taken into account when specific engagements at the international level happen. The former Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs asserted that “Parliament should limit its involvement to observing as opposed to participating” (Ahmed, 2009:302. This statement could mean that Parliament cannot both be a player and referee, in the sense that it cannot negotiate and sign international agreements, while overseeing the executive over the implementation of the same deal it arranged and approved. However, Parliament is advised to keep abreast of issues under discussion and this, in turn, will enhance its oversight function. An active role for Parliament in the negotiation and signing of the international agreement may compromise Parliament in holding the Executive accountable for the implementation of these agreements.

3.3 What is foreign policy decision-making?

Foreign policy decision-making refers to the everyday choices that individuals and groups take that affect a nation’s actions on its external relations. Some of these decisions may be as simple as the Portfolio Committee members deciding on the question of whether the Minister of DIRCO should come before the Committee to account for some of the decisions South Africa has taken as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The decision on this question requires a majority of members of the Committee to be present (Parliament of South Africa, 2016: 115). It is worth mentioning that the Portfolio Committee is a multi-party committee with several political parties, with dynamics such as differing agendas, interests and foreign policy decisions.

Some of these decisions include Resolution 1973 on Libya that South Africa as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council supported. According to du Plessis and Louw (2011:1), this Resolution was followed by increased reports of “gross and systematic human rights violations, including indiscriminate armed attacks against civilians, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of peaceful demonstrators in Libya” (du Plessis and Louw, 2011:1).

3.3.1 Types of foreign policy decisions

Foreign policy decisions fall under the following different types: one-shot, interactive, sequential, sequential-interactive, and group decisions. *One-shot decisions* are uncommon in international relations because decisions are usually made interactively with other actors. The withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change qualifies as a *one-shot* decision. *Strategic, interactive choices* are those by at least two people. *Sequential decisions* include a series of interrelated decisions, such as whether to attack or occupy a particular country. *Group decisions*, on the other hand, tend to be susceptible to differing plans, benefits, and inclinations for ordering

structures and policy options. They often involve bargaining among group members (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010). Mintz and DeRouen Jr (2010) add that the following policy-making process stages guide all these decisions:

- Intelligence (collect information and identify the problem).
- Design (identify alternatives, select standards).
- Choice (use criteria to evaluate options and make a decision).
- Implementation (put the decision into effect and allocate resources).

3.3.1.1 Analysis of foreign policy decision-making at the group level

Decisions above can be analysed from three levels: the individual, the coalition and the group. Individual-level decisions are prevalent when leaders have extreme power within a state or group. In these scenarios, decision-makers are not constrained by institutional factors, and the policy-making process does not follow the same dynamic as a group decision. Coalition decision-making “involves invoking rules and procedures to reach a decision. A decision can be reached as a consensus but often will be based on a simple majority rule” (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010:18, 21). A hung parliament or government are good examples of coalition decision-making, where no particular political party has an absolute majority.

Foreign policy decision at group level refers to more than two people “who are jointly responsible for detecting a problem, elaborating on the nature of the problem, generating possible solutions, and evaluating potential solutions” (DeSanctis & Gallupe, 1987: 591). Legislative committees, governing boards, and project teams are some of the examples of decision-making groups (DeSanctis & Gallupe, 1987: 591). Nearly all foreign policy decisions are made in groups, particularly small ones consisting of approximately 15 individuals or less, and not by single influential individuals (Hudson, 2014 and Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010).

Decision-making in groups tends to be characterised by dynamics such as members’ different agendas, interests as well as preferences for ordering structures and policy options. It is also marked by compressed time, high stakes, enormous uncertainty about other actor’s motives, beliefs, calculations, and stress. Stress can be induced by the following factors, individually or in combination: a threat to essential values, sleeplessness, anxiety, or severe time pressure. These factors combined tend to exacerbate and contribute to poor decision-making processes. At the same time, high pressured situations may also force decision-makers to rise to the occasion and perform well under trying circumstances. As captured succinctly by President Richard Nixon, “in crisis, the decision-maker discovers all the covert powers he never knew he had” (Renshon & Renshon, 2008:513).

Nevertheless, these dynamics influence and affect how information is processed and how decisions are made. Group decisions are affected by the structure, cohesion or lack of cohesion, internal processes, and management of a group (Renshon &

Renshon, 2008; Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010:44). Group dynamics is rooted in the work of scholars such as Allison, whose analysis of the Cuban missile crisis produced conceptual frameworks that explain “the how and why of foreign policy decision” (Janis, 1972:7). According to Janis (1972:7) group dynamic analysis assumes that the occurrence of questionable policy errors can only be understood by examining the behaviour of the small group of decision-makers “because all the well-known errors stemming from limitations of an individual and a large organisation can be greatly augmented by group processes that produced shared miscalculations” (Janis, 1972:7).

Group dynamic approach is based on “the working theory that the members of policy-making groups, no matter how mindful they may be of their noble national status and their heavy responsibilities, are exposed to the pressures widely observed in groups of ordinary citizens” (Janis, 1972:8). This situation was proved in numerous cohesive group studies: platoons, aircrews, therapy groups, seminars, and leadership training (Janis, 1972:9). The signs of high cohesiveness and the accompanied concurrence-seeking tendencies shown by these diverse groups interfered with their critical thinking. Janis (1972:9) termed these occurrences ‘groupthink’.

3.3.1.2 What is groupthink?

The term ‘groupthink’ is an invention of social psychologist Irving Janis and is one of the studies to emerge in the past four decades that focuses and explains small group problem-solving (Tetlock, 1979; Aldag *et al.* 1993). It concentrates on how specific patterns of social interaction among group members can influence decision-making. Janis argues that severe social pressures toward cohesiveness and in-group loyalty within decision-makers can build up to the point that they interfere with both “cognitive efficiency and moral judgment” (Tetlock, 1979:1314). Janis endeavoured to prove the effects of cohesiveness and in-group loyalty on decision-making by using real-life US foreign policy decisions under the leadership of different US administrations. He used the Bay of Pigs, North Korea, Pearl Harbour, and Vietnam to demonstrate that groupthink led to poor decision-making (Tetlock, 1979; McCauley, 1989). In each of these cases, Janis identified the presence of groupthink symptoms, and that is high levels of mutual admiration among group members of the policy-making, isolation from the expertise of external specialists, and lack of systematic procedures to appraise and search for new evidence relating to the issue at hand. During the deliberations on the issue at hand, group leaders tend to advance their desired solutions instead of promoting a conducive environment for analysis of alternatives. Moreover, all the decisions are likely to be made under duress, and group members are discouraged in finding a better option to the one already favoured by the group. Under these circumstances, patterns such as grandiosity among members, hostility towards dissenting views and as well as voluntary censorship among members emerge.

- **Definition of groupthink**

Janis (1972,1982) provided numerous definitions of groupthink, but the most concise is 'concurrency-seeking' (McCauley, 1989:252). It refers "to a method of thinking that people engage in when they are intensely involved in a cohesive in-group when the members' strivings for unison supersede their inspiration to assess the alternative course of action realistically." It also refers to "an excessive form of concurrency-seeking among members of high prestige, tightly knit policy-making groups" (Janis, 1972:9). This concurrence can result from (i) internalisation of the group norm, (ii) from compliance with the standard or (iii) from the combination of both internalisation and compliance. Concurrency-seeking makes members to value the group more than anything else. To preserve this, members "suppress their doubts, silence dissenters, and follow the group's leader's suggestions" ('t Hart, 1991:247). This scenario ensues typically when group members are unified and well organised as well as under pressure to make a decision. This pressure increases the likelihood of defective decision processes, which, in, turn, lower the chances of achieving a successful outcome ('t Hart, 1991:268).

Internalisation occurs "when a person accepts influence because the content of the induced behaviour – the ideas and actions of which it is composed – is inherently satisfying" (McLeod, 2016). With internalisation, the person changes their behaviour to fit in with the group, and this is the sincerest form of conformity and is permanent behaviour (McLeod, 2016).

Compliance refers "to a change in conduct that is demanded by a group or another individual; the individual acted in some way because others asked him or her to do so" (McLeod, 2014). It usually stops in the absence of group pressures and is hence, a temporary behaviour (McLeod, 2016).

When it comes to *group norms*, studies have identified group norms, group dynamics, as well as group cohesion as some of the critical factors that exert considerable influence on team performance. Group norms can be defined as "standards that regulate group members' behavior" (McLeod, 2016). They symbolise a common expectation regarding each members' involvement in the team. Moreover, they have a remarkable influence on how group members perceive and interact with each other and to a certain extent, contribute towards the stabilisation of the group's structure. When validated and agreed upon, norms have shown to improve the team's effectiveness. Norms usually change around matters deemed necessary, and groups do not develop standards for every situation. Langford's study of military units (1998) revealed that units with low standards of the norm for performance but with high cohesion were less productive than units with both high scores for performance norms of coherence. Langford's study concluded that "a more cohesive group influences its members in whatever directions the norms are oriented" (Langford, 1998). Equally, Høigaard's 2006 study on the *Relationship between Group Cohesion, Group Norms and Perceived Social Loafing in Soccer Teams* (2006) revealed that for performance,

team-building requires aspects of cohesion in combination with performance norms. Norms and cohesiveness are the critical ingredients of the group (Høigaard, 2006).

McCauley (1989:251) is of the view that Janis's 1982 work on groupthink appears to have defined groupthink as *internalised* group influence:

In a unified group of policy-makers the danger is not that individuals will fail to reveal his/her strong objections to a proposal preferred by the majority but that he will think the proposal is a good one, without trying to carry out a critical examination that could lead him/her to see that there are grounds for strong objections. When groupthink dictates, suppression of different views takes the form of each person's deciding that his or her reservations are not relevant, that the benefit of any doubt should be given to the group consensus. A member of a cohesive group will rarely be subjected to direct group pressures from the majority because he or she will rarely take a position that threatens the unity of the group.

- **Model of groupthink**

The model depicts eight main symptoms of groupthink:

- i. An illusion of invulnerability: is visible in the majority of members and creates excessive confidence and encourages extreme risk-taking.
- ii. Collective efforts to justify and discount any warnings which may result in members reconsidering their expectations before recommitting to their previous policy decisions.
- iii. Group members discount moral consequences to their decisions due to the unquestioned belief in the morality of the group.
- iv. Common views of adversaries and enemies as too evil or weak to warrant genuine attempts to negotiate.
- v. The direct pressure on any person who expresses an opinion on the group's delusions or standards.
- vi. Self-censorship: the group members avoid expressing anything that may be interpreted as an attack on the group's plan or decision.
- vii. The shared illusion of unanimity: Members choose to concur with the view of the majority. Members unconsciously prevent any disagreement from surfacing when they are about to initiate a risky course of action.
- viii. The rise of self-appointed mind-guards: members protect the group from opposing information that threatens their shared complacency about the morality of their decisions and efficiency ('t Hart, 1991:257).

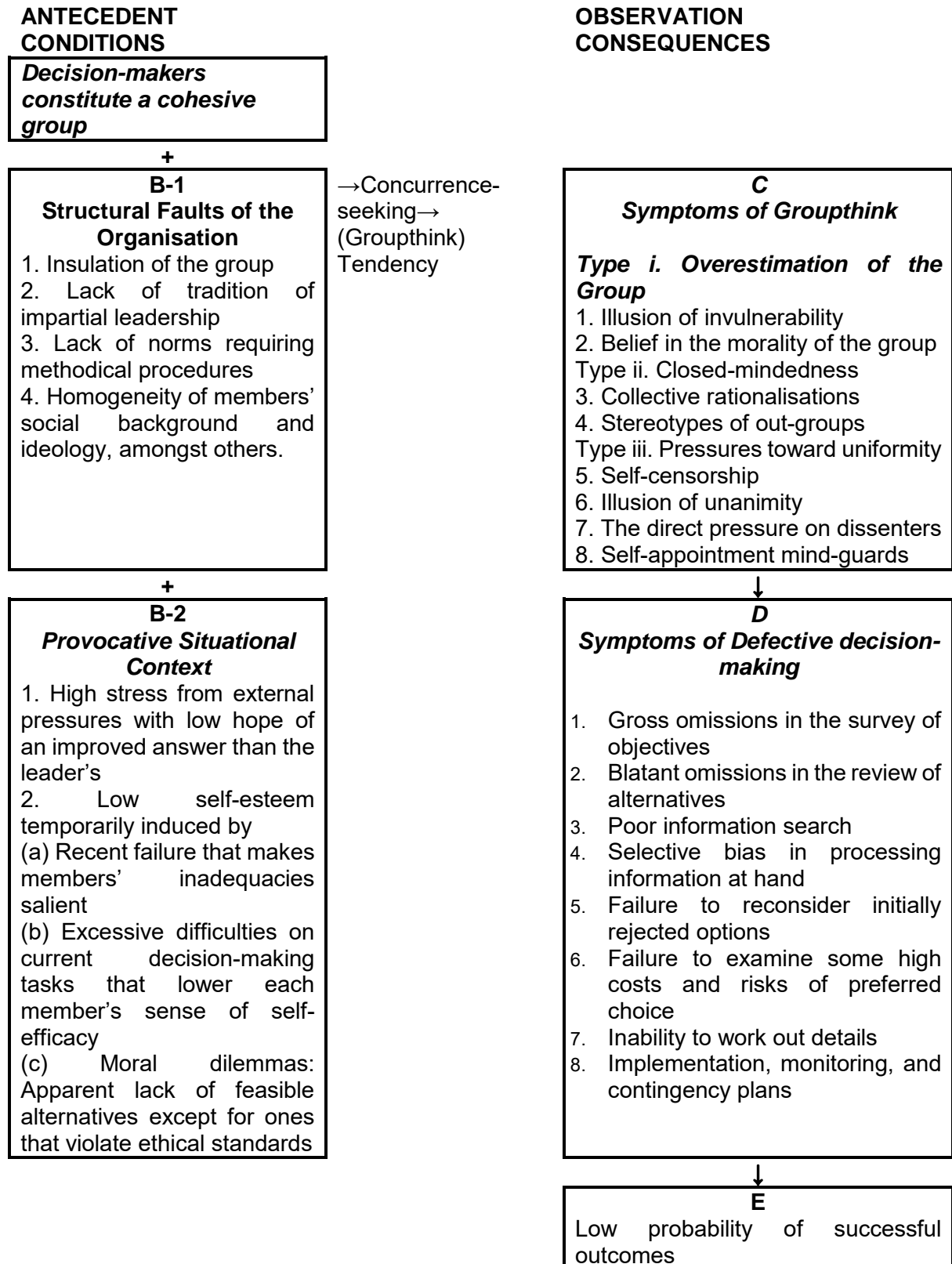


Figure 3: Groupthink theory

Source: 't Hart (1991:257)

- **Groupthink theory and group cohesiveness**

Group cohesiveness has been one of the extensively studied concepts in literature, particularly in areas related to groups and group dynamics. It is an essential influencing factor over group performance in task teams, work teams, therapy groups, exercise groups, and group processes in terms of communication patterns, behaviour changes, etc. It is described as 'sticking together' – a group whose members are bonded to each other and the group as a whole. Others view it in terms of 'belongingness' and 'sense of we-ness.' For Høigaard (2006:219), this refers to "the resultant of all forces that hold group members together". For an individual, it is the overall attraction to the group (McCauley, 1989).

Similarly, it can mean a dynamic process that is replicated in the propensity for members to stick together and remain unified in the quest of the group instrumental objectives and for the satisfaction of members' compelling needs (Høigaard, 2006). Studies on small groups concluded that cohesion is positively connected to trust, empathy, self-disclosure, and acceptance, and it can also be argued that the presence of these factors can lead to an increase in cohesion. According to Dyrman and Kamalanabhan (2005:185) studies examining the effects of cohesiveness on employees' job performance found a positive relationship between cohesiveness and productivity. On the other hand, other studies found that the average performance of cohesive groups was relatively close to that of non-cohesive groups (Dyrman *et al.*, 2005: 185,186,187).

When it comes to group cohesiveness and decision-making, studies have shown that cohesive groups are more accomplished than non-cohesive groups. This performance lies in the fact that these kinds of groups are successful in generating numerous alternative courses of action. At the same time, due to the involvement of more than one person, it takes time for a group to reach consensus ('t Hart, 1991). Mullen, Anthony, Salas, and Driskel (1994) study found out that high cohesiveness impairs decision-making quality in large groups, in line with Janis's formulation that poor decisions result from members mirroring some of their behaviour to behavioural standards of unison, consensus and mutual support (Dyrman *et al.*, 2005:189).

Cohesiveness among group members is the core factor that Janis's work singles out as a "substantive and independent cause of groupthink" ('t Hart, 1991:251). Janis and other theorists such as Lewin view cohesiveness as the extent of "devotedness and closeness" of group members and essential to the functioning of the group ('t Hart, 1991:251, 252).). This is because "cohesiveness results in solidarity, friendliness, interpersonal attraction, cooperation, mutual liking and positive feelings towards group meeting attendance and fulfilment of tasks by members of the group" (Janis, 1972; 4,5 and 't Hart, 1991:252). It provides a source of security for members, thereby reducing anxiety while heightening self-esteem. The highly cohesive the group is, the more power it has to bring conformity to its norms and the easier for members to accept its goals, assigned roles and tasks (Janis, 1972:5). Cohesiveness among members

forces them consciously or unconsciously to avoid raising contentious issues or questioning arguments. Moreover, making it their business to influence the nonconformist member in terms of toning down their dissenting views, and if they fail, they resort to excluding that individual from the group. High cohesion may emanate from, amongst others, (i) the need for acceptance by other group members, (ii) complex interplay of “rewards and punishments mediated by the group” as well as (iii) membership from an influential group, and from the magnetism of the group (McCauley, 1989:251).

According to Esser (1998:125), Moorhead, Ference and Neck's (1991) analysis of the *Report of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident* (1986) revealed the existence of groupthink. This study reported the presence of a majority of the antecedents and symptoms of groupthink. The authors concluded that groupthink was involved in Challenger's decision (Esser, 1998:125).

Park's (2002) study entitled *A Comprehensive Empirical Investigation of the Relationship Among Variables of the Groupthink Model* found that group cohesion worked as a primary antecedent condition. This study piloted an extensive empirical investigation of the relationships among all the 24 variables, including conditions for antecedents, symptoms of groupthink. According to Park (2002), the study confirmed the effects of group cohesiveness which opposes previous studies by Courtright (1978) and Flowers (1977) and others, that downplayed the impact of group cohesiveness. This study also confirmed symptoms of groupthink, including self-censorship, direct pressure on dissenters, and self-appointed mind-guards. The study, however, found that the self-esteem of group members had no bearing on the symptoms of groupthink that the group demonstrated, which contradicts Janis's findings.

Antecedents of Groupthink: A Qualitative Study by Schafer and Crichlow (1996:415) reinvestigated Janis's 19 cold-war crises and confirmed that groups must have impartial leadership and methodical procedures to avoid defective decision-making while avoiding overestimation of the group, closed-mindedness, and pressures toward conformity. The study also found that homogeneity of members did not result in more defective decisions than did non-homogeneous groups. Due to the seldom occurrence of group insulation, the study was unable to evaluate its impact on faulty decisions. It seems like, in practice, decision-making groups seldom isolate themselves in the manner suggested by Janis. *A Test of the Groupthink Model* by Tetlock *et al.* (1992) used two research instruments, namely, the Group Dynamics Q- Sort (GDQS) and the Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) to explore the logic of the groupthink model. This exercise involved the examination of the ten foreign policy decisions that Janis's groupthink analysed. What is interesting about this study is that the two research instruments produced two contradicting results. LISREL found out that neither group cohesiveness or situational stress are sufficient causes of groupthink. In one view, cohesiveness can only stimulate groupthink when members are less confident or want personal approval.

It is worth pointing out that Janis in *Groupthink* (1982) to some degree acknowledges that high cohesion on its own is not sufficient to produce groupthink, but the presence of several structural and situational conditions in addition to it determines groupthink. Structural conditions include impartial leadership, group homogeneity, and group isolation. Situational conditions include time stress and recent group failure. All these factors combined, increase group members' need for concurrence in the creation of an "imaginary world" that replaces fear and uncertainty (McCauley, 1989:252). Janis also used the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Marshall Plan to demonstrate successful decision-making without the presence of groupthink (McCauley, 1989). In each of these cases, policy-makers, including leaders, prioritised "open and critical appraisals" of policy options (Tetlock, 1979:1315). According to Tetlock (1979:1315), Flowers' (1977) study entitled *A Laboratory Test of Some Implications of Janis's Groupthink Hypotheses*, found that "open-leadership style" results in group members proposing more solutions to a problem than "closed leadership style" (Tetlock, 1979:1315).

3.3.2 Preventing groupthink

Janis (1972) highlights several ways to prevent groupthink. Firstly, leaders on a rotational basis are encouraged to appoint a member to act as "devil's advocate" that is a person that will question the group decisions and assumptions (Hudson, 2014:81). The institutionalisation of devil's advocate creates a sense among members that they have considered all sides of the issue, and the chosen policy option has been thoroughly examined within the decision-making group.

Second, the invitation of experts and outsiders to openly challenge the group decisions and assumptions (Hudson, 2014:81). This practice is likely to counter any complacency about risky decisions. Third, leaders should avoid stating their individual preferences and expectations at the onset. The potential benefit of this practice includes avoidance of establishing a group norm that will induce conformity with the leader's views.

Fourth, role-playing and study of the other nations involved constructing possible scenarios (Hudson, 2014:81). This practice is likely to counter shared illusions of invulnerability among members and "their tendency to ignore warning signals that interfere with complacency," (Hudson, 2014:81) and this requires the leader jointly with the group to put more effort into making a detailed contingency plan for possible risks that may arise.

Fifth, once a group reaches a consensus about the best policy alternative, members should hold a second meeting, in which every member will be allowed to vividly express any doubts about the chosen action plan before making a final choice. This scenario will prevent a policy decision based on "unwarranted expectations of invulnerability" (Janis, 1972), bias and other ill-informed assumptions shared by members of the group. In these meetings, members should be encouraged to

challenge their arguments and examine all the risks associated with their cases (Janis, 1972).

Sixth, the organisation should adopt an administrative practice of establishing independent numerous policy groups to work on the same policy questions under different leaders. This practice will prevent senior management of the group from “challenging information and independent judgments by well-qualified outsiders” (Janis, 1972:211). Lastly, members of the policy-making group should periodically discuss the group’s deliberations with trusted associates and report back feedback to the group. This practice is likely to counter ‘mind-guards’ and allow for the free flow of opposing views/ideas while gently pushing members out of their complacency (Janis, 1972:213).

Janis also argues that not all foreign policy fiascos are as a result of groupthink, and it is also possible for a group to operate without generating any failures (Hudson, 2014). In some cases, poor decisions are as a result of misrepresentation and miscalculation Janis highlights the following six defects in decision-making contributing to poor policy outcomes as a result of groupthink and other factors including fatigue, information overload, prejudice, emotional stress, and ignorance:

- i. First, the group limits itself to a few alternative courses of action.
- ii. Second, the group has to revisit the course of action initially identified by the majority of the members from the position of non-obvious threats and problems that had not been considered when it was initially evaluated.
- iii. Third, members choose to ignore courses of action initially identified as flawed by the majority of the group.
- iv. Fourth, members fail to seek expert advice on other alternative courses of action.
- v. Fifth, the group shows ‘selective bias’ toward facts from the experts, mass media, and outside critics.
- vi. Sixth, members, dedicating less time reflecting on the various ways that can derail and sabotage their chosen course of action. Consequently, failing to come up with a contingency plan for unexpected setbacks that may endanger the overall success of the selected operation (Janis, 1972:10).

In addition to the defects that Janis alludes to, *the Group Decision-Making under Risk of Aversive Consequences Study* by Bem, Wallach, and Kogan (1963) revealed that even in the context of aversive consequences, members are more likely to take complex and high-risk solutions in group decision-making. This situation is mainly due to the diffusion of responsibility whereby members know that they would be “experiencing the consequences of one’s decision in the company of others who had made similar decisions” (Bem *et al.*, 1963:16). Overall, groups are ‘security blankets’ for members, particularly in stressful situations.

3.3.3 Limitations of groupthink

Groupthink theory remains one of the widely cited contributions to the study of decision-making in small groups. Esser (1998:116) notes that the popularity of the groupthink model is found in the research that indicates that in any given year a brief review of the *Social Sciences Citation Index* will show more than 100 citations of groupthink theory in the wide variety of disciplines, including political science, business, psychology, and others.

Janis used real-life US foreign policy decisions to illustrate groupthink. On high cohesiveness of the decision-making group, he used President Truman's group, which dealt with the Korean War:

“During the first week of daily conferences to deal with the Korean War crisis, Truman's group of advisers developed a high degree of solidarity... one of the most striking aspects [of the set of decisions that committed the United States to fight in Korea] is the high degree of satisfaction and sense of moral rightness shared by the decision-makers... Every time they met during the first week of the crisis, the advisers agreed to a recommended course of action with minimum conflict” (Janis, 1972:51).

Janis also used the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Marshall Plan to illustrate that when groupthink is not apparent, group decisions produced positive outcomes. On the Marshall Plan, Janis quoted *Memoirs* of Kennan, an influential leader during the negotiations of the Marshall Plan, who stated:

...this was a remarkably painful group experience. The members were able to force me into a mental agony more intense than anything I have ever previously experienced. So earnest and intense were the debates to recover my composure I walked the entire building (Janis, 1972:51).

The Cuban and the Marshall Plan scenarios, according to Janis, were different from “the affable, non-argumentative sessions, pervaded by groupthink, that produced fiascos” (Janis, 1972:175).

Schafer and Crichlow (1996) revealed a noteworthy shortcoming of Groupthink and its theoretical underpinning, that its sample cases limit generalisation. First, the theory is based solely on US foreign policy decisions from only five administrations. Therefore it is possible that different patterns will emerge if the sample is applied in other countries and other US administrations (Schafer & Crichlow, 1996: 429). 't Hart *et al.*, 1997:7:11) further submit that coalition cabinet, common in the majority of Western European states, with ministers from diverse political backgrounds and different departmental responsibilities, are unlikely to suffer from groupthink “than the generally more homogeneous American presidency”. Moreover, countries with the presence of relatively good political parties and departments are likely to experience groupthink only at the departmental level and with coalition partners ('t Hart *et al.*, 1997).

Second, only crises cases were used as a sample. Therefore, more research is required to examine non-crisis situations for evidence of poor decision-making. Third, all the circumstances observed occurred during the Cold War; consequently, they were part of the Cold War conflict. 't Hart *et al.* (1997:7) go so far as to state that “Janis

concentrated his efforts on a rather specific feature of small group behaviour in foreign policy. Consequently, many aspects of small groups investigated... have received little attention in foreign policy analysis" ('t Hart *et al.*, 1997:7). 't Hart *et al.* (1997:7) strongly suggest that there is more to small-group decision-making than the bias that groupthink perpetuates (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010:63).

Moreover, self-censorship, urging dissenters to curtail remarks, avoiding the influx of outside opinions, and even collective rationalisation are normal in group decision-making processes ('t Hart, 1991:269). These symptoms are necessary "mechanisms for cohesiveness" if a group is to reach a decision. "If no limits were to be put upon duration, scope, and likely outcomes of deliberation," (Longley and Pruitt, 1980) decision groups would never achieve anything. According to them, essential factors involved in determining whether the mentioned-symptoms of groupthink can hamper deliberation about choice are:

- Timing: If discussions are shortened too early within a group then it will fall into groupthink trap, but if, for instance, these mechanisms (symptoms of groupthink) are used to avoid repetitive and meaningless discussions, they may improve the quality of debate.
- The type of decision task that the group faces: Basically, the problem that the group faces will determine whether it needs innovative solutions that require "elaborate and wide-ranging discussions" ('t Hart, 1991:269).

't Hart (1991) reviewed Janis's model within the realm of group dynamics to uncover conditions that increase high or low-quality decision-making. At the heart of 't Hart's argument is that Janis chose cases already classified as 'alleged policy failure' to apply and test his hypotheses. In other words, he used examples that provided some degree of certainty for his theory. 't Hart (1991) further argues that one of the challenges in the deliberations on groupthink and the quality of a decision emanates from the criteria that Janis chose for examining the quality of decisions. In Janis's case, as a psychologist, he used a psychological instrument ('vigilant problem-solving') to evaluate political decision processes, and this may have caused him to neglect other types of rationality (such as values, national interests, political legitimacy) that are common in the models of political decision-making. As put by 't Hart (1991),

...psychologists [in this case, Janis] often neglect the possibility that what appear to be errors on the part of politicians are devious strategies for seeking less than admirable goals. Thus, a statesman who seems inconsistent or confused may be seeking the support of opposed factions.

't Hart (1991) goes further by indicating that high-level decision-makers often have to balance between competing demands: finding sound solutions to problems, sustaining political support and legitimacy, and handling limited resources such as time and skills. In conclusion, 't Hart (1991) is of the view that further research from different disciplines using different methodologies is needed to arrive at a better diagnostic of

when, how, and why groupthink occurs. This research in the future may assist decision-makers in following Janis's lead in attempting to prevent groupthink.

Mintz and Wayne (2016) offer a possible alternative to groupthink in the form of polythink. They are of the view that in real decision-making situations, few cases are wholeheartedly groupthink or polythink. Instead, decision-making dynamics typically lies between the two extremes – group concurrence (groupthink) or group disagreement (polythink).

Polythink refers to a plurality of opinions, views, perceptions on the same issue, decision problem, goal, and alternatives among group members (Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010:65). Mintz and DeRouen Jr (2010:65) term this:

...a group decision-making dynamic whereby different members in a decision-making unit advocate a plurality of opinions and offer divergent policy recommendations, which can result in intragroup conflict, a disjointed decision-making process, decision paralysis, as well as inaction as each member, pushes for his or her preferred policy option.

Overall, it is a disjointed and conflicted pattern of decision-making in which decision-makers are 'somewhat antagonistic' to each other (Mintz & Wayne, 2016:4). Parliamentary democracies where the legislature consists of representatives from different parties with different agenda, constituencies, and interests increase the likelihood of polythink (Mintz & Wayne, 2016). For this study, it is feasible that polythink may have also contributed to the ineffectiveness and weakness of the Portfolio Committee, which comprises 13 members from 7 political parties with opposing opinions and different policy options.

3.3.3.1 Symptoms of polythink

Mintz and Wayne (2016:5) contend that the presence of the majority of the following symptoms can be used as a diagnostic criterion to determine the presence of polythink in a decision-making group on a stated decision problem.

- *The higher likelihood of intragroup conflict, leaks, and framing:* Due to the different, sometimes conflicting views on the same situation and on potential solutions, there is a higher likelihood of conflict and disagreements. This may negatively impact all the decisions on planning and implementation. Due to these opposing views, group members are likely to leak information to undermine a position they are opposing. Polythink may cause group members to advance biased knowledge to push their points and convince the leader of the usefulness of their views at the expense of others.
- *Confusion and lack of communiqué:* Polythink may surge uncertainty through deliberate lack of communication, mixed messages sent from different members of the decision-making group, and unintentional failure between and within a different decision-making structure to converse effectively. This is likely to result in an unclear course of action for members.

- *Decision paralysis*: The presence of too many opposing views within the decision-making group under polythink may cause leaders to be apprehensive, as they are both unsure whether their choice is correct and if the decision-making group will accept it. Consequently, decision paralysis is the result.
- *A limited review of policy option*: Polythink can cause the debate within a group to be unmanageable and as result decision-makers will unwittingly exclude some of “options from consideration to be presented with a more manageable choice set for more thorough consideration” (Mintz & Wayne, 2016:7).

Overall, Mintz and Wayne (2016:11) submit that polythink can positively benefit decision-making if group leaders leverage the plurality of opinions and views presented to them in a group setting to forming a decision. In this light, they note “if a leader can take the different feedback of members and channel it into one inclusive viewpoint, articulated in one unified voice, it may be beneficial to have diverse input in the decision” (Mintz & Wayne (2016:11).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that parliaments and parliamentary committees are among the key domestic actors in the foreign policy decision-making processes. It also determined, through the groupthink theory, that the presence of an antecedent condition (cohesiveness) within a decision-making group influence the group to become a victim of groupthink. Once a group becomes a ‘victim,’ symptoms of groupthink emerge, and ultimately, unfavourable outcomes ensue. The chapter also established that cohesive groups are more accomplished than non-cohesive groups. This performance lies in the fact that these kinds of groups are successful in generating several alternative courses of action. The study by ‘t Hart (1991) concluded that further interrogation of groupthink by different disciplines using different methodologies is needed “to arrive at better-grounded diagnostic of when, how, and why groupthink occurs” (‘t Hart (1991). This further examination will assist decision-makers in preventing groupthink.

CHAPTER 4

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. According to the research question and sub-questions, the aim of the study is to explore the Portfolio Committee members' definition of the nature of parliamentary oversight and their experience with it. The study also aims to critically examine how the members used oversight mechanisms to hold DIRCO accountable for the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

The findings revealed that holding the executive accountable, ensuring that the executive fulfils its mandate, making sure that funds allocated by Parliament are used responsibly by the executive, and serving the country's best interests are all aspects of parliamentary oversight. The findings further suggest that Portfolio Committee members use several oversight mechanisms, including inviting the Department to make a presentation on a particular matter, putting questions to DIRCO Minister, making statements in the House, and during the State of the Nation address, as well as budget speeches to oversee DIRCO. The findings revealed that Portfolio Committee members submitted 191 written questions to the DIRCO Minister for the 2011 – 2012 period on foreign policy matters. Of the 191 questions, findings show that there were four associated written questions on the two identified case studies. An examination of these questions showed that the majority sought clarity on peace and security, particularly South Africa's role and support in Zimbabwe and BRICS and its influence on South Africa's foreign policy decisions, particularly at the UN Security Council.

The findings also revealed factors that have hindered the Portfolio Committee from effectively carrying out its oversight role. These factors included the absence of the Minister in the Committee and the House proceedings to take oral questions and the inability of DIRCO senior officials to speak with absolute authority and clarity on given issues. Lastly, revealed the presence of groupthink symptoms was detected in the Portfolio Committee, namely, cohesiveness and insulation of the group from external expertise.

4.1 Data analysis

The following section presents the findings of the study. The first step is the qualitative content analysis of the interview transcripts to provide answers to the sub-questions. The second step is the critical examination of the 191 written questions submitted by the Portfolio Committee to answer the main research question.

4.1.1 Qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts

Qualitative content analysis systematically examines recorded data such as transcripts to “provide information and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1278). Mayring (2014:64) highlights three primary forms of interpretation, namely, (i) *summary*, where data is reduced in such a way that only essential information remains to provide a comprehensive overview of the base material; (ii) *explication*, which involves an analysis to provide additional information on unclear text (terms, sentences) to improve understanding; and (iii) *structuring*, whereby relevant information is filtered.

According to Amaratunga (2007:503), structuring is suitable for exploratory research. For this study, filtering out of the relevant information from the interview transcripts and analysing them in identified thematic areas was deemed appropriate. Themes and categories were identified through inductive coding; this refers to categories or themes which emerged from the text itself (interview transcripts) or the processing of coding information without any attempt to fit this information into a prior coding pattern (Braun and Clarke (2006:83). Amaratunga (2007:503) recommends that these categories and codes be established closer to the original text by using actual phrases or words in the text. This process will make the development of codes more manageable for the data analysis process (Amaratunga (2007:503).

In the present study, this meant reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to identify categories related to parliamentary oversight. This process was done without the undue influence of the reviewed literature on the same topic. For coherence and consistency, as advised by Braun *et al.* (2006), each extracted theme was supported and explained by examples and narratives. It was then linked to the research question. Each theme was separated into sub-themes and variables for each sub-theme. Coding was done manually, to identify potential themes using highlighters. The majority of the statements were quoted directly, with minor insertions in the researcher’s words. These words were marked with square brackets. After coding of all the transcripts, the collected statements were analysed and interpreted in Chapter 5.

4.1.2 Interviewee profiles

The following section describes the profiles of the interviewed Portfolio Committee members. The sample consisted of five participants, drawn from the 13 members of the Portfolio Committee. Of the five participants interviewed, two females and one male were from the opposition party while the remaining two were males from the ruling party. Of the five, two had 19 years’ experience as MPs, and one had 14 years’ experience while the remaining two had five years’ experience each. This considerable number of years translates into extensive knowledge of parliamentary oversight, particularly as it relates to the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy.

The participants were individuals that Lilleker (2003:207) refers to as “elites” – those in close proximity to policy-making. In this case, the interviews with elites produced rich insights into the “inner workings of the political process, the machinations between influential actors, and how the sequence of these events was viewed and responded to within the political machinery” Lilleker (2003:207). Politicians hold expert knowledge of procedures and policymaking, and in most cases, are a valuable source for information on their activities and experience (Lilleker, 2003:207). Figure 3 below illustrates the study sample.

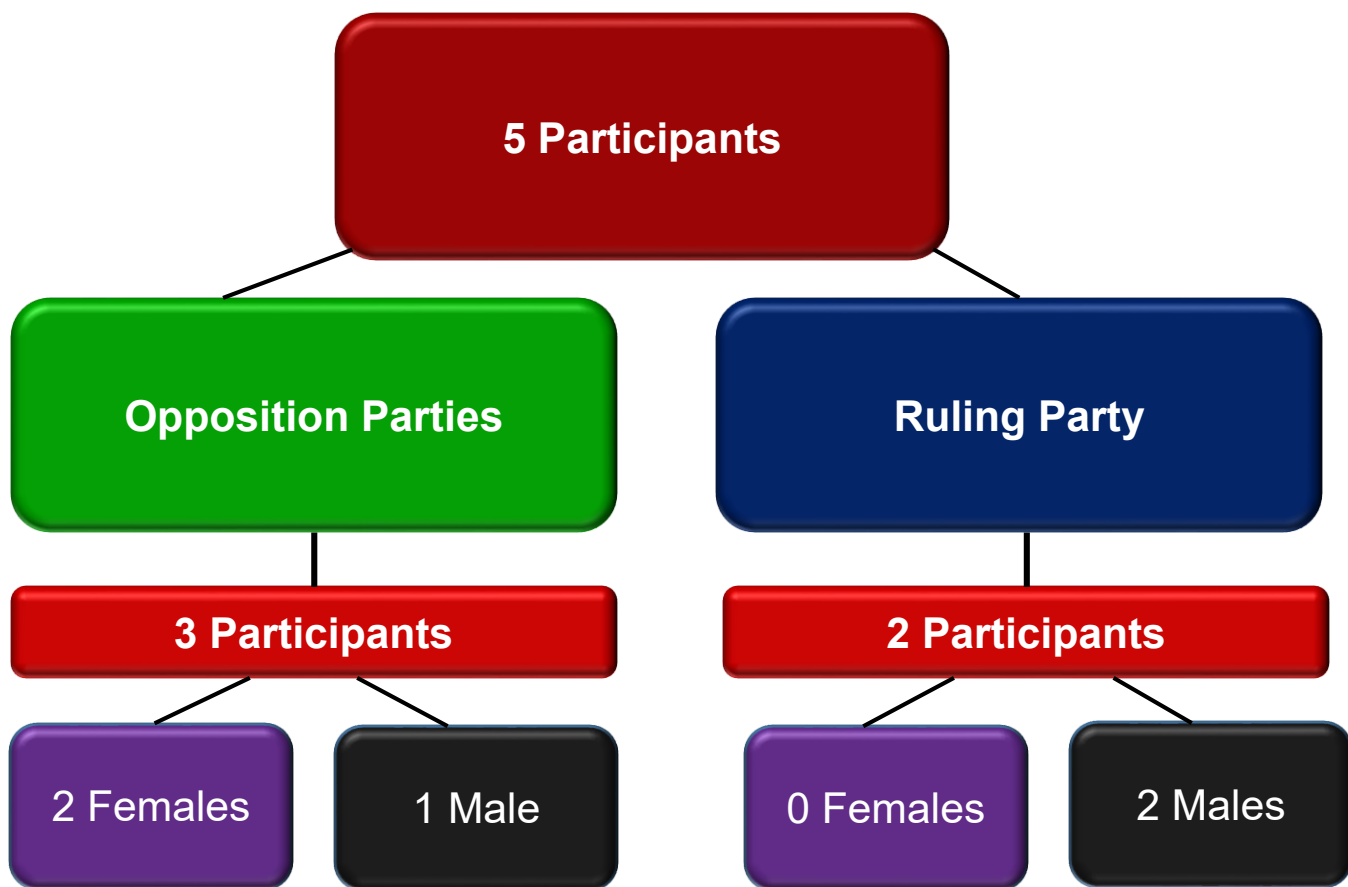


Figure 4: Sample of the five participants

Source: Researcher's work

4.1.3 The term ‘parliamentary oversight’

Since the central topic of this study is parliamentary oversight, the following section specifically looks at how the interviewed participants defined and explained the nature of legislative oversight for themselves as the executors of this function.

4.1.3.1 Definitions

To get a sense of what parliamentary oversight meant to the participants, they were asked to give their definition of the term. Members' statements are listed below:

Oversight is a mechanism through which the legislature holds the executive to account (Participant 1)...is to hold the Executive to account (Participant 2).

Ensuring that the executive is held accountable (Participant 3).

Oversight is an important tool by which Parliament holds the executive accountable (Participant 4).

It means holding the governing party to account (Participant 5).

4.1.3.2 Explanation

To further understand the meaning of parliamentary oversight, the following section looks at the members' opinions on the definition of parliamentary oversight. As stated in section 2.1.1, Yamamoto (2007) attests that at the core of legislative oversight is the intention to ensure the proper implementation of government policies as approved by parliament. It is also to enhance public trust in the government and to increase the transparency of government business.

4.1.3.3 What is the nature of oversight?

One of the most frequently cited principles of oversight was ensuring that the executive delivers on its mandate and that budgets allocated by Parliament are used to serve the best interests of citizens and used responsibly by the executive.

To ensure that the executive fulfils its mandate, if there are no checks and balances, the one-arm might even do wrong things without anybody doing anything about it s

... the Department relating to the Executive is actually doing in terms of implementing the legislation and budget that Parliament has put in place (Participant 2).

...South Africa has a separation of powers, and Parliament is the apex of oversight in ensuring that the executive delivers on the mandate (Participant 3)...to keep them on their toes and make them [executive] to utilise the monies, personnel and to serve South Africans in the best interest possible (Participant 4).

...to account on how Ministers carry out their duties and mandates (Participant 5).

In summary, the majority of members seem to agree that at the heart of oversight is the desire to ensure that the executive fulfils its mandate, including on legislation and the budget passed by Parliament. These findings are in line with the assertion of Yamamoto in section 4.2.2.

4.1.3.4 Discussion – Definition and nature of parliamentary oversight

The analysis shows that to hold the executive accountable, to ensure that the executive delivers on its duties and mandate, to ensure monies allocated by Parliament are used purposefully and responsibly by the executive, as well as serving the country in the best possible way are all traits of parliamentary oversight. Members' understanding of oversight and its importance was in line with the definition provided by the IPU in section 2.1, that legislative oversight is the means used by parliaments and parliamentarians, on behalf of the citizens, to hold the government to account. Another issue that came out strongly from the findings was that oversight ensures 'checks and balances' between the different arms of government to prevent wrongdoing, particularly the misappropriation of public funds. Members' understanding of this doctrine was closely related to the definition provided in section 2.3.1 by Mojapelo (2013:13,17), which states that "the objective of the doctrine of separation of powers is the prevention of abuse of power within these three spheres."

An examination of transcripts further revealed that Participant 2 mentioned that in the past ten years or so, Parliament had become increasingly proficient at conducting oversight because the leadership of former President Jacob Zuma had created the opportunity for members to carry out real oversight. However, it was concerning that, upon further examination of the findings, it seemed like the majority of Portfolio Committee members had limited parliamentary oversight on the technical issues such as the Department's allocated budget and not necessarily on foreign policy issues. However, members' focus on the allocated budget seems to be in line with one main component of effective oversight as stipulated in section 2.1 by Gilley (2002:25) who contends that effective oversight relies on a detailed examination of the budget or allocation by legislators.

Further analysis of the transcripts revealed that the focus of some members was more on traveling to South Africa's 126 missions abroad than on assessing whether South Africa's foreign policy objectives addressed the triple challenge facing the country, namely, unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy states that the country's vision for 2025 is to be:

...a prosperous and influential member of the international community, supported by a globally competitive economy on a sustained growth path that has made significant inroads in addressing unemployment, inequality, and poverty in South Africa.

It is worth noting that Participant 4 admitted that the Committee's assessment shows that South Africa's 126 missions have *"not necessarily translated into trade-spin offs into South Africa and Africa."*

In summary, there seems to be strong agreement among participants that one of the critical functions of oversight lies in the power to hold the executive accountable for, amongst others, the implementation of legislation. As stated in section 2.1, the IPU (2017) submits that an opportunity to amend government legislation and to ensure proper implementation of the law are some of the key incentives for parliamentarians or the Committee to engage in oversight.

4.1.4 Closer examination of parliamentary oversight as it relates to the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy

After looking at the definition of parliamentary oversight, it is crucial to understand how oversight is achieved. Participants were asked what legislative monitoring entailed, particularly in relation to the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by the Department.

4.1.4.1 How to achieve parliamentary oversight?

The IPU submits in section 2.1 that oversight begins with parliamentarians, individually or collectively, taking specific steps such as posing a probing question to a minister on a particular matter. The IPU 2004 survey, as highlighted in section 2.1.1, revealed that 88 parliaments showed that parliamentary committees were involved in varying ways in foreign policy, including through the application of existing oversight instruments at their disposal. The following section highlights the participants' views on oversight entails.

4.1.4.2 Parliament's oversight mechanisms

The findings show that there are several mechanisms including inviting the Department to make a presentation on a particular matter, committees, questions to the Minister, questions in the House, making statements in the House, State of the Nation address and budget speeches to achieve parliamentary oversight over South Africa's foreign policy. Participants' responses were as follows:

[I] looked carefully at what the Department is doing in terms of how the budgets are being spent and if their plans are relevant to what we want to achieve in terms of the State of the Nation and budget speeches. There are various ways, and there are questions in the House and committee (Participant 2).

[We] invite the Department from time to time to make presentations on a particular event...[we] ensure that the monies that had been allocated by Parliament are being used for the purpose it was intended and ensuring that the services that the executive had promised the people [are] executed (Participant 3).

...There is a parliamentary committee to oversee a specific department; in this case, it is the Portfolio Committee...keeping oversight over DIRCO. [We] invite the Department from time to time to make presentations on a particular event, peacekeeping, mediation, and other international interventions that South Africa is involved in. We ask the executive about the budget, how their budget has been spent, whether it has been consumed for a specific item for which they have requested ...to utilise the monies, personnel and to serve South Africa in the best interest possible (Participant 4).

Ensure that the governing party account on how budgets are used. This is done using various parliamentary tools/mechanisms like questions to Ministers, making statements in the House, byways of motions and statements (Participant 5).

In summary, the findings reveal that there are several mechanisms to achieve parliamentary oversight. The following sections explore the participants' experiences of the Portfolio Committee's role in overseeing South Africa's foreign policy and their engagement with the Department.

4.1.4.3 Portfolio Committee's oversight role over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy

Hill (2003:257) maintains that committees on foreign affairs are the most viable tool of exerting pressure on the executive as they possess capability and knowledge with which to challenge the diplomatic specialists. They have the power to summon or insist on the presence of the minister, release documents, and expose errors through cross-questioning as well as written analysis. Their reports tend to enjoy legitimacy from both the public and scholars, particularly if they provoke controversy that is undesirable to decision-makers but important for quality control and shows that they are doing their work. In this regard, to fully understand the Portfolio Committee's oversight role over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy, participants were asked to describe their experiences as members of this Committee.

4.1.5 Participants' experiences of the Portfolio Committee's oversight role

The findings suggest that some participants approve how the Department has been implementing South Africa's foreign policy and how the Committee has been overseeing the implementation of the country's foreign policy. Others, however, acknowledge challenges such as limited engagements with the Minister, inefficiency, and an inadequate oversight model.

My general experience has been disappointment, utter disappointment, the oversight model does not actually fit the Committee's nature of work, DIRCO has footprint [embassies] in almost 126 countries, but parliamentarians are not able to do oversight on these embassies, we can only do a study tour, and not play oversight (Participant 1).

I think the Committee's oversight role has strengthened, and the Department fully understands that now that it is in their interests to have us fully informed as possible (Participant 2).

The challenge with the Committee's oversight is that the Committee seems to be meeting regularly with the bureaucrats – DG and senior management. We don't seem to engage with the Minister (Participant 3).

Talking about the limitation, the current Oversight Model does not permit the Committee to travel to South Africa's Missions to do oversight (Participant 4).

My experience of the Committee's oversight role over DIRCO and its policies has been that it lacks effectiveness (Participant 5).

4.1.6 Participants' experiences of the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO

The findings suggest that some participants approved of the manner in which the Committee had been implementing South Africa's foreign policy. The Committee was said to be regularly briefed in this regard while acknowledging challenges such as the unavailability of the Minister's briefings to the Committee.

As far as the practical implementation of South Africa's foreign policy, the Department regularly briefs the Committee, but we lack the political side of things from the Minister (Participant 3).

Department has been doing very well (Participant 4).

4.1.6.1 Discussion – Portfolio Committee's oversight over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy

The findings on the participants' experiences show that some of the participants approved of the Department's implementation of South Africa's foreign policy and the manner in which the Committee had been overseeing the Department. Participant 2 remarked that the Committee's role had been strengthened over the years, to the point that the Department understood that the Committee needed to be fully briefed on foreign policy matters. At the same time, the findings showed that the Oversight Model failed to take into account the nature of the Committee's work insofar as the Committee was not allowed to oversee the 126 DIRCO missions across the world physically but could only conduct study tours. Furthermore, the Committee was not able to properly engage the Minister on the foreign policy due to the nature of the Minister's work. In practice, this absence may have meant that the Committee was not given an explanation on some of the foreign policy decisions taken by the Department. Another finding was that the Committee lacked effectiveness when it came to overseeing the Department, including its implementation of policies. Lastly, participants pointed to the unavailability of the Minister to provide briefings to the Committee.

These findings identified an area that could be investigated in future research, namely, an assessment of the relationship between the Portfolio Committee and the DIRCO Minister. Such a study would provide a holistic view of the key decision-makers in the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. As also noted by Yin (n.d.), any research question that has to do with an organisation's relations with other organisations can only be answered if the information is collected directly from the other organisation and not only from the one being studied.

4.1.6.2 Portfolio Committee's current process of engagement with DIRCO

Views on oversight role over DIRCO, it is essential to establish whether there are any challenges in the engagement between the Portfolio Committee and the Department. The findings suggest that the unavailability of the Minister at Committee meetings and the House (NA plenary) had deprived the members of the opportunity to ask oral questions to obtain clarity on foreign policy decisions taken at the Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council. The Minister's unavailability goes against Section 92

of the Constitution, which specifies that ministers must provide Parliament with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control, as highlighted in section 2.2.

- **Engagement with DIRCO Minister**

The findings on the engagement between the Committee and the Minister revealed the following:

- The Minister was not always available to take oral questions from the Committee and the House (NA plenary), and consequently, the Department's officials were unable to speak with absolute authority on specific developments.
- The Committee was not kept abreast of events, having to rely on media reports instead.
- There were no early warning systems that would ensure that the Committee received information on foreign policy decisions or resolutions that South Africa's representatives had taken at the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. This vacuum created a division.

The biggest challenge is the Minister herself, and another problem is the question of early warning systems, the Department operates in a fluid moving world so decisions are taken and the Committee is not taken into confidence, and that creates a problem by the time the Committee engages the Department. The Committee is not kept abreast we just see it in the media the following day, the Committee can be more reactionary than being proactive. We need early warning systems that can ensure that we communicate our policy resolution, our foreign policy stance, and resolutions that we take in the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council. Another issue thing sometimes is the non-availability of the Minister to answer oral questions in Parliament when is the peace and security cluster sessions, so it also creates disjuncture in terms of oversight committee as well (Participant 3).

The challenge is that the department cannot always speak with absolute authority and clarity on certain developments at a particular level (Participant 4).

- **Engagement with DIRCO's Deputy Ministers and other senior officials**

In general, the findings reveal that the Committee regularly met with DIRCO's top officials, including Deputy Ministers, however, the challenge lay in the vague and weak responses that these officials provided to the Committee. Participant 1 commented that the officials 'told them stories' or what they thought members wanted to hear. Another finding revealed that the Committee should be conscious of the budget and

time when requesting a briefing from the Department. Moreover, the Department did not always implement the Committee's decisions or resolutions.

We engage the Department and robustly so, but the issue of engaging and being feed with what you don't actually observe on the ground, they will tell us stories they want us to hear, but we are not sure as to what is happening (Participant 1).

We are challenged just by time and money. You know what we are doing we are calling [Department] every five minutes and they must jump. the Committee should consider a little more, what are we costing the Department, you know, is there anything we can do to put less, get the same results but have less pressure and deplete the coughers less (Participant 2).

[Another] challenge is that the Department does not always implement some of the changes/recommendations/resolutions that we would have made to them as a Committee, which end up being the resolutions of Parliament once we have taken them to the National Assembly: (Participant 4).

The Department as a whole (officials) are always available to engage the Committee, however, being available is one thing and offering weak responses is another, e.g., I asked the DG what the Department is doing about lobbying for the seat on the UN Security Council, he said they are working hard. When I asked the Deputy Minister Landers about the status of the special economic envoy appointed by the President he could not answer (Participant 5).

- **Discussion – Portfolio Committee's current engagement with the Department: DIRCO Minister, Deputy Ministers, and other senior officials**

The findings on the Committee's engagement with the Minister and the top officials of the Department reveal fundamental issues that may have prevented the Committee from effectively overseeing the Department. The Committee regularly met with DIRCO's top officials, including Deputy Ministers, but the challenge lay in the vague and weak responses that the Deputy Minister and senior officials provided to the Committee. Consequently, due to these vague answers, the Committee members were unable to make appropriate oversight recommendations and decisions. Other findings of concern related to the Minister not being available to take oral questions from the Committee and the House (NA plenary) and the Department's officials being

unable to speak with absolute authority on specific developments. Moreover, the Committee was not kept abreast of events and was instead only apprised by the media. Lastly, the lack of early warning systems prevented the Committee from being informed on foreign policy decisions and resolutions taken by South Africa's representatives at the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

4.1.7 Concluding remarks

The qualitative content analysis examined the Portfolio Committee members' definition and experience of parliamentary oversight as well as their engagement with the DIRCO Minister and top officials. The following section explores how participants have used oversight mechanisms to hold the Department accountable for the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. It also identifies the areas that members' oversight focused on other than the identified case studies.

4.2 Portfolio Committee members' use of written questions and summoning of the Minister to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy (based on identified case studies)

The findings reveal that 191 written questions were put to the Minister in the 2011 – 2012 period. An examination of these questions shows that only five were related to the two identified case studies, and only one of the five participants had submitted a written question on one of the cases, namely, Syria.

4.2.1 Interviews of Portfolio Committee members on identified case studies

Semi-structured interviews were held with participants to gain insight into how the members themselves and the Committee used oversight mechanisms to hold DIRCO Minister accountable for the foreign policy-making decisions in the identified case studies. Participants were explicitly asked during the interviews about their recollection of the oversight activities of the Committee and their action on the identified case studies during the 2011 – 2012 period.

4.2.1.1 Participants' recollection: The action of the Portfolio Committee on identified case studies

To determine whether the Committee reacted by summoning the Minister to explain South Africa's voting in favour of Resolution 1973 (which authorised "all necessary measures to protect civilians" in Libya and its indecisive voting on Syria), participants were asked to recall whether the Committee had summoned the Minister on the identified case studies.

As stated in section 2.2, section 56 of the Constitution (1996) empowers the Portfolio Committee to summon any person to appear before it to give evidence on oath or affirmation or to produce documents. This constitutional provision is given effect through Rule 158 of the Rules of the NA (2016) and Rule 103 of the Rules of the NCOP (2008b).

The findings on this question show that the Portfolio Committee did not engage or summon the Minister to explain South Africa's representatives voting in favour of Resolution 1973. However, concerns had been raised, mainly by the opposition party participants:

There was a divided opinion, and we held them accountable, there was an immediate request for the Department to come and brief us, explain to us, took the questions [DIRCO] to those questions (Participant 2).

The Committee raised concern as well but never engaged on it (Participant 3).

The Committee did not summon the Minister to explain why South Africa voted in favour of Resolution 1973, and the Committee did not summon the Minister about South Africa's indecisive voting on Syria (Participant 4).

The Portfolio Committee did not apply its mind seriously to either issue. There was no input to my knowledge on either issue. No debate was held on either one (Participant 5).

In summary, the findings show that despite concerns from the opposition party members, the Portfolio Committee did not engage nor summon the Minister to explain representatives voting on Libya and Syria. Reasons put forward for inaction by the Committee are as follows:

There was a divided opinion, take myself, for example, although I would have been sure that my constituency would have seen straight out value in that (Participant 2).

This matter was raised by members of the opposition, and this matter was discussed in the Caucus of the ANC, where were explained to why South Africa voted in favour of Resolution 1973. I am saying Caucus because it

was no longer a Committee matter but a South African matter (Participant 4).

There seems to be no synergy between DIRCO and the representative in the UN (Participant 5).

4.2.1.2 Discussion – Action of the Portfolio Committee on the identified case studies

Summing up the findings on the identified case studies, it was found that although concerns were raised mainly by the members of the opposition parties, the Committee did not engage or summon the Minister to explain the voting decisions. Several explanations were put forward for the Committee's inaction, including that there was divided opinion, the constituency not seeing outright value in that, the Committee did not apply its mind and that the matter was discussed in the Caucus of the African National Congress where it was explained why South Africa had voted in favour of Resolution 1973. The response of Participant 4 questioned the independence of the Committee members in performing their oversight function as called upon by the Constitution. Participant 2 also suggested that if Caucus was to have a briefing on a specific issue, there would be no need for a question to be put to the Minister.

Napier and Labuschagne (2017:213), in *Political Party Caucuses and Democracy: Contradictory in Terminus?* view political party caucuses as a “cohesive” unit from which members can find common ground on policies. Cohesiveness among group members is the core factor that Janis's work singles out as a substantive and independent cause of groupthink. It tends to force group members to avoid raising contentious issues or questioning arguments. Mullen *et al.* (1994) found that high cohesiveness impairs decision-making quality in large groups, in line with groupthink, which holds that poor decisions result from members mirroring some of their behaviour to match the behavioural standards of unison, consensus and mutual support. For this study, it may mean that the decisions of the party Caucus on the identified cases may have inevitably influenced the Portfolio Committee members from engaging the case studies, including summoning the Minister. This situation, in turn, prevented the Committee from adequately examining the available range of policy alternatives and considering the possible consequences of the Department's chosen policy, as advised by Janis in section 1.2. At the same time, Janis acknowledges that high cohesiveness on its own is not sufficient to produce groupthink, but a presence of several structural and situational conditions including impartial leadership, group homogeneity, and group isolation, time pressure increases the occurrence of groupthink.

According to Napier and Labuschagne (2017), in the South African Parliament, party caucuses are used by “political parties to covertly and tactically coordinate strategy before a parliamentary session” (Napier and Labuschagne 2017:213). By their nature, they “intrinsically and inherently” erode the fundamental principles of democracy and

representation. Overall, a party caucus is a well-organized decision-making body in which the “view of the majority will prevail, while the minority will have to bow to the interests of the majority” (Napier and Labuschagne 2017:222). If this assertion is a true reflection of the workings of caucuses, it may be that caucus meetings exhibit a symptom of groupthink, namely, the shared illusion of unanimity, where members choose to concur with the view of the majority, while unconsciously preventing any disagreement from being verbalised.

In summary, the significance of a caucus is its “cohesiveness and its pursuance of a common strategy” (Napier and Labuschagne 2017:215). However, Napier and Labuschagne (2017) call for further research to understand the importance that parties attach to their caucuses because information regarding their functioning is not readily available. Napier and Labuschagne (2017) state that there was an attempt to obtain information from the ANC as the ruling party on its caucus or caucus rules. Hence, future research areas could focus on:

- Understanding the working and influence of parliamentary party caucuses on the work of legislative committees, particularly in relation to overseeing the execution of South Africa’s foreign policy.

4.2.1.3 Participants’ recollection: The action of individual members on identified case studies

To further delve into what transpired in the identified case studies, participants were asked to recall Portfolio Committee members’ oversight activities on these cases. The findings indicate that some members requested clarity through written questions from the Minister about these cases, while others did not. The participants’ responses are provided below.

I certainly did, I can't remember the other members asking questions outside of the Committee (Participant 2).

Yes, I think (Participant 3).

No, we did not (Participant 4).

To my knowledge, no one, including myself, have not (Participant 5).

In summary, the findings indicate that some Portfolio Committee members requested clarity from the Minister about these cases through written questions, while others did not. The following section elaborates on the members' oversight activities, mainly written questions to the DIRCO Minister on these cases.

4.2.1.4 Written questions to the DIRCO Minister on identified cases (2011 – 2012)

The findings show that of the 191 written questions to the Minister, only five were closely related to the identified case studies. Of the five participants, only one submitted a written question to the DIRCO Minister on one of the identified case studies, namely South Africa's voting on Syria. The question on Syria was put to the Minister on 4 October 2011, and the Department replied on 23 November 2011.

As highlighted in section 1.4.2, Portfolio Committee members are constitutionally empowered to put written questions to the Minister on any issue that falls within the official responsibility of the Minister. All the questions are published as part of parliamentary Hansard. Questions for written reply are limited to three questions per member per week.

To arrive at the findings, the researcher asked for all the written questions from the parliamentary Hansard that the Portfolio Committee members submitted between 2011 to 2012 to DIRCO Minister. Upon receiving them, the researcher diligently went through the written questions to identify those questions related to the identified case studies. This examination revealed that between 2011 – 2012, 191 written questions were put to the Minister, and DIRCO responded to all of these questions. The analysis of these questions shows that only one of the five participants (Participant 3) put a question on 4 October 2011. The Department replied on 23 November 2011, after 32 working days. The question and the response were as follows:

Question: *Why did South Africa abstain from voting on the resolution tabled in the UN Security Council to bring about democratic reform in Syria on 4 October 2011?*

Reply: *South Africa was concerned about the sponsors' intention to impose punitive measures which would have prejudged the implementation of the resolution. South Africa was also, which has been a clearly stated objective by some concerned that this resolution should not be part of a hidden agenda to institute regime change.*

It is worth pointing out that there was no follow-up to this ministerial answer.

In summary, the findings reveal that only five questions were related to the identified case studies of the 191 written questions to the Minister. Only one of the five participants had submitted a written question on one of the case studies.

The following section further explores associated questions. The finding that between the 2011 – 2012, 191 written questions were put to the Minister provides an opportunity to reflect on other areas focused on by the Portfolio Committee members other than the identified case studies. The 191 questions give credence to the conclusion that the South African Parliament, through mechanisms such as the Portfolio Committee, is relatively empowered to oversee South Africa's foreign policy, including foreign policy decisions.

4.2.2 Closer examination of questions on the identified case studies

Further findings show that there were four associated written questions on the two identified case studies. These questions related to whether South Africa's voting on Libya and Syria was influenced by the BRIC member states voting on these cases and clarity on the steps taken by South Africa after the implementation of Resolution 1973 on Libya. These questions read:

Question: *Whether South Africa's vote in favour of a No-fly Zone over Libya has to be explained to its partners, Russia, India, China?*

Reply: *South Africa as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, engages on an on-going basis with all the members including BRIC members, in support of the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. South Africa's support of the Council's decision to impose a no-fly zone over Libya was informed by the call of the countries of the region...and would continue to work through the Council, the African Union and other multilateral and bilateral platforms for the resolution of the Libyan crisis in a manner consistent with the aspirations of the people of Libya.*

It is important to note that, according to the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) (2012), South Africa's voting on Libya was in line with other African countries. Gabon and Nigeria both supported the resolution although its BRICS counterparts did not support the decision (The South African Institute of International Affairs: 2012). This analysis is in line with DIRCO's reply that the decisions of the other African countries informed South Africa's support of the Council's decision to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.

The following questions related to the steps that South Africa took after the implementation of Resolution 1973 on Libya and the voting on Syria. These questions may be an indication that some of the Portfolio Committee members were actually holding DIRCO accountable for the implementation of some of their foreign policy decisions taken at UN Security Council. They read as follows:

Question: *What steps is the Department taking to avoid a long-drawn-out conflict between President Muammar Gaddafi and the Nato forces?.*

Reply: *the Department, Deputy Ministers, Minister, and President have consistently spoken out against NATO's violation of the mandate of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 in seeking regime change and the resultant loss of civilians lives as it continues its bombing campaign...the NATO issue has been raised by the Prime Minister of Britain and the Russian President...South Africa will continue to raise this issue in an attempt to prevent further loss of civilian lives.*

Question: *Whether the Government is proactively taking steps to lobby fellow African countries to avert a full-scale civil war in Libya, if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?*

Reply: *Throughout the conflict in Libya, South Africa adopted a firm and principled stance on the resolution of the crisis in Libya. Within the ambit of the AU Road map, South Africa proactively sought to realise the peaceful resolution of the Libyan conflict.*

Question: *What steps is the Government taking to bring about a resolution to the conflict in Syria?*

Reply: *The South African Government is committed to encouraging all parties involved in the current conflict in Syria to engage in the process of the all-inclusive national dialogue. It will continue to promote this approach in the UN Security Council where South Africa is a non-permanent member until December 2012, as well as within the important groupings of BRICS and IBSA. South Africa takes its responsibility as a member of the Security Council seriously because its decisions impact the lives of ordinary people. South thus cannot support any resolution on Syria it perceives as one-sided. South Africa's view is that a one-sided resolution would only make the situation on the ground worse, pushing the government to pursue the military option further and encouraging the opposition to continue to reject talks. South Africa remains convinced that in a complex, divided society, such as Syria, there can be no military solution".*

In summary, the findings show that between 2011 to 2012, members of the Portfolio Committee exercised their constitutional mandate of overseeing the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by submitting 191 questions to the Minister on foreign policy matters. However, only one of the five participants put a question to the Minister on South Africa's voting on Syria. The findings also show that there were questions relating to whether South Africa's voting on Libya and Syria was influenced by the BRICS member states voting on these cases. However, an analysis by SAIIA (2012) reveals that South Africa's voting on Libya was in line with other African states, namely, Gabon and Nigeria, and not with BRICS counterparts. At the same time, it highlighted areas of concern; for instance, the inference that the BRIC member states had influenced South Africa's voting on Libya and Syria. This inference raises important questions on the independence of South Africa and the role and influence of external international stakeholders on the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

4.3 Portfolio Committee's report on identified case studies

An examination of the Portfolio Committee proceedings as published on the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) website showed that the Portfolio Committee was given a presentation entitled “*Developments in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Syria, North Africa, and Libya: Briefing by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation*” on 21 June 2011. This finding is in line with some of the participants’ statements that the Portfolio Committee had requested a briefing from DIRCO on the identified case studies, however, this occurred more than two months after South Africa had voted on Resolution 1973 on Libya.

We definitely held them accountable, there was an immediate request for the Department to come and brief us and explain to us (Participant 2).

We have asked for presentations from DIRCO to explain to us the unfolding scenario in Syria (Participant 4).

Record of the Portfolio Committee meeting from the PMG website

<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/13118/>

PMG PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING GROUP

What are you looking for?

[Committees and Meetings](#) [MPs](#) [Bills](#) [Questions and Replies](#) [Calls for Comments](#) [Attendance](#) [Blog](#) [Provin](#)

Premium content from before 2018 is now available for everyone!

[Committees](#) / [National Assembly](#) / [International Relations](#)

Developments in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Syria, North Africa and Libya: briefing by Department of International Relations and Cooperation

This premium content has been made freely available

Share this page:

[International Relations](#)

21 June 2011

Chairperson: Mr T Magama (ANC)

It is worth pointing out that the above presentation took place almost two months after South Africa’s vote on Libya. This time-lapse may be an indication of ineffective oversight, as pointed out by Participant 5. Nevertheless, the following are the questions that Portfolio Committee members raised, to which DIRCO replied:

Question: *What was South Africa's reaction to NATO's plan to add ground forces to Libya? Resolution 1973 showed how ineffective the AU had been on the Libyan issue. Could consideration be given to granting Colonel Gaddafi asylum in South Africa?*

Reply of Ambassador Jerry Matjila: *The government had been clear in its rebuke of the misinterpretation of the 1973 Resolution. Ground forces would be in place to lead a regime change which was against the principles of the Resolution. The Department would take its cue from President Zuma on whether Col Gaddafi would receive asylum in the country. Not everything that was reported by the press was inclusive of all the events that had happened.*

Question: *Whether the 1973 UNSC Resolution had a loophole, which allowed for the killing of Gaddafi?*

Reply of Ambassador Matjila: *There had been no discussion on how to implement the modalities of Resolution 1973. Thus the Resolution's implementation has been modified by those who sought to remove Col. Gaddafi.*

Question: *What stage of consultations on a UNSC resolution on Syria was South Africa at?*

Ambassador Matjila's reply: *Department had learned a lot from UNSC Resolution on Libya. What was written on the paper was not as important as the interpretation of the true meaning of what was on paper? Russia and China were opposed to any resolution against Syria, and they had veto power at the UNSC.*

A few months after this presentation, South Africa abstained from voting on a draft resolution condemning Syria's attack on anti-government protestors in October 2011. An analysis of DIRCO's above replies reflects the concerns of participants regarding ambiguous and weak responses by the Department, with Participant 5 going so far as to state:

The Department's officials are always available. However, being available is one thing, and offering weak responses is another (Participant 5).

We do engage the Department, and robustly so, it is not the problem to engage the Department, but you see the issue of engaging and being feed with what you don't actually observe on the ground, they will tell us stories they want us to hear, but we are not sure as to what is happening (Participant 1).

These vague responses may also refer to the issues raised by Participant 3 such as the Committee not being taken into confidence about some of the foreign policy decisions and the Committee learning about some of these decisions from the media.

This situation would create a problem by the time the Committee engaged the Department.

Based on the information provided on the PMG website, it appears that the Department was the sole provider of information to the Committee. As highlighted in section 3.3.1.2, Janis observes that isolation from the expertise of external specialists is one of the symptoms of groupthink as it limits group members from making an informed decision based on diverse views and alternatives. For this study, isolation may have prevented Portfolio Committee members from assessing and searching for new information to make effective policy decisions or to play their oversight function effectively on the identified case studies.

In summary, the findings indicate that Portfolio Committee members received a presentation on the identified case studies from DIRCO senior officials. However, this presentation was almost two months after the voting on Libya; this may be an indication that the Committee's oversight over the Department and its policies lacked urgency and effectiveness as pointed out by Participant 5.

4.4 Focus areas of Portfolio Committee members' oversight other than the identified case studies

The findings in section 4.2.1.2 showed that of the 191 written questions put to the Minister, only five were firmly related to the two identified case studies. Consequently, the study searched for other focus areas of the Portfolio Committee members' oversight during the 2011 – 2012 period. This process relied on reading and re-reading the 191 questions to identify issues that members' monitoring concentrated on and the responses of the Department to these issues.

As depicted in Figure 5 below, the findings reveal that in the form of written questions to the Minister, greater attention was placed on South Africa's support of peace and security in Zimbabwe and South Africa's BRICS membership. This indicates that members' questions focused on South Africa's foreign policy priorities of *Enhanced African Agenda and Sustainable Development* through the resolution of conflicts in the SADC region as well as *Strengthening South-South Relations* by forming BRICS to promote socio-economic and political convergence in the fight against poverty and the marginalisation of the South. Some of the questions raised concerns that South Africa's foreign policy decisions had been influenced or had to be explained to other key international stakeholders such as the BRIC formation. As already stated, these kinds of questions query the independence of South Africa and its role as well as the influence of external international stakeholders on the implementation of the country's foreign policy.

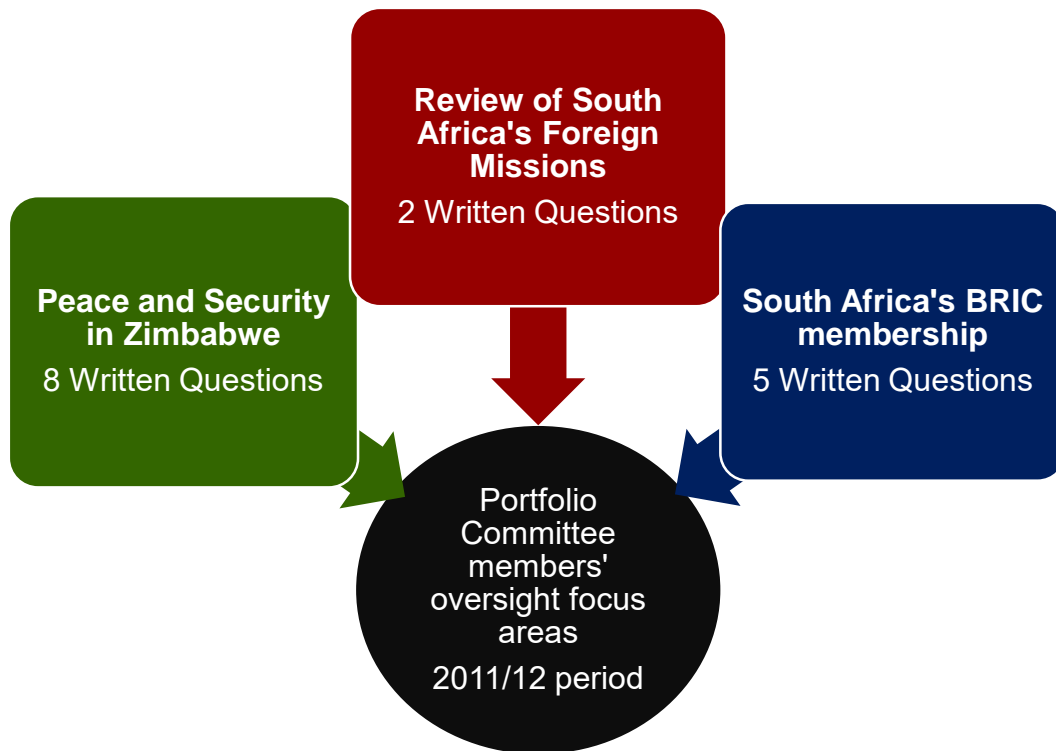


Figure 5: Portfolio Committee members' oversight focus areas 2011 – 2012

Source: Researcher's work

4.4.1 Review and benefits of South Africa's missions

The two written questions on South Africa's missions are comparatively fewer but are essential for this study as some of the participants touched on the performance of these missions. As mentioned in section 2.2.1.2, South Africa's missions are considered as 'provinces' of the Department, charged with the responsibility of implementing South Africa's foreign policy. The Committee's oversight mandate extends to the activities performed by these missions. According to the participants, South Africa has 126 missions abroad. The two questions were as follows:

Question: *Whether the Minister intends conducting an official review of foreign missions; if not, why not, if so, for each mission, what are the (a) relevant details, (b) expected diplomatic value, (c) operational cost involved, (d) national interests pursued?*

Reply: *The Department has not specifically planed a review of its missions. However, the Department on a going basis reviews the functioning of all its missions abroad.*

Indicated below is a follow-up question to the above:

Question: *With reference to her reply to question 67 on 28 February 2011, which Foreign Missions were routinely reviewed by her department which missions have been found to be the (i) best performing and (ii) worst performing foreign missions and (b) what were found to be the reasons for their performance?*

Reply: *The Department does not have a grading system to determine the best performing and worst performing Missions. The Department expects all the Missions to be fully functional. To ensure this, the Department has a holistic system whereby the various Business Units monitor the Missions.*

These questions are fundamental as according to Participant 4, the Committee's assessment revealed that the presence of South Africa in 126 countries had not translated into trade-spin offs for South Africa and Africa. This situation is mainly due to the failure of South Africa to attach post-trade attachés in Europe (where there are 28 countries), Russia, Canada, India, and Asia (especially China). The Committee's assessment implies that the 126 missions were not adequately contributing to South Africa's foreign policy vision for 2025 of South Africa "becoming a prosperous and influential member of the international community, supported by a globally competitive economy on a sustained growth path that has made significant inroads in addressing unemployment, inequality, and poverty", as stated in section 4.1.3.4.

Participant 4 further stated that some academics felt that South Africa was overstretching itself and should not have 126 missions abroad, proposing a reduction instead. The SADC region should have six ambassadors instead of fourteen, for instance, and one ambassador for small countries such as Lesotho and Botswana. Academics who are western-oriented propose the reduction of embassies in Asia and Africa because South Africa has limited economic trade with these countries. Other scholars with a more left-wing ideology suggest missions in countries such as Russia, China, and India as ideologically; these are essential partners and would, therefore, be vital in South Africa's economy and trade. Therefore, it would be crucial not only to open embassies there but to post-trade attachés as well.

Participants 1 and 4 raised the concern that due to a deficiency in Parliament's Oversight Model, the Committee had not been able to oversee the 126 missions across the world physically, for instance, to examine the whether the Department had implemented the recommendations emanating from the Committee itself and the Auditor-General.

An assessment of the Department's replies to these questions indicates that Portfolio Committee members were not provided with sufficient information on the performance of these missions. Therefore they may have been unable to make an informed oversight intervention. Some participants had noted that the Committee regularly met with DIRCO's top officials, including Deputy Ministers, but the challenge lay in the vague and weak responses that the officials provided to the Committee.

4.4.2 Peace and Security: Zimbabwe

The findings reveal that Zimbabwe, compared to other countries (global, continental, and regional), received the most attention from Portfolio Committee members in the form of nine written questions to the Minister. The findings reveal that the majority of these questions related to the role of South Africa in ensuring that Zimbabwe adheres to the terms of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). Findings also show that the questions were in line with South Africa's foreign policy focus area of *Consolidation of the African continent, specifically contribution to peace, security and stability in amongst other regions, including SADC* as enshrined in DIRCO's Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 (2012). In the SADC region, South Africa committed to strength initiatives geared towards democratisation and good governance, working together with other SADC countries to support Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement (GPA) as well as the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe. The GPA brought in the power-sharing government in Zimbabwe as a result of a lengthy SADC mediation process (Modeni, n.d:13). The questions were as follows:

Question on the status of the election: *What is the Government's position about President Mugabe's call for an early election in Zimbabwe?*

Reply: *South Africa, through President Zuma, is mandated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assist the Zimbabwe political leadership in implementing the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The GPA provides a guide to the holding of elections in Zimbabwe. In this regard, the GPA envisages that an election in Zimbabwe will be held following the finalisation of the constitution-making process. Currently, the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) is drafting a new Constitution for Zimbabwe after which a referendum and then elections should be held.*

Question on South Africa's plan on Zimbabwe national elections: *Whether South Africa, as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has any plans in place to address the upcoming national elections in Zimbabwe if a certain person (name furnished) fails to comply with the norms and standards set by the SADC; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) what plans and (b) what are the further relevant details?*

Reply: *The South African facilitators remain engaged with the process towards the full implementation of the GPA. It is therefore premature and indeed speculative to assume that one or other party will or will not conduct itself in compliance with the SADC Guidelines on Elections. Once we reach the referendum and election stages, SADC will field and Observation Mission.*

Question on South Africa's funding of Zimbabwe election: *Whether the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund (ARF) will be used to fund Zimbabwe to (i) undertake (aa) general and (bb) presidential elections and (ii) promote good governance and democracy in the receiving countries; if not, why not, in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case.*

Reply: *The African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund approved an amount of R5 million to fund South Africa's participation in the AU/SADC Election Observer Missions for the 2012/2013 financial year. This is in line with Section 4 (b)*

of the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund Act, 2000 that states that "the money in the Fund must be utilised to enhance the promotion of democracy and good governance.

Question on South Africa's steps to ensure Zimbabwe adheres to date and GPA: Whether the Government intends to take steps to ensure that the government of Zimbabwe (a)(i) sets and (ii) adheres to an election date and (b) meets the overall targets of the Global Political Agreement; if not, (aa) why not and (bb) what are the details of envisaged and/or experienced stumbling blocks in this regard; if so, what steps.

Reply: In executing her SADC mandate, South Africa continues to encourage and assist the Zimbabwe political leadership to fully implement the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The implementation of the GPA remains the sole responsibility of the parties to the agreement. South Africa is a guarantor of the agreement.

Question on Minister's policy direction on Zimbabwe: Whether she intends to pronounce a vigorous and robust change of diplomacy and policy direction with regard to negotiations in Zimbabwe; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details.

Reply: No. South Africa does not intend to pronounce any policy change with regard to her facilitation efforts in Zimbabwe. As mandated by SADC, President Zuma continues with his facilitation assisting the political leadership in Zimbabwe to implement the Global Political Agreement (GPA). In the recent past, the facilitation process has progressed to the extent that the parties have finalised drafting an election roadmap. Furthermore, the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC), as provided for in the GPA, is drafting a new constitution which should be presented to the Zimbabwean electorate through a referendum after which an election can be held.

Question on South Africa's support for elections in Zimbabwe: Whether her department supports the call by President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe this year; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

Reply: South Africa, through President Jacob Zuma, is mandated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assist the Zimbabwe political leadership to implement the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The GPA provides a guide to the holding of elections in Zimbabwe. In this regard, the GPA envisages that an election in Zimbabwe will only be held following the finalisation of the constitution-making process. Currently, the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) is drafting a new Constitution for Zimbabwe after which a referendum and then elections should be held.

Clarity-seeking question on Zimbabwe's environment to conduct free and fair elections: Whether her department has found that Zimbabwe has a free and fair environment within which to conduct any elections under the current circumstances; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

Reply: South Africa, as mandated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is assisting the Inclusive Government in Zimbabwe to implement the Global Political Agreement (GPA). Critical in the implementation of the GPA is the finalisation of the constitution-making process as well as the implementation of the Road map towards elections. In this regard, the recent SADC Summit has called on the parties to the GPA to finalise the constitution-making process and subject it to a referendum and to set out time frames for the full implementation of the Road map to elections. We believe, therefore that, if all these processes are carried out,

it will be possible for Zimbabwe to conduct free and fair elections in a conducive environment.

Question on the removal of Zimbabwe from the SADC Troika: *Whether the SADC Ministerial Troika has removed Zimbabwe from the Agenda; if not, what is the position; if so (a) why and (b) when will the situation be reviewed?*

Reply: *The removal of this item from the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ Troika Agenda was determined and informed purely by SADC statutory documents. Zimbabwe has been elevated to the Summit primarily because President Zuma is the Facilitator and responsible for the mediation with regard to the implementation of the Global Political Agreement.*

The above questions show that Portfolio Committee members were following up on developments linked to the national elections in Zimbabwe, particularly South Africa's role in ensuring that Zimbabwe adhered to the terms of the GPA. The questions also enquired on whether South Africa was funding Zimbabwe's elections through the African Renaissance Fund. This line of questioning accorded with the findings in section 4.1.3.4, that the Portfolio Committee members oversaw DIRCO to ensure that it delivered on its mandate and that it used monies allocated by Parliament purposefully and responsibly through the Fund.

An examination of the PMG website shows that the Portfolio Committee engaged representatives from leading political parties in Zimbabwe, a representative from the European Union and civil society representatives on the progress and challenges in implementing the GPA in Zimbabwe on 6 November 2012. The following serves as a reference to this engagement.

[Committees](#) / [National Assembly](#) / [International Relations](#)

Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe: progress and impediments towards implementation - dialogue

 This premium content has been made freely available

Share this page:

[International Relations](#)

06 November 2012

Chairperson: Mr T Magama (ANC)

The Portfolio Committee engagements with all the critical stakeholders on the GPA may have provided members with sufficient information on the ongoing negotiations and to make an informed oversight intervention in the form of questions. As stated in section 1.2.1, Janis is of the view that inviting outsiders counters risky decisions and

assists the group in reaching consensus on the best policy alternative. This is because group members have an opportunity to interrogate and express any doubts on the group's chosen policy decision. Therefore, these kinds of meetings should be encouraged to question and examine foreign policy decisions.

Nevertheless, an examination of some of DIRCO's replies to the above questions shows that members were not provided with adequate information to fully appreciate South Africa's role in assisting Zimbabwe to hold fair and free elections. For instance, a member specifically asked the Minister whether her department had determined that Zimbabwe had ensured a free and fair environment within which to conduct any elections under the current circumstances. The Department's response was as follows: "...we believe therefore that, if all the [GPA] processes are carried out, it will be possible for Zimbabwe to conduct free and fair elections in a conducive environment."

4.4.3 BRICS formation and its influence on South Africa's foreign policy

The findings indicate that the BRICS formation received particular attention from Portfolio Committee members in the form of five written questions to the Minister. The results show that the questions sought clarity on the benefits that South Africa and the rest of the African continent would derive from BRICS and whether other BRICS members would influence South Africa's foreign policy decisions. The questions were as follows:

Clarity-question on BRICS influence of South Africa's foreign policy decisions: *Whether foreign policy and decisions at the United Nations will be influenced by our new membership of the BRIC group of countries; if so, whether South Africa will in a future vote or support new issues in a bloc with other member states of BRICS; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?*

Reply: *I would to emphasise that South Africa takes foreign policy decisions at the UN based on its own domestic agenda which informs its foreign policy priorities. South Africa approaches its role in the UN and notably this year as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council on an issue basis and normally aligns with like-minded countries, depending on the issue at hand. South Africa naturally cooperates closely with the BRICS Member States in the UN context, and the BRICS Permanent Representatives have met to discuss issues of convergence, but also of divergence. South Africa will obviously liaise closely with both its BRICS and IBSA partners on issues pertaining...*

Clarity-question on South Africa's strategy on BRICS: *Whether her department has any strategy to ensure that South Africa is an effective participant in BRICS; if not, why not; if so, (a) what strategy and (b) how does this plan fit (i) into South Africa's global strategy and (ii) in with the top national priorities in South Africa?*

Reply: *I have clarified South Africa's strategy for BRICS in terms of how it fits into South Africa's global strategy and within the national priorities of South Africa*

through various policy addresses and media statements. I would like to quote from the media statement²⁴ December 2010 on South Africa's full membership of BRICS, as well as highlight some pertinent issues in relation to our approach. Our approach is to intensifying our relations with emerging powers and other countries of the South is, of course, through active and strong bilateral engagement. In addition, however, we also see the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 as important for South-South interaction, especially within the framework of the United Nations. All BRICS countries will serve on the UNSC in 2011 as permanent or non-permanent members (Brazil, India and South Africa), which augurs positively for enhanced cooperation efforts in terms of the salient issues of common interest.

Clarity-seeking question on BRICS membership benefits to South Africa and Africa: *Whether she has identified any positive contribution that South Africa's membership to Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa (BRICS) would have on the rest of Africa; if not, why not; if so, (a) what positive aspects have been identified and (b) what benefits will South Africa receive for being a member of BRICS?*

Reply: *Membership of BRICS is one of the platforms, at the international level, through which South Africa is able to realise its foreign policy priorities of enhancing the African agenda and sustainable development, global governance reform as well as strengthening political and economic relations in line with our domestic priorities contained within the IPAP II and New Growth Path. South Africa's membership of BRICS consequently gives greater expression and influence to the positions of the AU.*

Clarity-question on whether South Africa's voting on Libya had to be explained to BRIC members: *Whether South Africa's vote in favour of a No-fly Zone over Libya has to be explained to its partners, Russia, India, China?*

Reply: *South Africa as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, engages on an on-going basis with all the members including BRIC members, in support of the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. South Africa's support of the Council's decision to impose a no-fly zone over Libya was informed by the call of the countries of the region...and would continue to work through the Council, the African Union and other multilateral and bilateral platforms for the resolution of the Libyan crisis in a manner consistent with the aspirations of the people of Libya.*

As highlighted in section 4.2.2, the response of DIRCO to the question was in line with the analysis of the South African Institute of International Affairs (2012). The analysis indicates that South Africa's voting on Libya was in line with other African countries – Gabon and Nigeria both supported the resolution – while BRIC counterparts did not support the decision (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2012).

Clarity-seeking question on South Africa's steps to uphold multilateralism through BRIC membership: *What steps does she intend to take to ensure that the principles of (a) multilateralism and (b) reform are upheld in engagements on global economic and developmental challenges through South Africa's membership of the IBSA and BRICS fora?*

Reply: *Our membership of these groupings is geared towards deepening multilateralism and the rules-based multilateral system. South Africa's approach in this regard is outlined in one of the priorities of the Department's Strategic Plan,*

namely participation in the global system of governance. South Africa's membership of IBSA and BRICS is focused on common aspirations for the emergence of new world order, based on strengthened multilateralism and the ascendancy of new powers from the developing world. In this regard, I quote from the BRICS Delhi Declaration of 29 March 2012.

In summary, the formation of BRICS received more attention from Portfolio Committee members in the form of five written questions to the Minister. An examination of the White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy (2011) shows that members' written questions were in line with the prioritisation of the BRICS formation as a strategic mechanism to advance the interests of the African continent in global issues, including the reform of global governance, international trade, energy, and the like. These findings also show that members' questions were focused on South Africa's foreign policy priorities of *Enhanced African Agenda and Sustainable Development* through the resolution of conflicts in the SADC region and of *Strengthening South-South Relations* through BRICS formation to create socio-economic and political convergence in the fight against poverty and the marginalisation of the South. It was concerning to note the vagueness of some of the responses provided by the Department. For instance, the reply to the question of whether the Minister had a strategy to ensure South Africa's participation in the formation of BRICS stated: "*South Africa's strategy for BRICS in terms of how it fits into South Africa's global strategy and within the national priorities of South Africa through various policy addresses and media statements*". In the researcher's opinion, this kind of incoherent response does little to assist members to make the best oversight intervention.

4.5 Conclusion

The conclusion will be made regarding the main points, firstly, the definition, nature, and essence of parliamentary oversight. Secondly, participants' experiences of oversight, particularly over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO. Thirdly, the Portfolio Committee and members' use of oversight mechanisms - written questions and summoning of the Minister to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy (based on identified case studies). Lastly, the presence of groupthink symptoms in the Portfolio Committee's policy-making processes.

- **The definition, nature and essence parliamentary oversight**

According to the findings, holding the executive accountable, ensuring that the executive delivers on its duties and mandate, ensuring monies allocated by Parliament are used purposefully and responsibly by the executive as well as serving the country in the best possible way are all traits of parliamentary oversight. The findings further suggest that Portfolio Committee members use several oversight mechanisms, including inviting the Department to make a presentation on a particular matter, putting

questions to DIRCO Minister, making statements in the House, and during the State of the Nation address, as well as budget speeches to oversee DIRCO.

- **Participants' experiences of oversight, particularly over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO**

The findings on the participants' experiences show that some of the participants approved of the Department's implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. At the same time, findings revealed that the Oversight Model failed to take into account the nature of the Committee's work insofar as the Committee was not allowed to oversee the 126 DIRCO missions across the world physically, but could only conduct study tours. The findings further suggest that the Committee was not able to properly engage the Minister on the foreign policy due to the nature of the Minister's work. In practice, this absence may have meant that the Committee was not given an explanation on some of the foreign policy decisions taken by the Department. Another finding was that the Committee lacked effectiveness when it came to overseeing the Department, including its implementation of policies.

Another finding is that the Portfolio Committee received a presentation on the identified case studies from DIRCO senior officials. This presentation was almost two months after the voting on Libya; this may be an indication that the Committee's oversight over the Department and its policies lacked urgency and effectiveness as pointed out by one participant.

Another finding identified the absence of the Minister from Committee and House proceedings to take oral questions and the inability of senior officials to speak with absolute authority on specific developments. It was further highlighted that the Committee was not kept abreast of events, being apprised instead by the media and that the Committee lacked early warning systems to communicate foreign policy decisions or resolutions that South Africa's representatives had taken at the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

- **The Portfolio Committee and members' use of oversight mechanisms - written questions and summoning of the Minister to oversee the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy (based on identified case studies)**

According to findings on the identified case studies, the Committee did not engage or summon the Minister to explain the voting decisions on identified case studies. Several explanations were put forward for the Committee's inaction, including that there was divided opinion, the constituency not seeing outright value in that, the Committee did not apply its mind and that the matter was discussed in the Caucus of the African

National Congress where it was explained why South Africa had voted in favour of Resolution 1973.

Findings on the action of individual members on identified case studies reveal that only five questions were related to the identified case studies of the 191 written questions to the Minister between 2011 and 2012. Only one of the five participants had submitted a written question on one of the case studies. The findings further reveal that the majority of the 191 written questions, were clarity-seeking questions on South Africa's role in supporting peace and security in Zimbabwe as well as South Africa's BRIC membership and its influence on South Africa's foreign policy decisions.

- **Detection of groupthink symptoms**

The findings suggest the presence of groupthink symptoms, namely, cohesiveness and insulation. The discovery that the decisions of the party Caucus on the two identified cases may have hindered the Portfolio Committee members from querying or summoning the Minister on South Africa's voting on the two identified cases suggest the presence of cohesiveness. The Committee's reliance on DIRCO as the sole source of information suggests the insulation of the group from external expertise.

CHAPTER 5

5. Conclusion, summary, and recommendations

This thesis examined Portfolio Committee members' experiences of parliamentary oversight, including their definition of the nature of this concept. It also explored how Portfolio Committee members used oversight mechanisms such as written questions to monitor the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO. The thesis then identified focus areas of members' oversight during the 2011 – 2012 period. The concluding remarks firstly sum up the results of this study, followed by members' suggestions to improve the Portfolio Committee's oversight function, and lastly, recommendations are made for possible future research.

5.1 Conclusion

Conclusions are drawn about Portfolio Committee members' experiences of parliamentary oversight, including their definition of the nature of this concept. Consideration is also given to parliamentary oversight mechanisms and members' use of these mechanisms to monitor the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. The current engagement between the Portfolio Committee and DIRCO, including the Minister, is then looked at. Participants' suggestions to improve the Committee's oversight functions are stated, followed by the practical implications of these suggestions. Lastly, avenues of possible future research are identified.

5.1.1 How members defined the nature of legislative oversight

According to the findings, identified traits of parliamentary oversight included holding the executive accountable, ensuring that the executive delivers on its duties and mandate, ensuring that monies allocated by Parliament are used purposefully and responsibly by the executive as well as serving the country in the best possible way. Members' understanding of oversight and its importance was in line with the definition provided by the IPU in section 2.1, which states that legislative oversight is the means by which parliaments and parliamentarians, on behalf of the citizens, hold the government to account. Another issue that strongly emerged from the findings was that oversight ensures 'checks and balances' between the three arms of the State, to prevent wrongdoing, particularly the misappropriation of public funds. According to another finding, Parliament and its committees had become increasingly competent at performing oversight due to the leadership of former President Jacob Zuma, which allowed members to conduct real monitoring. The results also showed participants' limited legislative oversight over the technical issues such as the Department's allocated budget, and not necessarily over foreign policy issues. However, members' limited focus on the allocated budget seems to be in line with one main component of

effective oversight as stated in section 2.1 where Gilley (2002) explains that effective oversight relies heavily on, amongst others, a detailed examination of the budget by legislators.

5.1.2 Parliament's use of existing oversight mechanisms to monitor South Africa's foreign policy

According to the findings, there are several oversight mechanisms available to monitor the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy, notably inviting the Department to make a presentation on a particular matter, committees, questions to the Minister, questions in the House, making statements in the House, State of the Nation and budget speeches to ensure parliamentary oversight over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. According to Hill (2003), these mechanisms, namely, committees on foreign affairs, are the most viable tool to exert pressure on the executive. This is because they possess both the capability and knowledge with which to challenge diplomatic specialists. They have the power to summon or insist on the presence of the Minister, release documents and expose errors through cross-questioning as well as written analysis. Their reports tend to enjoy legitimacy from both the public and scholars, particularly if they provoke controversy that is undesirable to decision-makers but important for quality control, which shows that they are doing their work.

In terms of the Portfolio Committee's role in overseeing the implementation of foreign policy, the findings reveal that some of the members approve of the manner in which the Department has been implementing foreign policy and how the Committee has been overseeing the Department. Participant 2 went so far as to state that the Committee's role had strengthened over the years, to the point that the Department understood that the Committee needed to be fully briefed on foreign policy matters. At the same time, the findings show that the Oversight Model does not take into account the nature of the Committee's work insofar as the Committee is not allowed to oversee the 126 DIRCO missions across the world physically, but can only conduct study tours. Moreover, the Committee is unable to properly engage the Minister on the foreign policy due to the nature of the Minister's work. In practice, this absence means that the Committee is unable to gain clarity on some of the foreign policy decisions taken by the Department. Another finding is that the Committee lacks effectiveness when it comes to overseeing the Department, including its implementation of policies.

According to other findings, although the Committee regularly meets with DIRCO's top officials, including Deputy Ministers, the challenge lies in the vague and weak responses provided by the Deputy Minister and senior officials to questions posed by the Committee. This finding suggests that Committee members are unable to make appropriate oversight recommendations. Other findings of concern relate to the Minister not being available to take oral questions in the Committee and the House (NA plenary), and that the Department's officials are unable to speak with absolute authority and clarity on specific developments. It was also found that the Committee

is not kept abreast of events, and needs to rely on the media keep apprised of latest developments. Lastly, the Committee lacks early warning systems, which means that it is unable to respond to foreign policy decisions or resolutions taken by South Africa's representatives at the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

5.1.3 Portfolio Committee's current process of engagement with DIRCO Minister and top officials

According to the findings, the Minister was mostly absent from Committee meetings and the House (NA plenary), which deprived members of the opportunity to ask oral questions and gain clarity on some of the foreign policy decisions that South Africa took at the Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council. The Minister's unavailability goes against Section 92 of the Constitution, which specifies that ministers must provide Parliament with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control, as highlighted in section 2.2.

Other findings on the engagement between the Minister and the Committee include, once again, the Minister's unavailability to take oral questions in the Committee and the House (NA plenary) and the Department's officials being unable to speak with absolute authority and clarity on specific developments. The Committee was moreover not kept abreast of events and had to rely instead on media reports.

Lastly, according to another finding, the Department does not always implement the recommendations or resolutions put forward by the Committee; these then end up being resolutions of Parliament once the Committee takes them to the National Assembly.

5.1.4 How the Portfolio Committee members have used oversight mechanisms to monitor the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy in identified case studies

Based on the two cases of Libya and Syria, the findings reveal that the Portfolio Committee did not engage nor summon the Minister to explain South Africa's representatives voting in favour of Resolution 1973, authorising "all necessary measures to protect civilians" in Libya and its indecisive voting on Syria, despite concerns being raised by the opposition members. Several explanations were put forward for the Committee's inaction. These include the Committee's divided opinion, the constituency not seeing outright value in such a course of action, the Committee failing to apply its mind and the fact that the matter was discussed at the ANC Caucus, where it was explained why South Africa had voted in favour of Resolution 1973. Participant 4 questioned the independence of the Committee members in performing their oversight function, as called upon by the Constitution, whereas Participant 2 suggested that if a Caucus has had a briefing on a specific issue, there is no need for a question to be put to the Minister. Considering the action of individual Committee

members on the two case studies, the findings reveal that while some members had requested clarity from the Minister about these cases through written questions, others had not.

In this regard, it can, therefore, be concluded that between 2011 to 2012, members of the Portfolio Committee had exercised their constitutional mandate of overseeing the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by submitting 191 questions to the Minister on foreign policy matters. The results further show that of the 191 questions, only five written questions were put on the two case studies. Of the five participants, only one put a written question to the DIRCO Minister on one of the case studies, namely, South Africa's voting on Syria.

5.1.5 Portfolio Committee's report on the identified case studies

According to the results, on 21 June 2011, a presentation was made to the Portfolio Committee entitled *Developments in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Syria, North Africa, and Libya: Briefing by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation*. This finding is in line with some of the participants' statements that the Committee had requested a briefing from DIRCO on the two case studies. However, the presentation was made more than two months after South Africa had voted on Resolution 1973 on Libya. This time-lapse may be an indication that the Committee's oversight over the Department and its policies lacked urgency and effectiveness, as pointed out by Participant 5.

An analysis of DIRCO's replies during the presentation reflects the concerns that participants had raised as to the ambiguous and ineffectual responses made by the Department. These vague responses appear to corroborate the issues raised by Participant 3, who claimed that the Committee not been taken into confidence about some of the foreign policy decisions and had only learned about these decisions from the media. This situation creates a problem by the time the Committee engages the Department.

5.1.6 Focus areas of members' oversight role other than the identified case studies

The 191 questions reveal that Zimbabwe and the formation of BRICS received more attention from Portfolio Committee members compared to other countries (global, continental, and regional) and other multilateral organisations. Zimbabwe received nine written questions, mainly relating to the role of South Africa in ensuring that Zimbabwe adhered to the terms of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The findings also show that the questions were in line with South Africa's foreign policy objective of contributing to *SADC peace, security and stability efforts* as enshrined in DIRCO's Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 (2012). In the SADC region, South Africa committed to strength initiatives geared towards democratisation and good governance, mainly

working together with other SADC countries to support the implementation of Zimbabwe's GPA as well as the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe.

The formation of BRICS received five written questions on the benefits that South Africa and the rest of the African continent would derive from the membership and whether this membership would influence South Africa's foreign policy. An examination of the White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy (2011) shows that members' written questions were in line with the prioritisation of the BRICS formation as a strategic mechanism to advance the interests of Africa in global issues including the reform of global governance, international trade, and energy.

An examination of the Department's responses to the questions on Zimbabwe and BRICS shows that members were not provided with adequate information to fully appreciate South Africa's role in assisting Zimbabwe to hold fair and free elections as well as the benefits that South Africa and the African continent would derive from BRICS membership. For instance, a Committee member specifically asked the Minister whether the Department had found that Zimbabwe had ensured a free and fair environment within which to conduct elections under the current circumstances. The Department's response was as follows: "...we believe therefore that, if all the [GPA] processes are carried out, it will be possible for Zimbabwe to conduct free and fair elections in a conducive environment." The response to whether the Minister had a strategy to ensure South Africa's participation in the BRICS formation was as follows: "South Africa's strategy for BRICS in terms of how it fits into South Africa's global strategy and within the national priorities of South Africa through various policy addresses and media statements." The researcher's view is that this kind of incoherent response does little to assist members to decide on the best oversight intervention.

5.1.7 Presence of groupthink symptoms

The findings of this study drew a parallel with some of Janis' eight symptoms of groupthink. One such example was the discovery that the discussion of the political party Caucus where South Africa's voting, particularly on Libya, was explained may have deterred the Committee from engaging or summoning the Minister to explain the voting decisions. One participant went far as suggesting that if a party Caucus was to have a briefing on a specific issue, there would be no need for a question to be put to the Minister. Napier and Labuschagne (2017:213), in *Political Party Caucuses and Democracy: Contradictory in Terminis?* view political party caucuses as a "cohesive" decision-making unit in which the opinions of the majority prevail. For this study, this assertion accords with cohesiveness, a core factor which Janis terms a 'substantive and independent because of groupthink. Cohesiveness among group members is the core factor that Janis's work singles out as a substantive and independent cause of groupthink. Mullen *et al.* (1994) found that high cohesiveness impairs decision-making quality in large groups, in line with groupthink, which holds that poor decisions result from members mirroring some of their behaviour to match the behavioural standards

of unison, consensus and mutual support. For this study, it may mean that the decisions of the party Caucus on the identified cases may have inevitably influenced the Portfolio Committee members from engaging the case studies, including engaging or summoning the Minister. This situation, in turn, prevented the Committee from adequately examining the available range of policy alternatives and considering the possible consequences of the Department's chosen policy. At the same time, Janis acknowledges that high cohesiveness on its own is not sufficient to produce groupthink, but a presence of several structural and situational conditions including impartial leadership, group homogeneity, and group isolation, time pressure increases the occurrence of groupthink. In this light, in concurrence with Napier and Labuschagne's assertion, this study suggests further research on the functioning of parliamentary party caucuses as well as their impact on the Portfolio Committee's oversight function, particularly over the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy by DIRCO.

Another discovery was that the examination of data, as published on the PMG website and from the participant's interview transcripts, indicated the reliance of the Portfolio Committee on DIRCO as the sole source of information on identified case studies. This finding suggests the insulation of the group from external expertise. Janis observes that isolation from the expertise of external specialists is one of the symptoms of groupthink as it limits group members from making an informed decision based on diverse views and alternatives. Moorhead and Montanari (1986) analysis, consistent with groupthink suggested, insulated groups, make poor decisions due to consideration of fewer alternatives than groups that are not isolated. For this study, isolation may have prevented Portfolio Committee members from assessing and searching for new information to make effective policy decisions or to play their oversight function effectively on the identified case studies.

5.2 Participants' suggestions to improve the oversight function over South Africa's foreign policy

The oversight role of Parliament and the Portfolio Committee could be improved in the following ways:

- i. Parliament should review the Oversight Model to cater for the work of the Portfolio Committee. According to some participants, the Model in its current form does not permit the Committee to travel to South Africa's 126 missions abroad to, amongst others, ensure that the Department complies with the Auditor-General's findings. Travel abroad would also allow the monitoring of areas assisted by South Africa through the African Renaissance Fund, which is managed by the Department.
- ii. The Portfolio Committee should ensure that the execution of South Africa's foreign policy is underpinned by public diplomacy. This implies that South

Africa's resolutions and foreign policy positions should be communicated to the public timeously.

- iii. The Committee should guarantee participatory diplomacy by engaging with civil society, academia, and all those in the foreign policy domain. This is because the modern world of international relations is no longer owned solely by the government, as there are now non-state actors such as multinational corporations. The coordination of South Africa's foreign policy should be effected by engaging these non-state actors.
- iv. The Minister should attend at least one meeting a term to interact with the Portfolio Committee.
- v. Oversight needs to be strengthened, particularly on how South Africa will vote during its third term at the UN security Council.
- vi. There needs to be greater emphasis on popularising South Africa's foreign policy, which must emphasise human rights.

5.2.1 Practical implications of the study

The practical implications of this study are to strengthen the overall oversight function of the Portfolio Committee to ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. Effective monitoring would bring more actors into decision-making processes. As a result, decisions would reflect the interests of society as well as boosting Parliament's legitimacy as an "inclusive and representative institution" (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017:15). Based on the suggestions above, the following areas may be explored as a way of sharpening the oversight function:

- *Development of a comprehensive engagement strategy* – The Minister of DIRCO, as the implementer of South Africa's foreign policy, is not required by any parliamentary rule to consult with the Portfolio Committee before making foreign policy decisions. However, an arrangement, perhaps a comprehensive engagement strategy between the Portfolio Committee and DIRCO, could be explored. Such an engagement strategy between DIRCO and the Committee would ensure that the Committee is briefed more timeously; the Committee would, therefore, be able to communicate better with the public. When it comes to voting at the UNSC, for instance, members of the Portfolio Committee would be informed and consulted on what policy direction DIRCO intended to take. This could be one way in which members, as the representatives of the electorate, could become more involved in the implementation of South Africa's foreign policymaking, while at the same time increasing their oversight role.
- *Development of a communication strategy* – Based on the participants' responses, it would seem that the Portfolio Committee has limited communication with the public regarding South Africa's foreign policy decisions. Although dependent on the Committee's relationship or agreement with DIRCO

on the timely receipt of information, a well-executed communication strategy by the Committee could ensure that DIRCO policy positions are better communicated to the public. In line with the suggestion of Participant 3, the communication strategy should also promote participatory diplomacy to ensure engagement with civil society, academia, and stakeholders in the foreign policy state. This is because the modern world of international relations is no longer the sole preserve of government.

- *Review of the Oversight Model* – Based on the participants’ responses, Parliament needs to review its Oversight Model as currently, this Model does not adequately take into account the nature of the Portfolio Committee’s work. For instance, according to some of the participants, the Model does not permit Committee members to travel to South Africa’s missions abroad to ensure the Department’s compliance with the Auditor-General’s findings, nor does it allow members to visit areas abroad which are assisted by South Africa through the African Renaissance Fund, which is managed by the Department. A review of the Oversight Model should be informed by the views of parliamentarians as the overseers of government.
- *Strengthening of the existing induction programme for members* – Four participants’ transcripts revealed an area of concern, namely, the Committee members’ emphasis on technical issues, such as the Department’s allocated budget, at the expense of foreign policy issues. An induction programme would ensure that members fully understand the significance of their oversight role over the formulation and implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy. In practice, therefore, member training programmes should emphasise the fact that parliamentary oversight extends to the formulation and implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy.
- *Reviewing the Portfolio Committee’s position on the Minister’s attendance of meetings* – According to Participant 5, the Portfolio Committee decided that the Minister should attend at least once a term to interact with the Committee.

5.3 Further research opportunities

The study’s limitations and assumptions offer opportunities for further research. For instance, the small number of Committee members who agreed to be interviewed means that the views of other key stakeholders were excluded, notably the National Council of Provinces Select Committee on Trade and International Relations, which also oversees the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy. The perspective of DIRCO also offers the opportunity for an in-depth study which could include different angles from different stakeholders. Another possible avenue is the role of parliamentary party caucuses, particularly of the ruling party, to fully understand their work and influence when it comes to the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy. As revealed by the participants’ transcripts, Portfolio Committee members from the ruling party take their cue from their parliamentary party Caucus on foreign policy

issues. This practice may have prevented the Committee from providing input on crucial foreign policy decisions, including those that South Africa took during its second term at the UN Security Council. According to Napier and Labuschagne (2017) in *Political Party Caucuses and Democracy: Contradictory in Terminus?* information on the workings and influence of political party caucuses remains limited.

6. REFERENCES

- Adnan, M. 2014. *Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A conceptual account*. Research Journal of South Asian Studies, 29 (2):657-675.
- Ahmed, A.K. 2009. *The role of parliament in South Africa's foreign policy development process: Lessons from the United States' Congress*. South African Journal of International Affairs, 16(3):291-310.
- Alden, C. & Aran, A. 2017. *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches*. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Ali, A. & Yusof, H. 2011. *Quality in Qualitative Studies: The case of validity, reliability and generalizability*. Issues in Social and Environmental Accounting. 5 (1): 25-64.
- Amarutunga, K. 2007. *Structuring the unstructured data: The use of content analysis*. UK: University of Salford, Institute of Built and Human Environment.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 1998. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Baker, P. & Lyman, P. 2008. *South Africa: From beacon of hope to rogue democracy?* The Stanley Foundation: Working Paper. [Online]. Available: https://www.cfr.org/content/thinktank/South_Africa_Paper_Dec_2008.pdf [2019, July 11].
- Bajtaj, P. 2015a. *Shaping and Controlling Foreign Policy - Parliamentary Diplomacy and Oversight: The Role of the European Parliament*. City: European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies.
- Bajtaj, P. 2015b. *Democratic and Efficient foreign policy? Parliamentary diplomacy and oversight in the 21st century and the post-Lisbon role of the European Parliament in shaping and controlling EU foreign policy*. EU Working Paper RSCAS 2015/11 ed. European University Institute, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies.
- Bashir, M., Afzal, M., & Azeem, M. 2008. *Reliability and Validity of Qualitative and Operational Research Paradigm*. Pakistan Journal of Statistics and Operational Research. IV (1): 35-45.
- Barnett, L. & Spano, S. 2008. *Parliamentary involvement in foreign policy*. Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Parliament of Canada.
- Bem, D., Wallach, M. & Kogan, N. 1963. *Group Decision-making under risk of aversive consequences*. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Educational Testing Service, Princeton.

- Ben, W. 2014. *The Advantages and Limitations of the Single Case Study Analysis* [Online]. Available: <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/07/05/the-advantages-and-limitations-of-single-case-study-analysis>. [2017, May 4].
- Best, J. & Kahn, J. 1998. *Research in Education*. 8th Edition. USA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bogdan, R. & Taylor, S. 1975. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences*. Canada: John Wiley & Sons..
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:77-101.
- Carlnaes, W. 2009. *Actors, structures, and foreign policy analysis*. Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases. 3rd Edition. US: Oxford University Press.
- Columbia University. 2019. *Public Health Workforce Training: Exploratory Design* [Online]. Available: <http://training.lowernysphtc.org/introduction-to-mixed-methods-research/five-mixed-methods-design/exploratory-design/>. [2019, March 5].
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. 1996.
- Corder, H., Jagwanth, S. & Solti, F. 1999. *Report on Parliamentary Oversight and Accountability*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- De Vos, S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C. & Delpont, C. 2005. *Research of Grassroots for the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. 3rd Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- DeSanctis, G. & Gallupe, B. 1987. A foundation for the group decision support systems. *Management Science*, 33(5):589-609.
- Du Plessis, M. & Louw, A. 2011. *Briefing Paper on Justice and the Libyan crisis: The ICC's role under Security Council Resolution 1970*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Dworkin, S. 2012. *Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews*. [Online]. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10508-012-0016-6> [2019, 10 July].
- Dyram, L. & Kamalanabhan, T. 2005. Unearthed: The other side of group cohesiveness. *Indian Institute of Technology, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences*,10(3):185-190.
- Esser, J. 1998. Groupthink: Alive and Well. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 73(2/3):116-141.
- Geldenhuis, D. 1998. *The foreign relations of South Africa's Provinces*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs.

- Gentles, S., Charles, C., Ploeg, J. & McKibbin, A. 2015. Sampling in qualitative research: Insights from an overview of the methods literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11):1772-1789.
- Gerber, J. 2017. *Opposition slams Parliament's oversight*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/opposition-slams-parliaments-oversight-20170530>. [2018, August 24]
- Gilley, S. 1999. *Defining Effective Oversight: A Case Study of Sunset Legislation*. Texas, USA: Southwest Texas State University.
- Graham, S. 2008. Gold star or bottom of the class: is South Africa a good international citizen?, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 15:1,87-97.
- Götz, N. 2005. On the Origins of 'Parliamentary Diplomacy' Scandinavian 'Block Politics' and Delegation Policy in the League of Nations. *Cooperation and Conflict. Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, 40(3):267.
- Gustafsson, J. 2017. *Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1064378/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. [2017, May 4].
- Headley, J. & Van Wyk, J. 2012. *Debating the public's role in foreign policy. Public Participation in Foreign Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Herek, G., Irving, L. & Huth, P. 1987. Decision-making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 31(2):203-226.
- Hermann, G. & Hermann, C. 1989. Who Makes Foreign Policy Decisions and How?: An Empirical Inquiry. *International Studies Quarterly*, 33(4):361-387. [Online]. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2600518.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A5280377c2b7a06c6e7a4e76a34396c7b>. [2018, December 12].
- Hill, C. 2003. *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Høigaard, R. 2006. The Relationship Between Group Cohesion, Group Norms and Perceived Social Loafing in Soccer Teams: Small-Group Research. *Agder University College*, 37(3):217-232. [Online]. Available: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1046496406287311>. [2019, January 22].
- Hsieh, H. & Shannon, S. 2005. *Three approaches to qualitative content analysis*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16204405>. [2019, July, 20].
- Hudson, V. 2014. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary*. UK: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Hughes, T. 2011. *Parliament: Reclaiming its Position in 2011?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/parliament-reclaiming-its-position-in-2011>. [2017, February, 15].
- Human Rights Watch. 2018. *South Africa secures seat on UN Security Council for third time*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/11/south-africa-secures-seat-un-security-council-third-time> [2018, June 15].
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). 2006. *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice*. Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). 2015. *Parity Debate on Parliamentary Oversight and Political Will*. [Online]. Available: <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/133/wmn-parity.pdf>. [2018, April 25].
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). 2017. *Global Parliamentary Report*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2017-10/global-parliamentary-report-2017-parliamentary-oversight-parliaments-power-hold-government-account>. [2018, April 25].
- Janis, I. 1972. Groupthink and Group Dynamics: A Social Psychological Analysis of Defective Policy Decisions. *American Political Science Review*, Houghton-Mifflin.
- Kaarbo, J. 2015. A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on the Domestic Politics Turn in IR Theory. *International Studies Review*, 17:189-216.
- Khara, N. 2018. Determinants of Foreign Policy: A global perspective. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 5(3):105-115.
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: South Africa Office. 2004. *KAS Briefing: Actors and Processes in SA Foreign Policy*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.kas.de/suedafrika/en/events/12768/>. [2017, February, 19].
- Landsburg, C. & Masters, L. 2017. *From the Outside in Domestic Actors and South Africa's Foreign Policy*. Johannesburg: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, University of Johannesburg and Jacana New Book Publications.
- Lees, D.J. 1977. Legislatures and Oversight: A Review Article on a Neglected Area of Research. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 2(2):196-197.
- Lilleker, D. 2003. *Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield*. *Bournemouth University, Political Studies Association*, 23(3):207-214.
- Leibrandt-Loxton, N. & Montshiwa, M. 2010. *Assessing the role of Parliament in the ratification of international agreements*. Cape Town: Research Unit, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.
- Lingelbach, W. 1927. *Democracy and the Control of Foreign Affairs*. *American Philosophical Society*, 66:655-679.

Lumen Learning. n.d. *Foreign policy and shared power*. [Online]. Available: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/amgovernment/chapter/institutional-relations-in-foreign-policy/> [2017, August 22].

Majeski, S. .n.d. *Small Group Dynamics and Foreign Policymaking: Experimental evidence for repeated prisoners dilemma games*. Washington: University of Washington.

Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A. & Fontenot, R. 2013. Does sample size matter in qualitative research? A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*.

Masters. L. 2015. South Africa's Emerging Parliamentary Diplomacy and Soft Power. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37(2):74- 93.

Mathisen, H. & Tjonneland, E. 2001. *Does Parliament Matter in New Democracies? The case of South Africa 1994-2000*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/894-does-parliament-matter-in-new-democracies.pdf> [2018, February 15].

Mayring, P. 2014. *Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution*. Klagenfurt, Austria. [Online]. Available: https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/39517/ssoar-2014-mayring-Qualitative_content_analysis_theoretical_foundation.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2014-mayring-Qualitative_content_analysis_theoretical_foundation.pdf [2019, July 12].

McCauley, C. 1989. The Nature of Social Influence in Groupthink: Compliance and Internalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(2):250-260.

McLeod, S. 2014. *The Psychology of Compliance*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/compliance.html>. [2019, January 21].

McLeod, S. .2016. *What is Conformity?* [Online]. Available: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/conformity.html>. [2019, January 21].

Mintz, A. & DeRouen, K. 2010. *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision-making*. USA: Cambridge University Press. [Online]. Available: http://library.aceondo.net/ebooks/HISTORY/Understanding_Foreign_Policy_Decision_Making.pdf. [2018, June 15].

Mintz, A. & Wayne, C. 2016. The Polythink Syndrome and Elite Group Decision-Making. *Supplement: Advances in Political Psychology*, 37(51):3-21.

Modeni, S. n.d. *SADC mediation in Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement: A reflection on opportunities and complexities*. University of Fort Hare, South Africa. [Online]. Available: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/36af/202da8189a02b814003d4895e33b89d3adaa.pdf>. [2019, July 25].

Mojapelo, P. 2013. *The doctrine of separation of powers (a South African perspective)*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.sabar.co.za/law-journals/2013/april/2013-april-vol026-no1-pp37-46.pdf> [2019, March 13].

Moore, C. 2011. *South Africa's about-turn on Libya: Is speaking with the AU/BRIC majority defending the indefensible?* [Online]. Available: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2011/07/south-africa%E2%80%99s-about-turn-on-libya-is-speaking-with-the-aubric-majority-defending-the-indefensible/>. [2017, April 24].

Mullen, B., Anthony, T., Salas, E. & Driskel, J. 1994. Group cohesiveness and quality of decision making: An integration of tests of the groupthink hypothesis. *Small Group Research*, 25(2):189-204.

Napier, C. & Labuschagne, P. 2017. Political Party Caucuses and Democracy: Contradictory in Terminus? *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42(2):208-226. [Online]. Available: http://scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11660/7557/contemp_v42_n2_a10.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. [2019, February 19].

National Treasury. 2010. *Estimates of National Expenditure*.

National Treasury. 2014. *An Estimate of National Expenditure*.

Nganje, F. 2015. Intergovernmental relations on foreign affairs in South Africa: A Twenty Year Review. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37(2):52-73.

Omona, J. 2013. Sampling in qualitative research: Improving the quality of research outcomes in higher education. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, 4(2):169-185.

Oppong, S. 2013. The problem of sampling in qualitative research. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences and Education*, 2(2):203-210.

Park, W. 2000. A comprehensive investigation of the relationship among variables of the groupthink model. *Journal of Organisational Behavior*, 21(8):873-887.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. n.d.. *Oversight and Accountability Model: Asserting Parliament's oversight role in enhancing democracy*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2006. *Parliament since 1994: Achievements and Challenges*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2007. *Oversight and Accountability Model*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2008a. *NCOP Rules of the National Council of Provinces*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2008b. *Strategic Plan for the Third Parliament 2004-2009*. [Online]. Available:

<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/StratPlan/3/strategic-plan-for-third-parliament-2004-2009.pdf>. [2017, April 26].

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2009. *Report of the Independent Panel Assessment of Parliament*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/BusinessPubs/PanelAssessmentParliamentReport.pdf>. [2018, May 7].

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2010-2011. *The Annual Report*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2016. *Rules of the National Assembly*. 9th Edition. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2018. *How Parliament is structured*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/how-parliament-is-structured>. [2018, May 10].

Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG). 2011. *Developments in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Syria, North Africa, and Libya: Briefing by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation*. [Online]. Available: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/13118/>. [2019, February 25].

Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG). 2012. *Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe: Progress and impediments towards implementation - dialogue*. [Online]. Available: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/15189/>. [2019, July 25].

People's Assembly. 2010. *Appropriation Bill*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.pa.org.za/hansard/2010/may/11/proceedings-of-the-national-assembly-tuesday-11--2/appropriation-bill>. [2018, August, 24].

Politicsweb. 2011. *Activist parliament needed - ANC*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/activist-parliament-needed--anc-caucus>. [2017, April 26].

Polity.org.za. 2009. *IFP: Statement by Ben Skosana of the Inkatha Freedom Party, on an 'Activist Parliament'*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/ifp-statement-by-ben-skosana-of-the-inkatha-freedom-party-on-an-activist-parliament-10092009-2009-09-10>. [2017, May 5] Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation. (2016). *Five-year Strategic Plan*. Parliament of South Africa, Cape Town.

Rahman, S. 2016. The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language 'Testing and Assessment' Research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1):102-112.

Renshon, J. & Renshon, S. 2008. The Theory and Practice of Foreign Policy Decision Making. *International Society of Political Psychology*, 29(4):509-536.

- Ridder, H. 2017. The theory contribution of case study research design. *Business Research*, 10(2):281-305. [Online]. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40685-017-0045-z>. [2019, March 5].
- Rijnsoever, F. 2017. (I can't get no) saturation: A simulation and guidelines for sample sizes in qualitative research. *PloS ONE*, 12(7):[s.p.].
- Sandelowski, M. 1995. Sample size in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 18(2):[s.p.]. [Online]. Available: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/nur.4770180211>. [2019, June 22].
- Saunders, M. & Townsend, K. 2016. Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in organisation and workplace research. *British Journal Management*, 27(4):836-852.
- Schafer, M. & Crichlow, S. 1996. Antecedents of Groupthink: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 40(3):415-443. [Online]. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/174313.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A41a745fbee47fe1d43094cfae88961>. [2018, June 30].
- Sekhri, S. 2009. The role approach as a theoretical framework for the analysis of foreign policy in third world countries. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*.
- Serrão, O. (2011). *South Africa in the UN Security Council 2011 - 2012*. [Online]. Available: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/08166.pdf>. [2017, April 24].
- Siko, J. 2014. "Democratic" Foreign Policy-making and the Thabo Mbeki Presidency: A Critical Study. [Online]. Available: http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13360/thesis_siko_ja.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. [2018, May 11].
- Smith, R. & Tadesse, E. 2014. *Whose policy and why is it foreign? Exploring the impact of civil society influence on SA foreign policy*. [Online] . Available: <http://www.asc.org.za/action/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/whose-policy-and-why-is-it-foreign.pdf> [2018, April 26].
- Smith, S. 1985. Groupthink and the Hostage Rescue Mission. *British Journal of Political Sciences*, 15(1):117-123.
- Smith, S., Hadfield, A. & Dunne, T. 2008). *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Spies, Y. (2009). *Trends and developments in South African foreign policy*. [Online]. Available: [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/16503/Spies_Trends\(2009\).pdf;sequence=1](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/16503/Spies_Trends(2009).pdf;sequence=1) [2018, November 8].
- South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). 2012. *Coming into its own: An analysis of South Africa's voting pattern patterns and the achievement of its foreign*

policy goals. [Online]. Available: <http://saiia.org.za/research/coming-into-its-own-an-analysis-of-south-africas-voting-patterns-and-the-achievement-of-its-foreign-policy-goals-in-the-unsc/>. [2019, February 25].

Stern, E. & Sundelius, B. (1994). The Essence of Groupthink. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 38:101-107.

Suttner, R. 1995. *Parliament's role in foreign policy*. [Online]. Available: <http://journals.co.za/docserver/fulltext/indisa/12/3/684.pdf?expires=1486994882&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FF627EB8257790D4ECD21F71134EE8AA>. [2017, February 13].

't Hart, P. 1991. Irving Janis' Victims of Groupthink. *International Society of Political Psychology*, 12(2):247-278. [Online]. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3791464.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A07a3e880026ddf3baeee75af7ca4e0fb>. [2018, June, 30].

't Hart, P., Stern, E. & Sundelius. 1997. *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-making*. USA: University of Michigan.

Tahir, A. 2004. *Parliament and Foreign Policy: A comparative analysis of the US, UK and India*. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, Foreign Policy Case Study No.4.

Tetlock, P. 1979. Identifying Victims of Groupthink from Public Statements of Decision Makers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(8):1314-1324.

The Economic Times. 2018. Unlike other UN bodies, decisions of security council binding on members. [Online]. Available: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/unlike-other-un-bodies-decisions-of-security-council-binding-on-members/articleshow/49134386.cm>. [2019, January 15].

Tjemolane, T. 2011. *South Africa's Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 1994-2010: Partner or Hegemon?* Bloemfontein: University of the Free State. [Online]. Available: <http://scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11660/1562/TjemolaneT.pdf?sequence=1> [2018, May 11].

United Nations Children's Fund. 2017. *Syria Crisis: Humanitarian Results*. [Online]. Available: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF_Syria_Crisis_Situation_Report_2017_year_end_External.pdf. [2018, June, 27].

University of Surrey. n.d.. *Module 9: Introduction to Research: The advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires*. [Online]. Available: http://libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/Introduction%20to%20Research%20and%20Managing%20Information%20Leicester/page_51.htm. [2017, May 4].

van Heerden, O. 2018. *The reluctant Hegemon – SA's third United Nations Security Council Seat*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2018-06-13-the-reluctant-hegemon-sas-third-united-nations-security-council-seat/>. [2019, January 14].

van Wyk, J. 1997. *Parliament and Foreign Policy Affairs: Continuity or Change*. South African Yearbook of International Affairs. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs and the Institute for Global Dialogue.

van Wyk, J. 1998. *Parliament and the foreign policy process*. South African Yearbook of International Affairs. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs.

Willis, B. 2014. *The advantages and limitations of single case study analysis*. *E-International Relations Students*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/07/05/the-advantages-and-limitations-of-single-case-study-analysis/> [2017, September 12].

Yamamoto, H. 2007. *Tools for parliamentary oversight: A comparative study of 88 national parliaments*. Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Yin, R. n.d.. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 2nd Edition. [S.l.]: Sage Publications. [Online]. Available: <http://www.madeira-edu.pt/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Fgm4GJWVTRs%3D&tabid=3004>. [2017, April 26]. Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and Methods*. 3rd Edition. [Online]. Available: <https://www.slideshare.net/pavan7soni/case-study-research-by-robert-yin-2003>. [2017, May 4].

Yin, R. 2004. *Case Study Methods*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cosmoscorp.com/docs/aeradraft.pdf>. [2017, May 4].

Zainal, Z. 2007. *Case study as a research method*. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, University of Technology of Malaysia, 5(1):1-6.

7. APPENDIX

Appendix A – Coding Agenda

7.1 Coding agenda

The following table is the coding agenda for the qualitative content analysis:

Category	Variable (sub-category)	Definition of the Category	Examples from the interviews for statements suitable for the category	Coding rules
Theme 1: The term “oversight”				
(a) What does oversight mean for the participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of the term - Explanation 	The overall aim is to find out how different participants define the term oversight for themselves.	“In my opinion, oversight is a mechanism through which the legislature holds the Executive to account ” (1)	The first variable describes the definition. The second variable explains what oversight means and what are the preconditions.
(b) How is oversight achieved/performed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Own or collective responsibility 	Part of the definition of oversight is the question of whether oversight is something that the participant has to do on his or her own or whether it is a collective effort.	It is an individual responsibility and also a collective responsibility of the Committee Members. “I did raise a question [with the Minister], and I did make a statement about [identified case studies], and I did raise a question during budget vote [on	In theme 2, the study looks at the actual institutional action participants’ took to perform/achieve oversight.

			identified case studies] ” (3). “We ask [the Department] to make presentations about broad political interpretations to enrich our debates or understanding” (4).	
Theme 2: Committee - Oversight mechanism as enshrined in the Oversight Model				
(a) Exercising oversight through the portfolio committee and contacting the Department				
Portfolio Committee	“I could only think that the Committee then could you grilled the Department on that particular resolution”.(1)	“[We - Committee members] invite the Department from to time to make presentations on a particular event.” (3)	“There is a parliamentary committee to oversee a specific department; in this case, is the Portfolio Committee...keeping oversight over DIRCO” (4)	This section examined contacting the Department to exercise oversight through the Portfolio Committee as a tool to perform/achieve parliamentary oversight.
Contact or engagement with the Department	“We [Committee members] engage the Department and robustly so” (1)	“The Committee seem to meet regularly with the Director-General and senior management of DIRCO” (3)	“The Department as a whole (officials) are always available [to engage the Committee]”(5)	“We [Committee members] invite the Department from time to time” (4)

Theme 3: The participants' individual action of oversight				
(a) Experience				
During the Fifth Parliament	"My general experience has been a disappointment, utter disappointment."(1)	"My experience of the Committee's oversight role has been that it lacks effectiveness" (5)	"My experience is that the Department has been doing well" (4)	"We don't seem to engage with the Minister quite enough "(3)
Challenges?	"The Oversight model, which is applied in Parliament does not actually fit the Committee's nature of work" (1)	"The Minister never once came to the Portfolio Committee, instead, send the Deputy Ministers" (5)	"We have few limitations; for instance, our oversight model largely limits us. Oversight Model does not permit us to travel to South Africa's Mission to do oversight" (4).	"The challenge with that oversight is that the Committee seems to meet more regularly with the Director-General and senior management of the Department" (3).

7.2 Category system

For each theme, the various categories and variables will be analysed in-depth, with more details and statements from the participants. It is important to note that reproduced text solely comes from the transcripts. In a few instances, the author’s interpretation is marked with square brackets.

Theme 1: the term “oversight”				
Variables	Participant 1	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
(a) What does oversight mean for the participants?				
Definition of the term	“In my opinion, oversight is a mechanism through which the legislature holds the executive to account.”	“Ensuring that the executive is held accountable.”	“Oversight is an important tool by which Parliament holds the executive accountable.”	“It means holding the governing party to account.”
Preconditions and explanations	Engaging the Department to ensure check and balances. “We do engage the Department and robustly so, to ensure that the executive fulfils its mandate, if there are no checks and balances, the one-arm might even do wrong things without anybody doing anything about it.”	Inviting the Department to make a particular presentation event as a way of ensuring the Department delivers on its mandate. “[We] invite the Department from time to time to make presentations on a particular event., in ensuring that the executive delivers on the mandate.”	Inviting to make a presentation on an issue of national interest and to ensure that South Africans are served in the best possible way. “[We] invite the Department from time to time to make presentations on a particular event, peacekeeping, mediation, and other international interventions that South Africa is involved in. [To] make them [executive] to utilise the monies,	Using questions, motions, and statements in the NA or the Committee to ensure that Ministers fulfils her mandate. “Ensure that the governing party account on how budgets are used. This is done using various parliamentary tools/mechanisms like questions to Ministers, making statements in the House, byways of motions and statements.

			personnel and to serve South Africans in the best interest possible.”	To account on how Ministers carry out their duties and mandates”
(b) How is oversight achieved/performed?				
Own and collective responsibility	“We do engage the Department and robustly so”.	“I did raise a question [with the Minister], and I did make a statement about [identified case studies], and I did raise a question during budget vote [on identified case studies]”.	“We ask [the Department] to make presentations about broad political interpretations to enrich our debates or understanding”.	“I asked the Director-General what was the Department doing about lobbying for the seat on the UN Security Council”.
Theme 2: Committee - Oversight mechanism as enshrined in the Oversight Model				
Exercising oversight through the portfolio committee and contacting the Department				
Portfolio Committee	I could only think that the Committee then could you grilled the Department on that particular resolution”.	“[We - Committee members] invite the Department from to time to make presentations on a particular event”.	“There is a parliamentary committee to oversee a specific department; in this case, is the Portfolio Committee keeping oversight over DIRCO”.	“The Committee has taken a stand that the Minister should attend at least once a term to interact with the Portfolio Committee”.
Contact or engagement with the Department	Engaged the Department. “We do engage the Department and robustly so”.	In regular contact with the Department. “The Committee seem to meet regularly with the Director-General and senior management of DIRCO”.	Regular contact between the Committee and the Department. “We [Committee members] invite the Department from time to time”.	Department always available for engagement with the Committee. “The Department as a whole (officials) are always available [to engage the Committee]”.

Theme 3: The participants' individual action of oversight				
(a) Experience				
During the Fifth Parliament	Felt disappointed. "My general experience has been a disappointment, utter disappointment".	Felt unhappy that there was no engagement with the Minister. "We don't seem to engage with the Minister quite enough".	Felt good that the Department is doing well. "My experience is that the Department has been doing well".	Most unhappy throughout the Fifth Parliament
Challenges?	"The Oversight model, which is applied in Parliament does not actually fit the Committee's nature of work"(1)	"The challenge with that oversight is that the Committee seems to meet more regularly with the Director-General and senior management of the Department" (3).	"The Minister never once came to the Portfolio Committee, instead, send the Deputy Ministers" (5)	Have challenges with the unavailability of the Minister and the Oversight Model of Parliament.