

## **OLD VERSUS NEW DIPLOMACY IN THE SINO-SOUTH AFRICAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: PRACTISES, OUTCOMES AND REPRESENTATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines old versus new diplomatic practices in the Sino-South African bilateral relationship. The question is whether negotiation and representation follow traditional styles of diplomacy or embrace new political and economic discourses. Diplomatic exchanges between China and South Africa in the last decade is characterized by a set of ‘new rules to deal with more complex set of issues’. This ‘new diplomacy’ is not outmoding the old diplomacy but comes to complement the works of traditional diplomacy to meet new demands and making the two country’s economies more open and inclusive. Negotiations are not concerned only with defining the rules of trade, treatment of citizens and operational rules for transport and communications but also address environmental, health and information technology issues. The main players in dealing with old diplomatic practices are still high-ranking officials from the state and representatives from government departments, while new diplomatic practices are increasingly negotiated from non-governmental and actors on the margin. In the Sino-South African relationship this complex set of issues need the attention of individuals who can minimize non-traditional security threats. These threats are difficult to manage from the machinery of the state because of pressure on the distribution of resources and therefore need a ‘new set of rules or fresh approach’ to find solutions to the set of issues.