Political Culture in South African Foreign Policy

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Abstract

Although widely acknowledged as an explanatory variable in the study of states' foreign policies, political culture still tends to be neglected by foreign policy analysts. In studies of South African foreign policy the neglect is pronounced, not least because of the scarcity of reliable data on the country's political culture. This exploratory study set out to establish a general association rather than a causal relationship between South Africa's foreign policy and its political culture, especially elite culture. It was possible to infer various elements of political culture (values, norms, beliefs, expectations and attitudes) from seven tenets of South Africa's foreign policy, including its promotion of democracy and human rights abroad, the notion of sovereignty as responsibility, liberatory solidarity, and good global citizenship. Themes for further inquiry on the link between South African foreign policy and political culture are proposed.

Keywords: foreign policy analysis, political culture, South African foreign policy, domestic determinants of foreign policy

Introduction

On the face of it this should be a straightforward inquiry because there is an extensive scholarly literature on each of the three components contained in the title: political culture, foreign policy, and South African foreign policy. When the components are combined, however, difficulties arise. In foreign policy analysis, scant attention has been paid to political culture as a determinant of states' foreign policies. In the steadily growing literature on South Africa's post-1994 foreign policy, relatively few analysts have delved into political culture as a factor shaping that policy. Even the study of South African political culture is sorely underdeveloped. As a consequence this article, focusing on political culture as a variable in the making of South Africa's foreign policy, is entering largely unchartered territory. Far from presenting definitive findings, this is an exploratory inquiry.

The article begins with a conceptualization and operationalization of political culture. This is followed by a consideration of the link between political culture and foreign policy, and a brief survey of scholarly literature in the field, including some case studies of the influence of political culture on foreign policy. The third section is devoted to the tenets of South African foreign policy that evidently embody aspects of the country's political culture.

The meaning of political culture

For the purposes of this article Sodaro's (2004: 256) definition of political culture will be used, namely 'a pattern of shared values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations, and attitudes that relate to politics and its social context'. Each of the five components requires elucidation.

Core values relate to 'political ideals and social relations' and could be derived from ideas (such as liberal or social democracy), religion and nationalism (Sodaro, 2004: 256-7).

Moral norms 'define right and wrong in the behaviour of public officials, in the substance of government policy, and in the enforcement of legal codes' (Sodaro, 2004: 257).

General beliefs could include people's views of the nature of their state's political system (e.g. transparent and accessible versus closed) and their trust in government (Sodaro, 2004: 257-8). Beliefs could also focus on what Easton called 'political community', and can be established by asking with what political unit a population identifies most readily. Is the population in general strongly attached to an 'overarching national identity', or are there other powerful identities based on race, ethnicity or religion, among others? (Barrington *et al*, 2010: 104).

Next are the expectations people have of the functioning of their political system (e.g. regular elections, efficient delivery of public services) (Sodaro, 2004: 258).

The preceding elements combined shape mass attitudes toward authority, society and the state. Attitudes toward these political objects can be expressed through various continuums, such as the submissive-rebellious dichotomy (in the case of authority); consensual-conflictual and collectivist-individualist dichotomies (society); and permissive state-interventionist state (attitudes toward the state) (Sodaro: 261-5).

A further vital distinction needs to be drawn. In the majority of states one finds a dominant political culture, i.e. 'a collection of attitudes that are broadly shared by the political elites and a large proportion of the population', which cuts across divisions of class, ethnicity, race, gender, generation, etc. (Sodaro, 2004: 258; Newton & Van Deth, 2006: 143.) However, it is also common for countries to display one or several political sub-cultures, meaning 'a political culture that deviates from the dominant culture in key respects' (Sodaro, 2004: 258). It has been argued that one of the most important sub-cultures found in all societies is that of the political elite, which can even develop their own 'world view'. Defined as '[t]he relatively small number of people at the top of a political system who exercise disproportionate influence or power over political decisions', the political elite can constitute a ruling elite if it is 'powerful enough' (Newton & Van Deth, 2006: 143.) Elite culture is thus distinguished from – and may be 'vastly different' from - mass culture (Hudson, 1997: 16). Ebel *et al* (1991: 22) referred to the 'supraculture' formed by the 'political class' in a particular society.

An alternative distinction is between a homogeneous political culture (members of a society are 'relatively unified in their beliefs') and a heterogeneous political culture ('when other conspicuous sets of beliefs exist alongside the most typical cultural features of the group') (Barrington et al, 2010: 103).

Empirical studies of political culture (using public opinion surveys) have traditionally focused on the effects of political culture on the existence and success of democratic political systems (Sodaro, 2004: 260). Nowadays the connection between political culture and the domestic political process more generally is firmly established (Ebel *et al*, 1991: 2). But what about the link between political culture and foreign policy?

Political culture and foreign policy

Foreign policy can be understood as 'the totality of a country's policies toward and interactions with the environment beyond its borders' (Breuning, 2007: 5). Foreign policy analysis (FPA), in turn, is designed to gain understanding of how and why foreign policy decisions are made and why states engage in particular kinds of behaviour (Breuning, 2007: 16.) FPA in other words tries to 'unpack the black box of decisionmaking in international affairs' (Hudson, 1997: 5-6).

One of research fields in FPA deals with regime and societal differences and how they affect foreign policy decisions. It is into this particular area that the study of the influence of culture on foreign policy would fit. However, this very line of inquiry probably remains FPA's 'least developed angle of analysis' (Hudson, 1997: 1,5-6); political culture is a widely recognized but 'neglected explanatory variable' in the study of foreign policy that is moreover rarely subjected to careful measurement (Ebel *et al*, 1991: 3,27), thus leaving the link between the two 'elusive' (Ebel *et al*, 1991: 22).

It bears emphasis that political culture is by no means the only domestic variable one should examine in order to explain the substance of a state's foreign policy and its conduct abroad. Other typical internal factors requiring consideration are national attributes (a state's geographic size and location, natural resources and economic and military capabilities); government orientations (including ideology and development strategy); domestic social forces (such as interest groups); and national experiences (like particular historical events) (Ebel *et al*, 1991: 2,9). While this article focuses on the political culture-content of South African foreign policy, it does not follow that political culture is all-important to the exclusion of any other factors.

A further caveat is that the present inquiry merely tries to establish a general association rather than a causal relationship between political culture and foreign policy (Ebel *et al*, 1991: 5) in the South African case. Within political culture, the focus will be on ruling elite culture or supraculture - on the assumption that national leaders 'articulate a vision of the nation's role in world affairs that corresponds to deep, cultural beliefs about the nation' (Hudson, 1997: 10,13) – but some likely connections between mass political culture and South African foreign policy will be pointed out. The emphasis will also be on the declaratory or aspirational rather than the operational features of South Africa's foreign policy.

Turning now to some of the case studies that scholars have done on the link between foreign policy and political culture, two of the most comprehensive remain the book on *Political Culture and Foreign Policy in Latin America* (Ebel *et al*, 1991) and the edited volume on *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Hudson, 1997). More limited studies include those of Stairs (1982) who identified domestic features shaping Canada's international conduct (including a distrust of dogma, fear of extremes, respect for diversity and belief in compromise); Kalberg's (2003) investigation of the influence of political culture on misperceptions in US-German relations; and the examination of the role of 'culture' in shaping Israel's acceptance of the Oslo Accords in 1993 by Barnett (1999).

Among the numerous studies of democratic South Africa's foreign policy, ones dedicated to the link between political culture and articulated or implemented foreign policy are largely absent. Foreign policy analysts have, however, published related but narrower inquiries into 'an emerging South African national identity' (Williams, 2000); South Africa's search for a 'post-apartheid identity' in world politics (Serrão & Bischoff, 2009); 'aspects of South Africa's post-1994 identity' (Van Wyk, 2004); its 'unsettled' international identity (Borer & Mills, 2011); attempts to 're-imagine' its national identity (Death, 2011); 'the emerging South African foreign policy identity' (Cilliers, 1999); and 'state identity' in South African foreign policy (Klotz, 2006: 67-80). Several of these studies adopt a constructivist approach, assuming that 'the identity of nations determines the pattern of interactions between them' (Garner *et al*, 2009: 317. Also see Banerjee, 1997: 28-35 and Breuning, 1997: 102-103).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that very few opinion surveys in South Africa are designed to determine mass or elite political culture; aspects of political culture can, however, be inferred from the findings of some surveys. The most relevant for the present purpose are Kotzé and Steenekamp's *Values and Democracy in South Africa: Comparing Elite and Public Values* (2009), the SA Reconciliation Barometer reports, and the Afrobarometer surveys.

South African foreign policy and elite political culture

Given the scarcity of (quantitative) studies of political culture relevant to South Africa's foreign policy, aspects of elite political culture will be inferred from official foreign policy statements. The focus will be on those tenets of South Africa's foreign policy that are most likely to be informed by elements of political culture. Are the five components of political culture defined earlier - core values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations and attitudes - observable in the country's articulated foreign policy?

'Tenets' refer to ideas or opinions that a person (or a government, for that matter) holds as true and are supposed to guide their actual conduct. Included under this rubric are what South African policy-makers have variously called foreign policy objectives, principles, pillars, and roles. A few have not been proclaimed explicitly, but can be inferred from the words and deeds of policy-formulators. The seven tenets that reveal aspects of elite (and sometimes also mass) culture are democracy and human rights; sovereignty as responsibility and accountability; an African renaissance or agenda; solidarity with the Global South; liberatory solidarity; developmentalism, and good international citizenship. These tenets have remained remarkably consistent under the successive presidencies of Nelson Mandela (1994-1999), Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008) and Jacob Zuma (since 2009). To be sure, there have been also other tenets informing South Africa's foreign policy since the advent of non-racial democracy in 1994, including multilateralism, nuclear non-proliferation and emerging power status (Geldenhuys, 2011: 179-99). These, however, seem largely unrelated to political culture and are excluded from the present inquiry.

The first of the seven relevant tenets is the promotion of human rights and democracy. In a foreign policy blueprint issued in December 1994, seven months after ascending to power, the African National Congress (ANC) pledged to 'canonise human rights in our international relations' and assigned a 'central role' to South Africa in a 'worldwide human rights campaign'. The document went on to proclaim that 'we shall not be selective nor, indeed, be afraid to raise human rights violations with countries where our own interests might be negatively affected' (ANC Policy Document, 1994: 2-4). In 1996 Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo reaffirmed the commitment: 'Human rights are the cornerstone of our government policy and we shall not hesitate to carry the message to the far corners of the world' (DFA, 1996: 16).

During Mbeki's presidency (1999-2008) the first two principles underpinning foreign policy remained a commitment to the promotion of human rights and democracy (*Strategic Plan*, 2003: 11). Consider also Mbeki's championing of a so-called African renaissance, of which the establishment of democratic political systems and the protection of human rights were principal tasks (Mbeki, 1999: 3-4).

The Zuma government has confirmed the centrality of human rights in foreign policy. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim (2009: 1,4), Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, assured Parliament in 2009 that South Africa would henceforth place 'a greater emphasis on human rights', will focus on 'preventing gross violations of human rights' and '[we] intend to more robustly flex our muscles on human rights issues so that we can never be accused of betraying the ideals on which our democracy was founded'. Ebrahim's superior, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane (2010b), likewise stressed that South Africa's foreign policy would be shaped by its commitment to advance democracy and human rights across the world.

The current strategic Plan of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO, as Foreign Affairs was renamed in 2009) reaffirmed that the promotion of human rights and democracy remained the first two principles underpinning the country's foreign policy (*Strategic Plan*, 2010-2013: 7). It is instructive that South Africa's advancement of human rights abroad was not confined to political rights, but embraced also economic, social and environmental rights (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2011).

What explains this steadfast commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights through South Africa's foreign policy? A major factor is political history, especially the black majority's denial of fundamental human rights under apartheid. The Republic will spread the message of human rights across the globe, Foreign Minister Nzo had promised, because '[w]e have suffered too much ourselves not to do so' (*Discussion Paper*, 1996: 16). The same sentiment was articulated in the recent White Paper (2011: 10) on South Africa's foreign policy:

> The values that inspire and guide South Africa as a nation are deeply rooted in long years of struggle for liberation…South Africa believes strongly that what it wishes for its people should be what it wishes for the citizens of the world.

Zuma (2011) reaffirmed the domestic roots of foreign policy by declaring that South Africans 'believe in a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights', adding that 'our foreign policy is an extension of our domestic policy and our value system'.

These officially proclaimed commitments to human rights and democracy express a core value of the political culture of not only the ruling elite but the masses (Kotzé & Steenekamp, 2009: 63-84; Afrobarometer, 2012: Public Perceptions of Democracy and Freedom).

A second tenet of South Africa's foreign policy holds that state sovereignty entails responsibility and accountability: leaders are responsible for the safety and well-being of their respective countries' citizens, and are accountable to them as well as to the international community for their conduct at home. This 'soft' notion of sovereignty challenges the traditional 'hard' sovereignty that emphasized state rights and created a climate in which abusive leaders could act with impunity. In 1998 President Mandela had read his African counterparts a stern lesson in this regard:

> We must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when behind those sovereign boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny (quoted by Landsberg 2007: 199).

President Mbeki (2003: 3) was an equally stout advocate of sovereignty as responsibility in the African context:

> We should not allow the fact of the independence of each one of our countries…turn us into
> spectators when crimes against the people are being committed…We will have to proceed from
> the position that we are each our brother's and sister's keeper.

The elements of both elite and mass political culture underlying this second tenet are again the core *values* of liberal democracy and human rights, coupled with the expectation that government is duty bound to deliver public goods for the population at large and the belief that government should be accountable to the people. It is safe to assume that these aspects of political culture are as evident among the ruling elite as the general population of South Africa.

A third tenet of contemporary South African foreign policy has been the comprehensive regeneration of the African continent, embracing all spheres of life. In the Mandela and Mbeki eras this commitment was styled an 'African renaissance'. At a SADC (Southern African Development Community) summit in 1997, Mandela referred to '[o]ur dream of Africa's rebirth as we enter the new millennium'. That rebirth, Mandela argued, was critically dependent on African countries committing themselves to 'the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the basic tenets of good governance' (quoted by Gumede, 2005: 201). During Mbeki's tenure an African renaissance was elevated to 'the main pillar of South Africa's foreign policy objectives'; the revival of Africa was, according to an official policy review published in 2008, 'central to ensuring a better life for all in South Africa and on the continent' (quoted by Landsberg, 2010: 139). Under President Zuma the 'African agenda' replaced the notion of an African renaissance. Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ebrahim Ebrahim explained that this agenda

> seeks to promote peace and security on the continent, strengthen the pursuit of good governance
> and democracy, deepen regional integration, develop skills and build capacity within the organs
> of the AU, and advance Africa's development agenda (Ebrahim, 2010).

The centrality of Africa in South Africa's foreign policy is based not merely on geographic proximity. South Africans owed their victory over apartheid to support and solidarity from the rest of Africa, then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said in 1998, and this 'imposes an obligation on us to use this gift of freedom…to advance the cause of the peoples of our continent' (Mbeki, 1998). The recent White Paper (2011: 10) affirmed that '[a]s a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity in the past', South Africa was committed to 'contributing to a better and safer Africa in a better world'.

How does the above tenet relate to elite culture? The element of belief is present in that the ruling elite clearly subscribes to a pan-African identity in addition to a South African national identity. South Africa's previous white rulers had by contrast emphasized their European rather than African identity and orientation.

Solidarity with the Global South is a firmly established fourth tenet of South Africa's foreign policy. The ruling ANC's foreign policy blueprint of December 1994 set the tone by asserting that 'South Africa stands firmly as a country of the South' (*Foreign Policy Perspective*, 1994: 10). The Global South, Africa in particular, 'represents the ocean of the alienated and marginalised', whereas the affluent countries of the North were 'islands of prosperity'. South-South cooperation was therefore vital in addressing the challenges confronting Africa (*Overview*, 2007: 2, 8). The new South Africa from the outset saw 'an active and leading role' for itself in developing and strengthening multilateral forums that would 'empower the nations of the South' (*Foreign Policy Perspective*, 1994: 10).

President Mbeki added a strong dose of anti-imperialism to South Africa's affinity for the South. He classified the nations of the world as 'the dominant and the dominated', based on the unequal distribution of political, economic, military, technological and social power (quoted by Nathan, 2008: 6). In Africa's case its subservient position in the global system had been created by Western capitalism and colonialism. 'In a very real sense', Mbeki (2003: 1) maintained, 'the enrichment of the West was predicated on the impoverishment of Africa'. He accused the rich and powerful nations of consistently trying to maintain the 'existing power relations' (quoted by Nathan, 2008: 6) and so perpetuating 'the wretchedness of the poor' (quoted by Shillinger, 2007: 6).South Africa's commitment to what could also be styled as southernism or southern internationalism has continued under Zuma.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane (2010a) noted that the states of the South 'are defined not merely by their location in the southern hemisphere', but they also 'share a common history of struggle against slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism'. She depicted them, in terms reminiscent of Mbeki, as being 'in the periphery'; the centre comprises states 'who benefited from the fruits of Columbus' voyage across the Atlantic, those who wield power in our international system'.

The component of political culture most likely reflected in the fourth tenet is a belief among South Africa's ruling elite in their having a broader Global South identity in addition to their South African and African identities. The identification with the countries and peoples of the South is an extension of South Africa's own status as a developing country that is still struggling to overcome the legacies of its colonial past (under which the era of white rule is often included as representing a form of colonialism). Whether this sense of a 'southern' identity is as pronounced among the general public as in ruling circles in South Africa is uncertain. What counts now, is that solidarity with the Global South is indeed a tenet of South Africa's foreign policy – also one with domestic roots.

Being more than a variant of South solidarity, liberatory solidarity deserves to be treated as a separate fifth tenet. Although not featured as a principle of South Africa's foreign policy in official pronouncements, both rhetoric and action suggest that the government regarded foreign ruling parties and leaders that had actively supported the ANC in its struggle against apartheid as allies of a special kind. On a visit to Zimbabwe in 2009, President Zuma thanked Zimbabweans for their unceasing 'material and political support' against apartheid and asserted that 'the critical incidents in our history…will forever bind us for generations to come' (Zuma, 2009).

Indebted to them for their backing in the past, ANC governments under Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma expressed their solidarity by bestowing state honours on these foreign leaders, exchanging top-level visits, expanding economic and other bilateral ties, and refusing to criticize their old allies for human rights violations and other undemocratic practices. Among the ANC's erstwhile benefactors thus honoured have been Cuba, Angola, Uganda, Mozambique, India, Algeria, China, Russia and Vietnam. More broadly, liberatory solidarity extended to the whole Global South. Ever since the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955, Minister Maite-Mashabane maintained, developing countries' mutual cooperation in their quest for 'a world free of injustice, poverty and inequality' had contributed to South Africa gaining its freedom in 1994 (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2010a).

When relating liberatory solidarity to elite political culture, the value of loyalty to old friends comes to the fore. Whether this value is as strongly endorsed by the masses as by the ruling elite is a moot point.

Developmentalism, a sixth tenet, is the foreign policy extension of South Africa's portrayal of itself as a 'democratic developmental state'. The ANC government subscribed to a socio-economic programme pursued through 'active state interventions and supportive institutional structures' (*Overview*, 2007: 1). The accompanying 'developmental foreign policy' and 'economic diplomacy' were designed to include developmental issues in the global agenda; secure a stronger voice than presently for the Global South in deciding these matters; democratize the global economic order; challenge the hegemony of the Global North, and promote development especially in Africa (via the New Partnership for Africa's Development, known as NEPAD) (Landsberg, 2005: 725-7).

President Zuma (2010) has reaffirmed the ruling party's commitment to a developmental state, 'which will play a strategic and central role in shaping key sectors of the economy', including mining, energy and infrastructure development. This developmental framework, Nkoana-Mashabane (2010b) insisted, 'has and will continue to guide our participation into (*sic*) the global economy and engagements in international relations broadly'. The Minister spelled out a particularly ambitious external aspect of South Africa's developmental state model: 'We have to continue to build developmental states throughout our continent…', Nkoana-Mashabane (2010c) proclaimed in 2010, specifying that such countries 'must be self-reliant and self-sustaining, supported by strong economies with a solid industrial base'.

South Africa's developmental foreign policy can be linked to a pertinent attitude among the ruling elite and no doubt also the masses towards the role of the state. The ANC government and its constituency clearly support the idea of a strongly interventionist state to address the country's serious socio-economic challenges, of which severe income inequality is one (*SA Reconciliation Barometer*, 2010: 5-8).

The notion of good international citizenship has, finally, been a consistent theme in South Africa's post-1994 foreign policy. A good international citizen among states is

> a law-abiding member of international society, meeting its specific obligations and willing to pull its weight on international projects devoted to the common good (Brown, 2001: 30).

More specifically, such a virtuous state will promote universal norms of human rights and democracy as a logical extension of its fundamental national values; address common challenges such as terrorism and arms control through multilateral cooperation instead of unilaterally; participate in various kinds of international peace operations; and champion a rule-governed (as opposed to a power-driven) international order (Vickers, 2003: 31-2; Schoeman, 2003: 349-67.)

Probably the first government announcement of South Africa's aspirations in this regard was made by then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki when addressing the UN Security Council on 25 May 1994, a fortnight after the ANC had assumed power. Referring to the Council's responsibility in advancing global peace, security and stability, Mbeki committed South Africa 'as a responsible citizen of the world, to live up to our obligations in this regard'. He assured the Security Council that South Africa could be counted on 'to behave as a (*sic*) exemplary Member of this Organisation' (Statement Mbeki, 1994).

The sources of South Africa's self-proclaimed good global citizenship have often been spelled out. An ANC foreign policy blueprint of 1994 expressed the conviction that South Africa's 'miracle' of democratization could and indeed should serve as a role model for other societies suffering injustice and conflict (*Foreign Policy Perspective*, 1994: 2-4). Zuma (2011) reiterated this view when referring to South Africa's experience of 'having emerged from a ravaging conflict to become a peaceful stable democracy'. Then the offer: 'We are as always ready to share that experience and work for peace in the continent and the world'.

A related notion was South Africa's 'unique moral legitimacy', as an official foreign policy document of 1996 called it (*Discussion Paper*, 1996). A decade later the foreign ministry still invoked South Africa's 'particular moral authority' said to derive from the country's 'principles, policies and priorities' that 'provide hope not only for the people of South Africa and Africa, but also for the [Global] South since they essentially provide hope for humanity as a whole' (*A Strategic Appraisal*, 2005: 1).

The 2011 White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy again portrayed the country as a good international citizen, and reiterated that 'South Africa's greatest asset lies in the power of its example' (White Paper 2011: 4,10). That policy document also alluded to the 'leading role' South Africa has been playing 'in championing values of human rights, democracy, reconciliation and the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment' not only in the Southern African region and elsewhere in Africa, but globally (White Paper 2011: 4). Those tasks fall squarely in the realm of good international citizenship.

South Africa's aspiration to be a good international citizen is in tune with several aspects of elite political culture (and may indeed also reflect mass political culture). The core values of democracy and human rights are again evident. There are also expectations that the South African government carries a responsibility to help make the world a better place, not least because of international support for the ANC in its struggle against apartheid. Moral norms find expression in South Africa's good global citizenship in the sense that its national values and government practices make it an exemplary state. A belief that clearly informs this final tenet of South Africa's foreign policy is that even the most intractable political conflicts should and could be resolved peacefully. South Africa presents itself as living proof thereof and maintains that as a virtuous global citizen it should share its experiences of peacemaking and reconciliation with others less fortunate.

Conclusion

The point of departure in this article was that states' political cultures have a bearing on their foreign policies. The precise nature of the link remains an under-researched theme in foreign policy analysis generally and in studies of South African foreign policy in particular. The present inquiry has therefore been exploratory, aimed at determining only a general association rather than a causal relationship between the two variables. At least a tentative connection was identified between seven tenets of South Africa's foreign policy and the five components of political culture.

The association between South Africa's political culture and foreign policy can be summarized from either angle. Beginning with political culture, the article found that some core values were present in the tenets of democracy and human rights promotion, sovereignty as responsibility and accountability, liberatory solidarity, and good international citizenship. Moral norms could be detected in the tenet of good international citizenship. General beliefs, in turn, featured in the tenets of sovereignty as responsibility and accountability, an African renaissance/agenda, solidarity with the Global South, and good international citizenship. Expectations came to the fore in the tenets of sovereignty as accountability and responsibility and of good global citizenship. Finally, attitudes characteristic of political culture found expression in the tenet of developmentalism.

Conversely, the tenet of human rights and democracy was associated with core values constituting South African political culture; sovereignty as responsibility and accountability reflected values, beliefs and expectations; an African renaissance/agenda expressed certain beliefs; solidarity with the Global South likewise embodied beliefs; liberatory solidarity was associated with core values; developmentalism could be linked to attitudes; and good global citizenship was connected with values, beliefs, moral norms and expectations.

More than an association, there is a coherence between political culture and South Africa's declaratory foreign policy insofar as the seven tenets are concerned. This confirms that the country's foreign policy has strong domestic roots, at least in elite (if not always mass) political culture.

To conclude that there is a link and convergence between South Africa's aspirational foreign policy and elements of political culture is admittedly only a modest step in researching this particular determinant of its foreign policy. The precise nature of the connection still needs to be probed. The congruity or incongruity between mass and elite political culture on foreign policy questions (for instance South Africa's Global South solidarity, its pan-African identity, and the spread of democracy abroad) likewise calls for further scholarly investigation. The association between South Africa's operational (instead of aspirational or declaratory) foreign policy and its political culture is another theme for investigation. Most challenging of all would be to establish causal relationships between South Africa's foreign policy and political culture. All this can of course only be done properly if more data on the country's political culture – especially as it relates to foreign policy issues – is available.

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