

**Seating among the Giants: A study  
of South Africa's pursuit of the  
African agenda and voting  
behaviour in the United Nations  
Security Council"**

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## **Declaration**

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## List of abbreviations:

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAR	Central African Republic
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
E10	Elected 10
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
EU	European Union
G20	Group 20
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
IGO	International Governmental Organisation
IR	International Relations
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
P5	Permanent 5 namely China, Federation of Russia, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SCR	Security Council Report

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UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study investigates South Africa's three terms as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 2007 – 2008, 2011 – 2012, and 2019-2020 through the lens of the strategy of the African agenda, and its implementation in the UN body. The UNSC is the primary UN body in charge of the maintenance of peace and security at the international level, and as such most African conflicts are addressed in its meetings.

Similarly, one of the major goals of South Africa's African agenda is to ensure peace and security within the continent. Through this strategy, South Africa expresses its will to play an influential role on the continent, to speak on behalf of Africa on the global stage, and to champion its interests in international forums and organisations but also to promote 'African solutions to African problems'. Examining South Africa's performance in the UNSC represents, therefore, a useful and valuable way to assess the pursuit of the African agenda.

The study aims to assess whether South Africa stayed true to its African agenda in the UNSC through its actions and decisions, illustrated by its voting behaviour, by using a mixed approach combining a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. It examines the voting cohesion between Pretoria and other African members of the Council and critically evaluates its impact on the UNSC by looking at its records in the UN body.

The study reveals that South Africa indeed pursued the African agenda in the UNSC as shown by the voting cohesion with the members of the African group and the fact that Pretoria advanced AU's interests in the UNSC.

Based on the analysis of three case studies, the conflicts in Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire and Western Sahara, and South Africa's voting behaviour on these situations, the study also discusses the influence of Pretoria in shaping the outcomes and decisions of the UN body towards conflicts in the continent, and its alignment with the goals and principles underpinning its strategy of the African agenda.

The examination of these three case studies shows that South Africa's decisions and actions in the UNSC were not always aligned with its stated African agenda. Depending on the cases, the thesis uses the realist and constructivist approaches to understand why Pretoria did not always stay true to its African agenda. It also shows that South Africa remains an influential actor on peace and security at the regional level, particularly in Southern Africa, however, cannot be considered as a major influential continental actor in terms of peace and security.

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## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek Suid-Afrika se drie termyne as 'n nie-permanente lid van die Verenigde Nasies se Veiligheidsraad (VNVR): van 2007 tot 2008, 2011 tot 2012, en 2019 tot 2020; deur die lens van die strategie van Suid-Afrika se Afrika-agenda en die implementering daarvan in die VN-liggaam. Die VNVR is die primêre VN-liggaam in beheer van die handhawing van vrede en veiligheid op internasionale vlak. In daardie hoedanigheid word die meeste Afrika-konflikte in dié liggaam se vergaderings aangespreek.

Eweneens is een van die hoofdoelwitte van Suid-Afrika se Afrika-agenda om vrede en veiligheid binne die vasteland te verseker. Deur hierdie strategie streef Suid-Afrika daarna om 'n invloedryke rol op die vasteland te speel; om namens Afrika op die wêreldverhoog te praat; om sy belange in internasionale forums en organisasies te verdedig; maar ook om “Afrika-oplossings vir Afrika-probleme” te bevorder. Die ondersoek van Suid-Afrika se optrede in die VNVR is dus 'n nuttige en waardevolle manier die nastrewing van die Afrika-agenda te assesser.

Die studie het ten doel om te bepaal of Suid-Afrika getrou gebly het aan sy Afrika-agenda in die VNVR en sy optrede en besluite, geïllustreer deur sy stemgedrag, deur 'n gemengde benadering te gebruik wat 'n kwantitatiewe en 'n kwalitatiewe analise kombineer. Dit ondersoek die stempatroon en samehang tussen Pretoria en ander Afrika-lede van die Raad, en evalueer die impak daarvan op die VNVR deur middel van 'n kritiese blik op Suid-Afrika se rekord in die VN-liggaam.

Die studie toon dat Suid-Afrika wel die Afrika-agenda in die VNVR nagestreef het, soos blyk uit die stamsamehang met die lede van die Afrika-groep, en die feit dat Pretoria die Afrika-Unie (AU) se belange in die VNVR bevorder het.

Gebaseer op die ontleding van drie gevallestudies, die konflikte in Zimbabwe, Ivoorkus en Wes-Sahara, en Suid-Afrika se stemgedrag oor hierdie situasies, bespreek die studie ook die invloed van Pretoria in die vorming van die uitkomst en besluite van die VN-liggaam t.o.v. konflikte in die vasteland, en die belyning daarvan met die doelwitte en beginsels wat sy strategie van die Afrika-agenda onderlê.

Die ondersoek van hierdie drie gevallestudies toon dat Suid-Afrika se besluite en optrede in die VNVR nie altyd in lyn was met sy verklaarde Afrika-agenda nie. Afhangende van die gevalle, gebruik die tesis die realistiese en konstruktivistiese benaderings om te verstaan waarom Pretoria nie altyd getrou gebly het aan sy Afrika-agenda nie. Dit toon ook dat Suid-Afrika 'n invloedryke rolspeler oor vrede en veiligheid op streeksvlak bly, veral in Suider-Afrika, kan egter nie as 'n groot invloedryke kontinentale akteur in terme van vrede en veiligheid beskou word nie.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background

South Africa finished a two years tenure in the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC)<sup>1</sup> in December 2020 as one three representatives of the African Group. This was the third tenure for Pretoria in the UNSC after the two first terms that took place in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012. In the past fifteen years, no other country, except Japan and Germany, has served three mandates as non-permanent member of this UN body. This fact highlights the importance that South Africa put lately on serving in the body, and follow a trend that saw South Africa's increasing assertiveness on the global stage during these past 20 years, with the creation of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in 2003, the organisation of the soccer World Cup in 2010 and the integration within the BRICS Forum in 2011, among other activities and initiatives.

South Africa's research to serve as often as possible in the UNSC raises the question of its motivations to join the body. Scholars usually consider that states seek non-permanent seats in the UNSC for networking, influencing, getting status, and international prestige (Hurd, 2002:43). In the case of South Africa, the White Paper on South African Foreign Policy entitled "Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu" published in 2011, asserts that "South Africa seeks to become a permanent member itself" (DIRCO, 2011: 25). With that regards, serving in the body so many times would allow Pretoria to display that it has the right profile to be a permanent member and can effectively contribute to the maintenance of global peace and security, the main role of the UNSC, and play an impactful role. It would also be a way of unofficially declaring its bid and running for a permanent seat whereas the debates and demands for a reform of the Council reflecting the realities of the 21st century and ensuring a more equitable representation of the world population are becoming increasingly vivid.

In addition, another significant reason that appears to have motivated South Africa to claim a seat in the table of the great powers would seem to be the promotion of its strategy of the African agenda. This goal has remained constant in all three of the South African tenures in the

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Security Council will be referred to in the present thesis alternatively as the UNSC, the Security Council or the Council.

UNSC. On taking up its seat for the most recent tenure, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) claimed to “promote the African Agenda, including highlighting the continent’s priorities in the area of peace and security” (DIRCO, 2018). This objective echoed President Jacob Zuma’s (2011) statement in his speech at the start of its second tenure in the UNSC:

“we have taken up our non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, which we will use to promote the African agenda as well as peace and security in Africa and the world”.

Thirdly, the Department of Foreign Affairs’ (DFA) asserted that “South Africa utilises the Security Council seat to advance and consolidate the African Agenda” (DFA, 2007). In this way, therefore, South Africa’s leaders and successive Foreign Affairs Departments outlined the importance of the continent for the foreign policy implemented by Pretoria during all its tenures in the UNSC. This is in line with the fact that Africa is at the centrepiece of South Africa foreign policy (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 2). The significance of the African agenda in South Africa’s foreign policy is also clearly stated by the DFA as follows, “the consolidation of the African Agenda remains the principal focus of South Africa’s foreign policy” (2008) and is based upon the claim that “Africa is at the centre of South Africa’s foreign policy” (DIRCO, 2011:20).

There have been many occasions for South Africa to demonstrate its leadership and its understanding of Africa-related issues to promote its African agenda during its three tenures in the UNSC. Pretoria through its role in the UNSC indeed faced several crises that reached dramatic heights and that erupted in Africa during its tenures in the UN organ: the post-electoral crisis in Côte d’Ivoire in the first semester of 2011, the Arab awakening in North Africa and particularly the conflict in Libya in 2011, the crisis in Darfur and South Sudan, the piracy in Somalia, the repression of political opposition in Zimbabwe in 2007, the conflicts in Mali and in Central African Republic (CAR), the conflict in the Sahel during its last tenure, among others. Being in the UNSC provides thus an opportunity to voice on and act towards African conflicts, as the continent has been at the centre of the attention of the UNSC since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, conflicts on the continent make up more than 60% of the formal meetings of the body (Graham, 2015: 77). Numerous decisions and actions about peace and security in Africa are taken in the UNSC and being in the Council provides the opportunity to play an influential role in attending to African conflicts. The UNSC, through its role of the maintenance of peace and security at the global level and the fact that African conflicts have been primarily treated in

the body, offers thus a valuable arena to observe and examine the implementation of South Africa's African agenda on the global stage. It was the purpose of this research to interrogate if South Africa's African agenda – its goals and principles – was translated from intention and declaration into effective actions and decisions – through its voting behaviour – in the UNSC.

### **1.1.1 Conceptualising the African agenda**

For the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to understand, firstly, the notion of an African agenda, the rationale behind this strategy, and to clearly conceptualise it. The strategy of the African agenda is a theme well analysed by scholars (Zondi, 2012) (Landsberg, 2009) (Landsberg & Kondlo, 2007) (Landsberg: 2012) (Rapoo: 2015) (Gelb 2001) (Qobo 2010). Since the end of the Apartheid era, the strategy of the African agenda has been widely used by South African leaders, policy makers, and officials in their public discourses and official documents not necessarily explicitly but under different forms (van Wyk: 2015: 283). The DFA Strategic Plan 2005-2008 (DFA, 2005: 19) summarises the Africa agenda as follows:

The South African Government firmly believes that the future of South Africa is inextricably linked to the future of the African continent and that of our neighbours in Southern Africa. Therefore national visions of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society are also relevant in the context of our vision for the Continent. Coupled with this is the understanding that socio-economic development cannot take place without political peace and stability as they are a necessary condition for socio-economic development. Conversely socio-economic development is necessary in the context of addressing the root causes of conflict and instability.

Behind the concept of African agenda is, therefore, the idea that the futures of both South Africa and the continent are intricately intertwined (Qobo, 2010: 15). In its essence, this is what Nelson Mandela meant when he said that “South Africa cannot escape its African destiny” (1993, 87). In other words, the identity of South Africa is clearly African and embedded into regionalism and African nationalism, which acknowledges a sense of belonging and an African destiny. Furthermore, the rationale of this strategy is that the destiny, security, stability, development, economic growth, and prosperity of South Africa depends on that of the continent

of which it is part of (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 2). There are, therefore, common shared interests between Africa and South Africa.

Consequently, on this basis and background, the stated objectives of Pretoria's Africanist foreign policy orientation are to address the main challenges and realities affecting the continent. Three main responses and long-term goals guide South Africa's African agenda. These are to ensure the political stability through promoting good governance, while achieving peace and security in Africa and its socio-economic development.

The first objective is reaching **political stability** on the continent especially through **promoting good governance**. This includes a large array of actions such as a commitment in the consolidation of democracy on the continent, the support to multi-party elections, the respect of the rule of law internally and internationally, and the advancement of human rights, equality and justice in the international order. The promotion of good governance by South Africa can be demonstrated by its efforts to reform Africa's main institutions such as continental and sub-regional organisations like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and especially the African Union (AU) and its different bodies. South Africa also had a leading role in the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the AU (Alden, 2013: 4; Landsberg & Kondlo, 2007; van Wyk: 2012: 283) and in trying to strengthen the capacity of the AU. The consolidation of democracy in Africa is illustrated by the role South Africa held in the promotion of democratic political systems with multi-party elections on the continent, especially in the case of Zimbabwe.

The second aspect is linked to South Africa's commitment to **the peace and security** on the continent through conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-making<sup>2</sup>. Since the end of the Apartheid, South African governments and leaders have played an active role as mediator or peacemaker in Africa (Schillinger, 2009) and have been actively involved in the resolution of conflicts, including civil wars, and peace negotiations in various parts of the continent such as Burundi, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). South Africa's contribution in the peace and security on the continent is also illustrated by its participation in peacekeeping missions. Pretoria has also been involved in the building and strengthening of effective security architecture, mechanisms and structures on the African continent (Zondi, 2015: 101) and also in refining the relationship between the UN and AU structures.

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter 3 of the present thesis.

South African peace diplomacy and conflict resolution activities towards the continent have been widely examined by academic literature (Van Nieuwkerk, 2012) (Sidiropoulos, 2007) (Van Nieuwkerk, 2014) (Bischoff, 2006)<sup>3</sup>. This include its engagements in conflict prevention, peace-making, mediation, peace keeping, peace enforcement, peace building, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. South African peace diplomacy has been active on the continent, leading Pretoria to be perceived as a mediator (Clark, 2016: 41) and a continental peacemaker (Mabera & Royepeen, 2015:1) (Schillinger, 2009) (Barber, 2004: 85). The approach of South Africa to mediation is based on “inclusiveness, political will, impartial facilitation and consensus” (Mabera & Royepeen, 2015:4). These activities fall under the mandate of the UNSC, They are crucial to understanding the way South Africa deals with these issues on the continent and its decisions and actions during its tenures in the UN organ. In the same manner, the liberation struggle and the relatively peaceful transition to democracy of the country through negotiations and reconciliation among former enemies also inspired the way Pretoria approaches disputes on the continent, searching for peaceful solutions to attend to conflicts (Mathsiqi, 2012: 38) (Mabera & Royepeen, 2015:2) (van Nieuwkerk, 2012: 85).

South African logic for conflict prevention and attending to internal conflict is, therefore, based on a pacific approach using policy instruments, such as negotiated settlement, mediation, peace talks, dialogue, and negotiated solutions, instead of peace enforcement through force, sanctions, and military solutions (Sidiropoulos, 2007) (DFA, 1999: 7) (Nathan, 2005: 364-365) (Smith, 2012: 73) (Landsberg, 2015: 129). This model aims at bringing all belligerents to the table of negotiations to reach compromises (Sidiropoulos, 2012: 6). It includes other instruments, such as foreign aid geared towards funding peace-building activities. These instruments comprise promoting democracy, building institutional capacity, and for conflict prevention (Van Nieuwkerk, 2012: 95) or “training of diplomats, capacity-building workshops for the public sector and information-sharing and best practice exchanges” (Mabera & Royepeen, 2015:5) to achieve sustainable and long-lasting peace and political stability. It can be summarised as a holistic approach that aims at resolving conflicts in every aspect through using not only peace-making and peacekeeping but also peace-building and post-conflict efforts.

The ultimate goal and final desired outcome of the strategy of the African agenda aimed at addressing the issues of poverty, underdevelopment, and fostering economic growth on the

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<sup>3</sup> Bischoff in: SA foreign policy after apartheid in full flight



continent. It has been acknowledged that the **socio-economic development** of the continent is a target that cannot be achieved without prerequisites and enabling conditions which include ensuring political stability through good governance as well as maintaining peace and security on the continent (Nathan, 2011:58). In turn, socio-economic development also contributes to political stability and the maintenance of peace and security on the continent. This involvement in favour of the socioeconomic development of the whole continent is illustrated by the active economic diplomacy that South Africa undertook in Africa. This involves the increase in foreign aid directed towards African countries and its leading role in establishing the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The doctrine of the African agenda informs the role South Africa aspires to play to shape the future—developmental, economic, political, peace, and security agendas—of the continent. This has been based on the belief that South Africa wants to be recognised as and is expected by the rest of the world to be a leader on the African continent (Vaudran, 2016; Alden, 2013: 2; Clark, 2016; Gelb, 2001:4; Cilliers, 2010: 20). The role South Africa is playing on the continent has been analysed by scholars as a “norm entrepreneur” (Vaudran, 2016) shaping the future of Africa by its involvement in the reform of regional and sub-regional institutions and structure, the promotion of regional integration, and its investment of “substantial financial and human resources in the building of continental institutions that can accelerate the continent's pace towards development” (Ngwenya, 2012: 153).

Besides, Pretoria sees itself as an advocate for Africa on the international stage. Its policy-makers and leaders have claimed to speak on behalf of and advance – or even champion – through its foreign policy the interests of the continent (Jordaan, 2012: 283). It recognises the AU as the primary organisation for coordinating continental positions (DIRCO, 2011: 20). They assert to take this into account when engaging on bilateral activities or when participating in international fora such as the G20 or the IBSA Forum or strategic partnership alliances such as the BRICS (DIRCO, 20) (Smith, 2012: 74). Owing to its large economy and their perceived status of regional power and influence on the continent, South Africa was able to integrate international alliances and groupings (Qobo, 2010: 15). As such, South Africa is indeed the only representative of the African continent in most of these groupings and alliances, despite its presence being often questioned as it does not necessarily have the usual requirements that would justify its inclusion – South Africa is in the G20 without being among the twenty biggest world economies. Numerous scholars have questioned the presence of South Africa in the BRICS (Alden, 2013). According to Alden (2013), the second mandate in the UNSC must be

seen in the perspective of this claim of South Africa of being globally seen as the regional leader.

The goal of advancing the interests of Africa is linked to the mantra of promoting and finding 'African solutions to African problems'. This asserts that Africans should have increased autonomy from external actors to formulate their own solutions and establish their own agenda to solve the issues that encounter the continent (Landsberg, 2015: 128-129). It is based on acknowledging that for a long time in their history, Africans have been dictated their future or imposed solutions to address their own challenges. Their leaders have lacked the opportunity to craft their solutions and take ownership of the conflictual situation. Their perspectives have not been peace and security issues on the continent (Landsberg, 2012:127). Pretoria's claim to promote the African agenda to advance African interests in global institutions is simultaneously meant to defend and advance African solutions to Africa's problems.

Pretoria's African agenda can be traced back on the continent and South Africa's history. South African post-Apartheid foreign policy has been deeply rooted and framed in the legacy of the liberation struggle and its peacefully negotiated transition to democracy (Landsberg, :17) (Matshiqi: 2012: 38) (Zondi, 2015: 98). By drawing on their struggle to the Apartheid, the post-Apartheid South African leaders built the country's foreign policy by opposition to the former regime. South Africa was considered as a pariah during the Apartheid by the rest of the world. During the Cold War, South Africa was aligned with the West (Dika, 1), fighting against guerrillas identified as communists. In contrast, post-Apartheid leaders would identify the country as African, within the Global South and the non-aligned movement. Furthermore, to differentiate itself from a regime that projected its power through a strategy of domination and destabilisation of the neighbouring countries and the use of force (Nomfundo Xenia Ngwenya, 2012: 153), post-Apartheid South Africa based its relationship with fellow African partners through cooperation rather than coercion (van Nieuwkerk, 2007: 65).

The colonial history of the continent and of South Africa nurtured its fears of being perceived as a hegemon by other countries of the continent, consequently influencing its actions and decisions towards its African peers (Qobo, 2010: 16) (Kornegay, 2012a: 200) (van Heerden, 2018) (Zondi, 2015) (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 2) (Landsberg, 2015: 119). This official policy is illustrated by the following quote from the DFA: "South Africa should deal with African partners as equals and avoid all hegemonic ambitions" (DFA, 1996). It is also characterised by a search for multilateral consensus instead of acting unilaterally (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 2). The

solidarity and supports received from different countries, personalities or political parties on the continent, such as Zimbabwe or Libya, generated a feedback support from South Africa after its liberation (Jhazbay, 2012: 243). This was to cause some perplexity among Western countries that considered certain regimes like Zimbabwe or Libya as undemocratic (Sidiropoulos, 2007: 2). This background is important to understand its foreign policy decisions and actions towards its continent as framed in its African agenda. Kornegay insists on the importance of this context in order to “understanding how South Africa aligned itself during its first tenure on the UN Security Council in 2007-08” (2012: 6).

The set of values and principles informing and underpinning the way South African post-Apartheid foreign policy is conducted and formulated cannot be separated from the history of South Africa and the continent. The African agenda is clearly informed by anti-imperialist or post-colonial rhetoric and postures, the DIRCO asserting its objective of “addressing colonial legacies and neo-colonial influences” on the continent (DIRCO, 2011: 20), and showing a “visceral anger at historical and contemporary manifestations of imperialism and racism” (Nathan, 2005:363) for obvious historical reasons. The African agenda is also characterised by an aversion for regime change, the respect of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states (DIRCO, 20). The promotion of unity among African countries and to deepen regional integration through multilateral organisations in the African agenda is based on the pan-Africanism doctrine (Zondi, 2012:99). Among the values that South Africa promote in its African agenda are the promotion of democracy and human rights based on diplomacy on the continent (Qobo, 2010).

Arguably, therefore, the strategy of the African agenda is the main goal and external policy agenda of South African foreign policy and can be conceptualised as the government’s stance towards and public policy strategy vis-à-vis Africa. This policy guides and frames its interactions on the global stage. In other words, it is what South Africa envisions for Africa’s future, the place and role Pretoria intends to play in achieving this objective, and the actions and decisions deemed appropriate by Pretoria to contribute to this objective.

### 1.1.2 Operationalising the concept of the African agenda in the context of the United Nations Security Council

South Africa's goal was to promote the African agenda as one of its main objectives in the UNSC in 2007, 2011, and 2017; however, pursuing this strategy in the UNSC requires operationalising and applying the concept in the framework of the body. It also necessitates obtaining an understanding of the goals expressed through the official public documents from the DFA and the DIRCO, and the speeches from presidents, ministers, representatives in the UN and other officials of the country, especially during the campaign to obtain the seat in the UNSC before beginning the tenures.

The main theme was “to promote stability and security, particularly on the African continent” (DFA, 2009). This echoes a declaration made in 2018 that South Africa “will actively contribute to achieving an Africa at peace” (DIRCO, 2018). This constant strategy for all three tenures relates directly to the strategy of the African agenda and the second of its three focus areas – to ensure peace and security on the continent. Several sub-related goals claimed by the DFA and the DIRCO link to this overarching goal for promoting the African agenda in the UNSC.

In the first place, South Africa claimed to “advance African common positions” (DFA, 2006), “use non-permanent membership as a strategic opportunity to advance the interests of Africa and the South” (DIRCO, 2011: 25), or to highlight “the continent's priorities in the area of peace and security” (DIRCO, 2019). This can be directly linked to the African agenda of South Africa which claims to speak on behalf of Africa in international organisations. In the Security Council, this aspect carries even more weight owing to the election process to obtain a seat as a non-permanent member. Pretoria was indeed nominated and supported by the SADC and endorsed by the AU<sup>4</sup> (Serrao, 2011: 3) to represent the continent in the UNSC for all three tenures before being elected in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) within its regional group. This process confers legitimacy to an African nonpermanent member to speak on behalf of their region and advance the continental's interests. In return, they are expected to promote defend common African interests, positions, and decisions on the issues brought in the UNSC,

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<sup>4</sup> For the three tenures, South Africa was endorsed first by the SADC, then by the AU. South Africa was endorsed for a second tenure at the AU Summit at its 14th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa on 31<sup>st</sup> January to 02 February 2010.

especially for issues concerning Africa. To investigate this further, a need exists to clarify the rationale behind African interests in the UNSC.

The advancement of African interests and priorities in the area of peace and security can be linked to two South African goals in the UNSC. The first was to strengthen the cooperation between the UN and the AU (especially the African Union Peace and Security Council with the UNSC) on conflict resolution and peacebuilding on the continent. South Africa particularly emphasised that aspect during its three tenures as illustrated by both following statements: “it is critical to strengthen the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC), and its linkage to the United Nations Security Council” (DIRCO, 2011a: 21), and “it will continue to promote effective partnerships between the UN and regional and subregional organisations” (DIRCO, 2018). The second goal linked to placing African interests pursued by South Africa in the UNSC was the body's reform, entrenched in the larger South African framework of the global governance reform<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, South Africa abided to the Ezulwini Common African Position (Ezulwini Consensus) endorsed by the AU Executive Council in March 2005. This exposes its official position regarding the reform of the UNSC and, broadly, the UN system, requesting two permanent seats with the right of veto and five nonpermanent seats for the continent in the Council (African Union Executive Council, 2005). Pretoria claimed to take advantage of its non-permanent seat in the UNSC to push for a reform of the UN organ which would ensure an equitable representation of Africa in the Council, but also improved its working methods to make it more legitimate and effective: “pursuing equitable representation of Africa on the United Nations Security Council” (DIRCO, 2011), “work towards improving the working methods of the UNSC to make it a more legitimate, representative and effective body” (DIRCO, 2019).

Under the *Agenda 2063* initiative of the AU, and particularly its Article 61, which states that it will “continue to speak with one voice and act collectively to promote our common interests and positions in the international arena” (AU, 2015), South Africa’s leaders pointed out the need to collaborate and synchronise their position with other African countries. This would be in order to advance the interests of Africa and to act as a collective voice in the UNSC to influence UNSC outcomes especially on the continent related matters. Gabon, Nigeria, South

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<sup>5</sup> However owing to the author’s preferences, this aspect will not be treated to assess South Africa’s African agenda in the present study.

Africa and Uganda collectively stated that they would promote the AU agenda in the UNSC (Kota, 2010).

Last, even if not explicitly stated, an assumption can be made that South Africa would influence on the Africa-related issues in the UNSC. Being influential on the UNSC outcomes and decisions towards the African continent is consistent with its goal of acting as a regional leader on the continent and championing its interests in the world affair, as seen in the section 1.1.1. Alden agrees with Schoeman (2013: 2) that it is in the context of its desire to be seen as a regional leader on the continent, that South Africa's elections in the UNSC must be seen. It is also aligned with ensuring that African solutions are being taken into account to resolve African conflicts in the UNSC. It could be therefore expected that the Republic took the lead on the Africa-related issues in the UNSC, weighted on its decisions or actions towards the continent, or that at least, that Pretoria's viewpoints were considered by the other members of the UNSC in order to be able to pursue its African agenda.

Applying a foreign policy behaviour aligned with the African agenda in the UNSC would mean for South Africa to place African interests in the UNSC, which includes the strengthening of the link between the AU and the UNSC. As South Africa claims to speak on behalf of Africa, it would mean that Pretoria would promote and defend African (or, more concretely, the AU) positions and solutions to African conflicts in the UNSC. It would also mean that South Africa would ensure that the outcomes of the UNSC are aligned with African positions by weighing and leading as much as possible on African-related items. Last, South Africa would coordinate and adopt common positions with the other African representatives in the UNSC.

## **1.2 Preliminary literature review**

Although Alden (2015: 1) observes that "South Africa's two terms – 2007–2008 and 2011–2012 – as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) has received limited scholarly attention", much has been written on South African tenures in the UNSC including with regards to its African agenda, except for the third tenure because of the time of the writing of the present thesis. The academic literature has examined the overall performance of South Africa in the first tenure (Cilliers, 2010; Masters, 2011; van Nieuwkerk, 2007), or during both the first and second tenures (Kornegay, 2012; Serrao, 2011). Another study focused on the

actions of South Africa to promote a greater collaboration between the AU and the UNSC (Alden, 2015), especially through its Presidency of the Council (Nganje, 2012). Scholars have also been concerned with several specific cases and issues in this time, namely South African's voting pattern during both first tenures within the UNSC (Bowland, 2012; Graham, 2015, 2016), the issue of the reform of the UNSC (Efsthapoulos, 2016), the comparison and the competition between South Africa and Nigeria in the UNSC (Maseng & Lekaba, 2014), the emerging powers dimension of South Africa tenures in the UNSC (Naidu, 2012).

South Africa's foreign policy in the UNSC has been described as "confusing", "demonstrating incongruity in its behaviour" (Alden, 2015: 1; Graham, 2015) while several studies or media reports maintained that both first tenures were highly controversial (Graham, 2015: 73; Kornegay, 2012: 5; (Serrao, 2011), "perplexing or puzzling" (Graham, 2015: 73), and ambiguous, showing contradictions in the decisions and positions of South Africa (Alden, 2015: 1). It was the case especially of the first tenure (Serrao, 2011) whereas the second tenure saw an improvement in terms of its performance (Nganje, 2012).

South Africa's position in the UNSC on the cases of Zimbabwe and Myanmar have been commented in the literature (van Nieuwkerk, 2007). These analyses are concerned with the implications of South African decisions in terms of foreign policy principles. Firstly, they tend to emphasise the contradictions and incoherencies between South Africa's refusal to condemn human rights abuses and its stated principles of promoting democracy and having human rights considerations which should guide its foreign policy (Kornegay, 2012: 5; Serrao, 2011: 2; van Nieuwkerk, 2007: 71). In addition, South Africa was qualified of "rogue democracy" (Kornegay: 2012:1) and received sharp critiques (Alden, 2015) (Graham, 2015) (Serrao, 2011) both from the West (Le Pere, 2014: 41), but also domestically (Serrao, 2011) for its positions on both cases.

In terms of the second tenure in 2011-2012, the literature has treated the UNSC response to the conflict in Libya and the decisions of South Africa extensively, especially the vote on the Resolution 1973 (2011) that authorised a no-fly zone over Libya (Graham, 2015; Landsberg & Moore, 2012; Moore, 2011; Nganje, 2011; Serrao, 2011; Zondi, 2015). Several scholars have pointed out the contradictions between some key principles and goals of South Africa's foreign policy and the decision that was made to support the Western sponsored resolution which ended on the final death of Muammar Gaddafi and regime change (Landsberg & Moore, 2012; Moore, 2011). The adoption of the Resolution 1973 has also demonstrated the limited power of

the non-permanent members to influence the decision-making outcomes in the Council (Nganje 2011). Previous researches by scholars (Graham, 2015; Zondi, 2015) contend that South Africa was not at the forefront in the UNSC on the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and did not weigh decisively on the UNSC decisions on the case. In such terms, therefore, it failed to make other members follow its solutions on the crisis.

The Emerging powers dimension is another aspect that has been addressed by scholars, especially in the case of the second tenure as South Africa became member of the BRICS in 2011 and somewhat demonstrated reluctance to support the Western permanent members positions during its first tenure (Serrao, 2011: 2). It was particularly noted that South Africa could be influenced by the competing interests of its emerging power allies. However, despite the fact that South Africa voted along Russia and China on several occasions especially during its first tenure (Kornegay, 2012: 9), scholars also assert that they failed to create a real bloc, opposed to the Western bloc, gathering the members considered as emerging powers (Naidu, 2012).

In all three tenures, South Africa's actions towards Africa were particularly scrutinised as it is a priority of its mandates. Scholars acknowledge the efforts of South Africa in trying to refine the relationship between the UNSC and the AU, asserting that Pretoria had a leading role (Cilliers, 2010) and achieved relative successes in promoting closer collaboration between both organisations (Alden, 2015) (Kornegay, 2012: 8) (Masters, 2011: 2). For Matshiqi (2012), the performance of South Africa in the promotion of the African agenda in the UNSC forms the core of his argument that South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to the African agenda but encountered difficulty in advancing the interests of Africa when the continent is divided on issues that affect it. The DIRCO, the institute for Global Dialogue and the SAIIA (2011) convened a "strategy dialogue in preparation for South Africa's second council term" on the topic of the African agenda to assess the country's performance on this theme during its first tenure and raise the implications and the expectations for its second tenure.



### 1.3 The Rationale for the study

The timing of this dissertation is deemed significant as South Africa just finished its most recent tenure within the UNSC in the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020 and therefore, the third tenure has been less studied by the academic literature.

As observed in Section 1.2, only some aspects of its African agenda in the whole period of its tenures have been examined in the extant literature. The African agenda has been addressed by Alden (2015) who has assessed the contribution of South Africa during its two tenures in the Council in terms of the strengthening of ties between the AU and the UNSC, and thus placing and championing African interests in the UNSC. Graham (2015) analysed the voting pattern of South Africa for several African cases but the focus was not on the African agenda, but rather on the alignment of South Africa's voting behaviour to its declared foreign policy goals and principles, including the African agenda, and to analyse trends between both first tenures.

There are aspects of South Africa's performance which has not yet been systematically analysed, including in its voting behaviour. The determination of the degree of alignment of South Africa voting with other African countries in the UNSC, and especially related to the resolutions on African-related items, remains a gap in the literature. Another significant aspect missing in the literature is whether South Africa proved influential through its voting behaviour in the UNSC on African-related topics.

This study, therefore, discusses these gaps in the literature by exploring South Africa's pursuit of its African agenda in the UNSC through an analysis of its voting behaviour. This is also conducted by considering its actions, decisions, commitments, and statements during its tenures. It is hoped this will contribute to assessing the performance of Pretoria within the UNSC on the specific topic of the African agenda.

South Africa's tenures in the UNSC are particularly relevant to assess its African agenda. Through its actions, decisions, and statements, being in the UNSC "allows a state [...] to succinctly communicate to the rest of the world what it thinks about issues, what it intends to do about these issues and with whom it agrees or disagrees on it" (Graham, 2015:74). Exploring

the tenures, particularly its voting patterns is, therefore, accurate to assess the foreign policy behaviour and orientations of South Africa.

Furthermore, academic literature on the UNSC tends to focus more on the five veto-powers as permanent members. As a result, the focus is on the actions and the power dynamics between them that shape and determine the overall action of the UNSC (Bosco, 2009). Consequently, the interest of this research study was to shift towards the perspective and foreign policy behaviour of a 'minor' country serving in the UNSC, which has less weight on the decisions of the UNSC which means it should, therefore, adapt its foreign policy. This study, therefore, intends to assess how a nonpermanent member of the UNSC can exert its influence especially on topics of its own interest.

#### **1.4 Problem statement and objectives of the study**

The primary research question that arises from this introduction is:

**Was there an alignment between South Africa's stated African agenda and its voting behaviour in the UNSC?**

The research question aimed to determine whether South Africa's voting behaviour in the UNSC was consistent with its stated African agenda, the goals established prior to its tenures as reflected in its strategy of the African agenda, and its foreign policy approach towards conflict resolution on the continent (based on what has not engaged yet in the literature and presented in 1.2). It will also reveal whether South Africa met its African agenda goals by being influential on the outcomes of the UNSC towards African conflicts. To help answer and support the main research question, two sub-questions will be tackled to cover the various aspects and issues of the African agenda and South Africa's behaviour towards African-related topics in the UNSC. The findings from these two questions helped consolidate a response to the main research question, as follows:

- **Did South Africa vote in line, side together, and advanced common positions in the UNSC with its African partners, particularly on Africa-related topics?**

During all three terms, South Africa served in the UNSC with numerous other African countries<sup>6</sup>. As South Africa has claimed to coordinate its positions with other African members of the Security Council as observed in the Section 1.1.2, this study will determine if South Africa followed this strategy by using a voting cohesion index method presented in Chapter 2. The response to this question will necessitate determining the percentage of voting similarity between South Africa and the other African members of the UNSC and comparing it with the percentage of voting similarity of South Africa with other groups of countries of the UNSC. If South Africa was aligned with its strategy of the African agenda, the percentage of similarity would be, therefore, higher with the former compared to the later. A further analysis will determine whether South Africa's votes were even more aligned with votes from other African members of the UNSC on African-related topics in the UNSC, in line with its African agenda to coordinate positions on African items.

- **Did South Africa's voting behaviour display that Pretoria demonstrated leadership and was influential on the UNSC outcomes and decisions on African topics?**

The literature did not systematically cover this aspect of South Africa's performance in the UNSC. This sub-question aimed to assess the extent of the influence and contribution of South Africa in the decision-making for African-related items in the UNSC through an analysis of its voting behaviour. As South Africa claims to play the role of regional leader on the continent, this research question aimed at analysing whether Pretoria demonstrated leadership in the UNSC through its voting behaviour. Leadership can be twofold: crafting its decision without the influence of other countries in the UNSC and influence the decisions of other body members so that they abide to its perspective. The study attempted to determine whether South Africa has had a meaningful role, weighted on the Security Council's decision-making process and shaped its outcomes on African-related issues. The analysis was based on how the theories approach the question of influence in International Relations (IR)—specifically in the UNSC, and how small and middle states (Chapter 2) pursue their agenda in the UNSC and influence the agenda setting and decision-making process of the body. The analysis also discusses

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<sup>6</sup> See table 5 in the section 3.2.

whether South Africa has the capacity and the means to be a leader in Africa, especially in peace and security-related issues and concerning the influence of other members of the UNSC.

The response to the main research problem of the alignment with the strategy of the African agenda in its voting behaviour also lies in examining whether South Africa remained consistent in its policy choices on two aspects. These are, first, the claim of promoting African solutions and speaking on behalf of Africa on the global stage therefore, ensuring that the decisions of the UNSC are aligned with the AU positions on a conflict. Second, the study will determine whether the Republic's voting decisions in the UNSC stayed true with the traditional solutions to deal with conflicts in the African continents by using peaceful means, such as negotiated settlements between belligerents, instead of the use of the force or sanctions. These aspects will be tackled in the last section of the study by an analysis of the voting behaviour of South Africa on several instances through these lenses to summarise how South Africa implemented its African agenda in the UNSC.

## **1.5 Research design and methodology**

This research comprises one main question and two sub-questions to support the core question on whether South Africa promoted its African agenda in the UNSC through its voting behaviour. Consequently, to best answer all these questions, the research will make use of a mixed methodology combining a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Indeed, the approach is mostly based on a quantitative method to answer the sub-questions related to the voting alignment, whereas the second one will be tackled through a qualitative method. The findings from both sub-questions will help consolidate an answer to the main research problem.

Qualitative research focuses on social actors and their actions from the perspective of the actors themselves, otherwise called the “emic perspective” (Babbie & Mouton, 2005: 270), studying the social-historical context and settings where the actors evolve and interact (Berg, 1998: 7), as well as considering and “understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc.)” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 3). In qualitative research, the method often refers and is closely associated with the theory (Berg, 1998) and researchers follow a non-linear research path. They apply logic in practice which is “a logic of research based on an apprenticeship model and the sharing of implicit knowledge about practical concerns and specific experiences” (Neuman, 2006: 141). For the qualitative aspect

of the thesis, the methodology will make use of the one developed by S. Graham, which will be presented in chapter 2, to analyse the voting behaviour of a country in the UNSC.

For the second sub-question, the study used the extant literature presented in Chapter 2 on how small states and middle powers can influence the decision-making process of the UNSC as nonpermanent members to provide an answer to the question. The approach used is descriptive. The core question of the research was approached based on the responses and findings from the two sub-questions.

For the sub-question aiming at determining the voting cohesion and level of alignment between South Africa and African nonpermanent members in the UNSC, this study employed a mixed approach but with a quantitative basis with statistical data. The material used was the voting records of South Africa and other members of the Security Council. The voting cohesion was measured using the voting records of the UNSC. This was conducted through an analysis of the convergence of their votes to illustrate the alignment of positions between Africa and other African members of the Security Council on Africa matters. Mathematical formulas were adapted to the specific context of the UNSC and according to the study's goals. The methodology used to determine voting cohesion is detailed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

This research method was based on the data and material available on the activities of the UNSC. The analysis and review of texts and documents used primary or secondary sources. Data collection for primary sources was mostly derived from the UNSC, the DFA, and the DIRCO. Most of the primary sources from the UNSC are on its website. It includes the Council documents, the records of the meeting that detail the voting decisions of the UNSC members on resolutions, reports, and documents from subsidiary organs. Other primary resources include the speeches and statements on the website of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN and keynote speeches, white papers, publications, and annual reports on the DFA and the DIRCO websites.

Data collection included secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, academic work, and documents from the Security Council Report (SCR) website. The academic sources focus on South African foreign policy broadly and the UNSC to define the context and the foreign policy goals of South Africa. Exploring local and global media further allowed for data on global perceptions of South Africa's tenures in the UNSC.

## 1.6 Limitation and delimitation

A major limitation of the study is the lack of sources and records regarding the informal discussions and meetings, as well as the Council's closed-door conversations. For instance, the resolutions are often the result of complex off-the-record negotiations between member-states of the UNSC to find common positions that communicate the decisions of the body on an issue. Consequently, without the records, it is not possible to determine with total accuracy the positions defended by the countries during the process of negotiation and their viewpoints on conflict-situations. Most of the voting following the drafting of resolution are consequently adopted by consensus between member-states of the UNSC. Besides, interviews could not be conducted due to time constraints despite the need for information about the private meetings, the off-the-record bargains and negotiations in the UNSC as well as some explanations on certain actions and decisions made by South Africa in these tenures.

In terms of delimitations of the topic, the research will focus only on selected topics – Africa-related issues<sup>7</sup> in the UNSC, peace and security in Africa – which are more relevant to South African foreign policy, and its African agenda. The length of the study does not allow an adequate analysis of all the activities of Pretoria during the tenures on all African topics or the reform agenda as each item would require extensive background research to understand the current situation at the moment of its treatment in the UNSC as well as an assessment of South African point of view about each one of them. Hence, the fact that the study focuses on the African agenda through the lens of South Africa's voting behaviour.

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<sup>7</sup> An understanding of what "Africa-related issue" or "Africa-related item" means, is provided in the chapter 2.

## **Chapter 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of chapter 2 is twofold. It aims firstly at presenting the concept of voting behaviour, the voting process in the UN and the methodologies used in the literature to analyse the voting behaviour of a country in the UNSC. It provides a framework to answer the second sub-question on the voting alignment of South Africa with its African counterparts in the Security Council. The second subsection of this chapter presents how IR theories approach the UNSC members' influence on the body's outcomes and especially their strategies on the vote. It will help to delineate the constraints, capacity, and scope of actions for member states of the UNSC, particularly the E10. This subsection presents the theoretical framework that will help answering the second sub-question of the study on South Africa's influence on the UNSC outcomes and decisions on African topics through its voting behaviour.

### **2.1 Methodology to analyse the voting cohesion:**

This sub-section presents the methods used in the literature to establish the 'voting cohesion' or 'voting coincidence'<sup>8</sup> among member-states in international governmental organisations (IGOs), especially in the UN and particularly in the UNSC. These methods will be used to address the sub-question of whether South African voting records are in line with other African partners on Africa-related issues. Besides, the sub-section will present S. Graham's methodology to analyse the voting behaviour of a UNSC member. The thesis structure will partially make use of this methodology to answer some aspects of the main research problem.

#### **2.1.1 The concepts of voting behaviour and voting cohesion:**

Examining the voting behaviour or voting pattern of a country in an international institution aims at explaining how and why decisions were taken, using the voting records and analysing the voting choices to measure states' preference over foreign policy. This is possible because

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<sup>8</sup> Also coined as voting similarity or voting affinity, and sometimes voting alignment in the literature.

the voting pattern broadly reflects “where a country stands, with whom it stands and for what purpose - at least in the UN context” (Khan, 2020: 3). In the case of IGOs, voting data is considered as a viable set to measure and analyse foreign policy positions and orientations “as they are comparable and observable actions taken by many countries at set points in time” (Bailey, Strezhnev & Voeten, 2017: 431). Indeed, countries vote on the same topics or situations, which helps to distinguish similarities and differences concerning perspectives among them.

The voting cohesion is one aspect of the voting behaviour of a country in an international institution. It is an evidence-based analysis which indicates the degrees of similarity of the voting pattern (or share of identical votes) of two countries or more that are participating in the same voting setting. Such an analysis is based on the observation that a pair of countries which frequently vote in unison results from their preferential affinities (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). However, in the case of the UNSC, an important additional aspect in the measurement of the voting affinity between states is due to the implicit rule of consensus. This rule complicates observing significant differences among countries, especially in the case of the nonpermanent members of the UNSC.

The literature examining the voting cohesion of countries in IGOs is extensive with studies on the voting coincidence cohesion in the UN in general (Hurwitz, 1975) , in the UNGA (Campbell, 1971) (Birnberg, 2009) (Kaplan et al, 2015 (Hosli et al, 2012) (Luif, 2003), the voting coincidence of Bangladesh in the UNSC (Khan, 2020), between China and Russia (Ferdinand, 2013), in other institutions where the voting process is similar such as the European Union (EU) (Hix et al), and voting cohesion of the BRICS countries in the UNGA (Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire, 2016). It results on the existence of numerous approaches and methods to calculate voting cohesion but only one will be presented for the purpose of this thesis in the section 2.1.4.

### **2.1.2 The United Nations Security Council and its voting system:**

Before, presenting the methodology, it is worth presenting the UNSC voting system to understand how the voting behaviour of a country can be analysed in the body and the voting cohesion being determined.



The UNSC is one of the six main organs of the UN. It is composed of fifteen member-states divided in two categories. Firstly, the five permanent members, unofficially labelled ‘the P5’, composed of China, France, the Federation of Russia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA). The second category comprises ten temporary members, known informally as the ‘E10’ (elected 10). Each has a two-year mandate – half are elected annually by the UNGA since they are ineligible for direct re-election and must rotate.

It expresses its final decisions on a conflict, an issue, or a thematic related to the maintenance of peace and security through four official documents, but the resolutions are the ones put on a vote. The other documents, press statement, presidential statements, and communiqués are agreed upon between all members of the UNSC prior to the public meetings through informal consultations. The resolutions are the most important texts. The drafting of resolution can be made by a member of the Security Council or a group of countries, either being in the UNSC or not. It can also be co-sponsored by several states. The countries which support, sponsor, or submit a resolution are mentioned and made publicly available for most resolutions.

The vote on a resolution with the subsequent discussion afterwards is the last part of the working process of the UNSC. It represents the most scrutinised aspect of the Security Council’s procedures and receives the most attention and media coverage (de la Sablière, 2015). Member states have each one vote and can either vote in favour of the resolution, cast a negative vote or abstain. They abstain if they do not support or want to display their disagreement on a resolution but do not want to obstruct the passing; therefore, block the Council’s action on an issue. An abstention can also be considered an equivalent of a negative vote (Shearar, 2011: 90).

The minimum required number for a resolution to pass is nine affirmative votes on procedural or non-procedural (or substantive) matters. Substantive matters are more important than non-procedural matters (Okhovat, 2011: 7) and the right of veto of the P5 is applied to them, meaning that a procedural matter requires the concurring affirmative votes of the permanent members. A member of the P5 can also allow a resolution to pass by abstaining on procedural matters. The principle for the vote in the UNSC is the consensus among the members especially since the end of the Cold War<sup>9</sup>. If the resolution does not require unanimity to pass, the members often search for unanimity to legitimise the Council’s actions. Resolutions are usually discussed and negotiated before the vote, to accommodate conflicting views in formulating the document.

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<sup>9</sup> More than 90% of resolution since 2001 were adopted by consensus.

They are put to the vote only when member states' interests converge, resulting in a high percentage of votes adopted unanimously.

The vote at the UNSC is therefore part of a whole process and analysing the voting behaviour of a country in this UN body requires to look at the entirety of this process and not only to focus on the voting action itself. It is necessary to examine the declarations and actions of an UNSC member on the conflict or the thematic issue in the UNSC and in other frameworks prior to and after the vote takes place on this conflict or issue in the UNSC.

### 2.1.3 Graham's methodology for analysing the voting behaviour

As observed in section 1.2 regarding the literature review, the main academic work which analyses the voting pattern of South Africa in the UNSC is Suzanne Graham's article entitled *South Africa's voting behavior at the United Nations Security Council: A case of boxing Mbeki and unpacking Zuma?* (Graham, 2015) which focuses on South African's voting behaviour during its two first tenures within the UNSC. She aims to determine whether Pretoria's decisions in the UNSC, such as its votes, were aligned with its main declared foreign policy principles and values.

For this, she established a model to analyse the voting behaviour of South Africa in the UNSC in three steps. The first step analyses the state's declared foreign policy which is realised through an investigation of the official statements, speeches, or documents from the state's officials and departments. The second level of analysis is the proper examination of the state's voting behaviour. This particularly verifies whether there was an alignment with other countries or countries grouping. The third step is the perception from various actors of the voting behaviour of South Africa. She, therefore, compiled the views, judgements, and observations of decision-makers in the government, media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), analysts, and observers. Central to her argument is that there have been no significant changes in voting behaviour between the first and the second term despite the change of presidency. A summary of her methodology is presented below in table 1.

Table 1: Model of voting behaviour

<p>Step 1. Declared foreign policy (government information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foreign office/Head of government's office</li> <li>- Press office/Media briefings</li> </ul> <p>Guiding question: What are the themes driving a state's foreign policy?</p>
<p>Step 2. Voting Action</p>

- Yes/No/Abstain/Non-Voting/Adopted without a vote (consensus)

Guiding question:

What is the actual voting stance taken by the state within the UN?

Does the vote align with a particular group?

Is the vote consistent with the state's foreign policy?

Are explanations provided prior to or after voting?

Step 3. Interpretations of voting action

- Government's views and observers' views (other states, the media, IGOs, NGOs, analysts, other observers)

Guiding questions:

Did the state attempt to explain its voting action at the UN (through speeches or press releases)?

What was the state's perception of its vote?

What does the vote signify (if anything)?

Was there an external response to the state's voting action (statements by other states, the media, interested observers, analysts, academics and the like)? If so, what were the responses?

Source: South Africa's voting behavior at the United Nations Security Council: A case of boxing Mbeki and unpacking Zuma? (Graham, 2015)

The African agenda is one of the four themes used by S. Graham to analyse the alignment of South Africa's voting patterns with its declared foreign policy. According to her results, she claims that in four out of five cases, South Africa's vote aligns with the main goals and principles of its declared foreign policy. Besides, her analysis of the voting behaviour of South Africa in the UNSC focused on whether it was aligned with its principles and values for the two first tenures and did not include the third term.

Graham's methodology inspires the general research design of the study to analyse the voting behaviour of South Africa; therefore, through the main research problem, it determines whether Pretoria stayed true and implemented its strategy of the African agenda in the UNSC through an analysis of its voting patterns. It uses a similar three steps process. As the study focuses on the African agenda, the strategy is presented and conceptualised in Section 1.1.1 based on the declared foreign policy and how the academic literature analyses it. The strategy was then operationalised in the UNSC in Section 1.1.2. This corresponds to Step 1 of Graham's methodology. Chapter 3 displays the voting data of South Africa in the UNSC with a particular emphasis on African-related items. In that aspect, Chapter 3 follows Step 2 of Graham's methodology. Last, Chapter 4 displays similarity with Step 3 of Graham's methodology as it attempts to determine whether, in three cases, South Africa's votes aligned with two aspects of its African agenda based on the perception and signification of its votes.

Measuring the voting alignment is not a goal of Graham's article despite evocating the necessity to analyse the alignment of the vote with a particular group in Step 2. She does not display the results of the analysis of the voting alignment with other countries' grouping. This study, therefore, measured the voting alignment of South Africa with various countries within the UNSC during its tenures in the body. The study attempts to identify whether South Africa aligned with other African countries, specifically on African-related topics. Determining the influence of South Africa's vote on the UNSC outcomes on African-related items is not a purpose of Graham's article. In these aspects, the study is, therefore, complementary to the work of S. Graham.

#### **2.1.4 Methods to determine the voting cohesion in the United Nations Security Council**

The subsection aims at presenting the main methodology to measure the voting cohesion or alignment of a country with other countries in IGOs. The voting process is similar between the UNGA, the UNSC, and the EU. The methods used for the three bodies can be employed interchangeably. For the present study, the choice was to use a quantitative approach, the most used by the USA, to compare its voting pattern with those of other members of the UNSC (Khan, 2020) but also by scholars. Other methods tested for the study were the agreement index approach (Hix et al, 2005<sup>10</sup>), the index of voting cohesion (Hurwitz, 1974), and the method developed by Hosli (Hosli et al., 2010).

The method used in this study, separates the voting cohesion into three categories – same, partial, and opposite vote. The same vote refers to a situation where two Council members voted similarly on a resolution, either in favour, against, or abstained. An opposite vote refers to a situation where one of the Council members votes in favour and the others against. Last, a partial vote refers to a situation where one Council member abstains and the others voted in favour or against (Khan, 2020). Based on these indicators, the following calculation is made:

The voting coincidence [...] is calculated by adding one (1) point for every “same” vote, zero (0) point for every ‘opposite’ vote, and a half (1/2) point for every

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<sup>10</sup> Hix, S., Noury, A., and Roland, G., ‘Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001’, *British Journal of Political Science* 35, 2005, pp.209-34

“partial” vote. The total number of points is then divided by the total number of votes each year. (USA Department of State, 2018)

The allocations of 1 point for ‘opposite vote’ and 0,5 point for ‘partial’ vote are based on ‘the predominant view in the literature that a “no” vote is a stronger signal of disapproval than an abstention’ (Khan, 2020) and that an abstention vote is considered as having distinctive incentives than the two other possibilities and therefore make it a singular choice of voting. The results using this method are displayed in the tables 6 and 7. However due to the particular setting of the UNSC, with permanent members and elected members, and as the thesis is reviewing three tenures, and, therefore, three periods of time, the method of calculations and the formula had to be adapted to these constraints as presented in Chapter 3.

For this study and to assess South Africa’s strategy of the African agenda in the UNSC, the analysis of the foreign policy behaviour and actions of South Africa in the UNSC focused on the Agenda items, which are the Africa-related questions or issues considered by the Security Council at meetings under its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. “Related to Africa” means that the topic is somehow connected or relevant to the African continent. The agenda items include country-specific issues which are addressing an ongoing conflict or a dispute or post-conflict situation monitored by the UNSC that are geographically located in one country or a region. A country-specific situation related to Africa, therefore, refers to an item treating an ongoing conflict or post-conflict situation in an African country or region. They also include thematic or general issues, referring to items addressing a cross-cutting specific theme of conflict resolution, such as the non-proliferation of weapons or children soldiers. These thematic issues are usually perceived as preventive diplomacy to mitigate the risk of conflict or threat to the peace and security associated with a thematic area, such as climate change, drug trafficking, or small arms trade. A thematic concern related to Africa, therefore, refers to a thematic concern relevant to the continent.

## **2.2 Influencing and shaping the Security Council agenda and decisions through the vote**

After having presented the methodology which will be used to determine the voting cohesion of South Africa to answer the main research problem and the question of whether South Africa’s

votes were aligned with its fellow African partners, this section clarifies at how a nonpermanent member of the UNSC can influence the decision-making process of the Council through its voting behaviour based on various theoretical approaches. This subsection explores how the E10 can influence the UNSC and implement their agenda in the UNSC through voting, therefore, meeting at least some of its objectives to respond the second sub-question.

### **2.2.2 Realism and its emphasis on the P5**

Realism contends that the actions of the states in the international stage are guided by the pursuit or the defence of national interest or self-interest, and this “concept of interest” is “defined in terms of power” (Morgenthau, 1960:5). Aron (1984) conceptualises power as “the capacity of a political unit to impose its will upon others”; power can be seen as the ability of a state to impose its own interests and political agenda on the international scene. It can be measured in terms of status, influence, resources or advantages.

In the UNSC, an IGO composed of member-states, the main decision-makers are the latter. Member-states shape and dictate the decision-making process and the outcomes of the Security Council. The traditional IR literature claims that the decision-making process of the UNSC “is dominated by the capabilities of the P5” (Thorhallsson, 2012: 140). Owing to its structure and composition, the Security Council allocate various power capabilities among its members, giving them more or less weight on the agenda-setting and the final decisions which decisively influence the world peace and security. Indeed, the structural inequality of the UNSC is established between the five veto-wielding permanent members and the nonpermanent members. The former occupies the dominant position, controls the agenda setting and shapes the UNSC decisions (al Shraideh, 2017). By holding the veto power, the P5 possess considerable power to shape the outcome and dominate the decision-making process of the UNSC. O’Neill (1996: 222-223) has conducted research focusing on the voting rules in the Council using a quantitative method (the Shapley-Shubik index) to establish the share of power for each permanent member and nonpermanent member within the setting of the UNSC. The author’s findings were that the permanent members each concentrate 19,6% of power to shape the decision of the UNSC on a particular item, against less than 0,2% each for nonpermanent members.

Besides, the P5 possesses significant leverage as they can also threaten to use their veto<sup>11</sup> for the vote on a draft resolution, threatening to quash it if they disagree with the text of the draft, a powerful additional device in the hands of the countries bearing it. These threats are usually not explicitly formulated but rather implied by the P5. This was evidenced in the case of France which threatened to use its veto if a resolution authorising the USA to invade Iraq was put to a vote in 2003 (Tavernier, 2008: 379).

Power in the UNSC lies not only in breaking or making decisions through the veto but through the negotiation process. The P5 exploit their institutional knowledge and memory accumulated through their extensive experience as permanent members (Lupel & Mälksoo, 2019). This allows them to use the complex formal and informal working methods to their benefit. They also tend to have a better knowledge of the history of conflict situations, as the Council has treated some for years. Besides, some researchers have observed that the P5 often decide to spend more attention on an issue when their interests are at stake (Butler, 2012). As a result, their perspective is always considered and they have more means to pursue their own interests in the Council. The configuration of the UNSC, therefore, leaves little room for the ten elected members to contribute, shape, and influence the body's final decisions and actions.

In this sense, the UNSC illustrates of the realist's perception of IGOs as the vessels of state actions and interests. For instance, Voeten (2005) demonstrates the use of the UNSC by the USA to advance its foreign policy agenda and objectives. There is inevitably a power dynamic with competition and rivalries established among the members to weigh and to exert more influence on the final actions of the UNSC on topics perceived as of particular interest to them. This is the case for contentious issues particularly, such as an ongoing conflict or conflicts being in a sphere of influence of a permanent member where the decision-making process on these issues is monopolised by the P5 (Gifkins, 2021: 13). The power dynamic among the P5, therefore, determines and structures the whole agenda and the working methods, the decision-making process, and in the end, the final actions of the Security Council. Indeed, the effectiveness of the Council greatly depends on the cooperation among the permanent members. This often affects the capacity of elected members of the Council to set and pursue their own agenda since the power dynamic severely constrained the decision-making outcomes (Cilliers, 2010: 20).

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<sup>11</sup> A practice nicknamed as "hidden veto", "informal veto" (Gifkins, 2021 :5) or "the pocket veto" (Okhovat, 2011).

Previous research on the working methods used by the P5 historically demonstrates that the permanent members, and especially the P-3, share responsibility for drafting resolutions among themselves for most items on the agenda of the UNSC (SCR, 2018). The draft resolutions are negotiated and agreed upon among the P3, before being negotiated with Russia and China. However, they are often submitted to the latter elected members “at a relatively late stage, sometimes with the explicit understanding that the text of the resolution is non-negotiable” (Keating, 2016:45). Consequently, this ‘take it or leave it’ approach offers limited room for the nonpermanent members to influence on the main UNSC outcomes represented by the resolutions.

Because of its focus on material capabilities, power, and factors to determine the influence on the global stage, traditional realist approaches to studying global politics provide limited insights to understand and explain the ability of the E10 to influence and shape the Council’s agenda and outcomes. This aspect complicates why nonpermanent members are elected to this exclusive club “as the centrepiece of their UN diplomacy and a great diplomatic achievement” (Von Einsiedel et al., 2015:4-5). They have no real benefits, according to realists. A legitimate question then arises: is there room for manoeuvre for nonpermanent members, and what options do they have to influence the Council’s actions and decisions without the right of veto to fulfil their foreign policy agenda, goals, and interests?

### **2.2.3 Constructivism and the legitimacy approach on decision-making**

Based on the failure of the realist theory to rationally explained why countries that are not permanent members of the UNSC would compete and invest ample resources in being elected in the body, whereas they should have no interests in obtaining a seat, constructivism offers a another perspective that fills this void. The constructivism approach explains how the E10 can influence UNSC decision-making processes. This is based on the work of Hurd (2002) (2007), applying a legitimacy theory. His study includes the importance of symbols to observe several aspects of the body, such as the reform of the UNSC. Legitimacy is used in peacekeeping (2002), in the campaign and competition to obtain a membership in the UNSC (2007), and in agenda setting (2002). For instance, the USA pursued to legitimate its future military intervention in Iraq through a UNSC resolution (Hurd, 2007). Gifkins (2021) further developed and applied the legitimacy theory, explaining how non-permanent members can continue to



hold symbolic power. Even though the P5 is a single holder of the veto, it still pursues favourable votes and the E10 support on the resolutions considered, drafted by the P5.

An unanimously approved resolution is more legitimate, therefore the “drafters privilege unanimous decisions so elected members can leverage this to enhance their influence” (Dunne & Gifkins 2011, 523). This is attributable to the consensual tradition of voting in the UNSC, pursuing more legitimacy to the UNSC decisions. The support from an E10 member perceived as representative of a particular region or being considered as a regional leader, would be more solicited for a resolution dealing with a conflict within its region. Gifkins (2021: 10) illustrates this aspect: “when an elected member is from the region under discussion the ‘legitimacy value’ of its support increases”.

#### **2.2.4 The literature on small states and middle powers’ influence in the United Nations Security Council**

If the literature focused on the P5 decisions and actions as the primary drivers of the UNSC decisions, an increasing literature, however, observe how the E10 can influence the decision-making process, shape the UNSC outcomes, implement their agenda, and meet foreign policy goals (Farrall Loisel, Michaelsen, Prantl, & Whalen, 2020; Keating, 2016; Langmore & Farall, 2016; Pay & Postolski, 2021; Thorhallsson, 2012). This literature attempted to analyse how small states or middle powers can advance their agenda and be effective in the UNSC. Three central aspects of the UNSC are identified, which the non-permanent members can influence. These aspects are the agenda-setting, the decision-making process, and the additional activities of the UNSC.

The E10 needs to prioritise where they can bring change and where they want to be influential, attributable to a lack of capacity and diplomatic resources, compared to the P5 (Farrall et al 2020; Lupel and Mälksoo 2019). The E10 can champion an item and be instrumental in the decision-making process of the UNSC on a particular matter through prioritising and demonstrating leadership (Thorhallsson, 2012). This means organising debates and negotiations, setting the timeline, drafting the resolutions on thematic or country-issues of less interest for the P5. This includes a strong opposition between them preventing one from being in charge of the subject or if the other member of the Council recognises their knowledge or competence on the issue. The diplomatic capacity can also be determinant to be impactful in the UNSC (Gifkins, 2021). It is understood as the human resources, the knowledge of the

Security Council practices and procedures, and the diplomatic skills and practices of a non-permanent member's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Members devoid of veto power in the UNSC, destitute to weigh on the decision-making process of the Council, can be involved in coalition-building (Thorhallsson, 2012: 156). In the UNSC, coalition-building involves forging a temporary alliance with other members of the Council—either from the E10 and / or the P5, coordinating perspectives or defend common position during the negotiations before the voting, or voting collectively on an item. This practice can be efficient for an E10 when they can obtain the support of one member of the P5. This support can provide veto power to defend a common position and potentially suppress a resolution. The E10 would otherwise not embrace such power.

The procedure and working methods provide several opportunities for the E10 to be effective in the UNSC. The rotating presidency is a main instrument for a member of the UNSC to advance its agenda in the institution (Langmore & Farrall, 2016: 63; Thorhallsson, 2012: 156), through influencing the agenda setting of the Council. The member holding the rotating presidency seat usually takes this opportunity to serve its own objectives, influencing and conveying critical matters of the member's concern to the Security Council table. This ability is a clear indicator of its foreign policy interests, goals, and motivations. This especially applies, considering that a state usually pursues its national interests through international institutions, as observed by the realist theory. During the presidency, the member holding it would often choose a topic on top of its agenda and may refuse to bring an item to be treated by the UNSC. A state can also present an item not originally planned to be treated on the agenda of the Council.

An E10 member can write to the Secretary-General, requesting that a specific topic be added to the UNSC agenda. The nonpermanent members can be actively involved in the subsidiary bodies, chair an ad hoc committee, lead UNSC diplomatic missions in countries affected by a conflict, and contribute to UN peacekeeping operations, to make the most of their membership in the UNSC.

South Africa has been considered as a middle power (Cooper, 1997), an emerging middle power (Shelton, 2012: 218) (Jordaan, 2003) (Serrão & Bischoff, 2009), or a regional power (Clark, 2016). Conceptualising these terms and applying them to South Africa can provide a comprehensive framework to understand South Africa's actions in the Security Council. Middle power refers to a hierarchy among states in the global system. Those labelled as middle powers

would correspond to an intermediary position, neither great nor small, among states. The academic literature classifies middle power according to their material capacity, for those influenced by realism. These states are also categorised according to their behaviour, called statecraft-based definitions (Ping, 2005) for the scholars influenced by liberalism. The behavioural approach, defining a middle power, is of interest for this study.

Keohane (1969) conceptualises a middle power in IR as “a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution”. This definition explains a principal feature of middle power. It confirms an incline towards multilateralism, seeking multilateral solutions to international problems, and the use of multilateral institutions to reach agreement at international level. This is attributable to their minor capacity to influence and shape the international system. They would combine their forces with other states and collaborate to support their foreign policy goals. This echoed the perspective of Cooper (1997) that middle powers are keener to collaborate with other states to reach compromises.

Another characteristic of middle powers’ behaviour on the global stage, especially in international organisations, is the propensity to act in the so-called “niche diplomacy” (Cooper, 1997). States considered middle power, therefore, to specialise in and target specific topics or areas, provided their limited resources or influential capacity. They cannot accomplish everything and perform in a wide range of areas. This hindrance pushes them to avoid dissipating their resources. The “niche diplomacy” approach has been employed to analyse and characterise small and middle states’ behaviour in the UNSC and how they influence and shape the UNSC outcomes on concerns (Lupel and Mälksoo, 2019: 7). By prioritising, focusing, and choosing where to allocate diplomatic resources, small and middle powers can overcome their lesser human resources, achieving successful outcomes in issues of interest to them and, therefore, making a real difference.

South Africa can be considered as an archetype of middle power, following these behavioural characteristics. Pretoria also claims that its priority concerning foreign policy is towards the African continent, placing its resources and efforts to guarantee peace and security and favouring its socioeconomic development. This focus can be observed as niche diplomacy where instead of being active globally, such as a global power, a middle power focuses on a specific area.

### 2.2.5 The case of the drafting of resolutions and the penholder system

Assuming the lead on or to champion an item is a significant way for members of the UNSC to implement their foreign policy agenda in the body and influence its decisions (Thorhallsson, 2012: 156). The most visible approach to identify a leading country on an item in the UNSC is to observe which country is involved in the drafting of resolutions concerning the item, as demonstrated below. Another means is to identify penholders for an item in the UNSC—since 2014 or chair a subsidiary organ on an item.

The practice of a country, or a group of countries, assuming the leadership on specific issues by administrating the drafting of all resolutions concerning an issue, evolved from an unofficial practice to become systematic in 2010 (SCR, 2018). According to the SCR website, penholdership “refers to the member of the Council that leads the negotiation and drafting of resolutions on a particular Council agenda item”. Penholdership is, therefore, a practice “whereby one or more states take political ownership for drafting decisions on a given topic” (Gifkins, 2021 :5). This directs that the country “assumes responsibility for a given issue and initiates all actions by the Council related to that issue, including drafting documents, chairing negotiations, holding emergency meetings, scheduling open debates and organising visiting missions” (Pay & Postolski, 2021: 5). Teixeira (2003: 15) contends: “If one looks at how the issues on the Council’s agenda are handled one can see that decisions are very often drafted by a group of interested states”. For instance, France historically actively participated in drafting resolutions in the UNSC for issues concerning francophone countries, such as the DRC, the CRA, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burundi (Teixera, 2003).

By holding such influence on the item and controlling the agenda setting and decision-making process on an item, a Council’s member has a greater influence in shaping the UNSC discussions, actions and weighting on the outcomes, according to its own interests for the item (Farall et al, 2016). Drafting and sponsoring resolutions is, therefore, a way to advance its interests on particular issues or countries. A state can manipulate the resolution language and the way a resolution is worded (al Shraideh, 2018). It allows control over the UNSC agenda an item, including determining its outcome—the resolutions on a particular topic.

It is, therefore, applicable to analyse this aspect of the UNSC working procedure. It can inform the influence of South Africa on the Security Council and its interests, especially regarding its African agenda. It also provides an indicator, identifying countries or issues South Africa focused on in the UNSC decisions and where its interests are at risk. This can be

perceived by comparing the number of resolutions dedicated to the continent to the resolutions considered.

### **Conclusion of the chapter:**

The chapter 2 provides the methodology and the theoretical framework that to respond to the main research problem and the two sub-questions of this study. It presents the method used in Chapter 3 to determine whether South Africa's voting was aligned with its fellow African countries, especially for the resolutions on Africa-related topics. It also introduced]s the theories that could help explain how the E10 can be influential in the decision-making process of the UNSC, particularly through their voting choices.

## CHAPTER 3: PRESENTATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S VOTING PATTERNS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

### Introduction

Chapter 3 presents South African voting records in the UNSC, identifying the voting patterns of the three tenures of South Africa in the UNSC and examining the voting cohesion of South Africa with other African members of the Security Council. The chapter answers the sub-question on the voting cohesion of Pretoria with the other African Council members while providing insights to consolidate an answer to the main research question.

Section 3.1 focuses on the voting patterns of South Africa in the Security Council, with a close lens on African-related topics and what information can be obtained from this analysis and are relevant to answering the research questions. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 examine the voting cohesion of South Africa in the Security Council with its fellow African partners during its three mandates in the institution. The aim is to observe whether South Africa stayed true to its claimed goal of voting in line with the other African members and build a united African front, especially on African-related topics.

### 3.1 Presentation of South African voting patterns in the United Nations Security Council

As revealed in Table 2 below, South Africa participated in 368 votes in total that adopted 349 resolutions overall<sup>12</sup> during its three tenures in the UNSC. Among the resolutions put to the vote by the Security Council during all three tenures, South Africa voted in favour of 355. Among the 349 resolutions adopted by the UNSC, Pretoria supported 344.

**Table 2. Summary of the number of public meetings, resolutions and presidential statements during South Africa's tenures in the Security Council**

Year	Formal Meetings	Resolutions Considered	Resolutions adopted	Presidential statements
2007	244	66	65	48
2008	202	57	56	50

<sup>12</sup> Eighteen resolutions were blocked by at least one negative vote casted by a permanent member of the UNSC and one did not receive sufficient positive vote.

2011	235	68	66	22
2012	199	55	53	29
2019	249	58	52	15
2020	81 <sup>13</sup>	64	57	13
Total	975	368	349	177

Source: The Role of Nonpermanent Members of the UN Security: A Lessons Learned (for both the first tenures) and authors' own account (for the third tenure)

All the non-consensual votes, where at least one member abstained or voted against a resolution, during South Africa's all three tenures are detailed below in Table 3. For convenience, the voting decisions of South Africa in these cases, including when Pretoria abstained or cast a negative vote, are also presented in Table 3. This table demonstrates a progressive shift concerning consensual decisions in the UNSC while comparing the three periods. Only nine votes were non-consensual during the first tenure, compared to eleven votes during the second and 34 during the last. The UNSC seems increasingly divided between two poles along the lines of Russia and China on one side and Western countries on the other.

**Table 3. Details of the non-consensual vote on the resolutions during South Africa's tenures in the Security Council**

2020				
	18 December		The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Russian Federation
S/PV.8775	12 November		The situation in Somalia	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Russian Federation
	30 October		Women, peace, and security	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America
	30 October		The situation concerning Western Sahara	<b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8768	15 October		The question concerning Haiti	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8758	15 September		The situation in Libya	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Russian Federation
	31 August		Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Against: United States of America

<sup>13</sup> Only 81 in-person meetings took place in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 269 Videoconferences took place as well.

	14 August		Non-proliferation	<b>Abstaining:</b> Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, <b>South Africa</b> , Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
	11 July		The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russian Federation, Dominican Republic
	10 July		The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia <b>Against:</b> Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America
	10 July		The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
	8 July		The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia <b>Against:</b> Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America
	7 July		The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
	25 June		International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation
	29 May		Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South-Sudan	<b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8732	25 February	SC/14121	The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8722	12 February	SC/14108	The situation in Libya	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation
S/PV.8719	11 February	SC/14105	The situation in Libya	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation
S/PV.8712	31 January	SC/14096	The situation in the Central African Republic	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8700	10 January	SC/14074	The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America
<b>2019</b>				
S/PV.8697	20 December	SC/14066	The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8697	20 December	SC/14066	The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Belgium, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait



				Against: Dominican Republic, France, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States
S/PV.8665	15 November	SC/14021	The situation in Somalia	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Equatorial Guinea, Russian Federation
S/PV.8651	30 October	SC/14003	The situation concerning Western Sahara	<b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8623	19 September	SC/13956	The situation in the Middle East	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Equatorial Guinea Against: China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8623	19 September	SC/13956	The situation in the Middle East	Against: Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States <b>Abstaining:</b> Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8559	25 June	SC/13856	The question concerning Haiti	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Dominican Republic
S/PV.8536	30 May	SC/13827	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<b>Abstaining:</b> China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8518	30 April	SC/13795	The situation concerning Western Sahara	<b>Abstaining:</b> Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.8514	23 April	SC/13790	Women and peace and security	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: China, Russian Federation
S/PV.8510	12 April	SC/13777	The question concerning Haiti	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Dominican Republic, Russian Federation
S/PV.8484	15 March	SC/13738	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Russian Federation
S/PV.8476	28 February	SC/13725	The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	<b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b> Abstaining: Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia
S/PV.8476	28 February	SC/13725	The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Against: Belgium, France, Germany, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America Abstaining: Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Kuwait
<b>2012</b>				
S/PV.6889	17 December	SC/10858	International Tribunal - Yugoslavia	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Russia Federation
S/PV.6838	19 September	SC/10769	Children and armed conflict	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Azerbaijan, China, Pakistan, Russian Federation
S/PV.6819	31 July	SC/10735	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan	<b>In favour: South Africa</b> Abstaining: Azerbaijan
S/PV.6810	19 July	SC/10714	Middle East	Against: China, Russian Federation

				<b>Abstaining:</b> Pakistan, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.6809	19 July	SC/10713	Cyprus	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Azerbaijan, Pakistan
S/PV.6711	4 February	SC/10536	Middle East situation - Syria	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
<b>2011</b>				
S/PV.6674 (Resumption 1)	5 December	SC/10471	Peace and security in Africa	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> China, Russia Federation
S/PV.6627	4 October	SC/10403	Middle East situation	<b>Abstaining:</b> Brazil, India, Lebanon, <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation
S/PV.6552	9 June	SC/10276	Non-proliferation	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Lebanon
S/PV.6498	17 March	SC/10200	The situation in Libya	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Brazil, China, Germany, India, Russian Federation
S/PV.6484	18 February	SC/10178	Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> USA
<b>2008</b>				
S/PV.6045	16 December	SC/9539	Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
S/PV.5947	31 July	SC/9412	Sudan	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Against:</b> USA
S/PV.5933	11 July	SC/9396	Peace and security — Africa (Zimbabwe)	<b>Against:</b> China, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b> , Viet Nam <b>Abstaining:</b> Indonesia
S/PV.5848	3 March	SC/9268	Non-proliferation — Iran	<b>Abstaining:</b> Indonesia
<b>2007</b>				
S/PV.5744	19 September	SC/9122	Afghanistan	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russia Federation
S/PV.5742	14 September	SC/9115	International Tribunal — Yugoslavia	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russia Federation
S/PV.5710	29 June	SC/9064	Iraq	<b>In favour:</b> <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Russia Federation
S/PV.5685	30 May	SC/9029	Middle East situation	<b>Abstaining:</b> China, Indonesia, Qatar, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b>
S/PV.5619	12 January	SC/8939	Myanmar	<b>Against:</b> China, Russian Federation, <b>South Africa</b> <b>Abstaining:</b> Congo, Indonesia, Qatar

Source: Table made by the author based on the data of the UNSC website

As revealed in Table 4 below, South Africa's percentage of positive votes was 96,47% during all its tenures. It demonstrates that South Africa overwhelmingly supported the common position of the UNSC. Similarly, to the evolution of the increasingly divided UNSC, there is a strong difference between the first tenures—except for the first year of the first tenure, where

South Africa had a relatively cooperative behaviour— abstaining three times and voting against only one resolution – and the last tenure where South Africa displayed assertive and discordant behaviour in the UNSC—abstaining or voting against the resolutions nine times.

**Table.4 South Africa voting records in the UNSC**

	<b>Number of vote</b>	<b>Positive votes</b>	<b>Abstention</b>	<b>Negative Votes</b>	<b>Pourcentage of Positive vote</b>
<b>All (country-specific and thematic) issues considered by the Council</b>					
2007	66	64	1	1	96,97%
2008	57	56		1	98,25%
2011	68	67	1		98,53%
2012	55	54	1		98,18%
2019	58	53	4	1	91,38%
2020	64	61	3		95,31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96,47%</b>
<b>Africa-related topics and thematic issues</b>					
2007	33	33			100%
2008	40	39		1	97,5%
2011	50	50			100%
2012	36	36			100%
2019	36	33	3		91,67%
2020	42	39	3		92,86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>97,05%</b>

Source: Table made by the author based on the data of the UNSC website

Concerning the resolutions on African-related items and thematic issues relevant to African peace and security, South Africa voted in favour of 97,05% of the resolutions considered. South Africa always voted in favour of the resolutions of the UNSC during its two first tenures except in the vote on draft resolution 447 in 2008. This vote concerned the situation in Zimbabwe, which Pretoria voted against. In the last tenure, South Africa constantly abstained on the three resolutions regarding the situation in Western Sahara put to the vote during its last tenure and abstained on the resolution on the Reports of the Secretary-General on Sudan and South Sudan in 2019.

In clarifying the difference of voting choices with other African countries on African-related topics, South Africa disagreed with at least one of the two other African nonpermanent members of the UNSC serving alongside Pretoria in the Security Council in seven instances. In the two first tenures, disunity among the African members of the UNSC on an African-related item occurred only once—in the case of the vote on the situation in Zimbabwe in 2008, where Burkina Faso voted in favour of the resolution, whereas South Africa and Libya voted against. The six other cases occurred during the last tenure. In 2019, Equatorial Guinea abstained for a vote on a resolution on the situation in Somalia, whereas Côte d’Ivoire and South Africa supported the resolution. South Africa constantly abstained from the resolution on the Western Sahara situation, whereas all four other African countries that served during its last tenure voted in favour of the resolutions put to the vote. It was not unique but constant. Remarkably, South Africa voted in favour of the other votes on Western Sahara during its two first tenure. Concerning the percentage for the total duration of its mandate in the UNSC, South Africa agreed with other African E10 members in 97,05% of African-related items put to the vote. This indicated a high level of agreement, demonstrating that the positions were aligned, if not coordinated, in most cases.

### **3.2 Determination of the voting cohesion for resolutions on all items**

For the analysis of the voting cohesion of South Africa with other African countries, especially on African-related topics, instead of focusing only on resolutions on country issues treating an ongoing or post-conflict situation in an African country or region, the resolutions on thematic issues relevant to Africa have also been integrated to the calculation. The calculation was based on all draft resolutions put to the vote in the UNSC to examine the voting cohesion, including those that failed<sup>14</sup>.

Observing substantial differences among members can be difficult owing to the consensus-driven nature of the UNSC votes. For instance, countries with opposing interests and diverging perspectives on the international stage, such as Russia and the USA, can have a high voting cohesion if a brief period is considered. It is, therefore, necessary to compare the voting cohesion among various members or grouping of countries to claim that a member has

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<sup>14</sup> The list of non-unanimous resolutions which passed and the resolutions which failed is included in Table 3.

potentially coordinated positions with another or other members. Three tenures were considered for the study, with varying timeframes between permanent members and non-permanent members, but also within group of countries. Within the nonpermanent members' group, five are rotating annually. Examining the voting cohesion, therefore, is more accurate and provides more insights and trends if we consider all tenures together. Looking at one tenure or the three tenures together provides an opportunity to identify real trends concerning voting patterns, presenting a more accurate response to the question of voting alignment among the African members of the Council.

This study divided the members into three groups to compare the voting cohesion and to determine if the analysis of voting cohesion demonstrates that South Africa coordinated positions with other African countries on African-related resolutions put to the vote.

The first group of countries gathers the permanent members in the Council during the whole time South Africa had its tenures. The voting cohesion can be calculated during the whole period with this specific group and individually. The second group of countries gathers the African members of the Council. Along with Pretoria, twelve other African countries were members of the UNSC during the three SA tenures, as illustrated by Table 5 below. This is because South Africa entered the UNSC as the sole African representative for all its tenures and owing to setting the body (with three African members serving two years, two rotating one year, and the other member rotating another year). South Africa never served more than a year alongside the other African members in the UNSC; therefore, the latter can be taken as an entire group and compared to the permanent members of the Council to examine the voting cohesion of South Africa.

**Table 5 African countries on the UN Security Council (2006-2020)**

Bold denotes concurrent position on AU-PSC

The two columns in the middle represents concurrent 2 years mandate

Year	Countries		
2006	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Republic of Congo</b>	Tanzania
2007	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Republic of Congo</b>	South Africa
2008	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Libya	South Africa
2009	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Libya	<b>Uganda</b>

2010	<b>Nigeria</b>	Gabon	Uganda
2011	<b>Nigeria</b>	Gabon	<b>South Africa</b>
2012	Morocco	Togo	<b>South Africa</b>
2013	Morocco	Togo	Rwanda
2014	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Chad</b>	Rwanda
2015	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Chad</b>	Angola
2016	Senegal	<b>Egypt</b>	Angola
2017	Senegal	<b>Egypt</b>	Ethiopia
2018	Côte d'Ivoire	Equatorial Guinea	Ethiopia
2019	Côte d'Ivoire	<b>Equatorial Guinea</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
2020	Niger	Tunisia	<b>South Africa</b>

Source : <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africa-can-become-more-influential-in-the-un-security-council>

The last group of countries gathers the remaining E10 from other continents. They share the same characteristics as the African members, rotating every two years, with three or four new countries entering for two years. Therefore, the voting cohesion of South Africa can be compared with all three groups of countries.

The voting cohesion of South Africa can, therefore, be compared with all three groups of countries. This subsection presents the results of the calculations according to the method of calculation and indicators explained in Section 2.2.4. The percentages obtained are for a periodicity of either:

- One year in the case of an African country that served only one year alongside South Africa;
- One tenure meaning two years for each of the permanent members, for a group of four African countries serving alongside South Africa for a duration of a tenure, and for a group gathering the remaining members of the E10, which included three countries, for a total of six, rotating annually and four other elected members elected obtaining their seat with South Africa and which served alongside South Africa for the whole duration of its tenure;
- All three tenures for each of the permanent members, for all the other African countries serving alongside South Africa during its tenures in the UNSC, and the remaining E10.

The formula introduced in the section 2.1.4 had to be adapted to make meaningful comparisons considering the fact that the group of countries composed of various number of

countries and considering that countries did not serve in the UNSC for the same duration. For the permanent members, the formula did not have to be amended to determine the voting cohesion, as South Africa served alongside them for the same period. The percentages displayed in the below table 6 are for an overall tenure on the last column. The formula developed in the thesis derived from Hosli et al. (2010) whose formula developed to calculate EU cohesion in the UNGA is the following:  $C = (AVx - 0.5) * 2 * 100$ , with C being the index of cohesion score and AVx represents the average vote on a resolution. This average vote is then calculated using the figure for each type of vote as presented in the Chapter 2.

First of all, considering ‘j’ countries and a time period of ‘i’ years, each country votes ‘Vi’ times during a year ‘i’ (where  $i = 1, 2, \dots, i$ )<sup>15</sup>. In this way, the total number of votes TNV of the ‘j’ countries over the ‘i’ years is defined by:

$$TNV = j (V_1 + V_2 + \dots + V_i) = j (\sum_{i=1}^i V_i)^{16}$$

Example: Taking  $j = 3$  countries, and considering a period of  $i = 5$  years over which the annual number of votes is 40 during the first two years, and 30 during the last three years. Then the total number of votes is  $TNV = 3 (40 + 40 + 30 + 30 + 30) = 3 (170) = 510$ . Now the similarity of any vote of these countries with the corresponding vote of South Africa is characterised as follows:

An identical vote is indexed by  $k = 1$ , a vote with partial similarity is indexed by  $k = 2$ , and finally, an opposite vote is indexed by  $k = 3$ . The study also defined the total number NVijk of South African votes with the similarity ‘k’ with the corresponding vote of the country ‘j’ during year ‘i’, for any triplet (i, j, k), where i from 1 to ‘i’, j from 1 to ‘j’, k from 1 to 3. Accounting for these definitions, the following formula is made:  $NV_{ij1} + NV_{ij2} + NV_{ij3} = V_i^{17}$

The subsequent step is to quantify mathematically the similarity of any vote of any of these countries with the corresponding vote of South Africa mathematically. Therefore, they were weighed by  $W_k$  ( $k = 1, 2, 3$ ), where  $W_1 = 1$ ,  $W_2 = 0.5$ , and  $W_3 = 0$ . The total weight of the South African votes is defined, considering the similarity character with all the other j countries at any vote, over the whole i-years period, by:

$$TWNV = \sum_{i=1}^i (\sum_{j=1}^j (\sum_{k=1}^3 W_k * NV_{ijk})) = \sum_{i=1}^i (\sum_{j=1}^j (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2}))^{18}$$

<sup>15</sup> In the study, it can be maximum  $i = 1,2,3,4,5,6$ .

<sup>16</sup> Named formula (1)

<sup>17</sup> Named formula (2)

<sup>18</sup> Named formula (3)

Considering  $NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2} \leq NV_{ij1} + NV_{ij2} \leq NV_{ij1} + NV_{ij2} + NV_{ij3}$ , whatever  $i$  and  $j$ . (Reminder: For any real number  $x$ , any positive real numbers  $y$  and  $z$ , one has:  $x + 0.5 y \leq x + y \leq x + y + z$ ). Reporting this inequality in the equation (2) above leads to  $NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2} \leq V_i$ , whatever  $i$  and  $j$ .

One has consequently:  $\sum_{j=1}^J (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2}) \leq J V_i$ , whatever  $i$ , and then:

$$\sum_{i=1}^I (\sum_{j=1}^J (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2})) \leq J (\sum_{i=1}^I V_i).$$

From the definitions (1) and (3) above, it is observed that  $0 \leq \text{TWNV} \leq \text{TNV}$ , that is  $0 \leq (\text{TWNV} / \text{TNV}) \leq 1$ .

A cohesion index (CI) is now defined to characterise the similarity of the votes of South Africa with any group of  $j$  other countries (OC) numerically, over a period of  $i$ -years, through:

$$\text{CI (SA / OC)} = 100 \frac{\text{TWNV}}{\text{TNV}} = 100 \frac{\sum_{i=1}^I (\sum_{j=1}^J (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2}))}{J (\sum_{i=1}^I V_i)} \quad 19$$

Where CI is expressed in percent (indeed it ranges between 0 and 100, since  $\text{TWNV} / \text{TNV}$  ranges between 0 and 1, see above).

In table 6, the results of this approach are indicated in the row entitled ‘voting cohesion with African members of the UNSC’. The percentage of voting cohesion of South Africa with the African members of the UNSC for all tenures is determined by adapting the formula by adding up the “partial” and “same” votes for all the twelve countries that served in the UNSC alongside South Africa and divide the results by the number of votes per year multiplied by two. Case 1: Consider the cohesion of South African votes with the group of African members of the UNSC (E10 OAF) during six years, obtained from (4):

$$\text{CI (SA / E10 OAF)} = 100 \frac{\sum_{i=1}^6 (\sum_{j=1}^2 (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2}))}{2 (\sum_{i=1}^6 V_i)}$$

Similarly, the formula had to be adapted to determine the voting cohesion with the group of remaining countries of the E10. Case 2: Consider the cohesion of South Africa votes with the E10 non-African countries (E10 NAF) during six years, obtained from (4):

$$\text{CI (SA / E10 NAF)} = 100 \frac{\sum_{i=1}^6 (\sum_{j=1}^7 (NV_{ij1} + 0.5 NV_{ij2}))}{7 (\sum_{i=1}^6 V_i)}$$

The results of this method for the votes on the resolutions related to all topics are displayed in Table 6 below. Considering all issues which were put to a vote at the UNSC during the three tenures, South Africa’s voting cohesion is the highest with the African members of the Council. Indeed, with 97,89% of identical votes, the voting cohesion is higher than with the non-African nonpermanent members of the UNSC (97,21% of identical votes), and any of the permanent

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<sup>19</sup> Named formula (4)



members – France having the highest voting cohesion with South Africa among them with 96,47%. The differences were insignificant for the first tenures. For instance, South Africa's voting similarity was closer to China during the first tenure than with other African countries together; however, the dissimilarities were higher for the last tenure. This aspect regarding the increasing divergences among members of the Council since the beginning of the last decade illustrates an increasing assertive behaviour for South Africa.

**Table 6 South Africa voting cohesion with UNSC members**

Countries	South Africa 1 <sup>st</sup> tenure	South Africa 2 <sup>nd</sup> tenure	South Africa 3 <sup>rd</sup> tenure	South Africa all tenures
<b>Permanent members</b>				
USA	97,56	98,37	90,57	95,52
China	100	96,75	90,98	96,06
Russia	98,78	96,34	90,16	95,24
France	97,96	99,19	92,21	96,47
Uk	97,96	99,19	91,80	96,33
<b>African members of the UNSC 2007</b>				
Ghana	97,73			
Republic of the Congo	98,48			
<b>African members of the UNSC 2008</b>				
Burkina Faso	98,25			
Libya	99,12			
<b>African members of the UNSC 2011</b>				
Nigeria		99,26		
Gabon		99,26		
<b>African members of the UNSC 2012</b>				
Morocco		99,09		
Togo		99,09		
<b>African members of the UNSC 2019</b>				
Côte d'Ivoire			96,55	
Equatorial Guinea			95,69	
<b>African members of the UNSC 2020</b>				
Niger			96,09	
Tunisia			96,09	
<b>Voting cohesion with African members</b>				
	98,37	99,19	96,11	97,89
<b>Other Members of the UNSC (E10)</b>				
	98,24	99,01	94,35	97,21

Source: Table made by the author based on the data of the UNSC website

### 3.3 Determination of the voting cohesion for resolutions on Africa-related items

This subsection clarifies determining the voting cohesion of South Africa with the same three groups identified above for the resolutions on Africa-related items, using the same calculation method introduced in Section 3.2. Table 7 presents the results while demonstrating that South Africa's voting cohesion with the group of African countries reached 98,63%. This represents a progression of 0,74% if compared to the voting cohesion percentage for all the resolutions considered by the UNSC. Compared to the permanent members taken individually and the non-African E10 members of the UNSC, the voting cohesion remains highest with the group of African members of the Council, even if the divergence is reduced. The progression of the voting cohesion between South Africa and other members or groups of countries of the UNSC reaches higher figures with, for instance, a progression of almost 2% for the voting cohesion with the permanent members. This demonstrates that there was less consensus on items unrelated to Africa than on items related to Africa between the permanent members and South Africa.

Using a voting cohesion calculation and comparison between South Africa and the other members of the Council indicates that the results and figures display efforts of alignment between South Africa and the other members of the Security Council and especially in the African-related topics. This is because their voting cohesion is higher than that of any other member of the Security Council. South Africa remained true to its African agenda despite divergences on the issues of Zimbabwe and Western Sahara with its counterparts in this aspect.

Table 7: South Africa's voting cohesion with UNSC members on African topics

Countries	South Africa 1 <sup>st</sup> tenure	South Africa 2 <sup>nd</sup> tenure	South Africa 3 <sup>rd</sup> tenure	South Africa all tenures
<b>Permanent members</b>				
USA	97,97	100	94,23 (4,5)	97,47
China	100	98,26	94,87 (4)	97,68
Russia	100	98,26	92,95 (5,5)	97,05
France	98,65	100	96,15 (3)	98,31
Uk	98,65	100	96,15 (3)	98,31
<b>African members of the UNSC 2007</b>				
Ghana	100			
Republic of the Congo	100			
<b>African members of the UNSC 2008</b>				
Burkina Faso	97,56			
Libya	100			

<b>African members of the UNSC 2011</b>				
Nigeria		100		
Gabon		100		
<b>African members of the UNSC 2012</b>				
Morocco		100		
Togo		100		
<b>African members of the UNSC 2019</b>				
Côte d'Ivoire			97,22 (1)	
Equatorial Guinea			95,83 (1,5)	
<b>African members of the UNSC 2020</b>				
Niger			96,43 (1,5)	
Tunisia			96,43 (1,5)	
Total African votes	99,32	100	96,47	98,63
<b>Other Members of the UNSC</b>	98,85 (8)	99,68 (2,5)	96,08 (27,5)	98,22
33 votes in 2007 on Africa-related items				
40 votes in 2008 on Africa-related items				
50 votes in 2011 on Africa-related items				
36 votes in 2012 on Africa-related items				
36 votes in 2019 on Africa-related items				
42 votes in 2020 on Africa-related items				

Source: Table made by the author based on the data of the UNSC website

### **Conclusion:**

The analysis of South Africa's votes in the UNSC provides key findings regarding pursuing its African agenda in the UNSC. The voting cohesion analysis demonstrates an undeniable will from South Africa to coordinate positions and vote similarly with other African countries in the UNSC, especially on African-related topics. The rate of voting cohesion with other African countries in comparison with other countries or groups of countries illustrates this. The increase in voting similarity on African-related items compared to all items display that the coordination of positions was higher for the former concerns; therefore, South Africa stayed true to its African agenda most of the time; however, South Africa's positions were not always coordinated with other African countries for the voting regarding a resolution on an African-related item. This is revealed by the divergences mentioned for several votes, especially regarding the cases of Zimbabwe in 2008 and Western Sahara in 2019-2020, further analysed in the subsequent chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4: SOUTH AFRICA'S VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND INFLUENCE ON THE AFRICAN-RELATED ITEMS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL: AN ANALYSIS OF THREE SPECIFIC CASES**

### **Introduction**

This chapter analyses whether South Africa remained loyal to its African agenda through its voting behaviour in the UNSC, particularly looking at whether South Africa exerted influence on issues of Africa's concern in accordance with its African agenda and could navigate the limitations of being a nonpermanent member of the UNSC. The analysis will make use of the theoretical framework presented in the second section of the chapter 2 of the thesis to determine whether South Africa was influential and will review whether the voting decisions of Pretoria on specific situations was aligned with its African agenda on two aspects: the alignment on the AU point of view and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Instead of reviewing all the Africa-related items, encompassing conflicts and thematic issues related to the African continent, that were brought to the Council's table during all three tenures of Pretoria, the study focuses on three case studies used for supporting or contradicting the main perspectives, and to qualify the statement. The three cases are the situation in Zimbabwe in 2007, the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and the voting behaviour of South Africa over the Western Sahara in 2019-2020. The three country-situations were chosen because they were deemed as providing interesting insights into South Africa's voting behaviour. They were non-consensual situations (except for the case of Côte d'Ivoire) that allowed identifying of discordances concerning perspectives. They also allow to cover and to illustrate the three tenures of South Africa, and to apprehend the voting behaviour of Pretoria and its evolution in three different periods of the UNSC. They also permit to cover different kind of situations that represent the two main types of situations treated in the UNSC with a conflict erupting (in the cases of Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire) and a long-term frozen conflict (Western Sahara). The country-situation of Libya represents another interesting case that informs South Africa's behaviour in the UNSC, especially with regarding its influence on Africa-related topics, but as

seen in Section 1.3, the case was already extensively treated in the literature. The study preferred, therefore, to focus on situations less or not treated by IR analysts.

Each country-situation analysis is treated in three steps. The first section presents the background or context of the country-situation. The second section determines the alignment of the voting decision with the African agenda. This is based on examining the consistency of the vote with the perspective of the AU on the proper situation and with South Africa's initial perspective on the situation but also with its principle of finding peaceful solutions to resolve conflicts. The last step interprets the vote concerning the influence and weight of Pretoria's voting behaviour to determine whether it was proved influential in the final UNSC outcome on the country-situation.

## **4.1 The case of Côte d'Ivoire**

### **4.1.1 Background:**

The political crisis of Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 is a case which offers interesting insights into analysing the performance of South Africa in exerting influence in the Security Council on country-issues. The post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire erupted soon after the end of the civil war in 2007, in a country still unstable. The presidential elections, initially planned in 2005 and postponed according to the peace agreements, finally took place at the end of 2010, opposing in the second round Laurent Gbagbo, incumbent President of the country since 2000 and Alassane Ouattara. After the second round held on 28 November 2010, both leaders claimed victory in the elections.

First, the *Commission Electorale Indépendante*<sup>20</sup> proclaimed that Ouattara won the elections with a 54,1% vote. The Constitutional Council invalidated the votes from several areas in the North (Zounmenou & Lamin, 2011: 10), justifying this action by irregularities, and upholding Gbagbo's victory with 51,45% of the vote. This decision raised suspicion as the Constitutional Council was observed as President Gbagbo's ally. Negotiations between both camps failed, and

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<sup>20</sup> Independent Electoral Commission

soon, the situation slid back into a civil war and widespread violence opposing the Loyalists supporting Gbagbo's camp to the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire supporting Ouattara. The conflict ended with the capture of Gbagbo on 11 April 2011 by the combined forces of pro-Ouattara troops backed by an intervention of the French army stationed in the country (under a UN mission). This enforced the decisions of the ECOWAS, the AU, and the UNSC.

South Africa had an opportunity to be crucial in the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire through its membership in the UNSC and its seat in the AU PSC. Pretoria had previous involvement and knowledge of the conflict. South Africa was indeed involved in mediation activities between 2004 and 2006. Former President, Thabo Mbeki, was also appointed as mediator by the AU in the renewed crisis in Côte d'Ivoire (Zondi, 2015:111). South Africa had considerable means to influence the agenda and the decisions of the various stakeholders involved in the crises in the country and in international institutions, the AU, and the UNSC, which could have resolved the conflict. Several sources assert that Jacob Zuma's stance was a negotiated solution, avoiding military intervention (Zondi, 2015: 110-111). A speech confirmed this during the meeting on 30 March 2011 at the UNSC, where South Africa advocated "to find a peaceful political solution", which aims "at restoring national reconciliation and unity" (UNSC, 2011a). This position aligned with South Africa's African agenda advocating peaceful means to resolve conflicts.

South Africa indeed did not recognise Ouattara's victory before long and was perceived as supporting Gbagbo (Patel, 2012). In the meantime, most of the international community, including the ECOWAS, under the influence of Nigeria, as well as France, recognised Ouattara as victorious in the Presidential elections. The AU PSC eventually recognised the election of Ouattara as the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on 10 March 2011 in Addis Ababa. South Africa could do nothing but align itself with the AU position (Patel, 2012) lately. Additionally, South Africa's solution of a negotiated settlement failed to be adopted at the UNSC during its various meetings on the political crisis. A military intervention resulted in the ousting of Gbagbo, backed by the former colonial master.

#### **4.1.2 How to interpret the vote in terms of alignment with the African agenda**

The decision to vote in favour of Resolution 1975 is not aligned with the traditional research for peaceful resolution of conflict through negotiation and dialogue among the belligerents that South Africa advocates for conflict resolution on the African continent. Ambassador Sangqu recalled that South Africa was still in favour of the dialogue during his speech after the vote (UNSC, 2011c); however, the decision to vote for this resolution cannot be consistent with the research of peaceful instruments to resolve the conflicts. The resolution recognised only one side—President Ouattara’s, as legitimate and victorious in the presidential elections, forcing President Gbagbo to step down. It provided the legal framework for a military intervention of the French army, supporting the rebels to topple President Gbagbo, therefore, enforcing the resolution through the use of force..

As illustrated by Ambassador Sangqu during the meeting following the vote on the resolution 1975, the decision supported the resolution based on that it was ‘‘fully in line with the road map outlined by the African Union’’ (UNSC, 2011c). South Africa’s vote on Resolution 1975 was, therefore, consistent with its African agenda for the aspect of relaying the positions of the AU in the UNSC.

#### **4.1.3 Was South Africa influential on the country situation?**

To understand South Africa’s failure to advance its own solutions in the UNSC (and in the AU), the roles of France, which had an active role, and Nigeria should be observed. The difficulty of South Africa in advancing its stance towards the conflict in the Security Council can be explained in Côte d’Ivoire falling in the sphere of influence of two other powers active in the West African region: Nigeria and France. It has been historically in the French sphere of influence and a fundamental ally for Paris in the region. France, like the other P5 members, is involved in furthering its perspective in the UNSC when its interests are at stake and when a conflict arises. This influences the decisions to send UN peacekeeping troops to these areas (Landsberg, 2012). According to several sources, France supported Ouattara’s claim to victory at the elections because of its long-standing objective to topple Gbagbo. The former was

perceived as much more accommodating to strong French interests in the country (Zounmenou & Lamin, 2011:11). In the UNSC, France led the talks on the crisis and had the lead on the topic, submitting most of the Council's resolutions related to the country during the conflict. It advanced its perspective and agenda in the UNSC, earning its backing for its military intervention (Abatan & Spies, 2016:3). The active role of France created tensions with South Africa, especially as the lecture and analysis of Pretoria of the function of the former in the conflict was deemed as imperialist or neocolonialist.

South Africa's involvement in resolving the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire clashed with Nigeria's involvement. Nigeria asserted that Gbagbo should step down, which prompted France to military support his removal. South Africa's implication in the crisis has been criticised by Nigeria in the context of deteriorated relations between both countries since 2009 (Monyae, 2012:165), seeing this involvement as an "interference in its regional sphere of influence" (Zondi, 2015:102). Nigeria was angered at the appointment of President Mbeki by the AU as a mediator of the conflict. The latter, perceived as a sub-regional leader of West Africa, also had a strong role in the resolution of the crisis, contributing to shaping the decision of the ECOWAS and the AU to recognise Ouattara's victory.

Several hypotheses can explain why South Africa eventually aligned its position with that of other Council members, such as Nigeria and France, despite the fact that the latter was pursuing a neocolonial policy in total contradiction with South Africa's African agenda and the decisions of the UNSC. These decisions allowed the total victory of one contestant over a peaceful settlement of the conflict, which was against Pretoria's initial stance of pursuing a negotiated settlement. A commitment to multilateralism drove South Africa's actions in Côte d'Ivoire because South Africa rallied the positions of other members of the UNSC, the AU and the ECOWAS. South Africa was also constrained as it did not want to appear as hegemonic in the African continent, preventing Pretoria from pushing too much for its own positions. South Africa's position on the conflict could be protecting sitting heads of state and managing Gbagbo's. There were initial divisions in the AU to recognise the victory of one of the contending. This disunity in the AU complicated and constrained the action of South Africa while reinforcing the competition and division between Nigeria and South Africa (Kornegay, 2012: 12). The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and other situations during the UNSC in 2011 illustrated that despite similar voting positions with Nigeria and Gabon, the African members demonstrated contradictory observations. Masters (2011:15) confirmed this by claiming that



“the three nonpermanent African members (Nigeria and Gabon and South Africa) did not work as a unit”.

The behaviour of South Africa in the case of the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire in 2011 can be explained through a realist approach. South Africa revealed controversial and intractable behaviour in this situation. Its behaviour was not aligned with its African agenda, which advocates for African solutions to African problems, by supporting a resolution drafted by France and aligned with its own interests. The resolutions contradicted the perspectives of the AU or the usual solutions that South Africa defends in international disputes, indicating the peaceful resolution of conflict through political dialogue among belligerents. This, despite the fact that South Africa was considered as an important actor in fellow Africans through its mediation role and efforts in the conflict. According to Mearshmeier, powerful member states in international institutions can “dictate the behaviour of weaker member states” (1994-1995:1). An assumption which, in the Security Council, a “top-down” institution, would indicate that the USA—and France or the UK—or China and Russia constraint the decisions of the nonpermanent members. Nonpermanent members must always navigate and align in the “web of alliances and power blocs” in the UNSC (Kornegay & Nganje, 2012:1). The case of Côte d’Ivoire is illustrative of this narrative, as South Africa was eventually bound to the decisions of the UNSC influenced by the Western bloc and seemed to have proved itself powerless to advance African positions or even build a common front with Nigeria in the case of Côte d’Ivoire. This case demonstrates that South Africa’s ability to implement its own agenda, the African agenda, by influencing the outcomes and decisions of the UNSC was constrained and limited by the power’s behavioural and dynamic, especially when the issues were of particular importance to one or several permanent members.

Several sources, including primary and secondary, assert that South Africa did not follow its initial perspective on the situation as President Zuma’s stance was a negotiated solution between former President Gbagbo and future President Ouattara while avoiding military intervention (Zondi, 2015: 110-111). This is confirmed by a speech during the meeting on the 30 March 2011 at the UNSC where South Africa advocated “to find a peaceful political solution”, which aims “at restoring national reconciliation and unity” (UNSC, 2011a). Furthermore, South Africa did not recognise Ouattara’s victory before long (Patel, 2012) and was hesitant to adopt a firm position and point of view on the situation. This was perceived as, once again, supporting former President Gbagbo. Meanwhile, the majority of the international community, including the ECOWAS, under the influence of Nigeria and France, recognised

Ouattara as victorious in the Presidential elections. The AU PSC eventually recognised the election of Ouattara as the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on 10 March 2011 in Addis Ababa. South Africa could do nothing but align itself with the AU position (Patel, 2012). It was among the last African country to recognise Gbagbo's defeat in the presidential elections.

### **Conclusion of the section:**

The vote on Resolution 1975 offered a mixed interpretation concerning the consistency of South Africa with its strategy of the African agenda. South Africa took its decisions based on the AU position; however, the case of Côte d'Ivoire illustrates the difficulty for South Africa to have a continental leadership role in conflict resolution in Africa in the UNSC, as its African agenda claims, especially when other actors defending their own interests are intervening in conflicts in Africa.

The realist model explains why South Africa's behaviour was not always aligned with its claimed African agenda and could not be impactful on this specific case. The realist model claims that the structure and power dynamic in the UNSC are crucial to understand the behaviour, including decisions and actions, of a state in the body. The model explains the inability of small or middle powers in the UNSC to dictate its outcomes or decisions. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa demonstrated its lack of weight in influencing the decision of the UNSC regarding an African topic, lacking the means to implement its stance while demonstrating a lack of consistency in defending its perspective.

## **4.2 The case of Zimbabwe**

### **4.2.1 Background**

The case of Zimbabwe in 2008 counterbalances the analysis of South Africa not exerting influence over outcomes regarding an African country-issue. The conflict in Zimbabwe was brought to the table of the UNSC during South Africa's first tenure at five official meetings (not including private consultations), which were held on the case in 2008 on 23 June, 8 and 11

July 2008. The UNSC's actions on the item led to one communiqué. One draft resolution failed to be adopted owing to using the veto by Russia and China. This resolution also saw the concurring negative vote of Libya, South Africa, and Vietnam.

Whereas South Africa already used its role of President of the Council to oppose the treatment of the ongoing issue of Zimbabwe on the Council agenda at the request of the UK in 2007, the issue was raised the following year again when the conflict broke out in March 2008. After the first round of the Presidential elections held on the 20 March, the opposition party, the MDC, emerged as the winner. However, its leaders, activists, and supporters faced retaliation and state-sponsored violence in the lead to the Presidential run-off election to occur on 27 June. Eventually, the MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew before the second round of the election. This was owing to the absence of conditions for credible elections because of the violence affecting his ability to campaign. Mugabe was declared the winner of the elections, being the sole candidate. The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, was appointed as the SADC chief mediator to resolve the political issues in Zimbabwe. Initially, his approach was to call for a dialogue and find a negotiated settlement based on a political solution which would bring the disputing parties to a power-sharing agreement, considering the results of the first round of the elections.

The UNSC members eventually treated the issue as per the body's prerogatives. Several meetings were held, and the United States drafted a resolution. The Resolution advocated for an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on several members of Mugabe's entourage. South Africa led the opposition to the sanctions. It did not support the resolution in Zimbabwe and voted against it. South Africa justified its vote by claiming that the UNSC was not the right body to approach this issue, which should instead fall under the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Council. South Africa's position aligned with its policy of 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe and can also be that of defending national sovereignty and non-interference in a state's affairs. The veto by Russia and China quashed the resolution.

#### **4.2.2 How to interpret the vote in terms of alignment with the African agenda**

Mr Kumalo's speech after the vote on the draft resolution 447 defended South African positions by claiming that the decision was based on SADC and the AU's stance on the conflict, which opposed taking sanctions against Zimbabwe and instead took any decision that "may negatively impact on the climate for dialogue" (UNSC, 2008, 4). In this vote, South Africa was clearly consistent within the framework of its African agenda and relayed the perspective of the AU and the SADC in the UNSC.

The decision of South Africa to not support a resolution calling for sanction towards Mugabe's regime aligned with its African agenda regarding the theme of 'peaceful resolution of conflict'. Indeed, South Africa would have been in contradiction with its approach to conflict resolution by supporting sanctions. The representative of South Africa in the UNSC reminded the position of South Africa of the Zimbabwean crisis to advocate for a negotiated settlement through a dialogue among the belligerents.

#### **4.2.3 Was South Africa influential on the country situation?**

There is no direct evidence of whether South Africa built a coalition by actively influencing and convincing Russia and China to use their veto, provided that South Africa could not quash a resolution on its own, but several hints lead towards this direction. At least one source mentions that Pretoria played an active role in influencing Russia and China to use their veto on the resolution (Kornegay, 2012:10). Another source claims that South Africa's opinion—as a regional stakeholder holding a nonpermanent seat in the UNSC when the issue was aroused—on the matter regarding Zimbabwe, was considered by China. It was one of the five main reasons that convinced Beijing to use its veto to quash the resolution (Wuthnow, 2011:108). Provided the tradition that China must assess major states' and regional stakeholders' perspectives on issues of interest to them (Wuthnow, 2011), the possibility that South Africa played a role in influencing China's decision is plausible. As for Russia, one source mentions that its perspective evolved during the crisis. The ongoing situation in Zimbabwe was discussed at the 8 and 9 July meetings of the group of eight, where Russia did not obstruct an initiative

threatening to take “financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for the violence” (SCR, 2008) in Zimbabwe. This position evolved after as it voted against the Resolution which called for sanctions and Russia specifically mentioned that it put its veto by opposition to the sanction. Therefore, South Africa might have had a role in influencing Russia’s change of stance in the situation. Furthermore, political analysts expected that Russia and China would abstain and not put forward their veto (SCR, 2008). It is therefore likely that South Africa has worked on convincing China and Russia to use their veto, and therefore proved to be influential in the country-situation of Zimbabwe in 2008.

### **Conclusion of the section**

Pretoria’s actions and decisions in the situation in Zimbabwe display that its interests were at stake and this issue was of paramount importance to its national interests. For obvious reasons, geographical proximity, historical ties, and a sizeable Zimbabwean population within the country’s borders, this vote was critical for South Africa. Therefore, it was important for Pretoria to weigh in the issue. The case of Zimbabwe is an example of issue where South Africa had a real influence on the decision of the UNSC and demonstrated leadership on a country-situation on an African-related topic.

The constructivist approach can also provide a perspective on the success of South Africa in influencing the outcome of the UNSC on the Zimbabwean situation in 2008. By adopting Hurd’s reading grid on legitimacy, the fact that South Africa succeeded in convincing (according to some analysts as seen above) Russia and China to follow its viewpoint in the UNSC on the item and voting altogether against the resolution presented by the UK can be understood through its perceived legitimate status. South Africa’s perspective was perceived as legitimate by other members of the UNSC owing to its geographical position and the legitimacy linked to it according to other countries. South Africa’s perspective from the beginning prevailed at the end, as China and Russia could veto the resolution in the UNSC, a resolution that South Africa would not have obstructed by itself. The constructivist approach explains South Africa’s influence on the UNSC outcomes in that case.

South Africa demonstrated an assertive behaviour in the case of Zimbabwe and conducted itself as regional power by influencing the outcome of the UNSC regarding a situation in its immediate surrounding so that it matches its perspective. When its interests were at stake, South

Africa could create a coalition with Russia and China to quash the vote on the draft resolution S/2008/447, submitted by the UK, on the situation in Zimbabwe. South Africa had much more influence in the UNSC when the case was in its neighbouring region than elsewhere in Africa. The example of Zimbabwe proves this compared to the cases of Libya or Côte d'Ivoire, which fall in the other powers' sphere of influence. This contributes to observing that South Africa has a regional or sub-regional power than a continental power.

### 4.3 The case of Western Sahara

#### 4.3.1 Background

As observed above in the subsection examining Pretoria's voting cohesion with the other African countries in the UNSC, South Africa did not coordinate its positions with its African counterparts on the votes on resolutions regarding the situation in Western Sahara during its last tenure. Indeed, South Africa broke ranks by abstaining and not supporting the resolutions on this conflict<sup>21</sup>. This behaviour raises questions, and it is worth exploring why Pretoria did not align its vote on this specific topic with the other African members of the Council and examine what it says about South Africa's African agenda.

South Africa's change of behaviour regarding Western Sahara during its last tenure aligns with its stance since the end of the Apartheid. During the Apartheid era, the Africa National Congress (ANC) received support from the *Front de Libération National* of Algeria. Several of its prominent members were exiled in Algeria, leading the struggle from there. The ANC drew a parallel between its liberation struggle and the Polisario Front's, also supported by Algeria, against the Moroccan rule over Western Sahara. South Africa's stance has never changed since then, officially supporting the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi people through the need to hold a referendum organised by the UN in Western Sahara or even directly claiming support for the independence of Western Sahara from Morocco. In 2004, it officially recognised the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) with the opening of an embassy in Pretoria.

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<sup>21</sup> See table 3.

In its last tenure, South Africa justified its abstentions on the votes for Resolutions 2468 (2019), 2494 (2019), and 2548 (2020) for several reasons. Among the main reasons was the perceived non-neutrality of the UNSC, accused of favouring one party, Morocco, over the other, the SADR, illustrated by choices of semantics and wording judged as “biased” (UNSC, 2020). South Africa regretted the fact that the body did not commit “to the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara” (UNSC, 2019a). Furthermore, South Africa strongly criticised how the UNSC handled the item, through the negotiation process and the drafting of the resolutions by a “group of friends”, not including a single African country. The Permanent representative of South Africa’s subsequent statement illustrated this: “the UNSC’s working method [...] remains of serious concern to South Africa. We have consistently raised this issue as problematic, particularly the unrepresentative nature of this Group, which does not include a single African Member of the Council, despite this being an African issue” (UN, 2019b), adding that “this is again an example of an African issue being decided by those that are not from the Continent”. (UNSC, 2019b). Pretoria also denounced the presentation of the text to the other members of the Council as a *fait accompli* not susceptible to be amended by the other members. There are no tracks of similar concerns and critics voiced by the four other African Council members which had a mandate in the UNSC in the 2019-2020 period. They indicated no opposition to the successive texts, voting in favour of all the resolutions concerning the issue.

#### **4.3.2 How to interpret the vote in terms of alignment with the African agenda**

It does not seem that considerations for the AU perspective on the situation in Western Sahara guided South African voting behaviour in the UNSC. There is no evidence in the speeches provided by South African representatives in the UNSC to justify Pretoria’s decision based on the AU perspective of the conflict in Western Sahara; however, the AU’s approach to the Western Sahara crisis is similar to South Africa’s. The AU described the conflict as a ‘decolonisation’ issue and accepted the SADR as a member. The AU, like South Africa, is calling for a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara; therefore, on the African agenda regarding speaking on behalf of the AU in the UNSC, no clear answer exists whether South Africa’s decision was aligned with its African agenda.

The call for a referendum which was reiterated to explain why South Africa's decided to abstain on the resolutions regarding the Western Sahara situation is aligned with the traditional use of peaceful instruments for conflict resolution advocated by South Africa for conflicts in Africa. As such, South Africa voting behaviour was aligned with its African agenda.

Pretoria embarked on a diplomatic solo on this issue, contradicting other African Council members who voted in favour of all the resolutions from 2019 to 2020. South Africa's position on the conflict in Western Sahara is illustrative of its African agenda because it is based on its identity and history and, therefore, against any reminiscence of colonialism on the continent. Therefore, South Africa's decision to abstain from the resolutions about Western Sahara aligns with its African agenda in the sense that this decision was taken independently based on its own perspective of the conflict.

#### **4.3.3 Was South Africa influential on the country-situation?**

It is the unique situation where it can be observed a dissonance between South Africa and its continental partners in the AU constantly on the same conflict and for several resolutions. However, it can also be noticed that South Africa failed to unite other African members behind its position. The other African members of the UNSC did not relay the criticisms of South Africa in their statements, and no other African members of the UNSC abstained on the issue. South Africa's voting behaviour and stance on this specific country-situation was, therefore, not influential on the UNSC outcomes but neither towards its African partners.

#### **Conclusion of the section**

The voting behaviour of South Africa on the country situation of Western Sahara is consistent with its African agenda through an interpretation of its position based on the themes identified in Chapter 2 and characterising its African agenda and doctrine concerning conflict resolution. It is aligned with its historical stance on the conflict and can be explained through a constructivist framework. It is difficult to identify what interests pushed Pretoria to abstain and, therefore, not support the resolutions in this specific case. A constructivist framework focusing on the identity of South African foreign policy and the ANC, anti-imperialist owing to its



history and the liberation struggle, can help understand on what basis Pretoria took these decisions and did not follow its African counterparts in the UNSC. The word “colony” (UNSC, 2019) qualifies the situation of Western Sahara to concur with this analysis. In that situation, South Africa's decisions are coherent with its anti-colonial identity.

### **Conclusion of the chapter and answer to the main research problem:**

Based on the analysis of the three cases and to provide a consolidated answer to the second sub-question of the research on whether South Africa was influential on the UNSC outcomes and demonstrated leadership on Africa-related items through its voting behaviour, the answer is ambivalent. Indeed, in two cases – Western Sahara and Zimbabwe situations – out of three presented in the study, South Africa demonstrated assertiveness by not binding to the perspective shared by the majority of the UNSC members and by abstaining for the case of Western Sahara and voting against the resolution in the case of Zimbabwe.

In the case of Zimbabwe, Pretoria proved itself influential on the final outcome of the UNSC, which it failed to be on the situation of Western Sahara, by rallying to its stance other members of the UNSC – namely China and Russia – that possess the power to decisively impact the UNSC outcome through their veto. The fact that China and Russia changed their positions under the influence of South Africa's stance in the case of Zimbabwe is typically an example where the constructivist legitimacy theory, developed by Hurd and Gifkins and presented in Chapter 2, of the E10 having leverage to be influential in the UNSC is verified.

However, in the case of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa was not aligned with its initial stance on the conflict and eventually supported a resolution which was developed under the influence of France. In that country-situation, South Africa was not aligned with its strategy of the African agenda. This could be considered as a trend during the second tenure of South Africa with regards to the Africa-related items, based on a similar analysis of Pretoria's decisions regarding Libya.

Second, with regards to the aspect of speaking on behalf of the continent, championing its interests, and advancing African solutions to the African conflicts, it is undeniable that South Africa was aligned with its African agenda. In all three cases presented in the thesis, South Africa claimed that its voting choices on the situations were based on the AU's perspective on the conflicts among the main reasons explaining its decision. For instance, it is under the

influence of the AU, and not only of the other UNSC members, that South Africa changed its position on the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and recognised Ouattara as the winner of the elections.

Concerning the promotion of peaceful means to address conflicts in alignment with its usual way to treating conflicts on the continent, South Africa performed inconsistently based on its voting behaviour in the three case-studies. South Africa remained true to its strategy of the African agenda in the case of Zimbabwe, in total alignment with its quiet diplomacy. It was the case also in Western Sahara, with its position to support implementing a referendum. However, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, where Pretoria rallied the widely shared perspectives that Ouattara won the elections, it supported a resolution preventing a negotiated settlement between the two opposing belligerents. This led to using force as the resolution of the conflict.

Based on the concluding remarks of the three cases, it can be said that South Africa's voting behaviour was generally aligned with the goals and principles of its strategy of the African agenda in the cases of Western Sahara and Zimbabwe, but adverse regarding Côte d'Ivoire.

From the findings of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 regarding the main research problem, South Africa mostly remained aligned with its African agenda. When observing the voting alignment, South Africa proved a higher level of similarity of voting positions with the other African members of the UNSC than with any other members and group of countries. Pretoria always relayed the AU's perspective and, therefore, supported African solutions and positions on African-related items. Last, it supported resolutions promoting peaceful approaches to attend to African conflicts in two cases out of three analysed.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary of the study:

This study focused on the analysis of the pursuit of the strategy of the African agenda by Pretoria in the UNSC through the lens of its voting behaviour on the Security Council resolutions. The study's overarching goal was to establish whether South Africa was consistent in its voting decisions with its African agenda. The alignment with the strategy of the African agenda was first measured in terms of goals and principles, including the conflict resolution approach on the African continent. The study also assessed whether South Africa achieved its goals before taking its seat in the UNSC of voting in line with other African members of the Council and relaying the solutions while speaking on behalf of the AU in the UNSC. The study assessed the influence of South Africa on the UNSC outcomes concerning African-related items through its voting behaviour.

The research design used a mixed approach, combining a quantitative and qualitative analysis of South Africa's voting behaviour based on the two sub-questions that guided and sustained the answer to the main research problem. The study used a voting cohesion methodology based on a quantitative approach to assess whether South Africa voted in line with other African members of the Council. An alignment of South Africa with other African members of the Council was determined using a comparison with the votes of the other members or groups of members on all the items considered by the UNSC, specifically on the African-related items.

The study was based on a methodology inspired by Suzann Graham's model of voting behaviour to assess the consistency of South Africa with its African agenda. Three steps were employed to analyse the data: (i) identifying two themes in the African agenda relevant in the context of the UNSC (in Section 1.1.2), (ii) the presentation of the decisions of South Africa in three case studies, and (iii) the interpretation and the analysis of the votes against the two themes identified in the first step of the method. The two themes of the strategy of the African agenda relevant in the context of the UNSC were the peaceful resolution of conflict, as it is what guides South Africa's attitude towards conflicts on the African continent (i) and promoting African solutions and the relay of the AU positions in the UNSC (ii).

The study assessed the consistency of South African decisions with its African agenda. Owing to the limitation of the study, it focused on three case studies, from the three tenures which offered insights and various perspectives on South Africa's performance. The three cases enriched the conversation with a better overview of the voting behaviour of South Africa and its alignment with its African agenda.

## **5.2 Key findings:**

This study illustrates that South Africa strived to promote, pursue, and implement its African agenda in the UNSC. This is reflected by the country's voting behaviour in the body, despite several incoherent cases and controversial decisions.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the voting cohesion of South Africa with the other African members of the Council was high; the percentage was higher than with other UNSC members. The voting cohesion with fellow African countries in the UNSC was higher when the resolutions which were put to a vote concerned an African-related item. This unity demonstrates a will to coordinate positions, especially regarding African-related issues, aligned with its African agenda. Regarding the few times where there were various votes on African-related topics—in the case of Zimbabwe in 2018, Western Sahara in 2019-2020 and Sudan—efforts were made to coordinate positions with its African counterparts and act as a coherent and cohesive group. In observing voting positions, South Africa complied with its African agenda.

South Africa stayed true to its African agenda through its commitments and dedication to placing and championing African interests in the UNSC, relaying the AU's positions on an issue, and thus promoting African solutions. To a feasible extent, South Africa assumed the function of relaying African perspectives in the UNSC and justified its positions, as illustrated in the speeches of its ambassador after the vote in the UNSC in the case of Zimbabwe. South Africa also changed its position on the Côte d'Ivoire situation based on the AU's recognition of Ouattara's victory. Last, on the Western Sahara situation, South Africa based its decisions during the last tenure on the historical point of view of the AU regarding the conflict. In that aspect it can be said that South Africa was aligned with its African agenda, speaking on behalf of Africa, if the AU can be considered as representative of the collective voice of Africa, and Pretoria attempted to represent Africa in the UNSC, advancing shared African positions and

perspectives in the UNSC during the official meetings. South Africa often quoted the AU and conveyed its positions, or other African bodies, on African-related topics in the UNSC.

Most of the time, South Africa attempted to coordinate positions with other African members of the E10, but failed to create a consensus among the African group for the votes on Zimbabwe in 2008, in Western Sahara or twice in the case of Sudan and South Sudan in 2019-2020. The lack of African consensus, the disunity, and divisions on the African continent explains the difficulties of South Africa in advancing the continental interests and voicing the African positions in the UNSC. It also explains why South Africa had difficulties adopting clear positions on African-related country-issues and defend them, as well as being always consistent with the goals and principles of its African agenda. The difference with the P3 and other Western nonpermanent members of the UNSC, which constantly align their votes, is blatant. South Africa, therefore, could not be a consensus builder among African countries all the time during its tenures.

In two cases out of three reviewed in this study, South Africa's vote aligned with the research for peaceful means and solutions to resolve a conflict, and thus stayed true to its African agenda.

The analysis of the influence and impact of South Africa's voting behaviour on Africa-related items is controversial. South Africa's approach of impelling for a negotiated settlement and a political solution did not prevail in the case of Côte d'Ivoire in 2011, where the use of force led to the collapse of one of the parties. Besides, Pretoria finally aligned its vote on the viewpoints of the other members of the UNSC. This example confirmed that Pretoria failed to advance a proper African agenda in the UNSC and influence the decision-making of the Council in favour of solutions based on its foreign policy principles (negotiated settlement, peaceful resolution of conflict) when the interests from bigger players in the Council – for the case of Côte d'Ivoire, France – were at stake. In some ongoing conflicts, South Africa abandoned its African agenda by supporting resolutions driven by Western countries partly contradicting the values and principles of its foreign policy. South Africa, as an E10, was severely constrained by the structure and working methods of the UNSC which leaves limited room for non-permanent members to decisively influence the final decisions and actions of the UNSC.

Lastly, if South Africa was not often impactful or influential on the UNSC outcomes and decisions towards African conflicts because its positions met other countries' interests, it demonstrated leadership and assertiveness in two cases presented in the study. Indeed, on the case of Zimbabwe where China and Russia made their decision based (in part) on South African

and the AU perspectives on the issue, and resisting aligning their vote with the Western countries. In the case of Western Sahara during its last tenure, South Africa aligned its voting behaviour with its historical perspective on the conflict, again showing its singularity in the country-situation.

### **5.3 Contribution to the literature:**

The study contributes to the academic debates on general aspects. These perspectives include South Africa's foreign policy, the analysis of implementing and applying the African agenda on the international stage, the analysis of the voting cohesion of South Africa with various countries in the UNSC, and the role and influence of the E10 in the UNSC. Concerning voting patterns of a country in an international body, an innovative mathematical formula was developed for the study to determine the voting cohesion of one country with a group of countries for a set of votes in various periods. This new formula is based on the one that is the most used in the literature to determine between two countries their voting alignment in the same period, and therefore adapted this formula to the specific context of an E10 in the UNSC.

The study also contributed to the general debates of the African agenda and its application to the UNSC by bringing innovative perspectives, especially on the capacity of South Africa to influence the peace and security landscape on the continent. The assessment of Pretoria's influence in the UNSC outcomes and decisions towards the African continent is not a topic confronted systematically by foreign policy analysts.

The literature did not analyse the decisions and actions of South Africa on Western Sahara in the UNSC. This study comprises novel perspectives and insights on analysing the decisions and actions of South Africa in the UNSC towards Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire. The study contributes to the general discussions on the role and influence of the E10 and how they behave in the UNSC, which remain under-evaluated in the literature compared to the studies on the P5.

#### **5.4 Areas for future research**

This study focused on the pursuit of the African agenda in the UNSC, observing South Africa's performance and its voting behaviour. Additional aspects of the mandates of South Africa in the UNSC are excluded in the current study, such as its stance towards other regions and country-issues. Another research could be on comparing the differences and similarities concerning decisions, actions, and positions, and behaviour of South Africa among the three tenures as they were conducted under three Presidents and with various administrations. It would also be appropriate to identify whether South Africa led a foreign policy aligned with the BRICS and the Western countries based on the voting cohesion and several case studies.

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