

ABSTRACT

South Africa's rising international presence is undeniable. The country has recently joined the BRICS club of powerful emerging countries, is in the G20, a member of IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum) and has been touted as a possible contender in a potentially reformed UN Security Council. Also, South Africa has set up a new International Development agency, a key marker of a middle power. Yet South Africa is not a typical middle power, as half of South Africans live below the poverty line. Through various methods such as print and online media content analysis and interviews with policy makers, journalists, civil society and international donors during the period between 2009-2011, this paper examines the two different and divergent faces of South African politics – one focused on the domestic development state and the other focused on its international middle power aspirations.

The janus faces of a middle power: South

Africa's emergence in international development

South Africa made the transition from an apartheid state to a constitutional democracy in 1994, yet apartheid's legacy continues to shape current economic, political and social development. Whereas the political transition has been relatively smooth and some strata of society enjoy socio-economic conditions equivalent to those in the developed world, others experience extreme deprivation, exclusion and poverty levels comparable with those of other African countries. A vast economic disparity exists within the South African population and the government faces an uphill struggle in extending opportunities to all and improving the delivery of public services. Yet, the South African economy is the most advanced on the African continent; it is an emerging market with an abundant supply of natural resources; has well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; has a stock exchange that is the 17th largest in the world; and, possesses a modern infrastructure supporting the efficient distribution of goods to major urban centres throughout the region. South Africa now belongs to the BRICS group of countries, along with powerhouse countries Brazil, Russia, India and China, and has a high profile international role in numerous international organisations, as well as a leadership role in Southern Africa.

One would assume, given South Africa's international positioning, that there would be domestic discussions around its international role, particularly around its role in international development. This research originates from a project titled 'Public Perceptions of Development Cooperation of non-DAC donors',¹ which aimed to explore

¹ This project was funded by the UK's Department For International Development (DFID). I would like to thank DFID for their support, as well as my colleagues on the project - Emma Mawdsely, Patty Grey, May Tan-Mullens and Ela Drązkiewicz-Grodzick. I would also like to thank Alex Wafer who assisted on the South African case study.

how public perceptions shaped discourses of development in 'emerging' states, South Africa being one of the five case studies. During the course of the research it became evident that in the South African case, the domestic public discourses around development cooperation were nearly non-existent. At the time of this project (2010-2011), South Africa was in the process of consolidating its different forms of development co-operation through a new South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) and was continuing to establish itself as an international development player in the Africa region. The incongruity between the domestic South African development co-operation discourses and South Africa's international discourses around development cooperation are the focus of this paper.

In order to examine these incongruities, two conceptual explanatory frames have been brought together. The first is the public engagement in development literature that outlines how international development is constructed, mediated and represented to publics of donor countries; how discourses of international development are formed and presented to domestic audiences. The second conceptual explanatory frame is middle power theory, and more specifically 'emerging' middle power theory that seeks to address how these states behave in international politics. At first, these two conceptual areas appear an odd pairing of theoretical fields, the first much less developed than the second, one which is focussed on domestic process while the other on international processes; yet this is precisely why these conceptual fields have been brought together.

The public engagement in development thinking has focussed on 'developed', or donor country discourses. Yet, this field can benefit from an exploration of how such development discourses evolve in emerging countries. Alternatively, the well-established middle power literature has evolved to take into account emerging middle powers, yet less attention has been focussed on domestic processes within those

middle powers.² Thus, the aim of bringing together these two conceptual fields is to help answer the set of questions informing this research: how do South African domestic and international development discourses differ? What contributes or limits South African international development discourses?

In order to answer these questions, the first section of this paper discusses the conceptual framework comprised of public engagement in development and emerging middle power theory. The second section details the methods used in the study and the third section explores both the domestic and international South African context utilising the findings from the empirical research. The final section of the paper concludes with what can be learnt from South Africa's domestic and international duality.

PUBLIC FACES AND MIDDLE POWERS

To explore the questions posed in this paper, it is helpful to examine the literature around the fields of domestic and international development discourses. With respect to the domestic setting, we start with the idea of 'the public faces' of development that explores the ways that development is constructed, mediated and represented to publics; in short, the way that development is communicated and conveyed by diverse organisations and institutions.³ Development awareness and development engagement has been of interest to both academic and practitioner communities, as it can affect the amount of development assistance given by a donor country. The different relationships that development organisations forge with their publics through

² See J. van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', *Third World Quarterly*, 19, 3 (1998), pp. 435-455; M. Schoeman, 'South Africa as an Emerging Middle Power', *African Security Review*, 9, 3 (2000), pp. 47-58.

³ M. Smith and H. Yanacopulos, 'The Public Faces of Development', *Journal of International Development*, 16 (2004), pp. 657-664.

fundraising, marketing, development education, campaigning and advocacy may significantly vary between (and even within) organisations.⁴

The UK's Department for International Development has been conducting annual surveys of development attitudes within the UK since 2000. They have also been conducting 'The School Omnibus' study with MORI focused on Development Education amongst 11 – 16 year olds. The Voluntary Service Overseas study 'The Live Aid Legacy' explored relationships of publics to international development, as did the post 'Make Poverty History' studies conducted in 2005-2006 that explored the 'Public Perceptions of Poverty' around large-scale campaigns.⁵ Finally, the European Commission's 'The Millennium Development Goals and Perceptions of Development Aid' examined European attitudes towards international development in 2005. The impetus behind such studies is to gauge public support for funding international development initiatives, as 'conventional wisdom suggests that successful and sustainable development cooperation policies and expenditures require a constituency for aid in donor countries'.⁶

Questions concerning ways that publics engage with development are also the focus of research conducted within the field of Media Studies. Questions which explore how different media are being utilised, how they contribute to relationships between 'donor' and 'recipient' and North and South, as well as how different media communicate development messages across borders, are of key importance. Some of this literature focuses specifically on humanitarian relationships but is informative in teasing out the

⁴ H. Yanacopulos and M. Baillie Smith, 'The ambivalent cosmopolitanism of international NGOs', in S. Hickey, D. Mitlin and T. Bebbington (eds), *NGOs and Development Alternatives* (London, Zed Books, 2007).

⁵ VSO, *The Live Aid Legacy* (London, VSO, 2002); A. Darnton, 'Comic Relief 'Public Perception of Poverty' Omnibus Survey. Wave 5 Findings Summary Report' (2006).

⁶ A. Czaplinska, *Building Public Support for Development Cooperation*, (Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales, 2007).

relationships of international development more broadly.⁷ Thus, the prevailing wisdom is that the greater the support and identification of publics to the development agenda, the greater the commitment of that country to foreign development assistance. All of the above studies and examinations focus on how development is mediated and relayed to publics in OECD countries in the North.

But what about how development is constructed, mediated and represented within 'emerging' countries such as South Africa? The ways that international development is discussed within emerging middle powers significantly differs between countries. Within the five countries examined in the DFID research project (China, Russia, Poland, India and South Africa), international development was least discussed domestically in the South African case. Noel and Therien's explanation is that:

...the association between public support for redistribution at home and abroad is strong and significant, but negative. In countries where domestic income redistribution is seen as an important priority, foreign aid is less popular; where this is less so, there is more concern for the fate of the poor in the South.⁸

Internationally, there is widespread agreement that countries such as Brazil, India and South Africa, which are 'regional powers', 'middle powers' and 'emerging powers' are becoming increasingly important in international politics.⁹ Whilst there is some debate concerning the classification of such countries, the term 'emerging middle power',

⁷ See L. Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); L. Chouliaraki, *Spectatorship of suffering* (London, SAGE publishing, 2006); B. Korf, 'Commentary on the Special Section on the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disasters, generosity and the other', *The Geographical Journal*, 172, 3 (2006), pp. 245–247; and M. Scott, 'How distant Others are mediated by UK television' (PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2011).

⁸ A. Noel and J.P. Thérien 'Public Opinion and Global Justice', *Comparative Political Studies*, 35, 6 (2002), pp. 631-57.

⁹ A. Hurrell, 'Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for Would-be Great Powers?', *International Affairs*, 82, 1 (2009), pp. 1-19.

utilised by van der Westhuizen best describes their behaviour and their collective role in international politics.¹⁰ These emerging middle powers have societal and economic conditions and histories that differ from traditional middle powers (such as Canada, Australia and Norway). Nolte states that while: 'traditional middle powers are first and foremost defined by their role in international politics, the new middle powers are, first of all, regional powers and in addition middle powers (with regard to their power sources) on a global scale'.¹¹ Vom Hau et al outline four key strategies employed by emerging middle powers in function of influencing global politics, which are: issue leading through coalition-building centred on policymaking in global governance institutions; opportunity seeking through bilateral relations and trade agreements with other countries; regional organising in a geographically defined area; and, regional mobilising through economic integration functioning as a regional hub.¹²

Emerging middle powers are frequently developing countries themselves, and have internal demands that differ from established middle power countries. Jordaan differentiates established middle powers and emerging middle powers by a number of factors.¹³ He claims that emerging middle powers may be fairly new to democracy; they appeared after the Cold War as a result of changing international dynamics; they do not belong to the 'core' of the world economy enjoying high standards of living, but to the semi periphery in unequal countries with high degrees of poverty; they tend to be very powerful and active within their geographic region; they tend to make 'heroic'

¹⁰ van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', pp. 435-455.

¹¹ D. Nolte, 'How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytical Concepts and Research Topics, paper presented at the ECPR Joint Session Workshops, Helsinki, 7-12th May, 2007, pp. 10.

¹² M. vom Hau, J. Scott and D. Hulme, 'Beyond the BRICs: Alternative Strategies of Influence in the Global Politics of Development', *The European Journal of Development Research*, 24, 2 (2012), pp. 187-204.

¹³ E. Jordaan, 'The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers', *Politikon*, 30, 2 (2003), pp. 165-181.

international interventions rather than providing large scale development aid; and, they are more appeasing than reforming in their character.¹⁴

With respect to middle powers being regional powers, Flemes and Habib build on Van der Westhulzen's original argument. Regional powers, they argue, assume leadership of a geographic area and are influential in regional affairs. Additional features of a regional power are:

...the economic, political and cultural interconnectedness of the state to its region; its provision of collective goods to members of the region; its demonstration of an ideational leadership (here defined as the ability to bring about reforms based on regional values and normative perspectives); and the acceptance of its leadership among potential followers.¹⁵

They argue that countries like Brazil, India and South Africa are both emerging middle and regional powers. Schoeman specifically writes about South Africa as a regional emerging middle power, and states that emerging middle powers such as South Africa are expected to exercise a morally responsible role in their respective regions promoting and protecting acceptable rules and norms defined at the global level.¹⁶ Schoeman argues that, as moral standing is a defining characteristic of their power status, emerging middle powers strive for a more active role at the international level.

So what are the typical characteristics of emerging middle powers? Jordaan, Van der Westhulzen and Schoeman have outlined two important features. The first is that

¹⁴ Jordaan, 'The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers', pp. 170-176.

¹⁵ D. Femes and A. Habib, 'Introduction: Regional powers in contest and engagement: making sense of international relations in a globalised world', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 16, 2 (2009), pp. 137-138.

¹⁶ M. Schoeman, 'South Africa as an Emerging Middle Power', *African Security Review*, 9, 3 (2000), pp. 47-58.

emerging middle powers are regional powers with strong regional interests, and second, that emerging middle powers generally have high levels of poverty and inequality within their own countries. Huelsz emphasises that to understand emerging middle powers, it is essential to use an analysis that 'focuses on the interplay between international and domestic factors... [offering] a better insight into the different forms of power an emerging power possesses and exercises at the international level'.¹⁷ Van der Westhuizen also confirms that regional middle power behaviour is driven by domestic political concerns.¹⁸ Thus, these theorists encourage any analysis to, 'focus on what Robert Putnam has called two level games: the interaction between domestic and international politics'.¹⁹

METHODS

To further explore the differing South African domestic and international development discourses, this research utilised a number of different research methods. To assess the degree of engagement of South Africans on issues of international development, a print newspaper media content analysis²⁰ was conducted, examining the largest South African English speaking newspapers: The Mail and Guardian, The Times, The Star, The Sowetan, and The Sun. These newspapers represent a predominant portion of print news media within South Africa, and were reviewed and analysed during the two-year period between 2009-2011. Additionally, some specialist media such as the ANC

¹⁷ C. Huelsz, 'Middle Power Theories and Emerging Powers in International Political Economy: A Case Study of Brazil' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2009), pp. 226-230.

¹⁸ van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', pp. 435.

¹⁹ van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', pp. 435.

²⁰ W. Neuman, *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. (Needham Heights, MA, Allyn & Bacon, 1997), pp. 272-273. Neuman describes content analysis as 'A technique for gathering and analysing the content of text... The 'text' is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication'.

newsletter, the COSATU Shop-Steward newspaper and the Democratic Alliance newsletter were also analysed during this period.

In addition to newspapers, a content analysis of online media was also conducted for this same time period, examining the most active online news media sites. An important caveat with respect to online media is to recognise that the penetration of the Internet in South Africa is very low and most lower-LSM category individuals would not be able to access a decent Internet connection on a regular and consistent basis to rely on online news as their primary news source.²¹ The online media sources examined were: News 24, The Times Online and the Mail and Guardian online for the same two-year period. Additionally, a content analysis was conducted on online international news sources, where announcements of the South African government's new SADPA agency were made. This was done through an Internet search of key terms relating to the proposed SADPA agency for the period 2009-2011. Finally, this research was supplemented with interviews of key actors in South African news agencies, civil society, government and external international donors. Interviews were conducted during April-May 2011 in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

There are some methodological limitations in this research, the first being that it was not possible to closely analyse television or radio in the same way as newspaper and online sources. This was due to both the time constraints of the project as well as the nature of the media itself. Radio is predominantly live broadcast and it is seldom

²¹ Whilst race is still the primary division within South Africa, socio-economic divides are increasingly a key factor. In South Africa, newspapers and media outlets define publics through categories of Living Standard Measures (LSM). LSM is a marketing tool developed by the South African Advertising Research Foundation. LSM 1 is the lowest living standard category whilst LSM 10 is the highest. In 2001, Africans made up 99.7% of those in LSM 1, but only 3% of those in LSM 10. In 2010 Africans made up 98% of those in LSM 1, and 19% in LSM 10. Of adults in LSM 10, 65% were white. <http://www.southafrica.info/about/social/living-standards-030212.htm#> (accessed 1 March 2013).

archived. Moreover, the largest radio-stations in the country are non-English language. In a similar vein, the analysis of television news also proved difficult.

The second methodological issue relates to an English speaking, and Gauteng bias of the sources reviewed and interviewed. One could argue that the print news sources selected were the largest in the country and if discussions around international development were to take place, this would be the most likely sites of such discussions. The third methodological limitation revolves around the idea of 'publics'. The author acknowledges that media cannot claim to represent a coherent or complete 'public' as there is never only one public. While the conventional mainstream media, therefore, may incite only a limited notion of public into being, it is necessary to rethink what kind of debates, actions and engagements might constitute different publics, or constitute publics differently. This is partly the reason why the media review has attempted (albeit in limited terms) to extend the analysis beyond the mainstream media, to include representations of issues of development cooperation in the non-government and civil society sectors.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

South Africa is in a somewhat unique position – it is a country that is both a recipient and a donor of development assistance.²² As an aid recipient, South Africa is unlike most other African economies, as aid comprises a fraction of South Africa's GDP. The total contribution of foreign assistance to the South African economy is less than few

²² The term development assistance and development cooperation are used here interchangeably. Aid is a term that is problematic as many of the emerging countries analysed in this larger project did not give bilateral aid but provided non-monetary forms of development assistance.

percentage points of the national budget and any aid received is very specifically targeted.²³

Whilst there has been economic growth and poverty reduction since the end of apartheid, 50% of the population still live below the poverty line. South Africa's richest are continuing to expand their wealth, and arguably not enough progress has been made to alleviate poverty and reduce economic inequality.²⁴ South Africa is classified as an Upper Middle Income Country with a GDP per capita of US\$5,693 in 2008, and according to a Mid-Term Country Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), South Africa is well on its way to achieving many of the MDGs by 2015.²⁵ Since 1994, South Africa has seen consistent and reasonably strong real GDP growth, at an average rate of 3.5% up until 2008. The country has a well-developed infrastructure and institutions and a large and reasonably diversified economy. However, even though South Africa is the wealthiest country in southern Africa, it faces huge challenges in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic, high unemployment, growing inequality, poverty and crime.

The ending of apartheid brought with it a more conciliatory and inclusive agenda of regional and foreign relations. During the anti-apartheid struggle, the ANC received support from many neighbouring regimes, and so was inclined towards embracing cooperative relations with these regimes – even where these regimes were themselves sometimes not entirely democratic. Although the post-apartheid state was built on the principles of democracy, the infrastructure of government was largely built out of the

²³ Official Development Assistance commitments as a percentage of GDP measured 0.4% in 2007, IMF, 'IMF World Economic Outlook' (2009), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/02/pdf/text.pdf> (accessed 24 July 2012).

²⁴ South Africa's GINI coefficient (the measure of inequality) is 57.8, thus ranking it as one of the highest and most unequal countries in the world, UN Human Development Report 2009 (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), pp. 197.

²⁵ IMF, 'IMF World Economic Outlook' (2009).

remnants of the apartheid regime. The first five years of the post-apartheid government was effectively a process of gradually remaking and reshaping the convoluted patchwork of segregated apartheid institutions into a workable developmental state. The developmental agenda was in effect a number of projects coordinated across departments which themselves were splintered into different racial and provincial entities under apartheid.

Along with many other state infrastructures, South Africa's Development Assistance Programme was incorporated into the new post-apartheid government infrastructure after 1994. The emphasis was directed towards strengthening states and democracy in the region, and this contributed to a more conciliatory and cooperative South African foreign policy agenda regionally. South Africa, as the symbol of democracy and reconciliation, was internationally outspoken against what has emerged as a discourse of 'global apartheid'.²⁶ Mandela famously chastised the west for its declining commitment to development support in Africa, and more recently South Africa has played a significant role as a G8 advisor, as a member of the UN security council, as part of the G20 as well as the 'non-aligned movement'.²⁷

After 1994 South Africa was invited to join SADCC, renamed in 1992 as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). What began as an agreement on coordinating regional development priorities, developed into an instrument for greater economic and customs integration in the region, in which South Africa has played a leading role. Yet there remain suspicions about the role of South Africa as a regional power amongst other SADC members. This is due in part to the history of the apartheid regime actively seeking to destabilise neighbouring regimes, and partly due to a

²⁶ P. Bond, 'Reflections from South Africa. Breaking the chains of global apartheid', *International Socialist Review* (August – September, 2001), pp. 1-5.

²⁷ C. Alden and M. Soko, 'South Africa and its Economic Relations with Africa: Hegemony and its Discontents', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43, 3 (2005), pp. 367–392.

suspicion of South Africa's overwhelmingly dominant economy. South Africa accounts for over a third of Sub-Saharan Africa's economy, with seventeen out of the top twenty companies in Africa.²⁸ Thus, South Africa has been only partially successful in achieving its own national interests regionally, striking an equivocal balance between consolidating internal political imperatives and pursuing regional economic and political interests.²⁹

The Mbeki Presidency consolidated the international standing of South Africa, establishing South Africa as an important conduit between Africa and the international arena. Mbeki's philosophical and theoretical thinking was based on the solidarity of the non-aligned states and south-south relationships, and at the same time leveraging support and investment from the global north. Central to Mbeki's philosophy was the African Agenda and the African Renaissance – the idea that Africa could collectively overcome declining growth rates and human development indices, as well as establish a culture of effective governance and democracy. The then Finance Minister Trevor Manuel defined this new position thus: 'there is a new resilience and a new will to succeed in the African continent. We in South Africa have called it a renaissance, a new vision of political and economic renewal. It takes the global competitive marketplace as a point of departure'.³⁰

At the 52nd National Conference of the ANC in 2007 held in Polokwane, a number of significant events occurred which impacted on the foreign policy context of South Africa, the most significant being the election of Jacob Zuma to the presidency of the

²⁸ P. Carmody, 'Another BRIC in the Wall? South Africa's Developmental Impact and Contradictory Rise in Africa and Beyond', *European Journal of Development Research*, 24, 2 (2012), pp. 224.

²⁹ E. Sidiropoulos, 'South African foreign policy in the post-Mbeki period', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 15, 2 (2008), pp. 107-120.

³⁰ Quoted H. Melber, 'NEPAD: South Africa, African Economies and Globalisation', in F. Manji (ed), *African Voices on Development and Social Justice, Editorials from Pambazuka News 2004* (Dar es Salam, Mkuki na Nyota Publishers), pp. 18.

ANC. Also coming out of the Polokwane conference was the proposal for the establishment of the SADPA. According to the Polokwane Resolution:

The idea of a Developmental Partnership is one of the key strategies that could assist the ANC and government in pursuit of our vision for a better Africa. The Development Partnership will enhance our agenda on international relations which rests on three pillars namely; (i) consolidation of the African agenda, (ii) South-South and (iii) North-South cooperation.... The national budgetary processes should commit the necessary resources to such a developmental partnership. The fund should be located in the Department of Foreign Affairs as is the current situation, functioning as the African Renaissance Fund.³¹

Whilst SADPA gives some institutional framework for a new period of partnership, what is perhaps more important is the broader shift in thinking with respect to South Africa's international relations priorities. If the Mbeki era was characterised by a mixture of idealism and seeking a leadership role for South Africa, the post-Mbeki era is characterised by pragmatism and realism. This may suggest a continuation of many of the Mbeki-era policies, but there is nevertheless a shift toward a language of national strategic interest.³² Flesmes and Habib suggests that many within the new Zuma presidency were involved in the development of the Mbeki doctrine on international relations, and therefore the expectation should be that there are no radical shifts.³³ Landsberg points out that the Zuma presidency has been more pragmatic with regards to both domestic and international affairs.³⁴ Certainly, the establishment of a far more

³¹ See <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2536> (accessed 24 July 2012).

³² Sidiropoulos, 'South African foreign policy in the post-Mbeki period', pp. 107-120.

³³ Flesmes and Habib, 'Introduction: Regional powers in contest and engagement: making sense of international relations in a globalised world', pp. 137-142.

³⁴ C. Landsberg, 'The foreign policy of the Zuma government: pursuing the national interest', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 17, 3 (2010), pp. 273-293.

robust and overarching agency such as SADPA to coordinate South Africa's development assistance suggests continued commitment to these partnerships. But it also suggests increasing consolidation of South African interests.

The key issue for the success of SADPA will be the ability to link South Africa's international involvement to its domestic concerns. The Zuma presidency has explicitly placed South Africa's involvement in Africa and in partnerships with other southern nations such as India and Brazil, as vital to South Africa's economic success. It remains to be seen how this resonates within South Africa.

South Africa's domestic public faces of development

The findings from this research indicated that development cooperation has remained largely under-represented in the mainstream South African media outlets. In most of the newspapers examined there was a relatively wide coverage of the questions of development, service delivery and governance within the South African national context. The developmental state and the national developmental agenda were issues that featured. This was especially acute around times of elections such as in the 2009 national elections and the 2011 municipal election. However, South African development assistance to other countries did not feature in any significant manner during this time. Where these newspapers engaged the issue of aid and development assistance, it was usually in reference to 'other' countries. There has been a construction and caricaturing of the relationship between donor aid countries (from the west) and donor recipients (poor African countries), which serves to situate South Africa as a relatively well off country and thus not in danger of becoming a recipient of

donor aid. During the 2009-2011 period, there were virtually no articles about the new SADPA agency in the South African press examined.

In the Mail and Guardian, the primary issues relating to development assistance reported on were: water and sanitation; agriculture and sustainable development; and health and HIV. These were all areas in which development and aid agencies, both international and local were operating within South Africa. In The Times, where the issue of donor aid had been represented, it was with reference to aid coming from traditional donor countries into Africa. The Times editorial stance has tended to reflect negatively on the context of aid - representing recipients as either corrupt (4 June 2009) or incompetent (14 January 2010), and donor countries as increasingly pessimistic (25 February 2009). Interviews with editors at the Mail and Guardian and at the Times revealed that SADPA had neither featured as a major news item, nor as an editorial or op-ed piece in the news.

It seems that far more than issues of donor aid and development assistance, the editorial content of the Times was reflective of concerns about good governance and economic stability. This complemented the existence of a similar discursive field within the editorial stance of the Mail and Guardian, the target demographic for these two newspapers being roughly similar. This suggests that specific discourses have emerged around African governance within a particular demographic, but this accounts for only a proportion of total newspaper readership - and a far smaller sector of the overall demographic spread.

The Star focused primarily on local news content and with little reporting on issues of development cooperation or international donor aid. SADC and the international foreign policy concerns of South Africa were similarly relatively absent, emerging in the news

or editorial only when prominent members of government attended meetings in other countries.

The Sowetan positioned itself as a more critical newspaper than the tabloids, with a more progressive and aspirational readership than the other mainstream dailies. As such, the content and editorial bias tended to reflect a strong engagement with local and national politics. Questions of development were covered, particularly as connected to issues of service delivery, and to discussions about development policy at a provincial and national level. Discourses of foreign donor aid were obscured by discourses of local development policy and priorities, and the nature and position of the South African state.

The Sun had little comment and analysis content, and almost no international news. There was seldom coverage of international development cooperation, and when issues of development were covered, they were almost always in the form of the local service delivery concerns. In the spirit of many tabloid-style newspapers, the Sun represented itself as the voice of ordinary people, although more in line of consumer-rights than political analysis.

News 24 regularly covered issues of donor aid, but these stories were always in relation to other African countries, and construct the conventional narrative of western donors and African recipients. In 2009, the News 24 website covered the announcement by the President in his State of the Nation address of the SADPA. The article was a brief, stating that the President introduced SADPA in terms of South Africa's national interest. There was no public response to the announcement, and there was no follow-up of the article.

Far more than most other media outlets, issues of development, donor aid and development cooperation were relatively frequently engaged in the Mail and Guardian

online. There was clearly a representation of the relationship between donor countries and recipients as unequal and politically fraught. For the most part, comment pieces focused on the areas of need in Africa, or on the areas where aid had failed to achieve its goals. The discourse was generally about the ethical responsibility of donor countries, and whether these countries should give aid, and whether South Africa has a role to play through diplomacy.

The Mail and Guardian online was also the only media outlet in this review that reflected upon the involvement of China in the aid / foreign policy context of Africa. In two separate comment pieces from September 2008, the involvement of China in development in Africa was raised. These articles were in response to the 2008 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra. However, neither of these articles spoke about the role of South Africa in this context, again locating the issue of donor aid at a distance, as part of a global concern rather than a local imperative.

The ANC Today never once mentioned SADPA during this period. In 2009, the President found cause to mention the establishment of SADPA in his State of the Nation address. In 2011, a statement on the website of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation suggested that the new agency would take form towards the end of 2011. Yet it is significant that the establishment of the agency was not of major significance to branch members of the organisation. However, a number of other issues emerged with consistency, relating to development and international cooperation. There remains, as articulated within ANC Today, a discursive preoccupation with issues of transformation within South African society and economy. A number of editorial articles in the ANC Today over the period of 2009 and 2010 related to the need for continued economic transformation. There were also a number of comparisons to Zimbabwe, where agricultural reform has taken on political significance. Again, this suggests a narrow preoccupation with domestic issues. In

2009, there were a series of articles about the continuing transformation of society (for example, in volume 9, number 35 and volume 9 number 37). There was a dominant discourse throughout the ANC Today newsletter of the question of nationhood and nationality, and the responsibility of the ANC to drive a project of transformation in society and the economy as well as the strategic role of international relations in securing the national interest of the country (for example volume 9, number 44). Finally, in a series of articles in late 2010 there was a condemnation of xenophobia and an acknowledgement of South Africa's responsibility as a major economic hub to engage in development in the rest of the SADC region.

An analysis of the international press during the period of mid-2010 to mid-2011 showed a different story. This press covered the South African process of setting up the SADPA that would bring together all the different forms of development assistance under one umbrella. The stories claim that SADPA represented a clear effort to not only bring together rather disparate elements of South African development assistance, but to also clearly identify South Africa as an international development player.

Some of the stories that appeared in international papers and online sources were in: the Guardian (25 October 2011); irinnews.org (17 January 2011); foreignpolicyblogs.com (28 October 2011); afronline.org (29 October 2011); devex.com (12 December 2011); csis.org (15 June 2011); undispatch.com (27 January 2011); futurechallenges.org (27 October 2011); huffingtonpost.com (17 February 2011); dfid.gov.uk (25 May 2011); and capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu (29 November 2010). The similarity in the wording of some of these stories reflects that these online news sources were responding to a South African government press release. The importance of setting up such an agency is linked to international prestige, and the South African government's international publicity ensured that the international

community was aware of the creation of SADPA, arguably making SADPA's existence more relevant to South Africa's international audiences rather than its domestic one.

Thus, whilst donor aid and development cooperation as concepts were not prevalent in public discourse within South Africa, at least as contained within the mainstream print and online media, there do appear to be a number of other discourses of domestic development and national interest that were prevalent. These include concerns about the developmental state, issues of service delivery, and more recently issues of national diplomatic and economic interests in international relations.

South Africa – the international agenda

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has moved from being an international pariah to becoming an active force within the African region and within international politics. South Africa's new international role took hold with the presidency of Nelson Mandela, but it flourished during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, who had a personal commitment and conviction towards positioning South Africa as an important global player.

As Van der Westhulzen, and Flandes and Habib argued, emerging middle powers such as South Africa, assume leadership of a geographic area and are influential in a region's affairs. South Africa's involvement in international bodies is noteworthy. South Africa is an important member of the G20 group of the world's strongest economies. South Africa is also a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (and has been touted as a possible contender in a potentially reformed UN Security Council) and has now become a formal member of the BRICS, even though South Africa's economy is dramatically smaller than its BRICS partners. South Africa's geographic position has privileged the country's involvement in international

organisations, and as Landsberg and Kondlo³⁵ and Mills³⁶ have stated, the country is 'punching above its weight' in the international arena. South Africa is also a founding member of the IBSA tri-lateral group of emerging democracies, and a regular participant in meetings at the United Nations and the African Union, including at the UN Human Rights Council and the African Union's Peace and Security Council. South Africa plays a leading role in the SADC and in debates regarding trade justice at the World Trade Organisation. The Secretariat for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with its African Peer Review Mechanism is based in South Africa.³⁷ South Africa has also become a hub within the non-governmental sector, with previously northern-based NGOs such as CIVICUS and Action Aid relocating their head offices to Johannesburg. South Africa's international aims have been: 'to promote regional integration, promote South-South cooperation and promote the Millennium Development Goals with the objective of focusing on cooperation between South Africa and other African countries'.³⁸

South Africa's role as an African regional power can be clearly seen in its support of an 'African Agenda', which has been driven by a desire to shift Africa's economy, politics, governance and development focus. Landsberg and Kondlo outline South Africa's vision for Africa, which is 'to position the country so that it becomes a critical player in shaping the development agenda of the continent... [having] positioned itself as a

³⁵ C. Landsberg and K. Kondlo, '*South Africa and the 'African Agenda'*', Paper presented at the Royal Danish Embassy, Pretoria, Policy: issues & actors, 20, 13 (2007), pp 1.

³⁶ G. Mills, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy: from Isolation to Respectability?' in D. Simon, *South Africa in Southern Africa. Reconfiguring the Region* (Oxford, James Currey, 1998), pp. 84

³⁷ CIVICUS, 'CIVICUS Submission to the International Consultative Seminar of South African Legislatures 2011' (2011), pp. 4-5.

³⁸ Parliamentary Monitoring Group, <http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20110803-department-international-relations-co-operation-legislation-establish> (accessed 24 July 2012).

special 'middle ranked' power, a 'pivotal state' and exemplar in Africa and the rest of the developing world'.³⁹

South Africa's role in SADC, which promotes regional integration and economic development and growth, and encourages: 'the highest possible degree of economic cooperation, mutual assistance where necessary and joint planning of regional development initiatives, leading to integration'.⁴⁰ This falls in line with South Africa's government and private sector-driven ambitions in the rest of Africa. But as Landsberg and Kondlo point out, there have been accusations by other African countries that South Africa has used its political role in organisations such as SADC to advance its business interests.⁴¹ This is not unusual for a regional power. In 1996, Mfundo Nkuhlu from South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry stated: 'Whereas South Africa has no desire or ambitions for hegemonic designs in the region, it continues to have legitimate interests'.⁴² Yet, as McGowan and Ahwireng-Obeng state, this is exactly what regional hegemons do – they promote their interests.⁴³

South Africa's focus on the 'African Agenda' directly links to Mbeki's co-creation and support of NEPAD, which was set up to enhance Africa's growth, development and participation in the global economy. South Africa's commitment to NEPAD can be seen through its hosting of the NEPAD secretariat and through its commitment of resources to NEPAD's operations. Landsberg and Kondlo state that South Africa, 'took almost exclusive responsibility for promoting NEPAD internationally as Africa's socio-

³⁹ C. Landsberg and K. Kondlo, 'South Africa and the 'African Agenda'', pp. 1.

⁴⁰ C. Landsberg and K. Kondlo, 'South Africa and the 'African Agenda'', pp. 3.

⁴¹ C. Landsberg and K. Kondlo, 'South Africa and the 'African Agenda'', pp. 8.

⁴² Quoted in P. McGowan and F. Ahwireng-Obeng, 'Partner or Hegemon? South Africa in Africa: Part Two', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 16, 2 (1998), pp. 178.

⁴³ McGowan and Ahwireng-Obeng, 'Partner or Hegemon? South Africa in Africa: Part Two', pp. 178.

economic development plan. In 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution accepting NEPAD as the official development plan for Africa'.⁴⁴

Whilst South Africa is involved in different forms of development assistance, it is difficult to establish the economic extent of this assistance to other parts of Africa. As Tjonneland points out, very high aid figures are frequently cited, even figures optimistically suggesting that South Africa's combined development assistance exceeds 0.7 of its GDP.⁴⁵ These figures include contributions to peacekeeping operations, financial transfers to other members of the South African Customs Union, distributions through the African Renaissance Fund, and contributions to regional organisations such as NEPAD, SADC and the African Union.⁴⁶

South Africa channels a significant proportion of funds through multilateral mechanisms, which accounted for over 90% of contributions in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009. In 2008 the majority of humanitarian aid went to the Kenyan Red Cross - US\$0.5 million - in the form of emergency support relief including non-food items. The World Food Programme has continuously featured amongst the top ten first level recipients since 2005, featuring as the number one recipient in 2005 (US\$5.4 million) and 2009 (US\$0.7 million). The Food and Agricultural Organisation is the first level recipient to receive the largest amount of humanitarian aid from South Africa, at US\$15 million in 2006. In 2009 South Africa made troop contributions to three UN missions, all based in Africa. Its largest contribution was 1,173 troops to the United Nations Organization

⁴⁴ C. Landsberg and K. Kondlo, *'South Africa and the 'African Agenda'*, pp. 5.

⁴⁵ E. N. Tjonneland, 'Providing development aid to Africa: comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil', SAFPI Policy Brief No 25, (2013), pp. 3.

⁴⁶ E. N. Tjonneland, 'Providing development aid to Africa: comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil', SAFPI Policy Brief No 25, (2013), pp. 3.

Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which made up 6.4% of total troop contributions to the mission that year.⁴⁷

South Africa's humanitarian aid contributions since 2000 show peaks in giving, most notably in 2002 when nearly US\$20 million went to Zimbabwe. In line with its 'African Renaissance' approach to development assistance, its humanitarian aid has been focused on Africa. Every year since 2000 an African country has been featured as a top recipient of South African development assistance. In 2009 of the four recipients that received South African humanitarian aid, three were in Africa – Ethiopia (US\$0.3 million), Somalia (US\$0.2 million) and Democratic Republic of Congo, (US\$0.1 million). However, typically South Africa favours multilateral mechanisms to channel its humanitarian aid (such as the World Food Programme), which have made up 90% of all allocations every year, with the exception of 2008.⁴⁸

As Tjønneland states, there is a noticeable trend showing a much closer alignment of South African development assistance with South African foreign policies. He highlights that the African Renaissance Fund monies have gone to countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, two countries that could provide vast future investment opportunities.⁴⁹ With the establishment of the SADPA, the South African government aims to bring together different types of development assistance under one umbrella. It will also, 'help to promote a more coherent South

⁴⁷ <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/quick-comparison-of-oecd-dac-and-un-ocha-fts-data-590.html> (accessed 24 July 2012).

⁴⁸ <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/south-africa> (accessed 24 July 2012).

⁴⁹ E. N. Tjønneland, 'Providing development aid to Africa: comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil', SAFPI Policy Brief No 25, (2013), pp. 4.

African approach to development in other African countries. [Yet] This approach is dominated and shaped by the corporate profile'.⁵⁰

South Africa has a long history of development cooperation and this has been explicitly and inexplicitly tied to its national interests. Today, poverty and inequality still exist in South Africa and yet the state has international aspirations. What we currently see is that for South African development assistance to be justified, this assistance is not necessarily framed in humanitarian terms, but in those of national self-interest. This was captured in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's stated aims: 'Development cooperation [is] a vehicle to advance South Africa's foreign policy to address challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalisation in Africa and the South'.⁵¹

CONCLUSION

This research has exposed a complex field of public discourse in South Africa, within which development assistance has remained largely obscured by discourses of a domestic developmental agenda and foreign-policy national interest. Development assistance has remained largely under-represented in the mainstream print and online media outlets, yet has had more attention in the international press. This is not surprising given that Jordaan, Van der Westhulzen and Schoeman have all outlined that emerging middle powers such as South Africa are both regional powers with strong regional and international interests and that they also have high levels of poverty and inequality within their own countries.

⁵⁰ E. N. Tjonneland, 'Providing development aid to Africa: comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil', SAFPI Policy Brief No 25, (2013), pp. 6-7.

⁵¹ Parliamentary Monitoring Group, <http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20110803-department-international-relations-co-operation-legislation-establish> (accessed 24 July 2012).

Additionally, emerging middle powers such as South Africa show: 'the tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, the tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes and the tendency to embrace notions of 'good international citizenship' to guide diplomacy'.⁵² At first glance, the category of emerging middle powers seems particularly promising for explaining the common behaviour patterns of countries such as Brazil, India and South Africa which found their aspirations on a value-driven discourse committed to democracy, peace and development. In the 2006 Brasilia Summit Declaration, Singh, da Silva and Mbeki reaffirmed their commitment to promoting peace, security, human rights and sustainable social and economic development in the world.⁵³ Yet, as we have seen with emerging middle powers such as South Africa, they themselves have high levels of poverty and inequality that creates an awkward tension domestically and internationally.

South Africa's development assistance has remained largely obscured by discourses of a domestic developmental agenda and the country's international relations interests. Development assistance has remained largely under-represented in the mainstream media outlets, and remains of peripheral importance outside of government policy circles. The investigation into public discourses of development assistance in South Africa has led to two primary conclusions:

- There is a great deal of internal concern about poverty and development within the South African state itself; and,

⁵² A. F. Cooper, R.A. Higgott and K.R. Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1993), pp. 19.

⁵³ D. Flesmes, 'India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) in the New Global Order: Interests, Strategies and Values of the Emerging Coalition', *International Studies*, 46, 4 (2009), pp. 404.

- There is an emerging concern about the relationship between development assistance, international stature, and the South African national interest.

South Africa has attempted to position itself as a partner in regional and continental development and has avoided the moniker of 'donor'. This view is well captured as far back as 1996 in the then South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo's statement: 'South Africa is a developing country with certain of the attributes of a developed, or industrialised country. This enables us to understand, and relate to, the concerns of both the South, as well as the North, and therefore to play a pivotal role'.⁵⁴

Whilst the creation of SADPA had been reported in the international press, there had been virtually no coverage about this important agency within South Africa itself during the period of 2009-2011. Neither has there been much domestic discussion more broadly about South Africa's role as a donor, or 'partner' in development assistance. The explanation frequently provided by interviewees was that South African publics are concerned about development issues within South Africa itself, with a South African journalist stating 'how can we justify building schools in Malawi when we are in desperate need of better schools here?'.⁵⁵ So there is a domestic silence about development cooperation within South Africa, whilst South Africa's international profile increases. Clements Six has called this the 'dual position'. She states that the economic and social structure of these new donors 'defines a 'dual position' as developing country on the one hand and development partners in their external relations on the other'.⁵⁶ South Africa's incongruent faces make sense given these dual positions.

⁵⁴ Quoted in van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', pp. 450.

⁵⁵ Personal interview conducted on 25 April 2012 in Johannesburg South Africa.

⁵⁶ C. Six, 'The Rise of Postcolonial States as Donors: a challenge to the development paradigm?', *Third World Quarterly*, 30, 6 (2009), pp. 1110.