

**SHIFTING LANDSCAPES, CHANGING DYNAMICS.
THE RISE OF REGIONAL HEGEMONS: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICA, 2009-2018**

by

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Mini dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Diplomatic Studies

in the

Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Dr. MG Shangase

31 MAY 2019

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the interplay of history, Pan-Africanism and soft power and its impact on how hegemony should be understood on the African continent. These dynamics were demonstrated through an examination of scholarship related to South Africa's contested status as a regional hegemon.

Using the theoretical framework of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, it argues that much of the current contestation is attributed to the limitations of transposing a global theory to the regional level without taking into account the dynamics and complexities of that particular region. The study adopts a qualitative design and is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm to allow a more nuanced and richer analysis of the regional system. The study is a literature-based study that relies on secondary sources.

The dissertation found that the examined contextual factors rooted in the history and ideology of the continent combine to create powerful structural forces that impede the operation of hegemony in the manner envisioned by Hegemonic Stability Theory. Any application of hegemonic discourse to South Africa therefore requires a deeper understanding of the continent's history, its Pan-Africanist ideology, and accompanying norms and values, as they actively constrain hegemonic ambition. Domestic complexities; contested space; increased competition; waning soft power and lack of secondary state followership also impede South Africa's hegemony in Africa.

Keywords: *Hegemonic Stability Theory, global theory, regional hegemon; South Africa; soft power; historical legacy, Pan-Africanism, Africa, African Renaissance, hegemony.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACROYMNS

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ANC	African National Congress
ARC	Africa Regional Centre
ASF	African Standby Force
ASA	Africa-South America Partnership
AUPSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
AU	African Union
AU-UN	African Union- United Nations
BRICS	Bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and South Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dti	Department of Trade and Industry
ESKOM	Electricity Supply Commission
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FLS	Front Line States
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
G20	Group of 20 Most Developed Economies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
ICC	International Criminal Court
IBSA	Bloc comprising India, Brazil & South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IORA	Indian Ocean Regional
KAF	Korea-Africa Forum
MTN	Mobile Telecommunications Company
NDB	BRICS New Development Bank
NEPAD	New Economic Plan for Africa's Development
NDP	National Development Plan
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RDC	Rapid Deployment Capacity
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
S&P	Stanley and Poor

SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANLAM	South African Financial Services Company
SARChI	South African Research Chairs Initiative
SKA	Square Kilometre Array
TICAD	Tokyo's International Conference for Africa's Development
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States
USSR:	United States of the Soviet Republic
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Following the end of the Cold War, there has been a realignment of the international political landscape from a bi-polar world order to that of a multi-polar structure comprising of competing regional powers. This multi-polarisation of the global order has resulted in a shift of power to the regional level giving credence to the view that regions will play an important role in the future of the world order (Nolte 2010).

As regional powers gain political and economic weight, they have been increasingly called upon to play a leading role as new norm builders and providers of public good. This is of particular significance to the African continent, which lags behind other regions of the world in terms of political and economic power. It is thus important to gain a better understanding of regional hegemony and its implications for the international order, especially in light of the current power vacuum left by states regressing on their global responsibilities.

As a preponderant power on the continent, South Africa has been identified as a country, which can “propel the continent towards the path of economic development and security” (Ogunnubi & Akinola 2017:430). However, despite playing a strong leadership role in Africa based on the core ideas of an Afro-centric foreign policy and notable achievements on the continent, its status remains highly contested. South Africa has been both criticised for assuming a dominant role and conversely evading responsibilities to play a stronger leadership role, akin to a regional hegemon.

Scholarship on hegemony remains divided about the country’s capability and willingness to assume the role of a regional hegemon. Habib (2009:148-149) and Tella (2017:392) are of the view that South Africa has already assumed the role of a hegemon by playing a central role in stabilising Africa, revitalising regional governance organisations and championing the African Agenda. Its provision to the public regional good and immense soft power capabilities have reshaped the narrative of the continent. On the other hand, Landsberg (2003) and Alden & Le Pere (2008) remain unconvinced of South Africa’s capacity to assume the role of a hegemon due to precarious domestic characteristics, resource constraints and regional challenges. South Africa’s ability to play a hegemonic role is severely compromised by its failure to transform its own economy and that of its immediate neighbourhood. This makes it difficult for the country to assume the position of a continental political–military hegemon (Tjemolane et al. 2012:102). The third view is that South Africa possesses some hegemonic characteristics

and could be classified a putative or symbolic hegemon, at most. However, South Africa's subservient role in the international political economy and vulnerability to the manipulations of powerful external actors (China, USA, India and the European Union (EU)) in Africa strips the country of full hegemonic status (Ogunnubi & Akinola 2017; Schoeman & Alden 2015, and Burgess 2012).

Much of the contesting views stem from the theoretical prism of the Hegemonic Stability Theory through which South Africa's foreign policy is measured. According to Keohane (1989) and Cox (1996), the Hegemonic Stability Theory posits that the international system is more likely to remain stable when a single nation-state is the dominant world power, or hegemon. It possesses a preponderance of power and exercises leadership, either through diplomacy, coercion, or persuasion. It also expresses a willingness to take on the responsibilities of a hegemon and contributes to the public regional good. Despite possessing preponderant power, exercising leadership and contributing to the public regional good, South Africa has continuously failed expectations. The dissertation advances that this anomaly may be due to the Hegemonic Stability Theory failing to take into account contextual factors that can constrain the rise of a hegemon.

Originally formulated to describe a dominant state in the international sphere, the theory has been increasingly transposed to the regional level to understand regional dynamics (Prys 2009). It contains inherent western bias and euro-centric prescriptions, which limit comprehensive analysis of the regional system. Ogunnubi (2017:429-440) not only questions the applicability of a universal theoretical approach to hegemony in fostering an understanding of regional power dynamics in Africa but also argues that any application of the theory to Africa requires fine-tuning to fit the peculiarity and nuances of the African context. Due to the brutality of colonialism and its dependent position in the global sphere, any analysis of the African region would be incomplete without consideration of the continent's historical legacy and Pan-Africanist ideology. South Africa's own historical legacy of Apartheid and its role in creating enduring negative perceptions, coupled with expedient use of soft power to counter those perceptions, are intrinsic to fostering a better understanding of regional dynamics on the continent. The increasing recognition of soft power in hegemony studies, placing greater emphasis on ideology, institutionalism and prestige, would also facilitate a better understanding of hegemony in the regional system (Nye 1990, Cox 1981).

As the fissure between theory and empirical reality deepens, a better understanding of how regional hegemons engage in their sphere of influence and the constraints they face would

help explain conflicting views of how hegemony is practiced, evaluated and analysed in the regional system.

Aim

Thomas and Hodges (2010) state that the research aim usually refers to the main goal or overarching purpose of a research project. Accordingly, the aim of this research study is to examine those factors, which are often ignored or overlooked in mainstream hegemony literature but play an intrinsic role in influencing regional hegemony within the African context.

Research Objectives

According to Thomas and Hodges (2010), the research objectives refer to key issues to be focused on in a research project. Thus, the paper seeks to:

1. assess and contribute to the existing body of literature on regional hegemony that extends beyond the traditional (global, prescriptive and euro-centric) definition of hegemon;
2. examine the role of neglected contextual conditions such history, ideology and soft power on regional hegemony and;
3. investigate a regional hegemon's performance and identify the unique constraints it faces within its sphere of influence

1.2 Rationale

The topic of this research is timely as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of South Africa's foreign policy in order to re-orientate its trajectory and regain lost influence on the continent. By examining specific contextual factors (history, pan-Africanism and soft power), the paper seeks to provide a more nuanced and richer interpretation of South Africa's contested status in Africa. This would facilitate an enriched understanding of African dynamics and the unique constraints faced on the continent as much of the current literature on South Africa's perceived hegemonic status focuses largely on realist attributes (economic and military) and contested interpretations of hegemony. Further to this, given the shift of power in the global order and that countries of the Global South may be new power poles for the future multipolar system, it is imperative to possess an understanding of regional dynamics in the Global South, with specific reference to Africa.

The unit of analysis is South Africa's foreign policy and the geopolitical dimension is restricted to Africa. While the temporal dimension focuses on the period 2009 to 2018, reference is made to events in the preceding years to provide context for the various foreign policy decisions taken. The paper examined the following main question, broken down into three sub-questions:

Main Question

How has the configuration of history, pan-Africanism and soft power contributed to the position of South Africa as a regional hegemon on the African continent?

Sub-Questions

1. Why has South Africa engaged as a reluctant regional player on the African continent despite its prowess and capabilities?
2. What constraints does South Africa encounter as a regional hegemon on the continent?
3. How has South Africa performed as a regional hegemon on the African continent?

1.3 Chapter Outline

This research paper is divided into seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** This chapter provides a brief introduction of the topic and rationale of the study. It highlights the growing importance of regional powers in an evolving global landscape and the subsequent limitations of applying the Hegemonic Stability Theory, a global theory prescribing euro-centric notions of hegemony, to the regional level. In the absence of a regional specific theory, the paper argues that there is a need to examine contextual factors such as history, pan-Africanism and soft power to better understand regional dynamics on the continent.
- **Chapter 2:** This section provides a literature review of South Africa's contested hegemonic status on the continent, ranging from a natural hegemon to those who reject it on the basis of domestic constraints, limited financial spend for the provision of public regional good, limited influence on the continent due to the country's dependency on the international global market and competition from external partners. The second half focuses on literature pertaining to historical legacy (colonialism and apartheid); Pan-Africanism (African Renaissance) to gain a better understanding of their influence on the continent.
- **Chapter 3:** This chapter contains the research design and methodology used in the study. The primary aim is to examine contextual factors (history, pan-Africanism and soft power) and their contribution to South Africa's status as a hegemon on the African continent. The research adopts a qualitative design and is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand experiences and actions within their social and cultural context (Fossey et. al. 2002: 720). The research employs a case study methodology to allow for contextual analysis of events and South Africa was chosen as the case study as it is considered the regional hegemon on the continent. The research is literature-based and

uses secondary sources. Ethical considerations are limited as no sensitive or confidential information was used.

- **Chapter 4:** This section provides a conceptual and theoretical analysis of hegemony. It draws a cartography of hegemony from its classic realism beginnings to neo-liberalism, constructivism and the English School Theory. It also examines the theoretical framework of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, which postulates that the international system is more likely to remain stable when a single nation-state is the dominant world power or hegemon. The chapter also highlights the limitations of this universal theory and its inherent euro-centric shortcomings when transposed to a regional system, necessitating the examination of contextual factors to explain regional hegemony in Africa.
- **Chapter 5:** This chapter provides a broad historical overview of the case study, South Africa, and the integral role history and ideology plays in the state's behaviour and the continent's corresponding reaction.
- **Chapter 6:** The section explores the interplay between the examined contextual and Africa-specific factors of history, pan-Africanism and soft power and its impact on how hegemony should be understood in the African region. These dynamics are demonstrated through an examination of scholarship related to South Africa's perceived status as a regional hegemon. The research study finds that the continent's historical legacy and ideological values of Pan-Africanism constrain the rise of a hegemon. African states deliberately adopt a soft-balancing strategy to guard against bullying and neo-imperial ambitions of larger powers while African solidarity and unity discourage unilateral and dominant behaviour. Despite strong soft power capabilities, South Africa's waning power coupled with economic decline, domestic concerns and the rise of fierce competition constrain hegemony on the continent.
- **Chapter 7:** This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the dissertation and demonstrates the theoretical limitations of a global theory in the regional sphere. It highlights the need to break free of the constraints imposed by euro-centric and limited theoretical constructs to contribute to an enriched understanding of the African region.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is the current state of knowledge in a particular field of study (Walliman 2011). It identifies gaps in the research and helps provide the context of the study. This chapter is structured as follows: the first part examines scholarship on South Africa's contested characterisation as a hegemon in Africa. The second part focuses on regional hegemony and the importance of Africa to South Africa and the third part examines current literature on the history of the continent (colonialism and Apartheid) and the ideology of Pan-Africanism, with the aim of understanding their role in shaping hegemony discourse and regional dynamics on the continent.

2.1 South Africa's contested status as a regional hegemon in Africa

2.1.1 South Africa is the natural hegemon of Africa

Current literature characterises South Africa under a plethora of different concepts; hegemon, pivotal power, regional power, dominant power and emerging power. Prys (2007) characterises the hegemony debate as both prescriptive and normative, arguing that terminology is often over-simplified and applied inconsistently and interchangeably. According to Prys (2007:1), "much of the academic literature on South Africa's role in Africa is characterised by a clash of concepts, assumptions and normative convictions" giving rise to different interpretations. However, also acknowledges that this is not unique to South Africa but seems to be widespread across regional powers.

Due to the unique nature of South Africa's transformation into a democratic country, political commentators and academics alike hold contesting views and perceptions about the country's hegemonic status. Literature is replete with examples of scholars pronouncing and denouncing South Africa's hegemonic status, often stemming from contesting assumptions and narrow interpretations of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, which is a global power theory. Due to its economic size, military strength, enormous soft power capabilities and relative prosperity, South Africa has been identified as a natural regional hegemon or potential regional hegemon (Hugon 2003:117, Schoeman 2002:262, Singh 2018). It has also been dismissed on the basis that military and economic might is neither a necessary, nor sufficient condition for a hegemon (Keohane 1989).

In order to contextualise contesting interpretations of South Africa's status, the dissertation examines literature pertaining to South Africa's perceived hegemony. During its early days of

transformation, Hugon (2003:117) proclaimed that South Africa was already the economic powerhouse of the Southern African region and the African continent. Its strong economic and military power was viewed as an engine to address Africa's poverty and underdevelopment. Schoeman (2002:262) concurred that South Africa was the obvious hegemon given its extraordinary contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. It is important to note that much of its large and unfair economic advantage stemmed from its destabilising policies and economic exploitation of Southern Africa under the Apartheid regime.

Following its transition from outcast to responsible global citizen, South Africa was universally expected to take up a hegemonic role in Africa, given its economic wealth and level of development in comparison to neighbouring states. Its sophisticated banking system, expansive infrastructure; strong military prowess, and a GDP twice that of neighbouring states seemed to substantiate South Africa's status as a regional hegemon (Gelb 2001). Habib (2009) claimed that the country's economic, diplomatic and military capacities, in comparison to other African countries, seemed to automatically define it as a regional power or hegemon. Its pursuit of an Africa-centric foreign policy, reconstruction of institutional African architecture and popularisation of the African Agenda in the international community also pointed to hegemonic ambitions. Habib (2009) was convinced that South Africa was already a hegemon as it not only possesses a strong political and socio-economic vision of its environment but was also willing to implement this vision.

Prys (2007) viewed South Africa as the 'pole of activity' in Southern Africa in terms of its industrial output, GDP and trade imbalance with neighbouring countries. While acknowledging that the regional integration process has been slow, Mills & Soko (2005:370-377) noted that South Africa was committed towards promoting interdependence and cooperation within the region and was determined to prove that it was a good regional citizen. Mills & Soko (2005) claim that its dominance is clearly evident through its sophisticated infrastructure in Africa; liberal constitution; global goodwill and prowess in academia, sports, tourism and entertainment industry. It has several prominent institutions in Africa with an active private sector. South Africa is one of the largest foreign investors on the continent. Its robust peace and security efforts, promotion of democracy, good governance, market liberalisation and institution-building are viewed as strong evidence of its hegemonic disposition on the continent, positioning the country as a natural choice for an African hegemon (Mills & Soko, 2005 and Habib, 2009).

According to Cox (1981) and Gilpin (1981), a hegemon can take two forms, malevolent or benevolent. A malevolent or coercive hegemon uses force and aggression to get its way while a benevolent hegemon uses persuasion to influence other states. It is usually described as self-sacrificing and is willing to pursue consensus over individual power. In the case of South Africa, perceptions have been extreme. South Africa has been characterised as both an exploitative/coercive power pursuing selfish economic interests and a benevolent self-sacrificing and cooperative hegemon seeking regional consensus over the naked exercise of power. Based on its effective use of soft power and commitment towards building a stable and prosperous Africa, some scholars, such as Burgess (2012), have reclassified it as a benevolent hegemon. While others, Ogunnubi (2017) and Tella (2018) view South Africa's hegemonic status as solely based on its immense reserves of soft power, despite obvious limitations and contradictions.

It is evident that much of the scholarship classifying South Africa as a regional hegemon is largely time-bound and context specific. Hegemonic attributes can be traced to the early transformation years when South Africa re-entered global politics and enjoyed both regional and global goodwill to succeed. Its material preponderance, bolstered by the West's desire for a strong African representative and African expectations of redemption and pay-back of a historical debt, placed real and imagined expectations upon South Africa to assume the role of a hegemon. Its peace and security diplomacy; strong commitment to human rights; moral currency; global acceptance and commitment to revitalising the African continent through the establishment of pan-African governance organisations was interpreted as tantamount to the provision of the public regional good expected of a regional hegemon.

2.1.2 South Africa is not a regional hegemon

While theorists often describe the uneven distribution of power in a system as hegemony, they also acknowledge a slight power differential does not automatically translate into hegemony. According to Robert Keohane (cited in Nye 1990), while a hegemon is a politically and economically powerful state, it must be willing to maintain the rules governing interstate relations. Kindelberger and Krasner (cited in Nye 1990) agree that a hegemon should be a relatively strong state willing to assume and exercise leadership for the system. Ogunnubi and Akinola (2017:431) aptly claim, "Hegemonic allocation of power operates when a country has military, political and economic power to act unilaterally and this influences its openness of trade, market and other economic activities within the system".

Bearing this in mind, South Africa's status as a regional hegemon has been dismissed on the basis that it fails to meet the basic criteria of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, namely the

willingness to assume the role of a hegemon due to economic decline, limited domestic spend and fears of deepening resentment amongst African peers. Ogunnubi (2017) argues that there is a weak link between South Africa's foreign policy and its hegemonic disposition in Africa and attributes it to a lack of regional influence, vulnerability and dependency on international capital. Its lack of interest, protestations and denial of wanting to pursue a hegemonic role are put forward as clear indications that South Africa does not demonstrate the behaviour typically associated with a hegemon. Since the term hegemon is usually perceived to be negative, it is not surprising that South Africa eschews the title. South Africa also faces increased competition from other regional contenders, such as Nigeria and Egypt, which have recently surpassed the country in regional economic rankings. In addition, more powerful external powers (the EU, US) and new players (China and India) crowd its neighbourhood. It also does not possess the ability for unilateral action, nor does it enjoy regional consensus on its purported role as Africa's representative on the global stage.

However, it cannot be denied that South Africa enjoys international recognition as an African leader evident by its leadership positions in prestigious multilateral groups such as the Group of Twenty (G20) and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) partnership. As a unique state exhibiting developing and developed country characteristics, South Africa ticks some of the boxes of hegemony, which have led several scholars to argue that South Africa is a putative or symbolic hegemon at the very least. According to Alden & Schoeman (2015) South Africa's leadership and dominance of the African continent is only partially realised due to structural problems, material weakness and an uneven record of success. The scholars highlight that the country has a limited ability to translate its limited preponderance into political power and influence over African regimes, most notable being Zimbabwe and Swaziland. At most, South Africa's symbolic representativity is conditioned by the need for an African representative on the global stage, evidenced by the fact that it must work in partnership with other powers to achieve its foreign policy objectives (Alden & Schoeman 2015, Sidiropoulos, 2018).

2.2. Regional Hegemony

Much of the contestation over South Africa's status can be attributed to the plethora of different and oversimplified concepts (hegemon, pivotal power, regional power, dominant power, emerging power) applied inconsistently and interchangeably (Prys 2007). As the research study is limited to the regional system, this section will look at how regional powers are classified. Destradi (2010: 903-906) views regional powers as "regional leading powers, which adopt a cooperative and benevolent attitude towards their neighbours". They are advocates of regional interests in inter-regional and global fora and exercise cooperative hegemony in the

regional context. They also combine leadership and power over resources and have a special responsibility for regional security. Schoeman (2003) states that a regional power plays a stabilising and leading role in the region and is accepted by neighbours while Schirm claims that, regional powers are role models and leaders in their region (cited in Destradi 2010: 906).

Flemes (2009:135-136) distinguishes regional powers by four pivotal criteria: i) claim to leadership; ii) power resources; iii) employment of foreign policy instruments and iv) acceptance of leadership coupled with a willingness to lead, which is a necessary condition for regional hegemons. Osterud (1992:12) sees regional powers as a state that is geographically part of a delineated region, able to challenge any coalition of other states in the region and is highly influential in regional affairs. It could also be a global power in addition to its regional position. The following main characteristics are highlighted; geographic location; military strength; influence in regional affairs; possible influence on a world scale. However, Destradi (2010) criticises Osterud (1992) for not being clear on the means and resources required to achieve that status.

Nolte (2010) provides a more exhaustive list that “characterises a regional power as a state, which assumes a leadership position in the region; possesses tangible resources to project regional power; exhibits influence in the region, defines and engages clearly attainable regional projects; provides a collective good for the region; pursues a regional security agenda; receives regional acceptance of its leadership and is at the forefront of global and multilateral institutions to advance regional interests through political, economic or cultural resources”. They can exercise influence over other states and actors (internal and external) to accept their leadership. Similarly, Ogunnubi & Okeke-Uzodike (2016) characterise a regional hegemon as a state, which has power advantages via political and economic capabilities. It also possesses considerable regional influence and acceptance of its leadership.

As a regional power’s influence depends on the ability to determine the co-operation agenda, they are often creators of regional governance institutions. This influence can be achieved through co-operative or unilateral hegemonic leadership. While regional hegemons can exert influence within a limited geographic area, they do not always get their way. Hegemony can be a role that a state can aspire to or be brought into it (Williams et.al. 2012:22). There are also limitations of being a regional hegemon as its status (legitimacy, authority and credibility) depends on the recognition and acceptance of other (smaller and weaker) states, inclusive of broader and extra-regional acceptance (Flemes 2000).

Current literature conflates the terms regional power and regional hegemony when describing a preponderant power in the regional context. It is thus not surprising confusion exists in the field of hegemony studies. While many scholars use the term regional power and regional hegemon interchangeably, Prys (2010:21) makes a clear distinction between the two, which is the ability of a regional power to convert relative material preponderance to perform certain tasks and carry the regional burden, i.e. provision of a regional public good such as peace, regional security and regional integration. A regional power can be transformed into a regional hegemon through the following factors: perception: self-perception, regional perception; provision of a regional good and projection of power to secondary states within a region, which allows for the transformation of a state from a regional power to a regional hegemon (Prys (2010) cited in Oluwamayowa & Folami, 2018:198).

According to Prys (2009), regional hegemons lie at the nexus of global and regional politics as they operate within the international system of global distribution of power and international institutions. Since domestic, regional and global levels intersect/overlap and sometimes even contradict, regional hegemony can be the outcome of a certain foreign policy strategy (Prys 2009). Oluwamayowa & Folami (2018:98) argue that “regional hegemony encompasses the interplay of power politics, and the dominance of power within a specific region, earmarked by a superior state over another towards the actualisation of certain goals, values or interests and the attainment of legitimacy on the global stage”. Although the aforementioned criteria are important in the qualification of a state as a hegemon, not all potential hegemons meet these criteria, and this does not disqualify them from assuming the position (Francis et.al. 2013:186).

2.2.1 Strategies of Regional Powers

Since there is an overwhelming focus on material power capabilities; strategies pursued by regional powers should also be explored. Relations between neighbours provide greater insight into the strategy and motives of the regional power (Destradi 2010: 905 and Prys 2010). As regional hegemons also advocate regional interests in inter-regional and global fora, it is imperative to acknowledge the difficulties faced by regional powers as it highlights the contested nature of leadership and the need for followers. According to Siddiqui (2014), despite stemming from similar sources of power, hegemony and leadership differs in mode in projection and reception.

According to Siddiqui (2014), power refers to realist capabilities (economic and military) of a state, while prestige refers to the perceptions of other states with respect of a state's capabilities and willingness to exercise power. They also arise from interpretations given to those impressions by states. Siddiqui (2014) states that perceptions are psychologically rooted

and can be a result of circumstances and historical experiences. This brings to fore the important role perceptions play in the African region due to its historical legacy of Slavery, Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism reignited by the wave of Globalisation, which has the potential of trapping Africa into a new development-dependency paradigm.

2.3 Contextual and Africa-Specific Factors

2.3.1 Africa as a region

Since the paper is focused on the African region, a short historical background of the region is necessary as most hegemony studies apply euro-centric concepts indiscriminately to the continent, leading to the current dilemma between theory and practice (Ogunnubi & Akinola 2017).

Buzan (cited in Paul 2012:22) defines a region as one geographically distinctive from the wider international system. As most of the regions outside Europe were colonised, colonial heritage has an impact on the character of regions and how they relate to the western core and to each other (Buzan cited in Paul 2012:25). According to Yilmaz (2010) these regions are still trapped in a core-periphery pattern and subject to the extreme historical and colonial inequalities that gave birth to them. Failure to consider the dynamics of particular regions provides an incomplete understanding of the role, influence and impact of regional hegemons. To this end, Taylor (cited in Ogunnubi & Akinola 2017:430-437) cautions that hegemony studies need to be cognisant of the African situation and the manner in which western-centric international relations concepts are applied to Africa and the third world in general.

2.3.2 Colonial Legacy

Post-colonial Africa should always be examined within its historical context in order to contextualise its distinctive current socio-economic and political characteristics. An appreciation of slavery and colonisation is necessary to determine the impact, not only on the development of Africa but also of the African people's perceptions of themselves (Thiam 1965). While Africa has undergone a dramatic transformation over the years, it still conjures images of a continent plagued by centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Following decolonisation process, African states were left in conflict due to artificial frontiers carved during the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. They struggle to "assert national and regional identities in response to continuing inequities of colonialism" (van der Merwe 2014:148). Thiam (1965:72-73) states that the violent nature of Europe's conquest and exploitation of Africa coupled with Africa's resistance to it must be remembered when examining African dynamics as it explains why particular attributes (aggressive, dominating, exploitative, selfish militaristic) of hegemony are largely perceived as reminiscent of colonialism. Thiam (1965) further notes

that European colonisation not only set back the social, economic and political development of Africa but also led to fierce conflict over territorial integrity and sovereignty, giving rise to geo-political traditions steeped in resistance. Since liberation and freedom were hard fought, African states have fiercely protected their sovereignty and territorial independence. Tiekou (2013) concurs that shaped by centuries of slavery, colonialism, post-colonialism, Apartheid and most recently Globalisation, the post-colonial African state is naturally suspicious of euro-centric ideologies as well as fearful of domination by another state, fellow African or not.

Africa's historical legacy has also played an integral role in determining the continent's current position in global affairs. While colonisation is multi-faceted, its economic exploitation left the continent trapped in a vicious dependency cycle by relegating it to the periphery of the global economy where it continues to export raw primary commodities and import manufactured goods. During colonisation, vast amount of wealth, such as raw material and cash crops, were transferred out of the continent to fuel the industrial needs of colonial powers. According to Khapoya (2012:99-137) countries like Senegal, Kenya and Ivory Coast produced coffee and cocoa while those in the South focused on mining minerals and raw materials. Due to production of similar cash crops by several African countries, diversification and value addition was limited and intra-African trade was also stifled to avoid competition with European powers.

Miruthi (2013:1) argues "Africa's international relations narrative is dominated by perspectives of those who have invaded, enslaved and colonised the continent" and that "the relationship between Africa and its former colonisers are still infused with a paternalistic attitude informed by the need to civilise and discipline the continent". Africa has not yet come to terms with the historical injustice generated by the legacy of colonialism, which explains why African leaders and citizens continue to view Europe (including the USA) "with a complicated paradoxical mixture of admiration, suspicion and mistrust" (Miruthi 2013:2-3). Miruthi (2013) adds that Africa's relations with the developed world must be viewed through the paternalistic attitude of their former colonisers, which have sought to save Africa from its corrupt leaders as well as continue its exploitation of natural resources. This helps explain the animosity often directed at South Africa.

Africa's tragedy lies in the uncomfortable truth that colonialism and neo-colonialism did not end when political independence was achieved but rather increased under Globalisation. According to Puchala (1998), this frustration is often unleashed on western elites within non-western countries and against those countries perceived to have sold out to western imperialism. Puchala (1998:142) argues that, "Particular criticism is reserved for post-colonial and other developing countries perceived to be promoters of western interests in regional and

world affairs”. Following new oil discoveries, Africa has once again become a contested ground for resource wars, leading to a new scramble for Africa, which includes new and emerging powers such as China and India. Espousing friendship and solidarity with their African counterparts, China and India have made major inroads on the African continent, bringing them into direct competition with other established powers and emerging African regional powers such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and Ethiopia, reigniting fears of sub-imperialism.

2.3.3 Pan-Africanism

Similar to perceptions, African norms and values are conditioned by its particular history. Pan-Africanism was originally conceptualised in the mid-19th century by the African diaspora and later championed by African leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Sekou Toure against colonialism and for African independence. “The ideals of Pan-Africanism are based on fostering cohesion based on a shared colonial history and the need for solidarity in the struggle for complete decolonisation of the continent” (Korendyasov 2014:12). Tieku (2013:663) views it as one of the building blocks of African foreign policy, which seeks to promote the political and socio-economic emancipation of Africa. Tieku (2013) argues, it is multi-faceted and often invoked for self-defence and protection against other ideologies. It also serves as an ideal for African unity and can be emotionally charged (Thiam 1965:20). As an initial response to colonialism, Bamikole (2012:68) claims that it “served as a catalyst for social and political change for colonised people to attain nationhood and move away from the ideology of their colonial masters”. However, over time, it has come to be used as a tool to promote unity amongst diverse African people.

Derived from Collectivism, pan-Africanism prioritises collective preferences over individual interests and goals (Tieku 2013:13). Key identity markers include group memberships, collective obligations, group harmony and solidarity. Collectivist cultural practices still dictate African politics in general and inter-state relations specifically (Tieku 2013). Pan-Africanism is regionally accepted and dictates the proper and ethically acceptable behaviour expected of Africa’s political elites, that of unity and support towards other Africans. Tieku (2013:15-18) states, “The feeling of ‘we-ness’ goes beyond the public show of support and rhetorical level to impose on African leaders a sense that they ought to act in harmony and conform to the common position”. The solidarity norm discourages public disagreement by exerting pressure on African leaders not to step out of line when consensus had been reached on contentious issues (Clapham 1996:106-107). The norm, African Solidarity, was embedded in the interstate system at the first session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers held in Lagos in 1963 (Thompson & Zartman 1974:10-11).

As much of African international politics take place in informal settings, the norm of African solidarity has influenced the working methods of the African Union (AU) in specific ways; i) harmony amongst African governments should not be undermined; ii) major decision-making must be based on group consensus; iii) the AU forum should not be exploited by one African government against another, and iv), rejection of public criticism of an African leader by a non-African entity (Tieku 2013 and Clapham 1996). Such criticism usually results in AU members rallying behind the criticised African state. However, Tieku (2013) claims that the concept of African solidarity is poorly understood and largely under-rated in policy and academic circles. Moyo & Ramsamy (2014) concur that while African Solidarity is a central referent on Africa's international relations, it is also tempered with douses of self. Thus, the challenge lies in identifying what African solidarity is for as opposed to what it is against.

While hierarchy of power is a determining factor in Africa's interactions with the rest of the world, it is not the most defining factor in inter-Africa relations. In pursuit of egalitarian principles embedded in the humanist principles that underpin Pan-Africanism, "power is rejected as a basis for international relations, which makes it difficult for Africa's military and economic powers such as South Africa to use power to dominate African countries" (Tieku 2013:12-13). Due to centuries of slavery and colonialism, African countries are fiercely against any form of neo-colonialism, western interference or any perceived acts of domination. A powerful African state thus finds itself in a unique position as it contains characteristics of both developed and developing countries, more so, in the case of South Africa as a former colonial power itself and a prominent actor in the global space. Its exploits in Namibia linger in the minds of the continent. In order to erase lingering doubts about the sincerity of South Africa's transformation, the country embraced Pan-Africanism as a key element of its foreign policy. At the OAU meeting in Tunis, 1994, Nelson Mandela reassured fellow African countries that South Africa country would never seek to dominate another through force of arms, economic might of subversion and would contribute to the making of the new African renaissance (Mandela 1994).

2.3.4 African Renaissance

Following years of enslavement and colonisation, Africa has been re-discovering itself and actively seeking to bring about a change to its existing social order through a holistic conception of development. According to Gordon (cited in Bamikole, 2012), development is more than achieving an end but rather that an end ought to be achieved. This translates moving from an unsatisfactory condition to one that is materially, morally and spiritually better. Thus, African Renaissance describes the rebirth and cultural reawakening of Africa.

While not the original author of African Renaissance, Mbeki has been credited as its most ardent champion. Mbeki envisaged a renewal of the African continent led by South Africa as goodwill payment of a historical debt for Africa's role and sacrifice in South Africa's liberation struggle (Adebajo 2016). President Mbeki's political advisor, Mavimbela (1998:31) states that "the *raison d'être* for a renaissance was to empower African people to deliver themselves from the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism by situating themselves on the global stage as equal and respected contributors to and beneficiaries of human civilization" (cited in Nabudere 2001: 20). Mbeki wanted to change perceptions about Africa and reverse the marginalisation of African people. In addressing Africa's structural and developmental issues, African Renaissance would serve as the overarching vision to inspire and create enabling conditions for Africa's renewal and integration into the global economy (Venter & Neuland 2015:76). Mbeki wanted the West to be a partner and not a dictator of change.

According to Moyo & Ramsamy (2014), Mbeki sought to operationalise the philosophy through political, economic, social and cultural pillars to counter negative stereotypes. Creating a conducive environment for foreign direct investment and aid, South Africa focused on the transformation of the OAU into the AU and the establishment of the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) as the overarching policy and development framework for African Renaissance and engagement with external partners. NEPAD, made up of a set of neo-liberal economic policy proposals and good governance criteria, sought to boost confidence in Africa's ability to manage their politics and economics. Despite its strong emotive call, African Renaissance has been criticised for lack of substantive content and its emphasis on rhetorical unity and brotherhood (Moyo & Ramsamy 2014).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted scholarly discourse on South Africa's contested status as a regional hegemon on the continent, attributing variance to over-simplification and interchangeable use of terminology as well as varied interpretations of the Hegemonic Stability Theory. It highlighted that views are time-bound and contextually relevant. The chapter also situates South Africa's status within the broader regional and global scholarship on hegemony. The last part examined the historical legacy of colonialism and ideological underpinnings of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance to contextualise the African landscape in relation to the exercise of power by dominant actors. It also highlighted the continent's pursuit of a rebirth to not only spur development but also bring about a change to the African condition of life.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides the methodological considerations for the study. It is grounded in qualitative research design and the primary aim is to examine the role of contextual factors (history, pan-Africanism and soft power) on South Africa's status as a regional hegemon on the continent. The research is grounded in the interpretive paradigm to allow for contextual analysis of events within their natural settings. A case study methodology is employed, with South Africa as the subject. The study is literature-based and uses secondary sources available in the public domain. Ethical considerations are limited as none of the information contained in the study is sensitive or confidential.

3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is “a shared worldview that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and guides how problems are solved” (Schwandt 2001:183). It is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social realities. According to Patel (2015), there are three types of paradigms: i) positivist which postulates that there is a single reality which can be measured and known, ii) constructivist which believes there isn't a single reality or truth therefor reality needs to be interpreted and is most likely to use qualitative methods; and iii) pragmatic where reality is constantly negotiated, debated and interpreted.¹

This research is grounded in the constructivist/ interpretive paradigm, which believes that reality is socially constructed and that the truth is context-dependent and limited to time, space as well as individuals and groups. It emphasises the social and cultural context and how the phenomenon is perceived (Fossey et. al. 2002:720). It addresses issues of influence and impact by explaining the subjective reasons and meanings behind the action (Reeves & Hedberg 2003: 32). With regard to epistemology, constructivists believe that knowledge is subjective, and culture bound as well as historically and context dependent. As for axiology: constructivists believe social enquiry is time-bound and context specific. Since the research is value-bound, the researcher is influenced by their values and the paradigm chosen for inquiry, which can affect the neutrality of the study. The researcher is thus encouraged to state their positionality (Patel 2015).

¹ See <http://www.salmapatel.co.uk>

3.2 Positionality

The term positionality describes an individual's worldview and the position they have chosen to adopt in relation to a specific research task (Foot & Bartell 2011). This concerns the ontological and epistemological assumptions. While some aspects of positionality can be ascribed by race, gender and culture, the researcher can also be influenced by his/her educational background and social status, which can steer research in a particular direction. Recognising that researchers are located within the social world being researched allows for the opportunity to locate their views and beliefs within the research process and output (Palaganas et.al. 2017). "Open and honest disclosure would then allow the reader to make an informed decision as to the researcher's influence on the research and the how truthful they feel the research is" (Sultana (2007:1).

Accordingly, the researcher would like to disclose that she is an official at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and has had participated in several high-level international meetings. As a practitioner in the field of diplomacy, the researcher understands government bureaucracy and possesses insight and a unique perspective on processes and decision-making structures that would enrich the ability to provide a nuanced interpretative analysis of South Africa's performance. This would provide a mutually reinforcing benefit through cross-fertilising the work of government and academia. Practitioners can benefit from positioning their work within the broader academic discourse and academia can benefit from the practical insights into structural elements that influence decisions and decision-making processes. The researcher strove to maintain objectivity and integrity during the conduct of the research by consulting a wide variety of sources to avoid biasedness and steering the reader towards a predisposed point of view.

3.3 Research Design

The research employed a qualitative design. Since the concept of hegemony is subjective, qualitative data can provide a better understanding and explanation. As the research examined South Africa's foreign policy over a cumulative period of 25 years, the primary goal was the description and understanding of actions, behaviour, events, actions and processes in specific contexts and in terms of the actor's beliefs and history. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), this allows for an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world, also referred to as an idiographic study, where the interest is solely invested in understanding a specific event within its own context (Babbie & Mouton 2017:270-217).

3.4 Research Methodology

The research study employed a case study methodology as case studies have a variety of uses. They are used to test theories; develop new theories; provide detailed contextual analysis of events; analyse deviant cases that contradict generalizations. According to Mason & Bramble (1989), since case studies generally describe the events that occurred during a specific timeframe, subjective factors such as motivation and historical context can be examined to gain a more in-depth understanding of the case. This paper used the intrinsic case study to understand South Africa's contested hegemonic status on the continent. Intrinsic case studies represent some unique or not-yet-understood feature, which might explain the relevance of the case to our general understanding of a wider domain (Dornyei 2007:152). The strength of case studies lies in the ability to offer rich and in-depth insights, particularly where contextual conditions are being studied. However, there are obvious limitations as a small sample is involved and generalisation of findings to other cases can be misleading and biased (Mason & Bramble 1989 and Moser & Kalton 1973:241-243). However, Yin (1993: xi) argues that the case study research method is appropriate when investigators desire to (a) define topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual conditions and not just the phenomenon of study, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

Selecting relevant cases is also known as defining the unit of analysis. According to Yin (2014) view, the unit of analysis is the most important aspect of the research as it limits the boundaries of the study. The unit of analysis must be clearly identified at the outset of the study. The unit of analysis is the basic subject in the research and refers to the 'who or what' is being studied (Babbie 2016). In this instance, the unit of analysis is South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy. While the temporal dimension largely focuses on the period 2009 to 2018, reference is made to events from 1994 to provide a yardstick for measurement since the re-entry of democratic South Africa into international politics and as well as the context for various foreign policy decisions. It also provides the limits for data collection and analysis (Yin 2014:31).

3.6 Aim

According to Thomas & Hodges (2010), the research aim usually refers to the main goal or overarching purpose of a research project. Accordingly, the aim of this research study was to examine those factors, which are often ignored or overlooked in mainstream hegemony literature but play an intrinsic role in influencing regional hegemony within the African context.

3.7. Research Objectives

Thomas and Hodges (2010) state that the research objectives refer to key issues to be focused on in a research project. Thus, the paper seeks to:

1. Assess and contribute to the existing body of literature on regional hegemony that extends beyond the traditional (global, prescriptive and euro-centric) definition of hegemony;
2. Examine the role of neglected contextual conditions such history, ideology and soft power on regional hegemony, and;
3. Investigate a regional hegemon's performance and identify the unique constraints it faces within its sphere of influence.

3.8. Research Question

According to Walliman (2011), a research question can be based on an unresolved controversy or a gap in knowledge within a chosen field. It is also the central focus of the study. Since it is usually abstract in nature, the question is usually broken down into sub-questions, which can then be practically investigated (Walliman 2011). Sub-questions help focus the study and assist in shaping data collection and analysis.

Main question

How has the configuration of history, pan-Africanism and soft power contributed to the position of South Africa as a regional hegemon on the African continent?

Sub-Questions

1. Why has South Africa engaged as a reluctant regional player on the African continent despite its prowess and capabilities?
2. What constraints does South Africa encounter as a regional hegemon on the continent?
3. How has South Africa performed as a regional hegemon on the African continent?

3.9 Theoretical Framework

The Hegemonic Stability Theory was employed as the overarching framework. It holds the basic premise that international economic liberalisation and stability are most likely when a single country has a predominance of power to influence the rules, values and norms of international systems based on one's own motivation and interest (Keohane 1984:32 and Gilpin 1981). Its resources are usually military, economic or political and are used to influence the behaviour of other countries, either through coercive or benevolent tactics. The field of International Relations has failed to account for the rise of a superpower or regional power from the Global South as the Hegemonic Stability Theory is intended to be employed at the

global level. To this end, the paper provides a brief overview of the work of leading authors in the field of hegemony and regional hegemony studies.

3.10 Literature Review

According to Walliman (2011), a literature review is the current state of knowledge in a chosen field of study. It surveys books, scholarly articles and other sources relevant to an area of research or theory to provide a description, summary and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated (Fink 2014). A traditional literature review was undertaken, and the data collected via desk research.

3.11 Data Collection

According to Walliman (2011), data collection refers to the gathering of information in a systematic manner, which allows the researcher to both answer the question as well as evaluate the outcomes. Data can be collected from either primary or secondary sources. Primary data is collected first-hand by the researcher while secondary data is already available material in the public domain. The research employed a mono-method of data collection grounded in a single qualitative research design.

3.11.1. Data Sources: The dissertation used secondary texts, representative and relevant to the substantive interests of the study (Babbie & Mouton 2017:273). The work of a wide range of authors, both proponents and critics in the field of hegemony were consulted to ensure that there wasn't selection bias or selective interpretation to suit the researcher's viewpoint. Sources included books, journals, reports and speeches relating to South Africa's foreign policy. The DIRCO White Paper on Diplomacy and its Review (10,15 and 20 year) Reports were consulted to lend authority, credibility and legitimacy to the information used in the study. The aforementioned sources are available in the public domain, on the websites of DIRCO and the Presidency.

3.11.2 Data Analysis:

According to Marshall & Rossman (1999:150), "Data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the collection of data". The research employed a descriptive analysis to review current literature on hegemony and an interpretive approach to contextualise its application through the case study of South Africa. Factors such as intention and context and, not only outcome, were taken into account to allow for a nuanced interpretation of the influence and impact of the strategy employed as the research is based on a relatively unexplored field of enquiry with contesting conceptualisations, interpretations and the propagation of previously ignored and overlooked factors.

3.12. Delimitations of the study

The paper drew on secondary data and is based on a relatively unexplored field of enquiry, with contesting concepts and previously ignored and overlooked factors to derive a more nuanced understanding of regional hegemony. Time constraints were a factor in the research as the researcher is employed full-time at the South African Foreign Ministry (DIRCO).

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Since the research is a literature-based study and all the sources (secondary) are available and easily accessible in the public domain, ethical considerations are limited as they do not require special access and are not considered sensitive or confidential by the Government. According to Babbie & Mouton (2017: 527), “acknowledging the source is one of the key ethical principles of scientific publication and includes both direct and indirect quotations, which have made a significant contribution to the work”. To this end, researcher is familiar with the rules of plagiarism and has sought to credit and attribute information to the correct sources when making direct quotations or using ideas previously expressed by other researchers in order to adhere to the highest possible technical standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF HEGEMONY AND THE HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY

Introduction

This chapter provides a conceptual and theoretical analysis of hegemony by situating it within the broader field of mainstream International Relations (IR) theories. It is divided into two parts, the first part traces hegemony from its realist underpinnings where a hegemon is viewed as a subject to liberalism, which focuses on the conditions and the mechanisms through which hegemony is exercised. It then examines the Gramscian approach, which highlights the social construction of power through ideology and the role of institutions, inclusive of soft power and social recognition. The second part examines the Hegemonic Stability Theory, highlighting its prescribed characteristics and subsequent limitations upon transposal to the regional system. It concludes by emphasising the need for an examination of contextual factors to facilitate a better understanding of the regional system under study.

4.1 Conceptual Analysis of Hegemony

The concept of hegemony can be difficult to characterise in concrete political and philosophical terms as it draws on realist, liberal, constructivist and historical structural perspectives. According to Strange, hegemony theories lack a single body of consistent ideas and “are a bundle of concepts and explanations centring on the notion of the role of the hegemon or leader, the dominant state in the international system, and the connection between the hegemon and the stability of that system” (cited in Mowle & Scko 2007:7)

The classical schools of International Relations (IR) conceptualise hegemony as “a hegemon exercising a degree of control and influence over other states” (Dirzauskaite & Ilinca 2017: 3). The state possesses asymmetrical power relations through the exercise of preponderant material power and leadership, which is structurally defined in terms of economic, political and military capabilities. A hegemon uses either hard (direct) or soft (indirect power). Direct power refers to military capabilities and economic resources while indirect power refers to intangible assets such as attraction and influence through ideas and the ability to transform them into a preference. According to Dirzauskaite & Ilinca (2017:3-4), both types of power present aspects of a hegemon’s ability to influence actors and achieve desirable outcomes

The term hegemony is derived from the Greek word, *hegemonia*, which was a form of legitimate authority associated with honour and office. It is “an honorific status conferred by others in recognition of the benefits an actor has provided for the community as a whole”

(Berenskoetter & Williams 2007:124). *Kratos* (material capabilities) and *dunamis* (displays of power) was later associated with *hegemonia*, giving rise to the modern understanding of the term hegemony. It “reflects the dominant and oppressive status of one element over another in a system” Yilmaz (2010:194). Historical examples of hegemons include Portugal in the sixteenth century, Britain in the eighteenth century and the United States in the twenty-first century.

4.2 Theoretical Analysis of Hegemony

In order to grasp a fuller appreciation of the concept of hegemony and its limitations when transposed to a regional setting, it is imperative to trace its evolution in mainstream International Relations (IR) theories, namely: i) Realism; ii) Liberalism; iii) Neo-Gramscian Scholarship (constructivism) and to a limited extent iv) the English School Theory.

4.2.1 Realism

Realists generally define hegemony in terms of overwhelming power and the ability to use this power to dominate others. The most powerful state in the system, which possesses superior material capabilities: economic, military and sometimes diplomatic, is considered a hegemon. For realists, military power is the most important aspect of hegemony as violence is always a possibility in an anarchical society. Related to military power, is the notion that the preponderant state has the ability to dominate all other subordinate states. (Gilpin 1981). Mearsheimer (2001) views hegemony as domination of the system while Gilpin (1981: 29) considers a hegemonic structure coming into existence “when a single state controls or dominates the lesser states in the system”. The system becomes less anarchical and hierarchal. Layne (2006:4) identifies four main features of hegemony. Hegemons have i) the most powerful military; ii) the economic means to support and maintain military supremacy; iii) act in self-interest to create a stable international order that will safeguard its security and economic and ideological interests, and; iv) the will to exercise its overwhelming power to impose order on the international system. It is observed that unipolarity is often conflated with hegemony, in which the state’s capabilities are too great to be counterbalanced. Schmidt (2018) dismisses this interpretation as over-simplistic and problematic as power is a highly contested term. By emphasising preponderant material power, Schmidt (2018) points out that realists discount the wilful exercise of leadership and ignore additional factors such as the capacity to exercise power through soft power or ideological power, which entails the capability to change others’ behaviour by influencing their belief system, their way of thinking and even their rationality. Fettweis (2017) argues that while unipolarity is marked by an international system with one predominant power, hegemony requires the exercise of some form of leadership to achieve certain ends (cited in Schmidt, 2018). It is possible to have a unipolar

system without anyone exercising hegemony. It can be concluded that the realist interpretation is limited in its description and prescription of hegemony and the exercise of hegemony.

4.2.2 Liberalism and Neo-liberalism

While liberals acknowledge the importance of preponderant material power, they do not view it sufficient for understanding the concept of hegemony. Neo-liberalists are more concerned about the conditions of hegemony and the mechanisms through which hegemony is exercised. Keohane (1984) dismisses material preponderance as a one-dimensional understanding of hegemony and makes a distinction between the 'basic force model' and the 'force activation model' of hegemony. The basic force model of hegemony is defined as the possession of unrivalled tangible material power while the force activation model comprises both abundant power capabilities and the wilful exercise of leadership. Keohane (1984:34) thus defines hegemony "as a situation in which one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations and is willing to do so". In this interpretation, hegemony is established more by consent and less by domination. Liberals like Keohane view this form of hegemony as more robust and enduring rather than being defined solely by material preponderance. Leadership is exercised through cooperation and institutions. Keohane (1984: 46) further argues that "hegemons provide partners with leadership in return for deference, but unlike imperial powers, it cannot make and enforce rules without a certain degree of consent from other states".

Liberal conceptions of hegemony are more related to consensus and political leadership than brute power and domination. Ikenberry (2011) refers to it as a regime-based order created by a leading state. Ikenberry (2011) likens it to an imperial power but infused with liberal characteristics, the leading state operates within a system of negotiated rules and institutions; provides regional public goods; and the hegemonic order provides channels and networks for reciprocal communication and influence. The liberal hegemonic order relies on shared interests and the rule of law, where state power is embedded within a system of rules and institutions that restrain its exercise of power. States enter an international order out of self-interest and bind themselves to rules and institutions, which ensures that the power exercised by the hegemon is based on the rule of law (Ikenberry 2011). Ikenberry (2011) argues the power thus emanates from a legal-constitutional foundation and not power capabilities espoused by Realists. Its legitimacy hinges on the rules and institutions it helped create.

Flowing from this strand of thought, neo-liberalists use game theory to explain state interaction with emphasis on mutual win-win cooperation and institutions, which play an instrumental role in mutual profit and compromise (Dirzauskaite & Ilinca 2017: 28). Their core argument against

realism is that it under-estimates the complex interdependence that exists inside a decentralised system. Neo-liberal theorists like Keohane (1984) and Nye (1990) stress that when complex interdependence is present, the role of the military in resolving disputes is minimised and economic dominance becomes a defining characteristic of material preponderance. Keohane (1984) identifies four sets of resources that hegemonic powers have control over: i) raw materials; ii) sources of capital; iii) markets and the iv) competitive advantage in producing value-added goods. Military prowess is not dismissed but rather acknowledged as a necessity to protect the international political economy (IPE) from hostile adversaries. According to Keohane (1984), hegemons establish institutions to provide security and stability to secondary states in its sphere of influence and the decline of the hegemon doesn't signify the accompanying demise of institutions as they were created to benefit all stakeholders. In sum, hegemony can outlive a hegemon.

(a) Institutions

Institutions can influence the behaviour of state actors to facilitate greater cooperation. They can be used to craft agendas to suit political interests. According to Lobell & Sampanis (2012), "The benevolent hegemon can use its soft power to attract or persuade secondary states to accept its leadership through these institutions while coercive hegemons use aggression as a deterrent" (cited in Williams et al. 2012:21). Cox (1996:127) argues that if soft power (consent) is effectively applied, there would be no need for hard power (coercion).

(b) Socialisation

According to Ikenberry (2011), interaction with other states in the system is also a defining characteristic of hegemony and a hegemonic state can use a variety of ways to exercise power and gain acquiescence. It can manipulate material incentives in a way that acquiescence is gained by coercion or by influencing the beliefs of leaders to buy into the hegemon's vision of international order as their own. "National leaders internalise the norms and value orientations espoused by the hegemon and accept its leadership position through socialisation into the community" (Ikenberry, 2011, 289).

4.2.3 Neo-Gramsci Scholarship

Similar to its liberal counterparts, the neo-Gramscian approach views hegemony as more than possession of raw material and domination. According to Robert Cox (1981), dominance is a necessary but not sufficient condition of hegemony. Cox (1981:139) describes it as "a configuration of material power, the prevalent collective image of the world order and a set of institutions, which administer the order with a certain semblance of universality". Based on the work of Antonio Gramsci, the state comprises the entire society and hegemony is defined as

the dominance of the ruling class over the interests of other groups. In contrast to realism where hegemony is the dominance of one actor in terms of coercive power, Gramscian hegemony is the combination of coercion and consent exercised by the ruling class. Cox (1981) highlights the emphasis on ideology and cultural leadership, which is considered equally important as military and economic power and notes that a state with strong cultural and ideological leadership can last longer as a hegemon. Neo-gramscians thus view hegemony as a relationship based more on consent, political and ideological leadership than domination built on material power (Cox 1981).

Also similar to their liberal counterparts, neo-Gramscians view the role of institutions and the process of institutionalism as key aspects of the concept of hegemony, which legitimise the norms of the world order. “By casting its interests as universal instead of parochial, the hegemon is more likely to get secondary states to acquiesce to the existing order” (Cox, 1981:139). It is important to gain consent with the minimum use of force, so institutions become a key force or anchor to exercise a hegemon’s power. However, Cox (1981:139) acknowledges that institutions are one pillar of hegemony and cannot be considered in isolation of material capabilities. Growing interdependence amongst states and non-state actors has necessitated the need for cooperation to address mutual challenges and achieve collective goals. Thus “the changing nature of international politics has made intangible forms of power more important” (Nye 1990:164). This has led to new ways of exercising power. However, this is not a new phenomenon. Antonio Gramsci had long recognised the power of ideological and cultural capabilities to manipulate the system to popularise values and norms through consent and cajoling (Cox, 1981 and Nye 1990).

According to Ikenberry & Kupchan (1990:52), “While realist (material) and Gramscian (non-material) conceptions of hegemony differ, they mutually re-enforce the relationship among ideology, norms and traditional forms of military and economic power”. Yilmaz (2010:200), argues that, “there is an essential optimal balance to be maintained between the hard and soft power”. Gramscian theory defines hegemony as a combination of coercion and consent, which is also exercised by civil society and includes elements of culture, ideology and consent, which contribute to the attainment of hegemonic status (Ujara & Ibietan, 2017:131). According to Bhasin (2008), public reputation can be a source of ideational power as it includes credibility, legitimacy, moral authority and factors actors such as personalities and perceptions of statesmen and state-society relationship. Bhasin (2008) argues that perceptions of other states with respect to a state’s capabilities and willingness to exercise power is also important to note as they do not only arise from interactions but involve interpretations given to those impressions by other states, This can be conditioned to circumstances, duration of time and

historical experience. Bhasin (2008) also highlights states that perceptions can also be misperceptions borne out of exaggerations or stubborn prejudices.

According to Nye (1990:154-157), “Fragmentation of world politics has made military power more costly and less transferable than in previous eras”. This has resulted in the diffusion of power from great powers to smaller states and private actors as the changing nature of threats requires increased collective cooperation and international collaboration. According to Ogunnubi (2017:30), current trends indicate that states are increasingly unwilling to wield material bases as foreign policy instruments but rather, “are developing non-coercive and ideational methods of influence that go beyond the realm of hegemony in the traditional sense”. Flemes (2009) and Nye (1990:154) advocate a broader approach to material power resources to “incorporate technology; competitiveness; infrastructure; geography; energy; environmental and human development factors as a high socio-economic standard enhances resources that ultimately shape a state’s foreign policy”.

4.2.4 Soft Power and Ideology

Gallroti also noted that while power remains the central focus of state interactions, “notions of power have changed remarkably” (cited in Ogunnubi & Amao 2015:301). These non-material bases of power include norms and ideology, which are equally important to establish power. Ikenberry & Kupchan (1990:50-51) liken it to “hegemony is based on right as well as might, where legitimacy and prestige, also dimensions of power, enhances the capacity of the hegemon to lead”. Morgenthau argues, “While all politics is necessarily the pursuit of power, ideologies render involvement in that contest for power psychologically and morally acceptable to the actors and their audience” (cited in Ikenberry & Kupchan 1990: 51). This is referred to as soft power, which is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion. According to Nye (1990), soft power has the ability to shape preferences as it co-opts rather than coerces people. It can be based on resources like the culture of a nation, its norms and values and its power lie in the ability to change the behaviour of others.

Political leaders understand the power of ideas and the need to set political agendas to shape the preferences of others. Singh (2018:15) states that “soft power has a direct link to state power and can be derived or projected through culture, ideology and institutions. Its attraction lies with the state’s ability to co-opt the actions and behaviour of others”. Nye (1990) notes that a state will encounter less resistance if it can legitimise its power and make its culture and ideology attractive. Nye (1990) adds “If it establishes international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have change. If it supports institutions that make other states wish to

channel or limit their activities in ways the dominant states prefer, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or hard power” (cited in Singh 2018:13).

4.2.5 The English School Theory

Also referred to as the International Social Approach, the English School Theory emphasises the social recognition aspect of hegemony. According to this school of thought, hegemony is not solely an attribute of a dominant state, but rather a status bestowed by others and rests on recognition by them (Clark 2009). Clark (2009) defines hegemony as “an institutionalised practice of special rights and responsibilities conferred on a state with the resources to lead” (cited in Schmidt 2018). Akin to international legitimacy, it conceptualises hegemony as an institutionalised practice, which functions in a manner similar to other great powers. Clark (2009) further states that just as special status is bestowed on great powers, the same holds true for hegemony and legitimacy, which is a core component of hegemony, cannot be assessed solely in terms of material power. While the English School builds on the work of Hedley Bull, the scholarship is not well defined.

4.3 The Hegemonic Stability Theory

The Hegemonic Stability Theory falls under the field of International Political Economy (IPE) and combines the field of economic and political studies. Developed by Charles P. Kindleberger and Kenneth N. Waltz, the basic premise of the Hegemonic Stability Theory is the political, economic and military dominance of one state over the other is necessary in order to ensure economic cooperation in the international system. (Dirzauskaite & Ilinca 2017). As the preponderant power in the system, the hegemonic power provides a public good to ensure order and security. Kindleberger (1981) views international economic stability as a public good, which all countries benefit from regardless of their contribution. Wallerstein (1974) also views hegemony purely in economic terms, where free trade is a public good shared by all states and forms the cornerstone of liberal trading policy (cited in Lake 1993). According to Hegemonic Stability Theory, the world order dominated by a single country will be the most stable and have the most open economic order. This requires a country to consciously or unconsciously underwrite a system of rules that has been institutionalised to set standards of conduct for other countries (Kindelberger cited in Bozadaglioglu, 2009).

According to Kindelberger (1981), the main characteristics of hegemonic powers can be identified as follows:

- A military force: the state should have a superior navy and air force extending to the modern invention of nuclear powers.

- A large and growing economy: the state should have an unrivalled supremacy in at least one leading economic or technological sector
- It must provide a regional public good.
- The state must have the will to lead/will to establish a hegemonic regime as well as the capability to lead or enforce the rules of the system.

A hegemon must provide public goods out of self-interest to achieve an open liberal economic order. It can do this by creating international institutions and norms that facilitate international cooperation. The functioning of a liberal, open economic order is contingent upon the existence of a hegemon, which is willing to exercise the necessary leadership to maintain the system. Stability is thus most likely when a single power displays a preponderance of power. According to Burges (2008:68), the converse would be that the “collapse of the system comes from a decline in the capability or willingness of the major actor to continue providing the necessary public goods”. When the power of the hegemon erodes, the Hegemonic Stability Theory predicts that the liberal economic order will correspondingly decline. However, this view that has been contested by liberal critics who believe that cooperation and the perpetuation of international regimes can outlast the decline of a hegemon. Keohane (1981) strongly argues that while hegemony can facilitate cooperation, a hegemon is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition. Keohane (1981) adds “Hegemony is helpful in the establishment of international regimes but is not a necessity for their maintenance once they are created. Hegemony can be sustained when smaller countries cooperate to provide regional goods to sustain the liberal economic order in the absence of a hegemon” (cited in Bozdaglioglu 2009:7).

The Hegemonic Stability Theory also looks at the motives and behaviour of a hegemonic state. Habib (2009:3) states, “Hegemons need to have political and socio-economic visions about their transnational environments and a political willingness to implement those visions”. States at all levels of development should be able to benefit from leadership of the hegemon. However, some scholars have argued that the hegemon is solely interested in advancing its own interests rather than the general welfare of the states within its system. According to Gilpin (1981), the hegemon’s primary motivation to stabilise the political economy is to enhance its own economic and security positions. Political and military considerations of the hegemon take precedence over the needs of the other countries as “it expects to gain more from the regime than it invests in organising the activity” (Williams et. al. 2012:339). Hegemons assert their influence and control over others through manipulation of material resources that lead secondary state acquiescence. These states are faced with inducements which make them better off cooperating with the hegemon than not (Ikenberry cited in Williams et.al. 2012:10). Thus, a hegemon is unlikely to carry out the stabilising role for the system if the maintenance

costs are greater than the perceived value of the received goods. Snidal (1985) concurs that the hegemonic state is often more exploitative with regard to the costs imposed upon smaller states, blurring the distinction between leadership and exploitation.

4.4 Limitations of Hegemony and the Hegemonic Stability Theory

Schmidt (2018) describes the Hegemonic Stability Theory as a realist prescription of how to achieve international stability in an anarchical international system. However, the theory has been contested on theoretical and empirical grounds that hegemony can be fragile and overwhelming power does not always mean a hegemon gets it way. Cronin (2001) calls this the paradox of hegemony and identifies factors that could hinder hegemony such as domestic instability; environment degradation; public health issues; demographic trends; poor economic growth; xenophobia; unclear policies; historical legacy and insecurity/jealousy emanating from secondary or smaller states in a regional hegemon's sphere of influence. "Domestic level factors within the hegemonic state can also hinder a hegemon's capacity to act decisively due to juxtaposition of policies favouring national interest such as investing scarce resources in domestic rather than international issues" (cited in Williams et. al. 2012:10). Cronin (2001) further argues that hegemons often fail because they are unwilling and/or unable to resolve this dilemma. Another limitation is that a hegemon's power and influence is also contingent on the policies of other states, which may seek to undermine the hegemon's power by contesting its legitimacy as a hegemon. Resistance and resentment are ever-present.

Another major limitation of the Hegemonic Stability Theory is that it was developed to explain the dominance of a state actor in the international system with no provision made for a superpower from the Global South. The three major hegemons identified, Portugal in the sixteenth century, Britain in the eighteenth century and the United States in the twenty-first century, are all developed countries/great powers from the West. This led Eichengreen (1996) to decry "what had been intended as an interpretation of a specific historical episode has been since been generalised into a theory that is virtually applied to every setting in which nations interact" (cited in Bozdaglioglu 2009:5). Duncan (1985:579) argues that "the range of the theory is limited to very special circumstances". This raises questions over whether hegemony can be applied to the regional level of analysis. Neuman (1998:2) argues that mainstream International Relations (IR) theories (realism, liberalism and neo-liberalism) are "largely euro-centric and founded almost exclusively on what happens or happened in the West and when applied to the developing world, they have little reference to objective reality".

This critique has found resonance amongst other academics, arguing that mainstream theories fail to adequately explain hierarchy and state cooperation at the regional level. Prys (2010) observed that current theoretical and empirical literature lacked a conceptual and theoretical framework that adequately reflected hierarchical power regions (with specific reference to the African region) due to an over-reliance on global theories to explain regional phenomena and proposed the theory be slightly tailored to adequately reflect the complexities and intricacies inherent to the regional setting. When examining the African region, factors such as history, ideology and soft power play an integral role in how inter-African relations are conducted.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the conceptual and theoretical analysis of hegemony. The aim was to demonstrate the evolution of the concept and its culmination in the Hegemonic Stability Theory, often used to identify and classify hegemons. The chapter highlighted that as a global theory, the Hegemonic Stability Theory has limitations when transposed to the regional level. Due to their specific historical legacies, regional systems have unique characteristics that lead to contesting interpretations. The chapter concluded that the theory should be tailored to reflect the idiosyncrasies of the system under analysis to allow for a more nuanced interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of South Africa's historical origins from a British colony to an Apartheid state. The aim of the chapter is to highlight the destabilising political and economic impact of Apartheid on neighbouring states in order to contextualise why South Africa is viewed with ambivalence, suspicion, resentment and hostility. It also traces how South Africa acquired its preponderant wealth and immense reserves of soft power through a brief overview of the administrations of Nelson Mandela (1994-1998), Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008) and Jacob Zuma (2009-2018). It concludes with the influence of the African National Congress (ANC) on policy decisions and why South Africa has failed to erase unflattering perceptions across the African continent.

5.1 Relevance of South Africa as a case study

A case study investigates phenomena within its real-life context, "especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2009:638). It offers the ability to provide rich and in-depth insights of how the social world is shaped. Tellis (1997) states while case studies are not representative, emphasis is placed on what can be learnt from a single case study. South Africa is a unique case study, by way of its historical legacy, political nuance and ambition to rewrite the narrative of Africa. It has been a popular subject in International Relations studies due to its unique history, location and contested position on the continent.

5.2 Historical overview of the continent

South Africa occupies a unique position in Africa. According to the Regional Integration Index², it is the most developed economy on the continent and represents 61% of the regional GDP of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) comprising of sixteen states, which skews the balance of power in its favour in the sub-region. While, South Africa's rich multicultural history can be traced back centuries, the Union of South Africa came into being in 1910. In 1948, the National Party instituted the policy of Apartheid, which led to the isolation of the state from international politics. Following the institutionalisation and brutal enforcement of racial segregation, South Africa pursued a white supremacy policy, whereby it used hard

² See www.integrate-africa.org

power to counter insurgency and intimidate neighbouring and Front-Line States (FLS), such as Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Zambia into submission. This imbibed a negative image of a brutal, aggressive, selfish, domineering and manipulative state in the minds of most African states. “Despite taking a deliberate decision to set itself apart from Africa, Apartheid South Africa viewed its immediate neighbourhood and the rest of the continent as areas of penetration and exploitation” (Adedeji 1996:6). Hostile and belligerent, the South African government terrorised neighbouring states through economic and military destabilisation, dislocation and sabotage to weaken and break their defiance. According to Adedeji (1996), it set up puppet regimes, stooges and governments compliant with its hegemonic ambitions and designs, thus creating an asymmetry between the strength of the South African economy and the weakness of all its neighbours combined. Adedeji (1996) argues that Pretoria’s economic stranglehold was only surpassed by its military and retaliatory aggression.

The emergence of independent African states and the establishment of the OAU resulted in the isolation and neutralisation of international support for Apartheid South Africa culminating in sanctions and isolation. According to Adedeji (1996:7-11), “Its preference for coercion, in place of dialogue and political accommodation; frequent acts of aggression against neighbours; lack of sensitivity to the opinion of the international community and the spread of violence and counter-violence throughout the country led to a significant change in Western attitudes”. Following the withdrawal of support from international markets coupled with capital flight, hyperinflation and a plummeting growth rate, South Africa transitioned into democracy in 1994.

The democratisation of South Africa immediately changed the African landscape and heralded a new regional order. Upon its return, the country was immediately saddled with expectations of being an African saviour, ‘a beacon of hope’ for an oft forgotten, backward and stagnant continent. Cognisant of the impact of its aggressive and exploitative behaviour, South Africa restructured its hegemonic relations with neighbouring countries towards more equitable and mutually beneficial political and socio-economic relations. In the ANC Policy Discussion document (2012), South Africa promised to define itself positively and affirmatively as an integral part of Africa. South Africa’s historical legacy is an important variable that needs to be accounted for when analysing its role, behaviour and image on the continent.

5.3 The role and influence of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa’s Foreign Policy

Early into its democratic transition, Mills (1994:6) stated that the nature of the political party in power in South Africa will be important in determining its foreign relations after Apartheid and

that any study of post-Apartheid South Africa would be incomplete without a mention of the role of the ANC. According to Jordan (2003), emerging powers are often distinguished by a strong governing party at the national level and its ideological influence on the country's foreign policy in the international domain. In South Africa's case, "the ANC clearly dominates the foreign policy landscape both practically and ideologically" (Black & Hornsby 2016:157-158). Founded in 1912, the ANC drew inspiration from Ethiopianism, which represented the early consciousness of pan-Africanism and solidarity amongst black people. It defines itself as a pan-Africanism movement dedicated to the emancipation of the entire African continent (Duncan 2015). Strong anti-colonial and anti-imperial sentiments are thus embedded within the ANC as both a liberal organisation and a governing party, which has resulted in South Africa anchoring itself on a moral identity and adopting positions in favour of African and South-South solidarity. In its discussion paper, *Foreign Policy in a New Democratic South Africa* (1993), the ANC declared South Africa would 'explicitly renounce all hegemonic ambitions in the region and resist all pressure to become the "regional power" at the expense of the rest of the subcontinent'.

State choices often reflect elite perceptions and interests but a change in leadership can also bring in different views of national interest. According to Keohane & Nye (1989:264), "the change may not always reflect cognitive and societal views at large but rather domestic issues or factors unrelated to foreign policy". Interests can also be redefined through normative evolution. The administrations (Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma) are important as they clearly demonstrate subtle changes in how South Africa engaged with the continent, some of which could be largely attributed to personal views and leadership styles.

5.4 The Mandela Administration

Nelson Rohihlahla Mandela was South Africa's first democratically elected President from 1994 to 1999. The Mandela Administration epitomised a period when South Africa actively sought inclusion and acceptance by both African and global counterparts. It denied hegemonic tendencies and emphasised cooperation, mutual benefit and partnership. In light of its negative legacy, the Mandela Administration sought to establish credentials and develop values underpinning its foreign policy. It focused on transformation from a liberation movement to a governing party and state power. According to Landsberg (2010), the Mandela Administration was determined to overhaul the negative character of South Africa by conceiving a fresh new paradigm and redesigning a new global role. Mandela's vision for South Africa was "to gain its rightful place in Africa, the United Nations and the family of nations as the blueprint of Apartheid was torn up and a new chapter in South Africa's international relations written" (Landsberg 2010:80).

The Mandela Administration was underpinned by principled and ethical diplomacy as South Africa searched for a post-apartheid and international identity in a shifting political landscape. Cognisant of its geographical location and a deep sense of gratitude to the continent, it adopted a strong African character and proclaimed Africa to be the centre of its foreign policy. Landsberg (2010) proclaims that post-Apartheid South Africa showed little inclination of leading the African continent or taking up the role of a hegemon. Its main objectives were to “share mutual respect, promote reciprocal cooperation and engage with African partners as equals on the basis of unity, solidarity and consensus-making” (Landsberg 2010:96). It promised not to engage in coercive or hegemonic means but rather employ a partnership built on preventative diplomacy and bridge-building (Miruthi 2017). The Mandela era can be characterised as a search for a new state identity in a complex and changing international environment whilst saddled with deep-seated domestic challenges. It was also a time when South Africa’s moral authority was high and human rights dominated its international agenda (Sidiropoulos 2018). “Juggling ethical considerations with building African unity and promoting solidarity, the end-result was an eccentric display of clashing and contradictory orientations” (Landsberg 2010: 97).

5.5 The Mbeki Administration

Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki served as the second President for the period 1999-2008. His presidency is characterised by a strong commitment towards the creation of an African Agenda centred on development, good governance and regional integration underpinned by the philosophy of African Renaissance (Sidiropoulos 2018). During his Administration, South Africa’s ideational hegemony was perceived to be at its highest with regard to the creation of institutions such as the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the Africa Standby Force (ASF), which helped create, implement and defend norms, values and principles underpinning his foreign policy (Mpungose 2018). An ardent Africanist, Mbeki was dedicated to ending paternalism and propelling the continent towards genuine partnership based on equality and African ownership. Mbeki also sought to recalibrate the North-South axis, which only heightened expectations and perceptions of regional hegemony (Landsberg 2010).

Conscious of dousing African resentment, Landsberg (2010) noted that South Africa denied hegemonic aspirations by deliberately choosing non-hegemonic partners to achieve its political and developmental goals. However, its rapidly expanding commercial interests and strong economic status only served to re-enforce hegemonic notions. Corporate South Africa was labelled a neo-imperialist power and South Africa’s active and highly visible role on the global stage, through sole African representation in the Group of Seven (G7), G20 and the India-

Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) partnership meetings, strengthened hegemonic perceptions and accusations that South Africa was punching above its weight. Nzewi (2015:25) argues that while “hegemony is antithetical to African regional governance due to the history of regionalism in Africa and the enduring idea of Pan-Africanism, it provides a framework for understanding how South Africa was able to achieve such dominance during this period”.

5.6 The Zuma Administration

Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma served as President from 2009 to 2018 and his Administration was characterised by hostile domestic politics, heightened racial and xenophobic tension against the backdrop of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (Soko 2016). When Zuma entered office, he immediately sought a deviation from Mbeki’s grand African statesmanship to one with a stronger emphasis on domestic politics. Denouncing coercive and hegemonic behaviour, Zuma was keen to assure African leaders that South Africa would not pursue its own economic interests at the expense of others.

Incidents which stand out during the Zuma Administration include, amongst others, the Libyan crisis culminating in the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Resolution 1973; South Africa’s failure to execute the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) arrest warrant for Sudanese President, Omar Al Bashir, the Cote d’Ivoire crisis; South Africa’s membership of BRICS; South Africa’s prominent role in the G20 and the election of Dr. Dlamini-Zuma as Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) (Mpungose 2018). The Zuma Administration has been marred by South Africa’s downward reputational spiral, accusations of ineptitude, corruption, allegations of State Capture and a schizophrenic foreign policy (Soko 2016). It is also the era that witnessed the relative decline of South Africa’s power and influence on the continent following the rise of other African competitors such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Kenya, referred to as the African Lions, and aggressive competition from global actors in Africa.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted that South Africa’s foreign policy should be understood within the context of its historical legacy and transition to democracy. The role and ideological underpinnings of the African National Congress (ANC) was explored to highlight its influence on state decisions and eradication of perceived hegemonic ambition. Finally, it examined how the achievements and perceptions associated with Presidents Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma have shaped the narrative of the country and inter-state relations on the continent.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the contribution of history, pan-Africanism and soft power to South Africa's status as a regional hegemon on the continent. It examines the reasons for South Africa's reluctance to assume the role of a hegemon despite its preponderance of power within the context of history, its own Apartheid legacy and the continent's colonial experience. Flowing from historical legacy are continental prejudices, dependency, negative perceptions, inequities and resource constraints hindering secondary state followership to maintain hegemonic ambition and projection. It also examines the role of ideology in fostering notions of group unity and solidarity to counteract unilateral or aggressive behaviour. Lastly, South Africa's soft power capabilities are examined to determine if they can sustain external perceptions of hegemonic aspirations despite a declining economy, diminishing global status, waning soft power and increasing external and regional competition.

6.1 South Africa's Hard Power Attributes

South Africa's inherited hard power capabilities relative to neighbouring countries gave rise to both expectations and fears that South Africa would take on a strong leadership and hegemonic role in Africa. It was envisaged "as a natural hegemon and protagonist within its sub-region with aspirations towards a leadership role in South-South relations" (Evans cited in Ogunnubi 2017: 24). Upon its transition, South Africa was already proclaimed the military and economic powerhouse of the Southern African region and, by extension, the African continent (van der Westhuizen 1995). According to Hugon (2003:117), "its sizeable economic and military power was viewed as an engine to pull Africa out of its poverty and underdevelopment".

6.1.1 Military Power

According to realists, a hegemon is the most powerful state in system, which possesses superior material capabilities: economic and military. For realists, military power is the most important aspect of hegemony as violence is always a possibility in an anarchical society (Schmidt, 2018). Related to military power is the notion that a preponderant state has the ability to dominate all other subordinate states. It is in this regard; South Africa's military capabilities are examined.

According to the 2017 Global Fire Power Index³, South Africa is listed the third strongest in Africa and ranked 33rd out of 136 countries. It is characterised as the most modern fighting

³ See www.globalfire.com

force on the African continent with excellent air, naval and land strength. It trails Egypt (1st) and Algeria (2nd) but is ahead of Nigeria (4th) and Ethiopia (5th). It is the only country not experiencing active security threats in the form of instability, strife, extremism, terrorism or conflicts as evident in West and Central Africa as well as Nigeria (Schlovin 2017:16). Much of its resources and troops are used to assist other African countries in quelling threats and supporting both UN-AU hybrid missions to secure the public regional good of peace and stability, which is an important attribute of hegemony. While, South Africa is not the most powerful military power on the continent, the 2017 and 2018 Global Fire Power Index characterise it as the most modern and technologically advanced fighting force on the continent.

6.1.2 Economic Power

On the economic front, Africa is South Africa's largest export market, with trade surplus skewed in SA's favour. According to the 2016 Department of Trade and Industry (Dti) statistics, trade between South Africa and Africa totalled USD \$29 billion, of which 66 percent accounted for exports.⁴ This makes South Africa a pivotal economic actor in Africa. However, its economy has been in stagnation since 2010 and was officially overtaken by Nigeria as the top economy in Africa 2014. The International Monetary Economic (IMF) Outlook for 2017⁵ lists Nigeria at an estimated \$415.08 billion, ahead of South Africa 's economy at \$349,36 billion and Egypt at \$237 billion. According to the African Development Bank⁶, the increase followed the government's decision to rebase the Nigerian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014 to include unaccounted sectors such as telecommunications, retail and movies, resulting in an 89% expansion in Nigeria's GDP and leap to the 26th largest global economy, ahead of South Africa at number 34.

However, when measuring GDP per capita, South Africa remains ahead of Nigeria at \$5,018, which lags behind in terms of infrastructure, personal wealth for each citizen, and advancement in terms of financial institutions, education, travel, housing. Schlovin (2017,16) points out that while Nigeria might rival South Africa economically, South Africa remains the more advanced, competitive and diversified economy on the continent. It has better skills capacity, infrastructure development; sophisticated manufacturing skills and a savvy industry profile. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015⁷ lists South Africa as the second most competitive country in Africa, behind Mauritius.

⁴ Taken from Dti 2016 trade figures

⁵ See www.imf.org

⁶ See www.afdb.org

⁷ See reports.weforum.org

In spite of the decline in its annual GDP growth, military expenditure and foreign direct investment (Singh 2018), South Africa has been able to maintain an influential role on the continent through its peacekeeping and active diplomatic record. While military power is the most important aspect of hegemony for realism, this interpretation has been dismissed as an over-simplistic and one-dimensional understanding of power (Schmidt 2018:5, Keohane 1984). According to Keohane (1984:34) hegemony occurs when “one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations and is willing to do so”. It is here scholars (Alden 2002; Landsberg 2007; Prys 2010; Tjemolane 2011 and Ogunnubi 2016) argue that South Africa falls short of demonstrating the *willingness and capacity* to take up the leadership and responsibilities of a regional hegemon. It is often referred to as the reluctant hegemon and having established its material power, the question arises why.

6.2 Sub-question 1: Why has South Africa engaged as a reluctant regional player on the African continent despite its prowess and capabilities?

This sub-question examines the reasons for South Africa’s reluctance and unwillingness to take up the responsibilities of a hegemon within the context of history, with specific focus on apartheid and colonialism. Secondary state acquiescence and domestic constraints will also be examined as it relates to a regional hegemon’s ability to create a loyal followership and provide regional public goods. While the Greek word, *hegemonia* was originally associated with honour and office, modern understanding leans towards negative perceptions of a hegemon and according to Bhasin (2008), when conditioned to circumstances and historical experience, they give rise to misperceptions borne out of exaggerations or stubborn prejudices. According to Gilpin (1982:51) “the historical experience of the society is foremost among the determinants of these perceptions”. South Africa’s historical legacy of Apartheid coupled with the continent’s colonial heritage has shaped Africa’s perceptions and response to South Africa.

6.2.1 Apartheid Legacy

South Africa’s behaviour cannot be viewed in isolation of its historical legacy of Apartheid. During the height of Apartheid, South Africa played a destabilising role in the Front-Line States (FSL). It dominated the sub-region by sowing dissidence, sabotage and economic chaos in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia (Adedeji 1996). According to Braga (2015), South Africa’s historical legacy as an aggressive, militant and hostile state has been seared into the consciousness of African countries and forms an important part of the psyche of how it is perceived. Its occupation of Namibia also places it in the same category as European colonial powers and provides the context for South Africa’s reluctance to take on the role of a regional power, fearful of igniting memories of a historical replay of Apartheid.

Due to poor historical relations with its neighbours and negative attributes (dominant, aggressive, selfish and bully) traditionally associated with a realist interpretation of a hegemon, South Africa has been careful to eschew a hegemonic role in Southern Africa. It is aware that other African countries resent its hard power capabilities inherited from the Apartheid regime as they provide both the means and opportunity to dominate the neighbourhood. To allay fears, the ruling party, the ANC, explicitly declared that South Africa renounced all hegemonic ambitions in the region and would “resist all pressure to become the ‘regional power’ at the expense of the rest of the sub-continent”.⁸ Positive language such as ‘partnership, cooperation, equality, joint cooperation, reciprocity and mutually beneficial’⁹ has become an integral part of South Africa’s diplomatic leitmotif to disarm residual fears of dominance and frame its engagement in a cooperative and non-threatening light.

However, not all African states are convinced that South Africa has changed. Prys (2009:14) argues that this ‘strategy of denial’ is a common feature of regional hegemonies to avoid negative consequences of being seen as an imperialistic state and points out that despite denying hegemonic tendencies, South Africa fails to disguise its intention to position itself as the African representative on the global stage. Prys (2009) argues this duality is evident when South Africa publicly denies hegemonic ambitions but yet speaks of its special responsibility to assume leadership as a result of its transformation. Prys (2009) argues this makes its reluctance merely rhetorical and tactical to disarm fear and only serves to heighten perceptions of hegemonic ambitions deliberately cloaked in the guise of denial. Lack of trust in South Africa is borne of deep-seated memories of past hostilities and prejudicial perceptions of exaggerated aggressive behaviour South Africa still conjures amongst other African states. South Africa responds with paranoid denial and increased reluctance to take on greater responsibilities. In spite of loud protestations and actions to the contrary, South Africa has failed to shed its Apartheid legacy and its actions and intentions continue to be viewed with suspicion and scrutinised for hegemonic ambition.

6.2.2 Africa’s Colonial Legacy

Secondly, the continent’s history of slavery and colonialism play an important role in how it views and responds to South Africa. Tiekou (2016) stressed that the nature of Africa’s conquest and exploitation, coupled with its fierce resistance, must be remembered when examining how and why particular attributes (aggressive, dominating, exploitative, selfish militaristic) of hegemony are largely perceived as reminiscent of colonialism. According to Neuman (1998),

⁸ See Foreign Policy Perspective in South Africa. See <http://www.an.org.za/docs/pol/1994/foreign.html>

⁹ See DIRCO White Paper on Foreign Policy, 2011

African elites harbour a deep resentment against powerful states as Europeans are viewed as perpetrators of imperialism and colonisers who exploited and enslaved the continent. For many African states, colonialism did not end when political independence was achieved but has continued through monopoly trading practices, an unfair global governance system, globalisation as well as political, economic and cultural subjugation by former colonisers (Neuman, 1998).

Despite attaining independence and achieving moderate to robust economic growth, the continent is still trapped in a dependency cycle. According to Puchala (1998), many African countries are still grappling with the aftermath of colonial rule, which gave rise to embedded structural inequalities and rivalry over national sovereignty and scarce natural resources. Unable to challenge dominant western powers, they often vent their frustrations on other African countries accused of selling out to western imperialism. “Particular criticism is reserved for those post-colonial governments perceived to promote western interests in regional and world affairs” (Puchala 1998:142). The colonial legacy and propensity in Africa to associate liberal perceptions with the West renders South Africa susceptible to accusations of being un-African and pro-Western. This is compounded by its social recognition as a regional hegemon by western powers, which only serves to heighten South Africa’s sensitivities to accusations or perceptions of aggression, hegemony or bullying. According to Lipton (2003:33), “Sharpened by the ambivalence with which it was regarded by many African countries, it was uncomfortable at being embraced by the West and sought to distance and differentiate itself through a strong anti-western imperialism stance and denouncing any form of domination”. Aware that many African countries view South Africa’s growing business network as corporate dominance, it deliberately shuns responsibilities that could construe hegemony thus contributing to the broader narrative of being a reluctant leader.

Thirdly, the backdrop against which South Africa’s transformation as a democratic country occurred explains the duality observed in its identity and the “dilemma reflected by the wild swings in its foreign policy” (Alden & Le Pere 2009:50). Its transition coincided with the demise of the Cold War and “it unintentionally became a poster-child for the success of the liberal democratic system” (Singh 2018: 21). Espousing a western political ideology and strong liberal values, South Africa was placed in a unique position to influence the African continent from within. As the last western outpost in Africa, it was perceived as a ‘puppet of the West’ and viewed with open suspicion and hostility. There was fear that South Africa would undermine African regimes through the spread of western liberal ideas as Africa still had a fair share of autocratic, despotic and military regimes masquerading as quasi democracies. Burgess (2012) argues that autocratic African leaders feared South Africa would spread western propaganda

such as liberal values; promotion of a free market, democracy and intervention in domestic human rights issues, which would impact on regime survival, personal power and wealth. Aware that its economic dominance, historical legacy, western ideology, commitment to the promotion to human rights and democracy made other African countries wary of its motives and ambitions, it began to outwardly demonstrate reluctance to take up the title of hegemon (Braga 2012).

It is thus important to consider Africa's historical background unique to its specific setting in time and place to facilitate a better understanding of how regional hegemony is practiced and regional hegemons behave. In South Africa's case, its reluctance and unwillingness to take on the role of regional hegemon stems from a desire to allay fears of subjugation and domination borne out of historical sensitivities such as its Apartheid legacy and the continent's collective history of slavery and colonisation. It also does not want to be strongly associated with propagating western ideology on a continent fearful of western imperial domination. Most of the current confusion and misconstrued ideas of hegemonic ambitions can be attributed to South Africa implementing its pro-African foreign policy under international scrutiny and the desire for African representation on the global stage (Alden & Le Pere 2015), coupled with the limitations imposed by a universal theory that fails to account for the regional setting. Due to its tragic historical experience and fear of western subjugation, the continent is not receptive to the rise of a regional hegemon, especially not South Africa, which has a strong western liberal ideology on a continent still recovering from the ravages of colonialism and cognisant of its susceptibility to neo-colonial domination.

6.2.3 Acceptance and followership from secondary states: Competition

According to the Hegemonic Stability Theory, a state must have the will to lead/will to establish a hegemonic regime as well as the capability to lead or enforce the rules of the system. The status of a regional power or hegemon (legitimacy, authority and credibility) depends on the recognition and acceptance of other (smaller and weaker) states, inclusive of broader and extra-regional acceptance (Flemes 2009). To be a leader, a state has to not only gain acceptance but also a loyal followership on the continent. (Williams et. al. 2012). As a newly democratic state, South Africa eagerly sought acceptance by the African community but has struggled to erase Apartheid-era memories, reminiscent of colonial powers.

South Africa also failed to gain the confidence of established African leaders like Robert Mugabe, Muammar Gaddafi and Dos Santos, who were openly sceptical of South Africa's highly visible global role and attributed it to a thinly veiled ploy to dominate the continent. Burgess (2012) argues that Dos Santos was suspicious of South Africa's motives for

encouraging the Angolan government to work with its former enemy, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as it ignited old memories of Apartheid South Africa's support for UNITA and its 'divide and rule' tactic to exploit the Angolan economy. Mugabe resented South Africa's dominant role in SADC and feared losing power and autonomy within the region while Gaddafi dismissed South Africa as a trojan horse for Western power. There was also intense competition amongst established African powers aspiring to play leading roles on the continent, which made accepting leadership from a relatively a young country like South Africa difficult (Burgess 2012). As South Africa was amongst the last of the African countries to claim liberation, it was a younger brother to be led and not led by.

6.2.4 Lack of regional consensus on a regional hegemon

While regional hegemons exert influence within a limited geographic area, they do not always get their way. According to Williams et. al (2012:12), "Hegemony can be a role that a state can aspire to or be brought into it". On one hand, South Africa has received much criticism for its global identity as Africa's representative at prestigious multilateral groups such as the G20 and BRICS and, on the other, several African scholars have expressed umbrage at South Africa's characterisation as 'a junior partner' and criticism of its role and scope in the BRICS partnership. Makgetlanseng (2014:166) criticises Oliver and Schoeman (2011) of propagating euro-centric views by characterising South Africa as "the weakest member but carrying symbolic importance as an African state". Makgetlanseng (2014) also dismisses claims that South Africa is instrumental in carrying out the agenda of Russia and China and is submissive to their leadership. Makgetlanseng (2014) argues that this creates the narrative that South Africa is a servant of more dominant and powerful interests and lacks the agency to pursue to its own interests through the BRICS partnership in pursuit of foreign policy objectives.

Antagonism to and contestation of South Africa's status by African countries have raised questions about where its legitimacy and credibility as an African representative stem from. Oliver (2009) argues that South Africa should have lobbied the continent to gain wider African support for its membership to G20 and BRICS rather than making an assumption of acceptance. This would have imbued its leadership with more substance and legitimacy. Olivier (2009) considers this behaviour as an aggressive display of unilateralism, which runs counter to Pan-African and traditional multilateral diplomacy. However, Makgetlanseng (2014) argues that this is flawed criticism as none of the other BRICS partners had to seek permission to accept membership and that since South Africa is invited to international meetings, and not nominated as the African representative, it can be inferred that its status has been conferred by other powers. This is in line with the social recognition aspect of hegemony espoused by the English School Theory, whereby status is bestowed by others and rests on recognition by

them (Clark 2009 cited in Schmidt 2018). Alden & Le Pere (2009:165) concur that “since the ending of Apartheid, the international community has played a seminal role in fostering the idea that South Africa is marked out for leadership on the continent”. South Africa was considered an ideal partner to the West as it shared similar political ideologies. It also created the impression that South Africa had the means, ability and disposition to help solve the problems of the continent (Braga 2017). However, recognition as the sole African representative on the global stage heightens African fears that the country is once again being used to further the interests of external powers on the continent.

According to Tieku (2013:12-13), “The continent’s collective history of colonialism and slavery make it difficult for any hegemonic seeker as resentment against powerful states run deep in the thinking of African elites”. William Zartman points out that the tenets of Pan-Africanism and broader African ruling class ‘reject relations on the basis of power’, which makes it difficult for Africa’s military and economic powerhouses to use power to dominate African countries (cited in Tieku 2013). “States not only mobilise against a hegemonic seeker but also make it difficult for relatively big and wealthy African states such as South Africa and Nigeria to get support for their positions” (Tieku 2013:13). South Africa’s diplomacy is replete with incidents where it failed to gain support of fellow African states. South Africa was embarrassed when African countries failed to support its 2004 Olympics Games bid due to suspicious motives of “whether the bid was really an African endeavour or solely South Africa’s effort to appropriate the image of Africa for its own purpose” (Vale & Maseko 1988:284). Another example is the fierce opposition mounted against South Africa’s candidacy for Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2011 despite Dr. Nkosana Dlamini-Zuma’s credible qualifications for the position. Burgess (2012) argues that contestation and resentment did not arise solely from the fact that Dr. Dlamini-Zuma was a candidate from one of the big 5 AU member states, but rather because she was South African.

According to Vale & Maseko (1998), Africa’s leadership of Africa is condemned by its Apartheid legacy as its residual power skews rather than balances the prospects for sustainable and equitable development in southern Africa. They surmise that, “without equity, followership can only be reluctant and forced” (1998:283). According to Alden & Schoeman (2015:3-4), South Africa “resides in the realm of the structured characteristics of its designation as a regional leader and is a product of international needs for African representation on the global stage, together with its own ambitions, rather than any regional consensus on South African leadership and this fact is reflected in its membership of the G20 and BRICS”. Sirdropoulos (2014:2) argues that “South Africa was a natural choice for social ascription as a regional hegemon as the West saw an affinity with its own political values”. However, South Africa has

failed to secure recognition, credibility or legitimacy from the region it purports to represent. This highlights a limitation of the Hegemonic Stability Theory placing greater emphasis on the willingness of a state to assume the role of a hegemon and less on acceptance of that role by secondary state followership in a region plagued by a tragic historical legacy, mistrust, dependency and marginalisation. In sum, a state cannot be a leader without any followers.

6.2.5 Domestic Complexities

Gilpin (1981:159) notes that “structural changes in the economy undermine the power of a hegemon and are inimical to its long-term military and economic capabilities”. Factors such as national character, economic structure and political culture influence the foreign policy of a state and can limit new opportunities for wealth and power. Gilpin (1981:97) states that the “rise and decline of social classes, the shifting conditions of domestic interests and secular economic-demographic changes” also influence foreign policy goals.

The Twenty- Year Review Report (2014:40-41) notes that in 1994, ‘South Africa inherited a country with high poverty levels, inequalities and discriminatory practices’ in addition to dwindling financial resources, aging infrastructure, limited basic services, huge economic disparities, spiralling unemployment and a racially divided nation. To avoid the collapse of government, there was a concerted inward focus on nation building aimed at the transforming an illiberal state into a functional democracy. During the Mandela era, the country implemented an idealistic human rights orientated foreign policy, which proved difficult to maintain while the Mbeki years took a proactive approach to reviving the continental agenda by reconfiguring regional governance organisations and funding continental initiatives such as the African Renaissance Fund (ARF) and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) (Landsberg 2010).

However as economic growth slowed, finite resources had to be channelled to domestic priority concerns and immediate challenges encapsulated in the National Development Plan (NDP), which seeks to address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Twenty-five years into democracy, South Africa is still grappling with some of the same domestic challenges: bridging the inequality divide; creating employment; addressing service delivery challenges; preventing the collapse of the healthcare system; reducing the soaring rates of crime; keeping the public welfare system afloat and underwriting the failures of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). According to the World Bank¹⁰ and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Equality Report for 2017/2018, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world and inequality has increased since the end of Apartheid in 1994.

¹⁰ [Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: An assessment of Drivers, Constraints and Opportunities.](#)

According to Stats SA¹¹, South Africa's official unemployment has increased from 21.5% to 28.0 % over the last ten years. Despite redistributive measures, "Apartheid legacies remain deeply embedded and existing social divisions and fault lines are still in place" (Alden & Le Pere 2009:162). The World Bank's 2018 Report makes similar findings. This results in limited financial spend for the provision of regional public goods and curtails South Africa's clout on the continent.

6.2.6 Implications for Hegemonic Influence

According to the Hegemonic Stability Theory, while a hegemon should have a large and growing economy, a dominant economy is not enough. There should also be unrivalled supremacy in at least one sector. South Africa's dwindling GDP and tumultuous domestic issues reduce its capacity to finance public regional goods and project a hegemonic influence in Africa. As a developing country, South Africa is also subjected to the manipulations of the interests of global powers in Africa. Ogunnubi & Akinola (2017) posit that its subservient role in the international political economy also places limitations on its hegemonic ability on the continent. South Africa's economic vulnerability was exposed during the 2008/2009 global financial crisis, which resulted in reduced growth and a recession for the first time in 19 years. The rising unemployment and poverty levels and political disenchantment led to xenophobic attacks on African nationals, denting the country's image and reputation on the continent and reigniting resurgent fears and perceptions of Apartheid South Africa – aggressive, violent and abusive to fellow Africans.

The financial crisis coincided with the Zuma Administration (2008-2018), where domestic concerns and corruption scandals, namely State Capture, took centre stage (Soko 2016). The Zuma era polarised the public, threatened democratic gains and was characterised by factionalism and demagoguery. South Africa subsequently adopted an inward approach to address rising inequality and heightened racial tensions. In its struggle to consolidate its democratic transformation, South Africa's political leadership is under considerable pressure to pursue policies that spur economic development and avoid undermining key domestic interests (Le Pere 2013). Thus, it would be impractical to speak of a regional hegemonic order in the African context, which aligns with the tenets of the Hegemonic Stability Theory.

¹¹ See Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Q3: 2018 report

6.2.7 Conclusion

South Africa's reluctance is rooted in both its own historical legacy and the collective colonial experience of the continent. Enduring negative perceptions and lingering colonial grievances have failed to alleviate residual fear and suspicion of South Africa's motives, resulting in South Africa eschewing any role that could be misconstrued as hegemonic. Fearful that South Africa represents continued western dominance on the continent, the region has failed to recognise or endorse its legitimacy as the African representative. The nature of the colonial experience and decolonisation process has made African states naturally suspicious of any hegemonic seeker and will rally to prevent its rise (Tieku, 2013). This sub-question demonstrated the limitations of hegemony being ascribed to a state by external actors and importance of legitimising a hegemon's status within its own system through regional consensus and loyal followership. Linked to South Africa's turbulent history, domestic issues limit South Africa's hegemonic projection by reducing finite resources for the provision of regional public goods, which is a criterion for hegemony.

6.3 Sub-Question 2: What constraints does South Africa encounter as a regional hegemon on the continent?

It is evident that much of South Africa's reluctance and unwillingness stems from its historical legacy, lack of secondary state followership and domestic constraints. This sub-question examines other factors, which may have a bearing on its performance as a hegemon in the regional system. The following factors will be explored i); the role of the ideology of Pan-Africanism, ii) competition with powerful external actors and iii) fear of South Africa's growing corporate footprint.

6.3.1 Pan-Africanism and African solidarity

Gilpin (1981) notes that the field of sociology contributes to a better understanding of structural and institutional determinants of behaviour as individuals often make choices and act in a world of rules and norms not of their own choice. Gilpin (1981) states that while self-interest and social structure are thus determinants of human (state) behaviour, an actor's behaviour can even be opposed to its self-interest.

The ideals of Pan-Africanism fosters cohesion based on a shared colonial history and the need for solidarity in the struggle for complete decolonisation of the continent (Korendyasov 2014). Thiam (1965:20) states that while it was "once used as a weapon against colonialism, it is now popularly invoked to foster unity, solidarity, self-defence and protection". As African states often struggle to develop a consensus approach to common problems, Pan-Africanism is one of the building blocks for African foreign policy, which helps achieve a coordinated approach

(Tieku 2013). In sum, Pan-Africanism prioritises group preferences, collective obligation and group harmony over individual interests and goals. According to Tieku (2013:13), “it encourages proper and ethically acceptable behaviour amongst Africa’s political elites and imposes a sense to act in solidarity and conform to the common position”. It also removes the hierarchy of power as a base for relations in intra-African relations”. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:21) states that, “Pan-Africanism is re-emerging as a counter view to the dominant hegemonic euro-centric world view”. The role of Pan-Africanism will be explored in the following four diplomatic incidents where questions have been raised over South Africa’s reluctance to take a stronger leadership and more principled approach to Human Rights. The object of the discussion is to demonstrate how the ideology of Pan-Africanism has shaped South Africa’s interaction with the African Group and influenced its decision-making towards maintaining consensus and group harmony.

In order to facilitate better understanding of how these events unfolded, it is imperative to understand the decision-making processes. Decisions pertaining to the continent are made in the following structures: the AU, which is the continental body for decision-making and the five regional organisations. South Africa belongs to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and is beholden to decisions adopted at Summit. At the international level, Africa participates through the African Group, which is made of the five regional sub-groups as follows: Southern Africa (10), East Africa (14), West Africa (18), Central Africa (6) and North Africa (6) with decisions made by consensus. It is the researcher’s observation that while not all countries are present at every given African Group meeting, it is evident that West Africa dominates with the largest number of members (18) and outnumbers Southern Africa (10) by 8 countries. The colonial legacy (French/English/Portuguese), ideological outlook, the nature of government and age of leaders also play an important role in how country affiliations are made, and decisions taken.

South Africa actively participates in the various African Group meetings and is viewed as advancing a pro-liberal agenda, steeped in respect for human rights, democracy and good governance. According to Tieku (2013), Africa’s propensity to associate liberal values to western powers means that South Africa often finds itself at crossroads of a political and moral dilemma with specific reference to Human Rights violations by African countries. On the other hand, South Africa’s increasing shift away from the West towards Africa has led to accusations of the country defending rather than condemning African violators (Braga, 2017).

i) South Africa and Nigeria's Impasse over the Execution of Ken Saro Wiwa

South Africa experienced its first diplomatic challenge when the Abacha regime in Nigeria sentenced activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other dissidents on charges of treason in 1995 (Tripathi 2015). Outraged, Mandela unilaterally called for sanctions and a two-year suspension of Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth of Nations without consultation with the African Group. Mandela was subsequently accused of flouting the spirit of pan-Africanism and violating a cultural norm governing ethically acceptable behaviour amongst African elite – African Solidarity, which discourages African leaders from disagreeing with each other in public (Tieku, 2013, Burgess 2012).

According to Adebajo (2016:39), South Africa, "was accused ... of sowing seeds of division in Africa and undermining African solidarity". Mandela had wilfully flouted the spirit of African solidarity by publicly criticising another African country in front of the West. His behaviour was considered un-African and smacked of paternalism. Abacha mocked South Africa as "a black president of a white country" (M&G 1997). This experience would become a watershed moment in South African diplomacy, shaping South Africa's future engagement with the continent with regard to Pan-Africanist tenets of group unity and solidarity. While South Africa had gained Western accolades for standing against human rights violations, it lost the respect of its core representative group, the African Group. This incident is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, South Africa standing in solidarity with the West and publicly shaming another African country only served to perpetuate entrenched perceptions that South Africa was acting as a proxy for western interests and flexing its muscle as a hegemon. Secondly, South Africa's naïve response pointed to its lack of understanding and political nuance of how African politics worked. The latter is probably closer to the truth. Had South Africa been a true hegemon, it would have sought to cajole and influence African leaders, rather than acting unilaterally. Established group dynamics underpinned by African solidarity also effectively constrained any notion of South Africa's hegemonic leadership.

ii) Zimbabwe Crisis

The Zimbabwe crisis is often used to justify why South Africa is not a hegemon. According to Lipton (2009), South Africa's capabilities of assuming the role of a hegemon was questioned as Zimbabwe's implosion took place in its region. South Africa's choice of Quiet Diplomacy has been widely ridiculed both by African and global peers alike (Prys 2009; Alden 2002 and Ogunnubi 2016). However, when viewed through the wider lens of history and Pan-Africanism, South Africa's approach has resonance. In an effort to distinguish itself from the old regime largely associated as a destructive power and proxy of the West, South Africa shunned military

intervention and opposed economic sanctions. The Nigerian backlash had also exposed the perils of an aggressive unilateral approach.

Secondly, the role and gratitude of South Africa's ruling party, the ANC towards President Robert Mugabe for assistance provided to exiled ANC members should not be ignored. As former liberation parties, the ANC and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) shared similar interests (Lipton 2009). Thirdly, the country had newfound respect for African cultural norms discouraging public criticism of fellow African leaders and, in line with the collectivist outlook of pan-Africanism, negotiations took place behind closed doors. With western powers shut out of the discussions, Pretoria was accused of complicity in Zimbabwe's implosion and the protection of Mugabe in the name of African solidarity. It was accused of shielding "African rulers from international scrutiny of their behaviour towards their 'own' people, even in the face of calls for intervention by many of those people" (Lipton 2009, :338). There was deliberate rejection and disregard for the fact that as an appointed mediator to the crisis, South Africa could not make unilateral decisions without consultation or consensus with the regional (SADC) and continental (AU) bodies.

Fourthly, aware that colonial prejudice towards its liberal leanings rendered it vulnerable to accusations of being a puppet of the West, South Africa expressed a disdain for western assistance by declaring it would not act at the behest of Western powers. President Mbeki claimed that former British Prime Minister Tony Blair "pressured him to join a regime change scheme" (Smith 2013), which was not only an affront to Africa's initiative to seek African solutions to African problems but also undermined Africa's self-determination. The global media also criticised South Africa's indigenous mediation style, exposing western arrogance that only euro-centric methods were considered suitable.

South Africa was also genuinely convinced that Western powers, especially Britain, were responsible for Zimbabwe's problem. Lipton (2009) notes that South Africa attributed the crisis to i) the failure of the United Kingdom (UK) to deliver on its 1980 Lancaster House promises to fund the land redistribution programmes, provoking the land invasions that precipitated Zimbabwe's political turmoil and economic collapse; (ii) damage inflicted by the 1980s structural adjustment programme imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF); western sanctions and (iii) economic mismanagement by Zimbabwean leaders. There was also concern that the Opposition Party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), was a pawn of the West and South Africa did not want to be seen as aiding western powers to continue their rule by proxy. By failing to follow a western approach to conflict mediation to facilitate the forceful removal of Mugabe, South Africa's handling of the crisis elicited mixed reactions both

within and beyond Africa. While, it was ridiculed by western powers, it was lauded by non-western powers (Lipton 2009, Prys 2009).

Its reluctance to take on a stronger and more visible role of a hegemon should thus be viewed through a wider lens that captures the full spectrum of South Africa's decision-making. South Africa, under President Mbeki, was also highly invested in promoting African ownership of African Solutions for African Problems and would not be party to regime change. Ndemeni (2015) points to the chaos in Libya as an example of what could have happened to Zimbabwe had South Africa not neutralised the threat. Pan-Africanist values, admiration for Mugabe and its appointment as SADC mediator are contributing factors of South Africa's Quiet Diplomacy approach. Its fears of being seen as a purveyor of the West, the backlash experienced during the Ken Saro Wiwa incident and its sensitivities to perceptions that it may bully Zimbabwe contributed to its "reluctance, lack of assertiveness and limited sway over Zimbabwe during the height of its imploding crisis" (Prys 2009:16).

According to van der Westhuizen (2016:19), "the norm of African solidarity, particularly vis-à-vis human rights is much 'thicker' in the African context, fundamentally restricting the parameters within which South Africa can provide leadership or diplomatic innovation". South Africa is also dependent on those violators to consolidate its regional position. Strong criticism and condemnation would result in isolation of the country. However, this does not mean it does not act unilaterally when African leadership is divided. One such example would be South Africa's decision to adopt UNSC Resolution 1973 approving a 'No Fly Zone' over Libya.

iii) South Africa and Libya (UNSC Resolution 1973)

In March 2011, the AU took a collective decision not to support the imposition of a 'No Fly Zone' over Libya and proposed a Road Map to Peace. South Africa was nominated to engage Leader Muammar Gaddafi in the run-up to the Resolution but failed to convince him to step down (de Waal 2013). South Africa along with Nigeria and Gabon, Africa's three non-permanent members in the Security Council, subsequently voted in favour of the Resolution, which called for the use of 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians in contradiction of the collective position of the continent. According to Moore (2011), South Africa was dissatisfied with the AU's failure to resolve the Libyan conflict and was genuinely concerned support about civilian protection. While all three African countries voted in consensus, the harshest criticism was reserved for South Africa. As Puchala (1998) states this is not surprising as African countries vent their frustrations on those countries perceived to be closest to and complicit with the West.

When it became increasingly evident that the 'No Fly Zone' was used as a pretext to launch a military strike, South Africa called for a political solution, prompting the question why South Africa had supported the Resolution in the first place. Moore, (2011:1) noted that "it was unusual for South Africa to vote in favour of a resolution that violated key tenets of its foreign policy such as non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, (especially African states); reticence to agree to the use of force in resolving international crises in the absence of a cease-fire and host government approval; and, its proclivity for obstructing UNSC resolutions aimed at military action in, or even strongly worded resolutions on events in third countries not considered to be threats to international peace and security".

South Africa's decision should be viewed within the context of its commitment to Human Rights and not as an approval for military intervention. According to South Africa's UN spokesperson, Nomfanelo Kota, the country wanted to stop the aerial strikes and end the indiscriminate killings (Rossouw 2011:1). Secondly, the resolution came on the heels of another controversial vote during its previous tenure in the UNSC, where South Africa was harshly criticised for its indifference to human rights violations in Myanmar and Zimbabwe (Rossouw 2011:1). Kota stated that South Africa did not want to be accused of neglecting human rights and siding with Gaddafi (Rossouw 2011:1). Its sensitivity to international criticism coupled with a genuine concern for civilian violations and the slow and ineffective approach adopted by the AU may have spurred its decision to vote in favour of the resolution. The AU indeed reacted slowly, and the reasons could include internal strife, bureaucracy and more importantly, respect for the norm of African solidarity with another African leader. Gaddafi was not an ordinary leader. As a key proponent of Pan-Africanism, he financed continental initiatives and was not beholden to the West (de Waal, 2013). While South Africa was not the only African country to raise concerns over the deteriorating situation in Libya it was the first to openly disagree with the AU on an international platform and inadvertently mocked the organisation's failed efforts to operationalise the African Roadmap. The perceived mockery deepened international perceptions of Africa's ineptitude and its failure to elevate human suffering over solidarity with a despotic African leader (de Waal 2013). The result was open scorn for South Africa.

South Africa's commitment to Human Rights and sensitivity to criticism motivated the country to defy African consensus. While South Africa expressed regret for its decision, this is an example of it not always towing the line and acting in concert with African solidarity and consensus when it is genuinely aggrieved. However, the widespread condemnation from African counterparts and strong backlash against voting for Resolution 1973 made South

Africa even more reticent to take a strong stance on other human rights violations in Africa, with specific reference to the Sudanese President, Omar Al Bashir.

iv) South Africa's reluctance to arrest President Omar Al-Bashir

As a signatory to the Rome Statute, South Africa had an obligation to arrest President Al-Bashir during the June African Union (AU) Summit hosted in Johannesburg, 2015. The Government's refusal to arrest the Sudanese President led to an urgent High Court warrant for arrest and a global criticism of South Africa. Much of the fury can be traced to the AU's decision not to comply with the International Criminal Court's (ICC) indictment for a sitting Head of State based on its views that the Court is displaying racial bias against Africans, practicing unfair implementation of legal principles and lacking regional legitimacy. Obed Bapela, Chairperson of the ANC sub-committee on International Relations, accused the court of acting as "a proxy to persecute African Leaders and effect regime change on the continent" (Lalbahadur 2015:1)¹². As AU Summit host, South Africa called for an amendment of the Rome Statute in order to provide immunity to a sitting Head of State. Failing which, it announced it withdraw from the ICC altogether. Questions have risen as to why South Africa, would bring its name into disrepute for a leader of Al-Bashir's calibre. Fabricius (2015) ventures the answer could be that African obligations supersede all others or that South Africa seeking favour with the continent to support its bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The Al-Bashir-ICC issues should also be viewed through the lens of history and Pan-Africanism as South Africa once again found itself conflicted between its commitment to human rights and the norm of African Solidarity. If South Africa had arrested Al-Bashir, it would have not only invoked the ire of the continental body but would have resulted in South Africa being ostracised, an outcome the South African government wanted to avoid. As a prominent actor and mediator on peace and security issues, South Africa was also keenly aware that communication with all relevant parties was important and that included President Al Bashir. According to Lalbahadur (2015:1), "The country learnt that to lead the continent, one has to learn to garner its respect first and avoid alienating African allies".

African leaders tend to empathise, rather than criticise culpable peers. According to Akokpari (2016), "The AU has appeared to accommodate and, in fact, side with such leaders". Failure

¹² Lalbahadur, A, 2015, SA's foreign policy walks a fine line. Mail and Guardian, 25 December 2015. <http://www.mg.co.za>

to chastise African leaders, who threaten the security of their citizens or pursue policies that can potentially generate conflict, has weakened the AU's diplomatic efforts and diminished its capabilities in the global community. According to Akokpari (2016), it constrains attempts by countries, like South Africa, genuinely seeking to stem impunity and promote principles of good governance through promotion of accountability, transparency and ownership. Baraga (2017) quotes Geldenhuys stating that while all countries pursue a wide range of conflicting foreign policy agendas, ... (they) are limited or influenced by geo-political issues that portray the reality of global power cartography" Bohme (2016) adds that while "not all pressure is created equally, some matter more others" and "while Bashir's arrest would have drawn praise from western actors, it would have resulted in harsh opprobrium from other African states and emerging countries". Faced with these factors, South Africa prioritised its regional affiliations by aligning with the AU's non-cooperation policy. While the scope of the discussion is limited to the role of pan-Africanism, other grievances include the ICC's bias against Africans and acting as a proxy instrument at the behest of other more powerful countries.

On the surface, South Africa's varying approaches with Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Libya and Sudan create the impression of a country battling to maintain hegemonic leadership with inconsistency, contradiction, ambiguity, reticence and reluctance. However, on closer reflection, the struggle to balance its liberal values with those of Pan-Africanism comes to the fore. Its struggle history; the role of the ANC; strong ideological orientation; fear of rejection and desire for acceptance and the broader continental values of group unity pushing South Africa towards embracing African solidarity cannot be ignored. As highlighted by Gilpin (1981: x), "Individuals (actors) can never completely escape the constraints of social structure". Their actions invariably lead to unanticipated consequences as evident in South Africa's engagement on Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Libya and Sudan. It can be summed that its reluctance doesn't stem from an unwillingness to exercise leadership but rather from the desire to be part of the broader group consensus and not out of favour with the core region it represents on the global stage.

6.3.2 Contested African space with the influx of external actors

According to Ogunnubi & Akinola (2017:431), "Hegemonic allocation of power operates when a country has military, political and economic power to act unilaterally and this influences its openness of trade, market and other economic activities within the system". What makes the African regional system unique is that South Africa finds itself in competition with other more powerful global state actors (US, France, UK, India and China), which have more influence over African states due to shared colonial ties and newfound riches. Due to its subservient

position to the international economy on a politically weak continent amidst more powerful global actors, South Africa cannot act unilaterally.

The last two decades have witnessed a phenomenon, the Times Magazine (2011) referred to as 'Africa Rising' where the continent has increasingly assumed strategic geo-political and economic importance for many global powers. During the Cold War, the continent was used as a proxy in the battle between the US and the United States of Soviet Russia (USSR) with a focus on limiting the spread of communism (Miruthi 2013). The demise of the Cold War saw the rapid scramble for African resources, largely reminiscent of colonialism, through a burgeoning number of partnership frameworks. Only this time, traditional powers were strongly pursued by emerging Asian powers in search of natural resources and new markets for their growing populations and rising middle class. China is now Africa's biggest trading partner.

Despite achieving political independence, African countries display the trappings of a colonial economy with emphasis on extractive resources, materials with little diversification and value-addition as well as over-reliance on official development assistance (ODA) (Miruthi 2013). According to Akokpari 2016:11), "This exacerbates Africa's vulnerability and lack of influence in the international system". The drive for new markets has placed also South Africa in direct competition with external actors in its backyard. Akokpari (2016:15-16) cautions that the continent could be exploited by a new breed of colonisers which trap Africa into a deeper dependency cycle. To avoid a repeat of history, South Africa has been forced into a development paradigm with external actors to guide external engagement with the continent and promote mutually beneficial partnerships.

According to Boschhoff (2003:), this influx of external actors and inability to act unilaterally dismisses South Africa's claim to hegemony. Conversely, Nzewi (2015:26) argues that Boschhoff's view is informed by a realist point of hegemony as a bullish state power, which seems to indicate that "South Africa's commitment to pluralist solutions negated a hegemony cause". Nzewi (2015) aptly points out that hegemony conceptualisations can go beyond coercive power. Habib (2009:150) made similar claims when he stated, "Hegemonic leadership is not hostile to partnerships as partnerships are as much a modality of engagement as are other more aggressive interventions". This dichotomy of views is symptomatic of the inherent contradictions in South Africa's foreign policy when evaluated against the Hegemonic Stability Theory. The fact that South Africa can be both classified and dismissed as a hegemon based on different interpretations of the same theory speaks to the unique nature of the regional system where cooperation and interdependence are highly valued. It also helps explain the contradictory notions and supposed inconsistencies in South Africa's foreign policy, which can

be attributed to contextual factors specific to its region and limitations of the Hegemonic Stability Theory.

6.3.3 Fear over South Africa's economic dominance in Africa

According to Alden & Soko (2005:367), South Africa's growing economic presence across Africa had given rise to fears about its ambitions and intentions. In some cases, South African companies displaced local economies unable to compete with their more industrialised neighbour. They recite a story of a Kenyan legislator and businessman who complained that Kenyans could end up not owning anything in Kenya. "They bulldoze their way around. It seems they still have the attitudes of the old South Africa" (Alden & Soko 2005:367). However, the authors point out that these fears may have been exaggerated as South Africa was far from economic dominance as is still struggling to gain acceptance beyond its immediate region. Despite being the biggest investor in Africa, it has failed to convince African countries that it has changed its ways. Adding to its woes is the fact that it is challenged by powerful external actors such as the United States; Europe; China and India.

Fears of dominance has led to accusations of South Africa marketing itself as a gateway to Africa through institutionalised structures such as NEPAD to legitimise and spur its entry into the continent. Its altruistic motives to rejuvenate the continental economy has led to accusations of pursuing selfish interests descriptive of a hegemon seeking returns on its investment to public regional goods. South Africa's prioritisation of the African Agenda and its vision of a united and prosperous Africa have been misinterpreted as a clarion call to hegemony rather than a desire to improve the material condition of the continent. Once again, accusations borne out of prejudiced perceptions, historical legacy and fear of domination continue to dog South Africa and raise fears over its intentions (Bhasin 2008).

6.3.4 Conclusion

This sub-question examined constraints South Africa faces on the continent within the context of the ideology of pan-Africanism. It highlighted the influence of Pan-Africanism and African Solidarity on South Africa's performance on the continent and the moral struggle to balance its liberal values with that of group unity and solidarity. Strong historical, cultural and ideological convictions push South Africa into adopting positions, which are perceived to be beneficial and reflective of the broader collective good under the norm of African Solidarity. It also highlighted that South Africa is in direct competition with other global actors on the continent, which act as a natural deterrent to any hegemonic ambition or projection. Finally, the fear emanating from South Africa's growing corporate footprint on the continent has made South Africa more reticent to claim any hegemonic mantle.

6.4 Sub-Question: 3 How has South Africa performed as a regional hegemon on the African continent?

This sub-question examines South Africa's performance as a regional hegemon on the continent within the context of soft power. This includes the deliberate action taken to change negative perceptions, provide regional public goods, address skewed trade balance and promote security and stability. It will also briefly look at its role as an interlocutor between the regional and global spheres where inspirational and aspirational soft power drives it to carve a more just and equitable world for Africa. Its growing corporate footprint and cultural prowess will also be discussed as it adds to the country's prestige and reputational value, upon which much of the country's soft power and perceived hegemonic status rests.

Notions of power have diffused considerably with the addition of legitimacy and prestige as additional dimensions of power. Ikenberry & Kupchan (1990:50-51) have likened it to "hegemony is based on right as well as might", also referred to as soft power. According to Nye (2008), soft power is the ability to achieve objectives through attraction, rather than coercion. It can include a country's culture values and policies while smart power refers to the combination of hard and soft power resources.

Due to the nature of the continent's colonial legacy, any potential regional African hegemon would have been cognisant of the perceptions of hard power and intuitively grasped the critical importance of soft power. Sidiropoulos (2014:2) emphasises that, "hard power is frowned upon in post-colonial Africa and that its institutions eschew military or economic coercion when dealing with recalcitrant leaders. The only exception would be unconstitutional regime change". South Africa (old and new) is no stranger to the use of soft power. Apartheid South Africa used soft power and non-reciprocity to attract African states. Burgess (2012) states that the South African Customs Union (SACU) and the South Africa Development Bank (SADB) can be considered an outcome of Apartheid South Africa's soft power as they were established to attract other African partners. From 1994, South Africa has strategically leveraged the use of its soft power to "maximize its relative position amongst other regional states which may possess greater hard-power profiles" (Singh 2018:16). On the continent, South Africa lays the best claim to the exercise of soft power through its culture, moral currency political values and legitimacy of its human rights-based foreign policy (van der Westhuizen 2009 and Sidiropoulos 2014).

It is one of the few African countries able to tap into this repository of power. It has been able to influence other African countries to follow its lead while gaining a positive reputation abroad. A case in point would be "the critical role it played in leading African support to ban land mines

and extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation process” (van der Westhuizen 2009:2). By cultivating its vast soft power arsenal, South Africa has the ability to effectively change negative perceptions, deepen its regional prominence and raise its global reputation (Ogunnubi & Okeke-Uzodike 2015). This has led some to believe that South Africa’s vast reserves of soft power could make up for its political shortfalls, dwindling financial resources and limited military capabilities. Van der Westhuizen (2009) argues that South Africa could comprehensively assume the position of a regional hegemon based on the merits of *both* its hard and soft power (cited in Ogunnubi 2017:25).

6.4.1 Changing perceptions

South Africa has worked hard to change unfavourable perceptions to become an example of Afro-modernism and industrialisation of Africa by reconfiguring its foreign policy to play a more prominent role on the continent. Since South Africa’s historical legacy does not bode well for the use or threat of aggressive force to achieve foreign policy objectives, soft power has been its tool of choice. According to Ogunnubi (2017:31-32) South Africa is uniquely placed to advance the African Agenda and global aspirations, “provided it has the ability to grasp the complexity of its history, its multilateral diplomacy and its capacity to extract support from multiple sources”. It is ahead of African competitors, Egypt and Nigeria, as it scores high on the soft power index (Ogunnubi 2017).

Despite denying hegemonic aspirations, South Africa has benefitted from its soft power arsenal. Ogunnubi & Isike (2015) insist that much of South Africa’s credibility as a regional hegemon rests on its superior soft power base. They point out that while South Africa has been modest with its neighbours by protesting any hegemonic or leadership role, it has been much more brazen with its global counterparts. It has embarked on an aggressive campaign to stand out from its other regional contemporaries, evident by its proclamation to speak and act on behalf of the continent. Its successful use of soft power has reinforced prevalent perceptions that South Africa is a hegemon, putative or otherwise. According to (Braga 2017) Mbeki’s pan-African multilateralism enabled confirmation of South Africa as a regional power. Through its moral power and influence over regional institutions, it was able to pursue national interests without resorting to costly coercive measures. Some of its achievements can be enumerated as follows:

6.4.2 Provision of Public Regional Good: Establishment of Pan-African Institutions

Morgenthau stated that “While all politics is necessarily the pursuit of power, ideologies render involvement in that contest for power psychologically and morally acceptable to the actors and their audience” (cited in Ikenberry & Kupchan 1990:51). South Africa intuitively understood the

importance of embedding the African Renaissance vision within the continent's development framework. According to Louw (2000), it actively sought to portray a positive vision of Africa to attract foreign trade and investment. While African Renaissance was not a new concept to African lexicon, it infused new appreciation for the revival of African hope and prosperity and offered an "alternative to the prevailing European concepts of, and structures for African and global order" (Stremlau 1996:61). It also offered South Africa a mechanism through which to embed its core ideas without drawing accusations of hegemonic behaviour.

South Africa leveraged the philosophy of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance to play an instrumental role in the transformation of the continental political architecture, i.e. the transition of the OAU into the African Union AU. It hosted the first AU Summit in 2002 in Johannesburg, wherein a new approach to intervention on the continent, from non-interference to non-indifference was introduced (Sidiropoulos, 2007). This would allow for intervention in cases of genocide, gross violations of human rights, unconstitutional changes of governments and instability threatening regional stability (Sidiropoulos, 2007). It helped establish NEPAD, which would serve as the socio-economic blueprint for the continent's developmental agenda and the framework for its engagement with external partners. The establishment of NEPAD in South Africa allowed it to consolidate SA's role and influence on the continent. It also played a critical role in promoting infrastructure development on the continent through the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative (PIDA) spearheaded by former President Zuma. Other achievements include the North-South Road and the Rail Development Corridor. According to Gelb (2001), this was clearest expression of South Africa's presumptive leadership on the continent. However, it has also had the converse effect of fuelling international expectations that the country would lead the continent.

According to Nye (1990), a state encounters less resistance if its power seems legitimate in the eyes of others. It can achieve this through support of continental or regional institutions that lends credibility and legitimacy to its agenda and is thus spared from using coercive or hard power (cited in Singh 2018:13). These institutions provide credible information to state actors shaped by particular norms and values, which lead to greater predictability and stability (Singh 2018). With the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2003, South Africa tried to create a new political normative framework for the continent, one that respected democracy and good governance. South Africa's hosting of PAP has also contributed to the dissemination and entrenchment of democracy and good governance as well as facilitated the creation and ratification of the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance, which came into effect in 2012. South Africa wanted to reposition the African continent within the global context/sphere to counter western corporate hegemony, become self-sufficient and

move away from a “regime centred-security approach” (Sidiropoulos, 2007:8). The strategic placement of ARF within the South African Government ensured direct influence over Africa’s developmental agenda. Another notable achievement included the role it played in the crafting of Agenda 2063, which was adopted during the 25th AU Summit it hosted in 2015, which provides the overarching framework for Africa’s sustainable development and economic growth. Building on the achievements of NEPAD, Agenda 2063 is aligned with the global blueprint for development, Agenda 2030 and seeks to position Africa in an ever-evolving geo-political landscape.

South Africa is acknowledged as chief architect of several of Africa’s grand development projects, which have been put forward as evidence of its hegemonic projection and contribution to the public regional good. However, it is important to note the current state of these institutions. According to Nganje (2015:14), while there has been considerable improvement in the governance of the continent, the AU, the continent’s flagship organisation “continues to be embroiled in institutional crisis as it struggles to implement and operationalise its norms and policies”. Nganje (2015) argues that the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) also suffers from institutional imbalance and fragmentation while other institutions suffer from weak capacity, severe financial constraints, political alienation and a dearth of ethical and visionary leaders. Since submission to APRM is voluntary, NEPAD cannot compel states to sign up for review nor impose sanctions when transgression of good governance and democracy is exposed (Fagbayibo 2018). Further to this, as part of the broader institutional reform of the AU spearheaded by then-Commissioner Paul Kgame from Rwanda, the 31st Ordinary Session of the African Union (February 2019) adopted a decision to transform NEPAD into the African Union Development Forum (AUDA) to improve efficiency and efficacy.

The implication of this decision is that NEPAD is likely to move to Addis Ababa in the near future thus removing direct South African control over the organisation, another indication of South Africa’s waning influence on the continent. PAP also lacks accountability and meaningful legislative powers. It cannot make or enforce binding rules and regulations and allegations of impudence and wasteful expenditure blight the institution (Fagbayibo 2018). Despite South Africa’s best efforts and strong financial contribution to the establishment, it fails to or is not allowed to exercise sufficient oversight on the efficacy of the institutions. Since representative countries select the leaders, they are accountable to their national parliaments and government. Had South Africa being a regional hegemon, it would have played a bigger role in the management of these institutions and selection of representatives, as is the case with the US in the Bretton Woods system. In seeking to regain declining influence over the continent, South Africa should re-examine its engagement with these regional organisations in

order to strengthen efficacy and ensure implementation of their programmes as they are the building blocks of continental integration.

6.4.3 Peace and Security Diplomacy

South Africa used its moral currency to carve out a strong identity as a peacemaker, which has been increasingly associated with regional hegemony. Driven by the vision *to achieve an African continent that is peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable*, it has been at the forefront of strengthening regional security architecture and building a conflict-free continent. The Report, *South Africa, Towards a Fifteen-Year Review* provides an exhaustive list of South Africa's peace and security achievements through the operationalisation of the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and troop contribution to African Peace Missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan and Ethiopia-Eritrea. Its peacekeeping role and negotiated settlements in the Congo, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire and Sudan have been internationally lauded and recognised.

Its track record can be summarised as follows: In 1998, South Africa, together with Botswana, led a successful military intervention to quell a coup d'état in Maseru, Lesotho. Despite its success, South Africa was criticised for acting unilaterally and in pursuit of its own national interests that of securing strategic water resources (Likoti 2007). Its intervention was reminiscent of Apartheid militarism and fuelled perceptions of hegemonic ambitions with a Western agenda. As the intervention was not legitimised by SADC and ratified by the SADC Summit, it was considered unlawful (Likoti 2017). With regard to Burundi, Hengari (2016) outlines South Africa's strategic use of soft power exemplified in Mandela's appointment as mediator in the Burundi crisis. His highly revered moral stature played a critical role in pushing the peace process forward by getting both parties to sign an Agreement Plan. In the late 1990s, South Africa led a mediation process to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under Mbeki's leadership, where the Sun City Agreement (April 2002) and Pretoria Accord (July 2002) were signed, leading to peace with Rwanda and a transitional Government of National Unity. Hengari (2016) states that South Africa contributed significantly to institution-building in the DRC through an exhaustive list of interventions, including financial and technical electoral support, military stabilisation in the eastern DRC, revenue collection reforms, private sector investments and the training of Foreign Service officials.

In an effort to promote African ownership and an inclusive and bottom-up approach, South Africa has strongly lobbied for a more active and pro-African approaches to ensure that the continent does not lie at the mercy of external powers. South Africa has played a critical role

in ensuring alignment, synergy and reciprocal cooperation through the establishment of the AUPSC in 2002 and ASF with its Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) in 2003 respectively. The AUPSC is a key element of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. South Africa also played a prominent role aligning the AUPSC with the UNSC resulting in the AU-UN hybrid mission in Somalia. During the 2016 UNSC Open Debate on “*United Nations-African Union Peace and Security Cooperation*”, South Africa called “for greater strategic coherence between the two organisations in the resolution, prevention and management of conflicts in Africa” (Mminele 2016).

Despite playing a pivotal role in providing regional security on the continent, paradoxically, South Africa’s track record on peace and security is often cited as a reason why South Africa cannot and should not claim hegemonic status. Kagwanja (2009) is of the view “had South Africa been a regional hegemon, it would have had more success in dealing with the prolonged crisis in Zimbabwe and its policy would not have been so quiet” (cited in Tjemolane et. al. 2017:91). Hudson (2007), on the other hand, argues that there was no way South Africa could have condemned Mugabe and still expected acceptance by its African counterparts leading Williams et al. (2012) to acknowledge that “South Africa’s diplomatic efforts have elicited mixed reactions and cannot always be characterised as unqualified successes largely due to stiff resistance from several leaders” (Angola, Zimbabwe and DRC).

It cannot be denied that South Africa has transformed from ‘chief destabiliser to primary peacemaker’ (Kagwanja 2009). As the Pan-African national character shuns the use of power in intra-state relations, Kagwanja (2009) argues that South Africa prefers the strategy of peace brokering, human security and Quiet Diplomacy by deliberately choosing to engage African countries in a manner that is non-militant, threatening, belligerent or confrontational. Hegemony is also not relevant to the continent as most of the conflicts are intra-state and can be attributed to old colonial disputes over territories, resources and growing socio-economic disparities. Kagwanja (2009:31) notes the shift in behaviour towards a more cautious, defensive, non-threatening military strategy, grounded in the principles of deference and regional peace, is an effort to avoid resentment and backlash from other African countries. South Africa uses soft power to nudge and cajole African states in the direction of good governance and respect for democratic principles.

6.4.4 Interlocutor between Africa and the Global North and South

a) South-South Cooperation

South Africa has built beneficial strategic relations with partners from both the Global South and Global North. Under the auspices of the AU, South Africa has played an instrumental role in promoting Africa's development agenda through the various partnerships to streamline Africa's engagement and ensure win-win cooperation amongst all parties. Mpungose (2018) claims that while President Mbeki focused strongly on the Africa Agenda, President Zuma used multilateral platforms such as BRICS, FOCAC and G20 to advance Africa's interests. South Africa also shaped policies and frameworks to counterbalance the rise of Chinese, Indian and European economic competition across the continent. It refashioned the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) partnership by co-chairing the partnership twice during the Zuma Administration. It also chaired the BRICS partnership twice in 2013 and 2018 respectively. One positive aspect of Zuma's legacy lies in the prominent partnerships built during his tenure.

The 2008 Global financial crisis necessitated a search for additional influential partnerships. In 2010, South Africa became a member of the prestigious BRICS bloc. By channelling the BRIC countries participation on the continent through an institutionalised framework specifically dedicated to Africa, South Africa began assumed the role of interlocutor and gateway to Africa by championing African infrastructure development. Achievements include the establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and African Regional Centre (ARC), which promises to create more opportunities for investment, trade, and development on the continent (Mpungose 2018, Prinsloo 2018). However, its membership as the sole African member has raised consternation amongst its African peers, once again questioning South Africa's credibility and legitimacy to represent the Continent. Makgetlaneng (2014:168) claims that there is fear that South Africa is being used by its BRICS partners to further their strategic interests on the continent but attributes the fear to be emanating from old colonial powers more concerned about losing dominance in their former colonies.

b) North- South Cooperation

South Africa has also actively engaged the North in an effort to forge new partnerships for African development. Since 2008, it has been a representative of Africa at G8 Summits and played a pivotal role in the G8/Africa Outreach, where it actively lobbied for a G8 African Plan the adoption of the Africa Action Plan and the establishment of the Africa-Partnership Forum which took place at the 2003 Evian Summit (South Africa, The Twenty-Year Review 2014). As the sole African representative in the G20 Grouping, it has carved a niche for African diplomacy by shaping the Africa Compact, which guides engagement and channels resources to the continent. During the 2018 G20 Investment Summit in Germany, President Ramaphosa called

the Africa Compact an initiative to accelerate Africa's economic development by supporting the implementation of Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. It cannot be denied that South Africa has been skilful in seeking new avenues to profile Africa, however, strong sentiment exists that South Africa advances its own interests through partnerships. According to the Centre for Conflict Resolution's 2016 Policy Research Report, "South Africa rhetorically uses these platforms to promote Africa's voice while pursuing its own more parochial interests ... the extent to which the interests of the BRICS countries in Africa converge with the continent's own interests remains uncertain" (cited in Daniel & Nagar 2016:27).

6.4.5 Business and South African Private Sector

Non-state actors play dominant diplomatic roles and have assumed greater responsibilities in areas that were previously within the sole purview of states (Ogunnubi & Amao 2015 and Ogunnubi & Tella 2017). South African businesses are highly visible and respected across the continent. There are more than 150 South African companies in Nigeria alone. Keenly aware of the importance of soft power attributes, Chris Landsberg, Chair of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) in African Diplomacy (2016:1), claimed that South Africa could achieve a "tremendous amount through soft power and diplomacy".¹³ Persuasion, rather than force, would help South Africa gain ground on the continent and benefit from building cooperation and good relations with other African nations. According to the 2017 Forbes Global 2000 list¹⁴, South Africa features in the top 9 African companies. SASOL tops the list followed by MTN Group, Shoprite Holdings, Bidcorp, Standard Bank Group, FirstRand, Naspers, SANLAM and MMI Holdings. Dominating local industries, South Africa has been accused of pursuing narrow selfish interests and behaving in an exploitative manner¹⁵. Seeking to stem resentment and hostility amongst African elites, Landsberg (2016) cautioned, 'South African corporations need to be more sensitive to other African regions. Corporate South Africa has paid heed and have undertaken efforts to manage its engagement with local industries. While South Africa's growing corporate footprint is feted as a soft power success, if not managed sensitively, it can also drive African hostility and resentment towards South Africa.

6.4.6 Cultural Prowess

Soft power can be based on resources like the culture of a nation and its norms and values (Grant & Keohane 2005). Its power lies in the ability to change the behaviour of others. South

¹³ See article "The impact, profile and reputation of South Africa on the continent" (15 March 2016). Available from <http://www.brandsouthafrica.com>

¹⁴ Available at <https://africa.businesschief.com/top10/3629/Top-10-biggest-African-companies>

¹⁵ Quotation in a Brand SA article published 24 March 2016. Available at <http://www.brandsouthafrica.com>

Africa's soft power reach is not limited to its corporate footprint but also through the entertainment medium of satellite television and social media. This helps to shape the narrative, content, perception and reputation South Africa wishes to project in Africa. South Africa's soft power portfolio includes hosting several sporting and international events, which have raised the profile of the country and continent. Most notable was the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Cup of Nations, successive Cricket World Cup matches, Indian Premier League (IPL) Games and the 2010 International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup. It hosted, amongst others, the 17th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) on Climate Change in 2011 and the BRICS Summit in 2013 and 2018 respectively (Tella 2018). It also won the co-bid to host the Square Kilometre Array Telescope (SKA), which boosts the scientific and technological capacity of African countries. While these achievements are testament of South Africa's soft power prowess, they are not always embraced by all states and can lead to greater resentment. Ogunnubi and Amao (2016:300) suggest that "South Africa address polemic soft power ambivalences by correcting misinterpreted continental hegemonic aspirations".

6.4.7 Waning Soft Power

Of late, South Africa's soft power seems to be waning and this can be attributed to a number of factors such as economic decline, failure to manage its domestic issues, endemic corruption; rise in crime and xenophobic violence; increased regional competition with the rise of the African Lions (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda); its mixed voting record in the Human Rights Council and the decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC). While some of these impediments predate the Zuma years, his administration has been accused of weakening South Africa's influence across Africa. Tella (2018) argues that the crisis in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe worsened during the Zuma years with Swaziland opting to take an IMF loan rather than solicit help from South Africa. It also increasingly lost influence at the AU. Despite protestations, Morocco returned to the AU fold and failure its preferred candidate to replace the outgoing South African Chairperson of the AUC was unsuccessful. Its proposal for African states to withdraw from the ICC also failed to muster sufficient support (Tella 2018).

Constant deferral of controversial cases (Myanmar and Zimbabwe) during its last UNSC tenure, protection of fellow African governments over upholding human rights, backtracking on its decision on Resolution 1973 and denying a visa to the Dalai Lama have cost South Africa much of its credibility on the world stage (Van der Westhuizen 2009:2-4). Pressure to conform to both African and western norms, regional sentiments and uphold African traditions have contributed to its waning moral authority, loss of credibility, confidence and legitimacy both on the continental and global stage. The steady decline of South Africa's soft power robs it of any

facade of perceived hegemonic power and its ability to convince, cajole, let alone, coerce African states is practically non-existent. The lack of capacity to lead or enforce rules renders the state powerless and unsuitable to even hold the title of a pseudo hegemon. Negative image and reputational damage overshadow South Africa's soft power attributes and undermine its credibility and influence on the continent. Thus, soft power fails to be a sufficient condition to describe South Africa as a regional hegemon.

The South African government has acknowledged the decline of its power and loss of influence in regional and global affairs. In her maiden budget vote speech (May 2018), the former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu lamented that South Africa was once a giant in the world and its reputation was well known because of what it represented. The Minister implored that the country had a responsibility to regain the stature bequeathed by former President Mandela. In seeking to reclaim its status, DIRCO is undertaking a review of its foreign policy in order to address failed expectations and reverse missed opportunities in a fast-evolving global landscape. The objective is to create a more fit-for-purpose foreign policy that is relevant, strategic and responsive. As Tella (2017:116) aptly stated "Prestige, respect, attraction and admiration matter", South Africa needs to delve deeper to counter negative images by adopting a stronger stance on corruption, violent crime and xenophobia against African foreigners in addition to addressing inherent contradictions in its foreign policy.

6.4.8 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the interplay between all three factors contribute towards defining and understanding South Africa's role as a regional hegemon on the continent. Bound by the collectivist vision of the continent, South Africa's agency is thus limited and stripped of any hegemonic dispensation and attribution. The paper also demonstrated that much of South Africa's claim to leadership rests on the laurels of its soft power prowess in cultivating relations with countries from the North and South, hosting prestigious sporting events, its sophisticated infrastructure and business networks and iconic leaders such as Nelson Mandela. Using the aforementioned attributes, South Africa has leveraged its status to play a pivotal role on the continent. However, despite South Africa's regional status hinging on its vast repositories of soft power, it also fails to be a sufficient condition for hegemony on the continent.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a global theory formulated to describe a dominant state in the international system, the Hegemonic Stability Theory has limitations when viewed in relation to regional dynamics. The absence of regional contextual factors fails to provide a comprehensive analysis and understanding of how regional hegemony is practiced.

The interplay between the examined contextual factors and Africa-specific factors were found to have a significant impact on how hegemony should be understood and how the concept finds expression in the African region. These dynamics were demonstrated through an examination of scholarship related to South Africa's perceived status as a regional hegemon. The research produced the following insights that enrich and nuance the understanding of hegemony and its regional application in the African context.

The historical experience of the continent plays an important role in constraining hegemonic ambitions of powerful African countries. Shared memories of slavery and colonialism by western powers make African states naturally fearful of domination by another state. In South Africa's case, residual fears of domination, aggression, hostility and destabilisation caused by its Apartheid legacy perpetuate hostile notions of the state and prevent loyal secondary followership on the continent. Western adulation and recognition of South Africa as the regional hegemon raise suspicions of South Africa's motives and heighten perceptions of it being a western proxy. This has led South Africa to deliberately eschew the role of a regional hegemon to allay fears of domination and mistrust borne out of prejudiced perceptions and historical sensitivities. The continent's brutal colonial legacy has also eroded hard power as a vaunted attribute of leadership and explains why a preponderant power like South Africa has struggled to convert its material power into political power.

Secondly, the dissertation found that hegemony goes against the spirit of pan-Africanism, which rejects power as a basis for international relations and frowns upon the use of unilateral force. The tenets of Pan-Africanism, underpinned by African Renaissance and incorporating the values of African Solidarity and African Solutions for African Problems, make it difficult for African military and economic powers to use their power to dominate other African countries. Strong cultural and ideological convictions push African countries towards group unity and solidarity, which strip them of any hegemonic ambition, disposition or projection through force. Punishment and ostracism subject African states to the influence of the broader norms and values of the continent and limit dominant behaviour.

The paper also found that dependency on the international economic system and structural domestic issues undermine an African regional hegemon's political power and limit long-term capabilities. In the case of South Africa, its failure to adequately address deeply embedded social and structural inequalities limits hegemonic projection and the ability to contribute to the public regional good as finite resources need to be redirected to domestic problems. A high crime rate, damaging corruption scandals, economic decline and a spate of xenophobic attacks on African foreigners have led to increased international scrutiny, resulting in reputational damage and loss of confidence in the country's ability to lead the continent. Africa's dependence on global markets, vulnerability to external shocks and exposure to competition with more powerful global actors on the African continent were also identified as constraints to South Africa's power and influence. This is in sharp contrast to a global hegemon, which is identified as the most powerful state in its sphere of influence.

The paper also found that in spite of numerous constraints, regional powers do play strong leadership roles, which resemble the behaviour of global hegemons. In South Africa's case, it contributed towards the creation of a peaceful and stable continent through an active peace and security diplomacy and the establishment of pan-African governance organisations. It used its influence, moral currency and social recognition as a regional hegemon to act as an interlocutor between the continent and the international community to ensure that African issues are given prominence on the global agenda. While its soft power prowess placed it in an influential position, it has also had the converse effect of breeding resentment and hostility from other African countries competing for international recognition and influence.

The examined contextual factors rooted in the history of the continent and South Africa thus combine to create powerful structural forces that impede the operation of hegemony in the manner envisioned by Hegemonic Stability Theory. This environment does not facilitate optimum conditions for the practice of hegemony as traditionally conceived. Africa's location in global political hierarchy pushes it towards cooperative governance, regional integration and consensus as opposed to individualism and utilisation of hard power. The confluence of the historical legacy of the continent, African values promoting collectivism, its vulnerable position *vis-a-vis* the international global system, dwindling hard power and diminishing soft power credentials make it difficult for South Africa to take up the role of regional hegemon.

This dissertation has demonstrated the impact of current theoretical limitations on hegemonic studies in the regional sphere. This has been reflected in scholarship that examined South Africa's perceived role as a regional hegemon and the wide array of contestation in the produced findings, in this area of study. It also reflects the fact that 'hegemony' itself is a

contested concept with findings being heavily dependent on contextual factors, nuance and the clarity of the parameters of enquiry. It is likely that other studies might reveal similar constraints and limitations with regard to other regional powers in Africa such as Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya with regard to hegemony, due to the identified limitations and constraints.

Drawing on Africanist intellectual traditions and breaking free of the constraints imposed by euro-centric and limited theoretical constructs to mitigate the identified limitations provide an enriched perspective on existing concepts that could contribute to a better understanding of the region. An enriched understanding and interpretation of theories and concepts used in international relations studies provide researchers and policymakers with enhanced theoretical tools that might produce results that better reflect the African reality.

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