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Kenya's Emerging Global Profile: Between aspirations and prospects,

by,

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at the,

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Political Science Department,

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Declarations

I Dr. Gatama Joseph Gichini, student number 16363826, declare that the study on “Kenya’s Emerging Global Profile: Between aspirations and prospects” is my original individual work and that it was never put forward before either to the University of Pretoria or at any University.

All the sources used or quoted have been acknowledged by the means of comprehensive references.

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Ethical Clearance Certificate



Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

21 November 2018

Dear Mr Gichini

Project: Kenya's emerging global profile: Between aspirations and prospects
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Thank you for your response to the Committee's correspondence.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 21 November 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

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Abstract

Kenya is increasingly gaining a global profile. Over the last four years, the country has played host to a number of global leaders and has hosted a number of global events. This emerging global prominence, underpinned by an active foreign policy, is however occurring within a context of internal and external challenges and opportunities. Internal challenges such as high levels of government corruption and terrorist attacks have undermined both the global reputation and the economy of the country. Apart from the internal challenges, neighbouring states such as Ethiopia pose a threat to Kenya's hegemonic aspirations. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, this study seeks to better understand Kenya's emerging global profile, and the foreign policy drivers that underpin it.

The argument presented in this study is that given the shifting regional context, Kenya's increasing global profile is driven by a foreign policy, which is geared towards hegemonic ambitions within the Eastern African region. The study therefore operationalizes the contested concept of regional hegemony to understand whether Kenya is laying claims to be a regional hegemon in Eastern Africa or not. It is important that the study uses a context-specific and relevant conceptualisation of a regional hegemon in Africa. This is because of Africa's marginalization within the global power architecture and the different regional dynamics, which vary from one region to another within Africa.

In the Eastern African Region, no single state possesses the power preponderance relative to global powers. However, power differentials among states in the region produce political, economic, and security dynamics that are separate from the international system. This subsequently qualifies the Eastern African Region as a sub-region, which requires its own analysis. The study however does not assert that Kenya is a regional hegemon in the Eastern Africa region. It rather seeks to establish whether the country is laying claim to



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hegemonic aspirations, its potential role and credentials, and whether the role claimed, and credentials displayed are consistent with this status.

328 Words

Key words: foreign policy, Kenya's hegemonic aspirations, Eastern African region, regional hegemony, global powers and international system

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God Bless You All.



List of Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
EAC	East African Community
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KDF	Kenya Defence Force
LAPSSET	Lamu Port and Lamu-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor
UK	United Kingdom
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
USA	United States of America



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Kenya's Growing Global Profile

Over the last four years, Kenya has gained a global profile on account of the country's active foreign policy. The country has played host to several global leaders and many high profile global events. These have included the visit by the Pope in 2015, the hosting of the World Trade Organization Summit, the Global Partnership for Economic Development in 2015, the hosting of the 2016 Tokyo international conference, as well as the State visit by Barrack Obama in 2016. These global events and high-level visits have elevated Kenya's profile as an influential state in the Eastern African region. They are also important for the Kenyan government because they tend to legitimise it given the various internal challenges not least of which have been: contested elections, insecurity and corruption at the governmental level. The hosting of these events can also be seen as an indication of the country's lobbying skills, diplomatic influence, and its active foreign policy since the coming to power of the Kenyatta regime in general, and particularly the introduction of the 2015 Foreign Policy Framework. Since coming to power in 2013, President Kenyatta has maintained an active foreign policy based on bilateral engagement. As a result, many Kenyans refer to him as the "Travelling President".

In addition to its growing diplomatic status, Kenya remains one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The rebasing of the country's GDP in 2014, in particular, made Kenya a low middle-income country.¹ Kenya has also massively invested in mega infrastructure projects in line with its vision 2030 of transforming Kenya into an industrializing middle-income country. Kenya's growing global prominence occurs at a time when it has an officially written foreign policy document.² This is the first time since independence that Kenya

¹This increases the country's profile amongst investors and development partners. See: The Standard.2014b.

² Republic of Kenya.2014.

has developed a foreign policy framework with a view to achieve its interests coherently and strategically. Before 2013, Kenya lacked a coherent and articulate foreign policy to guide its relations with other states and to prioritize its interests. Traditionally, Kenya's foreign policy was largely characterized by a reluctance to be a regional actor. It focused on domestic concerns and was inconsistent in attempts to convert the country's material and ideational power into regional hegemonic influence.³ The launch of *Operation Linda Nchi* in 2011, under which Kenyan defence forces were deployed to Somalia to fight Al-Shabaab extremism, illustrates this departure from an ambivalent role to a more robust engagement in regional and global security issues. The development of the foreign policy document is therefore an indication of the country's desire for greater diplomatic engagement regionally and globally.⁴

These diplomatic and economic milestones are however occurring at a time when the country is experiencing a variety of internal and external challenges. For example, corruption cases involving high-ranking government officials highlight the country's governance challenges. Terrorist attacks by the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab have also had a negative effect on the economy and specifically the tourism sector. Additionally, the International Criminal Court (ICC) cases from 2010 against President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto resulted in strained domestic and foreign relations with various Western governments, and especially its traditional diplomatic partners such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). This is because most western envoys demanded accountability for the crimes committed during the postelection violence, which implied tacit support for the ICC cases against President Kenyatta and his co-accused.

³Kisiangani.2016. p.5

⁴The document provides the policy context as well as the fundamentals of Kenya's foreign policy. The document outlines the country's philosophy, values, guiding principles, objectives, priorities and instruments. For a list of these, see Republic of Kenya.2014, pp.16-20.

In addition, countries such as Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania are increasingly challenging Kenya's influence in the region. Ethiopia's economy, for example, overtook Kenya's economy in 2016. Tanzania is also projected to unseat Kenya as the top economy in East Africa.⁵ Moreover, Rwanda and Uganda opted to reroute a regional railway line and oil pipeline respectively through Tanzania instead of Kenya. This has threatened to undermine Kenya's regional influence because rerouting the railway pipeline would mean that Kenya would lose its current status as the region's transportation and commercial hub.⁶

An appreciation of Kenya's response in the face of these challenges, and the extent to which these responses are inspired by ambitions for regional hegemony, is worth examining. It is worth doing in order to contextually ground the notion of a regional hegemon and its analytical utility for approaching regional dynamics of cooperation and competition in Africa. Additionally, such an examination would reveal Kenya's hegemonic position relative to other states in the region that challenge the country's influence. It is therefore important to understand these challenges in order to understand what challenges these pose to Kenya's hegemonic prospects. It is important to understand whether the country is employing its foreign policy instruments to shape its influence in the region and whether this is informed by the desire to preserve and expand its prospects as a possible regional hegemon. It is important to do this because Kenya is often perceived as a regional player that can influence regional affairs. Yet, there is often a gap between these expectations and Kenya's actual achievements.

Much of the analysis of regional hegemons in Africa has focused on Nigeria and South Africa. This is due to the two countries' willingness to project their power, provide various resources to the region and their own self-perceptions

⁵The rankings of these economies are based on comparative GDP figures

⁶Achuka.2016.

as regional hegemons although this is sometimes contested.⁷ There is therefore a dearth of literature which examines the prospects for other countries in Africa, such as Kenya, to be potential regional hegemons. While the focus in the literature has largely been on the regional level (continental Africa) when analysing South Africa and Nigeria's potential hegemony,⁸ there is less focus in the literature at the sub-regional level. This is because much of the analysis on regional hegemons focuses on power (military and economic) at the global and regional level. The sub-level is therefore largely seen as overlaid by powerful states at the regional and global levels and thus bereft of its own regional dynamics (in this case hard power). What this ignores is that Africa in particular has a variety of sub regions that manifest different economic, cultural, and political dynamics that are variable across the different sub regions, namely Southern Africa, Northern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and Eastern Africa (Horn of Africa).

As a result, the focus has largely been on continental hegemons. This ignores the need to identify a contextually applicable definition of regional hegemons. Hence, it is first necessary to identify a contextually applicable definition that, first, is relevant to the dynamics in Africa, which are separate from the international level. This is because the structural causes and impacts of conflicts and large-scale insecurities in countries in Africa are largely internal and their effects are often removed from global security dynamics. Second, the definition needs to be applicable to the different sub-regional dynamics in Africa. This is because, the structural causes and drivers of conflicts differ from each sub-region in Africa. For example, racial inequalities as a structural cause and driver of conflicts in Southern Africa are non-existent in West Africa. Subsequently, the impacts of these conflicts are felt largely within the particular sub-region as opposed to the neighbouring sub-region.

⁷ See for example: Adebajo & Landberbeg, 1996.; Bach, 2007.

⁸ In this cases, Nigeria and South Africa potential hegemons in Africa see for example: Alden & Le Pere, 2009.; Alden & Schoeman, 2015. Odigbo et al. 2014.; Warner, 2016.

This is because the geographical distance between sub-regions in Africa is so expansive that it produces separate dynamics between sub-regions.

This study therefore seeks to widen the empirical foundation for the study of regional hegemony in Africa by examining Kenya's foreign policy behaviour between 2013 and 2017. This is in order to determine whether this behaviour can be considered hegemonic as per the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of regional hegemony provided in chapter two of this study. It is important to do this because Africa manifests different sub-regions with their own security, political and economic dynamics. This means that one needs to be flexible in the application of the concept of regional hegemon in Africa. Flexibility in this case is defined by and delimited to the separate dynamics that manifests in the particular sub-region in Africa that is the object of analysis. This is as opposed to transplanting the concept of hegemon as it is applied at the global level in the hope that the concept will travel well in any region in the world. By using a contextually flexible definition of a regional hegemon, it is possible to explore whether Kenya satisfies the various dimensions of a regional hegemon. This will also tell us something about the country's hegemonic prospects. This study also examines the challenges which the country faces with these hegemonic aspirations given the current political, security and economic shifts in the Eastern African region.

This study nuances the largely Eurocentric concept of regional hegemon that is limited in its application to Africa. This is because Africa remains at the margins of global power structures to which the concept is applicable. No single African country commands considerable material preponderance to contest global powers. The continent therefore lacks a regional hegemon that can articulate and shape African interests at the global level and to take leadership on the myriad security and development challenges confronting the continent. An application of the concept of hegemon in Africa therefore requires more modest estimations of African states' power and contextual specificity to

African regions. Given the different security, economic, and political dynamics in the various sub-regions in Africa, this study seeks to provide a contextually relevant application of regional hegemon at the sub-regional level in the Eastern Africa region. This will allow one to examine Kenya's hegemonic ambitions and prospects.

This study argues that Kenya's recent attempt at developing a global profile is driven by an active foreign policy is an indication of the country's hegemonic ambitions within the Eastern African Region. Given the often narrow conception of hegemony as currently applied at the global and regional levels, this may not always be perceived as such. The study therefore seeks to test the above proposition by examining how Kenya utilizes its foreign policy towards this end. To be certain, this study does not make the bold assertion that Kenya is a regional hegemon. The study instead seeks to assess whether the country's recent foreign policy actions are an indication of its hegemonic aspirations. It does this by examining Kenya's hegemonic prospects using four dimensions.⁹ These are: perception, including self-perception and acceptance of the influence asserted by Kenya in the region; projection of Kenya's vision, interests, and agenda in the region through various activities such as regional conflict mediation and financial assistance; and provision of various public goods such as regional infrastructural projects. It does this in order to also examine the challenges which other countries in the region pose to Kenya's potential to be a regional hegemon.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study has two broad objectives. The first objective is to analyse Kenya's foreign policy in the security, economic, and political domains so as to analyse how the country responds to the various internal and external

⁹ These three dimensions are developed by Prys Mariam, see Prys.2007.

challenges. This will allow one to understand whether these responses are driven by Kenya's aspirations to be a regional hegemon. The second objective is to examine the responses by neighbouring states to Kenya's hegemonic ambitions. It does this by interrogating how the current regional economic and security dynamics constitute a challenge to Kenya's hegemonic aspirations, as the country struggles to maintain its economic leadership in the region and increase its visibility in the regional security agenda.

1.2 Research Statement

This study argues that Kenya's recent global profile is driven by foreign policy strategic reasons that point towards its hegemonic ambitions. However, various internal and external challenges impede the country's attempts at realising these hegemonic ambitions.

1.2.1 Core Question

- ✓ How do Kenya's foreign policy priorities, objectives, and behaviour in areas of regional security and economy point towards the country's hegemonic aspirations?

1.2.2 Operational Questions

- ✓ How have the various internal challenges in Kenya impacted its foreign policy towards potential hegemonic aspirations?
- ✓ How does the increasing assertiveness of neighbouring countries in areas of regional economy and security impact on Kenya's potential to be a regional hegemon?

1.2.3 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research strategy is suitable for this study because it allows for an in-depth examination of Kenya's hegemonic prospects, given the variety of external and internal challenges. It enables the researcher to interpret and construct social reality by examining, for example, how a hegemon projects its power in a region in pursuit of its interests, and how this is perceived by neighbouring states.¹⁰ A qualitative approach therefore lends itself to the analysis of Kenya's hegemonic prospects and aspirations because it emphasises the specificity of the context of the study (in this case, the Eastern Africa region as a sub-region with its own specific and separate regional dynamics that are not overlaid by great power politics). It provides a detailed analysis of the rationale behind Kenya's foreign policy behaviour. It also allows for a richer understanding of the economic, political, and security relations in the Eastern African region and the challenges these pose to Kenya's hegemonic aspirations and prospects.

The study uses a case study design for data analysis.¹¹ A case study is an 'empirical inquiry that examines a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within a social context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'.¹² A case study approach allows the study to use a variety of primary and secondary sources so as to provide empirical evidence of Kenya's hegemonic prospects and aspirations within a shifting regional context. These shifts manifest in changes of influence that is wielded by relative powers in the sub-region; the changing economic relations, and the changing ability of potential hegemons to provide regional security goods in the face of the security threats in the region. The approach allows the study to assess Kenya's role and influence in the region by

¹⁰ Macdonald, & Headlam, (N.d.).

¹¹ Yin.2009.p.18

¹²Ibid.

examining its security and economic relations with its peers in order to understand its hegemonic prospects. Delimiting the case to Kenya's security and economic relations with its Eastern African neighbours defines the scope for analysis. It also allows the study to assess Kenya's strength as a potential hegemon relative to secondary states.

Kenya's hegemonic potential is relative to the material preponderance and power capabilities of its secondary states and the challenge that these states pose to its hegemonic claim. The study examines Kenya's security and economic relations with its peers in the region defined as Eastern Africa.¹³ It does this by examining Kenya's provision of regional security goods such as mediation processes, military interventions in Eastern Africa in the maintenance of regional peace and security; and its economic strength relative to secondary states. This involves the review and analysis of various sources of secondary data, including newspaper articles, academic journals, and Kenya's government policy documents, especially its foreign policy document and strategic plan. These documents contain data on how Kenya is seeking to influence regional relations and how countries in the region are challenging this. They provide information, which can be used to assess whether the country is shaping its foreign policy to influence security events and economic relations in the region towards potential hegemonic aspirations.

In particular, given the contemporary nature of the topic, the study uses newspaper reports from media houses in Kenya; for example, the Daily Nation, the East African and the Standard. These newspaper articles record and analyse events in Kenya and in the region that have an impact on Kenya's hegemonic prospects as sources of empirical data. These newspaper reports also capture statements from various government officials on Kenya's foreign policy and relations in the region. These newspaper articles serve as useful

¹³The region includes Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi and Kenya.

sources of empirical data. The study is temporally demarcated over the period 2013 and 2017 because it reflects Kenya's emerging global profile.

1.2.4 Study's Outline

Following this introductory chapter, this study is structured into five chapters. The second chapter provides a conceptual review of a regional hegemon. It does this in order to arrive at an eclectic approach to the study of sub regions in Africa, given that powerful states in Africa don't qualify as 'hegemons' if analysed using the largely Eurocentric concept of hegemony. The third chapter examines the various internal economic, security, and political challenges in Kenya, and how these have impacted its foreign policy. To illustrate this, the chapter examines the ICC cases involving Kenya at The Hague, the country's efforts to influence AU position on the ICC, and the challenge posed by terrorism emanating from Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks.

The rationale for the choice of these units of analysis is their direct bearing on the foreign relations of the country either because they involve external institutions in the form of the ICC and AU, or because the source of these challenges is mainly external such as Al-Shabaab that cannot be tackled through a domestic policy only. The fourth chapter analyses the growing economic and political profiles of Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia and how these constitute threats to Kenya's hegemonic ambition. The last chapter concludes the study by analysing the findings from the case chapters in order to determine whether Kenya's foreign policy point towards hegemonic aspirations.

Chapter 2: Regional Hegemony: Conceptual and Theoretical Review of the Literature

2.0 Regional Hegemony: A Contested Concept

Analysing regional hegemony is a complex undertaking not least because there is no consensus in the scholarly literature on the definition and meaning of the concept. The constitutive features, elements, and characteristics of regional hegemony are contested by a variety of scholars. A review of the literature on hegemonic states reveals several themes. First, the concept of a regional hegemon is used interchangeably with concepts such as empire, leadership, and regional powers with little attempt to make the distinction among the concepts as a framework for examining the behaviour and roles of powerful states in regional and global politics.¹⁴ For example, a hegemon is conventionally defined as a great power that exercises dominance over the international system.¹⁵

Despite this conflation of concepts, there exist differences in meaning and features among these concepts. The concept empire for example denotes a state that dominates due to its material preponderance and which pursues a unilateral approach in pursuit of its national interests through coercion and if necessary, military force.¹⁶ Some scholars such as Wallerstein and Lake conflate empire with a hegemon arguing that the latter is coercive and pursues its own goals through the exercise of power.¹⁷ However, a common dimension that differentiates an empire from a hegemon is that the empire uses military power in the pursuit of unilateral goals implying a substantial limitation of the sovereignty of the less powerful states.¹⁸ In contrast, a hegemon does not necessarily use domination like an empire to achieve its interests.

¹⁴ Sandram.2008.

¹⁵ Antoniadis.2008.p.1

¹⁶ Sandram.2008.p.8

¹⁷ Wallerstein.1984 p.38; Lake.1993. p.469

¹⁸ Sandram.2008.p.8

Second, a hegemon is also defined by distinguishing concepts such as great power and middle power from one another. For example, a hegemon is defined as a regional great power that is different from a middle power because it is able to influence not only regional politics but also global political spaces.¹⁹ The sphere of influence of a middle power in contrast is limited to the regional space and not global processes. Prys differentiates between a regional hegemon and a regional power by arguing that the indicator for the former lies in its ability to convert its material preponderance into the provision of certain public goods such as economic services and maintenance of peace and security in the region in order to achieve its interests.²⁰ Additionally, Burges defines a regional hegemon as a form of leadership that is different from domination in that leadership implies a consensual approach and acceptance of the predominant state's vision and ideas in the creation of the system.²¹ Domination in this case implies coercion while leadership involves ideas or vision that a predominant state seeks to create and which is based on the consent of other states.

Third, scholars conflate concepts such as empire, great power, and pivotal states but add a few more features that distinguish these concepts from a regional hegemon. For example, Habib equates a hegemon to a pivotal state but argues that unlike a pivotal state, a hegemon provides leadership in articulating a vision (security, economic, political, and development) for the region and a political willingness to underwrite that vision.²² A pivotal state on the other hand is caught up in the middle of great power configurations and its influence revolves around the politics of great powers. This conflation of regional hegemon with similar concepts such as empire underscores "a general lack of analytical instruments to identify and to compare regional powers and

¹⁹Neumann.1992.p.12

²⁰Prys.2010.p.10

²¹ Burges.2008.p.70

²² Habib.2009.

to differentiate regional powers from great powers and middle powers”.²³ This conflation is problematic because when transposed to different regions or sub-regions, these concepts do not travel well. This is because they are limited to the global level and to the measurement of would be hegemon from the dimension of their ability to project their power at the global level. They adopt universal analytical frameworks that lack the nuances and specificities of the different regions globally.

This conceptual ambiguity is in part due to the restrictive nature of the level of analysis by which a hegemon is defined, which is mainly at the global and regional (continental) levels. The focus is largely limited to the analysis of capabilities and behaviours of the US as a hegemon towards other regions. For example, the hegemonic stability theory²⁴ seeks to analyse the behaviour, role, and importance of dominant states such as the US in promoting stability at the international level.²⁵ According to this theory, the hegemon is involved in rule-making and the establishment of institutions that guarantee the status of the state and its interests as a hegemon. The need and importance of the hegemon lies in its ability to deploy its material preponderance and power capabilities, namely economic and military strength, to maintain the stability of the international system by establishing and enforcing the rules of engagement among members at the international level.²⁶ This analysis assumes anarchy at the international level because there is no single authority that can impose the rules of interactions among a set of powerful states.

This restriction in the analysis of the hegemon to the global and continental levels poses a problem when transposing the concept to a narrow sub-regional arrangement. This is because much of the analysis focuses on the

²³Nolte.2010. p.883

²⁴Charles P. Kindleberger is regarded as the father of the theory.

²⁵ According to this theory, stability at the international level is a collective good. As such, in order to maintain this stability, there is need for a dominant state that can establish the rules for international relations. See for example: Keohane.1984.

²⁶ Ogunnubi.2016.

power that a hegemon wields at the global and regional level. This is due to the traditional focus of analysis on hard power relations among a group of western states at the global level. However, at the sub-regional level, power is slightly dispersed, and therefore the concept offers limited utility as the only dimension to assess a regional hegemon. The focus on regional hegemons at the international level emphasizes a top down approach as the entry point for the manifestation of hegemony. This has limited relevance for analysing a sub-regional level and the dynamics of contestation and cooperation at this level. The focus at the international level is largely on power understood as economic and military capabilities. The sub-region however, manifests its own dynamics that are separate and autonomous from the power configurations of the hegemons at the international level.

Studies that examine regional hegemons in developing countries such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Nigeria²⁷ have refined the concept of hegemon in such a way that is more applicable to the regional level. These studies are motivated by a desire to understand how emerging predominant powers are shaping the direction of particular regional spaces. These studies view regional hegemons in terms of influence over, and leadership of, a limited set of countries embodied in the regional system and how the region interacts with other regional subsystems. As useful as this is in mending the shortcomings of the top down approach to the study of hegemons, it falls short of acknowledging contextual variations since it approaches regions through similar lenses. This is problematic due to the fact that the context and content of regions differ significantly from region to region. For example, Africa has different sub-regions that manifest different political, economic, and security dynamics. The peculiarities and particularities of different regions are not captured by these universal approaches to the study of regional hegemons.

²⁷ See for example: Burges.2008.; Alden &Schoeman.2015.; Odigbo et al.2014.; Ayoob.1991.

Another weakness in the study of hegemony is the tendency to focus on power. The emphasis on power at the international level underscores the prevalence of top-down lenses. In security studies, for example, great powers, regional powers, or the influence of the former on the latter are seen as central to the establishment of regional security orders and security communities.²⁸ The focus on power therefore centres on the projection of power by the preponderant state within its sphere of influence. These studies are driven by the desire to understand power considerations at the international level in the establishment of a regional hegemon. For example, Lemke uses power analysis to define a regional hegemon as a local dominant state overseeing local relations by establishing and striving to preserve a local status quo”.²⁹

Despite the focus on power, there is a lack of consensus on the type or form of power that the dominant states wield in the exercise of hegemony internationally. Power in most analyses is explained as the use of force.³⁰ Power in this case is determined by a combination of military and economic strength relative to other states in the region. A combination of wealth and power allows hegemony to provide a degree of stability in the region by providing incentives for actors, thus maintaining the status quo and constraints against those that seek to challenge it (hegemonic stability theory).³¹ Hegemony is having the power and capability to set and change the rules of the international system in order to achieve one’s goals and interests.³² However, the material preponderance and power capabilities of a state are an insufficient source of coercive power for the acceptance of hegemony by neighbouring states.³³

²⁸ See for example: Frazier & Stewart-Ingersoll.2010.; Buzan & Waever.200.3; Lake & Morgan. 1997.

²⁹Lemke.2002. p.49.

³⁰ Yilmaz.2010. p.165.

³¹ Warner.2016. p.7

³²Yilmaz.2010.p.195.

³³ Prys.2007. p.11

In contrast, Gramscian notions of hegemony centre on power that is not only dependent on force (hard power) but also on consent (soft power). This soft power approach includes the capacity and strength to persuade other states through ideas to realize the desired goals, rules, and norms at the international level.³⁴ This means that one state can realize its interests through the diffusion of ideas and ideals that render the other states' acting otherwise unthinkable. The very notion of what constitutes national interests and how to pursue them is to an extent determined by the identity of actors composing the state. Hence, these ideational factors need to be brought to the fore in the study of regional hegemons. Other scholars argue that the power of the hegemonic state arises both from the strength to persuade and force secondary states to realise the desired goals, rules, and norms at the international level.³⁵

2.1 Meaning and Measure of Hegemon

At one level, the concept of a hegemon can be approached in terms of nature and means. The nature of a hegemon refers to the strategies that the hegemon uses to pursue its goals which fall along the benevolence and coercion continuum.³⁶ The means of a hegemon include the instruments that the hegemon employs to exercise its power and influence, namely material power, resources, or ideational factors.³⁷ For example, a benevolent hegemon refers to a preponderant state that provides resources in order to stabilize and bring order at the international level.³⁸ Whether the hegemony is benevolent or coercive, the common element is that the hegemon provides public goods for its own national interests.³⁹

³⁴ Yilmaz.2010. p.195.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Sandram.2008.p.11

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. p.12.

Ideational and material power resource debates centre on the type of power resources employed in the exercise of hegemony. These includes norms, values, and material incentives. In this case, a hegemon relies on both the deployment of material and ideational resources in order to gain consensus from the subject states.⁴⁰ A hegemon pursues self-interests which are presented to the subject states as common goals.⁴¹ Though this literature approaches self-interest in terms of what is desired by the hegemonic state, it does not necessarily follow that what is in the interests of the hegemonic state is contrary the interests of other states subject to its influence. The hegemon uses a variety of strategies to realise its goals, including coercion, exercise of political pressure, or imposition of sanctions; provision of material rewards and benefits (including values) or side payments; or through ideological persuasion.⁴² For example, cooperative hegemons are powerful states that employ non-coercive means such as use of side payments, and power sharing as a strategy for cooperation in pursuit of regional institutionalization.⁴³

While the elements and features that constitute a hegemon can be contested, there is a common agreement on certain common features. Prys identifies three factors that are important in determining the constitutive elements of a regional hegemon.⁴⁴ These are provision of regional public goods, projection of the regional power's values and interests, and its self-perception and perception by others. Prys argues that these factors are interdependent and all of them are necessary and jointly sufficient to determine a regional hegemon. The provision of certain public goods includes maintenance of regional peace and security, which are context specific to the particular regional system. The logic is that since the status quo benefits the regional

⁴⁰ Ibid.p.14

⁴¹ Ibid. p.14

⁴²Ibid.pp.15-18

⁴³ Pedersen.2002.

⁴⁴ Prys.2007.

hegemon, it expends extra resources and efforts to maintain the regional system even when this is costly in the short term.

The projection of values and interests is a defining feature of a regional hegemon which differentiates it from domination. The projection of values occurs through regional and global negotiations and setting of agendas at regional organizations, mediation of conflicts, and the role of non-state actors such as multinational co-operations in the projection of values and interests.⁴⁵ Finally, the element of self-perception entails a sense of duty and responsibility that the hegemonic state perceives for itself in a particular region in relation to other states. Such a state therefore conceives its role as a regional leader with a sense of entitlement or exceptionalism.⁴⁶ However, Prys argues that the profile and role of a state as a regional hegemon is always challenged and not easily accepted by its neighbours.⁴⁷ However, there should be a certain level of acceptance by neighbouring states of a powerful state as a regional hegemon if hegemony is to be different from domination and force.⁴⁸

Flemes also proposes four indicators for identifying a regional hegemon. These include indications of leadership, preponderance of power resources, and use of foreign policy instruments and recognition of leadership by third states.⁴⁹ Being a hegemon therefore entails providing economic, political, and security services to a region. These includes playing a representation role at the international level, maintenance of peace at the regional level, and acting as a trade and investment partner and providing development assistance. Being a regional hegemon entails underwriting the specific political, socio-economic, and security vision-including responsibilities and obligations of the regional hegemon. Flemmes, like Prys, argues that regional hegemons are identifiable by their claim to leadership, preponderant power resources, employment of

⁴⁵ Ibid p.14

⁴⁶ Ibid.p.8

⁴⁷ Ibid.p.11

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.12

⁴⁹ Flemes.2007.p.11

foreign policy instruments and the acceptance of their leadership by secondary states.

The literature thus far combines two contrasting elements of hegemons reflecting the methodological divide in the study of International Relations. First, those that measure the power of a state and how it is projected. Whether that power is measured in terms of its economic and military capabilities only, or simply in terms of projection of values and provision of regional public goods. Second, the perception of the hegemon by other secondary states. However, there is often a gap between the expectations and the actual achievements of regional hegemons, with the regional hegemon demonstrating an unwillingness or inability to exercise regional leadership.⁵⁰ Regional hegemons tend to appear less influential and preponderant than what conventional assumptions hold about them, with the third states challenging the hegemon's leadership.⁵¹ These states have seemingly less power and material resources and their regional influence is challenged and rejected by secondary states.⁵² Many of these states have a limited understanding of what constitutes a regional hegemon. This is a common pattern that indicates their limited performances as regional hegemons.⁵³ As Prys argues, this gap between expectations and actual achievement is largely due to a theoretical problem rather than an empirical failure of regional powers to fulfil their hegemonic roles.⁵⁴

In so far as these elements are essential components in the study of hegemons, they constitute a useful starting point in the study of sub-regional hegemons in Africa. However, one apparent shortcoming of these approaches from the perspective of this study, is that they tend to privilege status quo over change in pre-occupying themselves with whether a state is hegemonic or not.

⁵⁰ Prys.2007.p.3

⁵¹ Prys.2008. p.2

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴ Prys.2007. p.4

Thus they overlook the important processes leading to the rise and fall of a hegemonic project. What seems apparent in Africa, especially Eastern Africa, is competing hegemonic projects rather than a single hegemonic state. Keeping this limitation in consideration, the concept can be used to trace the hegemonic project in a context where a clear regional hegemon is absent. Hence, the question is not whether a state is a hegemon in the sense that it undisputedly fulfils the three criteria of being a hegemon. It is rather whether the state seeks to realize this criterion or whether it considers some of these elements more important than others and why? Such nuancing would generate a regionally different notion of a hegemon alluded to earlier.

2.2 Conclusion

Given the variety of definitions and approaches to the study of regional hegemons, this study uses an eclectic approach to analyse Kenya's aspirations and prospects for regional hegemony in the Eastern African region. The study takes the position that the study of regional hegemons needs to combine four elements. First, the supply of hegemony (what the hegemonic state does for other states). Second, the demand for hegemony (whether other states accept or reject the assertion of influence). Third, the power element of the hegemon (defined in terms of projecting and/or supplying economic and military power and resources). Fourth, its ideational and perceptual elements. That is, its projection of values and norms and perceptions of regional responsibilities as well as others' acceptance of hegemonic state.

This eclectic approach is not without problems. Being a regional hegemon requires more than having more economic and military power that will influence other neighbouring countries. It also involves the active use of these resources for incentivizing and constraining the choices of other states with a conscious objective of advancing the projecting actor's interests in whatever way it defines them. It is also about the perception of those states



that are the object of the hegemonic state's influence. This eclectic approach is however open to the particular regional realities in the chosen region rather than seeking to impose a rigid conceptual approach to the study of hegemons that is based on a top down Eurocentric power analysis at the global level.

Chapter 3: Kenya's Internal Challenges and their impact on its hegemonic potential

3.0 Introduction

In January 2015, Kenya published its first written foreign policy document since achieving independence in 1963. The written foreign policy document is significant for Kenya, for a variety of reasons. First, it represents an attempt by the country to explicitly articulate its foreign policy directions, priorities, and values. In the past, a variety of documents such as executive pronouncements, international conventions, and sessional papers informed Kenya's foreign policy.⁵⁵ Second, an explicitly written foreign policy document signals an attempt by the country to articulate more clearly, effectively, and consistently its national interests and the means to achieve them.⁵⁶ These national interests and objectives include the protection of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the promotion of sub-regional and regional integration, maintenance of regional peace and security, economic development and the promotion of the interests of the Kenyan Diaspora.⁵⁷ Through the document, Kenya seeks to protect, promote and protect its interests and image regionally and globally.⁵⁸ It thus represents an attempt by the country to use the foreign instruments at its disposal to achieve its interests in regional and global processes and to shape its hegemonic aspirations in the Eastern African region.

The drafting of the document occurred during a period when Kenya was undergoing a variety of internal challenges, not least terrorism and the ICC cases at The Hague against President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto. These occurrences made it necessary for Kenya to draw up a framework

⁵⁵Mabera.2016. p.365

⁵⁶ Republic of Kenya.2014.p.11

⁵⁷ Ibid.p.19.

⁵⁸ Ibid,p.5

to achieve its goals and interests at the regional, continental, and global level. For example, the regional level was an important space for Kenya's pursuit of its national interests⁵⁹ not least because of the regional ramifications of the various internal challenges. The 2007/8 post-election violence, for example, had a disruptive impact on other economies in the East Africa region because of Kenya's position as the region's main transportation hub. The blocking and vandalization of some roads and railway lines interrupted the transportation of goods to other countries, thereby slowing down their economic activities.⁶⁰ The impact of post-election violence on the economy of neighbouring countries highlighted Kenya's political, economic, and cultural connectivity with other states in the region and lent substantial credence to Kenya's potential as a regional hegemon. As such any political, economic or security challenges in Kenya have a decisive impact on the political, security and economic fortunes and development of other countries in the region. This is a key feature of a regional hegemon because internal political, economic and security events in the preponderant state have a decisive impact on secondary states.⁶¹

Kenya's foreign policy also articulates a broad direction for Kenya's relations and diplomatic engagements at the regional, continental, and international levels,⁶² indicating a hegemonic vision for greater influence in these processes. The document underscores that regional security, development, and stability are an integral part of Kenya's future prosperity.⁶³ The document therefore identifies and emphasizes the Eastern African region as crucial to the development and security of Kenya.⁶⁴ This highlights a hegemonic intent on the part of Kenya to influence regional and global

⁵⁹ Indeed, the foreign policy document recognizes the increasing importance of regional integration for achieving its national interests. It also expresses Kenya's desire to play a leading role in this process. Ibid. p.5

⁶⁰ Kimani. 2008.

⁶¹ Olusola & Ufo.2016. p.112

⁶² Republic of Kenya.2014.p.7

⁶³ Republic of Kenya.2014.p.17

⁶⁴ Ibid.

processes. This desire is also consistent with the behaviour of a hegemon that seeks to project its influence, interests, and values through various regional and global processes. Using the hegemonic element of power projection,⁶⁵ this chapter assesses the various ways Kenya has sought to assert influence in the region. It also examines the various internal challenges confronting Kenya which have impacted on its ability to project its power and influence at the regional and global levels. The chapter argues that the various internal challenge facing Kenya have limited its ability to articulate a clear hegemonic vision for the region, thus undermining its own hegemonic aspirations.

3.1 Kenya at the African Union

A hegemon is not only able to influence regional processes but also global politics. A hegemon is thus identifiable by its ability to project and protect its values, interests, and influence through regional and global processes. A hegemon's influence therefore goes beyond its immediate sphere of influence. Kenya's engagement at the African Union (AU) therefore presents a higher level (continental)-beyond the sub-regional level- from which to assess the country's hegemonic aspirations and potential. Kenya's engagement at the AU between 2013 and 2017 stands out as indicative of its growing global profile and increasing influence in the region and continent. Two particular instances illustrate the country's increased deployment of its instruments of foreign policy and projection of values and interests at the continental level, namely the mobilization of the AU in support for the suspension of the ICC cases against President Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto; and Kenya's application for the candidature of the African Union Commission Chair in 2017. These instances are illustrative of the country's hegemonic aspirations.

⁶⁵ Prys.2007.

Following the 2007/8 post-election violence in Kenya, the ICC brought criminal charges against six suspects including the would-be president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, and his deputy, William Ruto, for allegedly bearing the greatest responsibility for the violence. The two co accused decided to run for elections in order to gain an influential platform to have the cases against them suspended. As president and deputy president, the two set out to ensure that the cases against them were suspended by the ICC. The country deployed its instruments of foreign policy, particularly through the regional bodies and the AU, to achieve its interests of mobilizing African leaders to have the cases against Kenyatta and his deputy suspended. The ICC's bias against African leaders seems to have gotten wider acceptance among African leaders who have similar concerns to Kenya's. Kenya's political engagement at the AU highlights the country's hegemonic traits of pursuing its interests by presenting these as common goals among African leaders. It also highlights Kenya's hegemonic ability to generate consensus from other African states and the acceptance of its ideas and vision for Africa in pursuit of its interests.

In 2013, during the AU extraordinary summit of Heads of State and governments, the AU issued a declaration calling for the suspension of the ICC cases against President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy. The AU argued that the ICC had become politicised and was intended to punish African leaders only; and that the Kenyan cases were a threat to the country's sovereignty as well as regional stability.⁶⁶ Though, many African leaders with questionable human rights record may wish to avoid the ICC's gaze, the AU's decision came after Kenya initiated the agenda for discussion. This declaration by the AU in support of the Kenyan government's position on the ICC highlighted Kenya's mobilization of its ideational and material resources; to draw the attention of the AU on issues affecting the continent. This declaration was the outcome of

⁶⁶ Chatam House. 2013.

mutual foreign policy interests between Kenya and most African states that not only called for the suspension of the ICC cases against president Kenyatta and the Deputy President Ruto, but also for the mass withdrawal from the ICC by African states.

Kenya's ability to set the agenda at the regional level and deploy its ideational resources was also demonstrated by its ability to have the AU hold an extraordinary summit to discuss the ICC indictments following the terrorist attacks on Westgate Mall in Nairobi in 2013.⁶⁷ The Kenyan government argued that the absence of both the president and his deputy in the country at the same time would pose a security threat to the country.⁶⁸ After intense lobbying by Kenya, in 2013, the AU requested that the cases against Kenyatta and Ruto be deferred on the grounds that they were too busy with national security issues.⁶⁹ Kenya's intense lobbying and shuttle diplomacy at the AU, as a demonstration of the deployment of its ideational and material resources, resulted in up to 40 countries reportedly writing to the United Nations Security Council(UNSC), seeking a deferral of the ICC cases.⁷⁰ The high costs for this shuttle diplomacy, estimated at 2.6 million dollars,⁷¹ are indicative of the country's ability and willingness to deploy its material resources to achieve its interests in the region.

Kenya's hegemonic potential is demonstrated by its deployment of ideational resources through the presentation of the discourse on the ICC as an instrument of neo-colonialism that targets Africans. The hegemonic ability of the country to project its ideational power resources and set the agenda at the regional level was illustrated during the AU summit in 2016. President Kenyatta argued that the ICC has no respect for the sovereignty of African

⁶⁷Ibid. p.3

⁶⁸ The Standard.2016a.

⁶⁹ The Standard. 2014.

⁷⁰Obonyo.2013.

⁷¹ Mutai. 2013.

nations and that it tramples on the security and dignity of Africans.⁷² Kenya was also able to mobilize African leaders by producing and circulating emotive discourses of solidarity, respect for the sovereignty of African States, and claims that the ICC unfairly and only targets African leaders. For example, during a speech at the AU in which African leaders voted for the mass withdrawal from the ICC, President Kenyatta argued that “it is a fact that this court performs on the cue of European and American governments against the sovereignty of African States and peoples that should outrage us”.⁷³

Through these anti-ICC discourses, Kenya proposed a road map for the mass withdrawal by African countries from the Rome Statute that established the ICC that was initially adopted by the AU.⁷⁴ In addition, Kenya’s foreign engagements at the ICC resulted in an AU draft strategy that called for African countries to strengthen local judicial systems and to expand the mandate and jurisdiction of the African Court of Justice and human rights “in order to reduce the deference to the ICC.”⁷⁵ Kenya vigorously lobbied African countries to sign the Malabo protocol that aims to create an African court by merging the African Court of Justice and the African Human Rights Court.⁷⁶ The signing and ratification of the Malabo Protocol would enable African countries to withdraw en masse from the ICC. Kenya also demonstrated its hegemonic ability and willingness to underwrite the goal of creating an African court that is run and funded by Africa by donating \$ 900,000 towards the establishment of the court.⁷⁷

Kenya’s hegemonic ambition and its desire to project its influence regionally is also demonstrated by the country’s decision in 2016 to put

⁷² The Standard.2016a.

⁷³Daily Nation.2013.

⁷⁴ The Standard.2016b.

⁷⁵ The Guardian. 2017.

⁷⁶ Daily Nation. 2015.

⁷⁷As a result of Kenya spearheading the anti-ICC discourse and influencing the agenda at the AU, African leaders unanimously agreed to grant sitting heads of states and senior government officials’ immunity from prosecution at the African Court for Human and People’s rights. See Ngirachu. 2015.

forward the name of its Foreign minister, Dr. Amina C. Mohammed, for the candidature of the African Union Commission Chair.⁷⁸ This decision demonstrated a number of issues in relation to Kenya's hegemonic ambitions. First, it indicated Kenya's growing self-perception to potentially provide hegemonic leadership in the region. Dr. Amina C. Mohammed argued that her candidature provided an opportunity to unite Africa, describing herself as having the required competencies to build consensus around issues that affect the continent.⁷⁹ Second, it showed the country's hegemonic potential to influence the foreign relations of other African countries. This was demonstrated by the initial receptiveness of most African leaders to the candidature of Dr. Amina C. Mohammed.⁸⁰ Regional organizations, including The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the East African Community, had also endorsed Kenya's candidature driven by the perception and confidence that Kenya would articulate an agenda at the AU that would be important for the region.

The case also demonstrated Kenya's hegemonic ability to underwrite the cost of implementing its national interests and goals in pursuit of its hegemonic project. For example, the country is estimated to have spent more than \$ 9.8 million on shuttle diplomacy in the region in order to influence African countries to vote for its candidate.⁸¹ The huge cost and resources spent on the campaign indicated the ability and willingness of Kenya to deploy its material resources and instruments of foreign policy to have a greater hegemonic influence at the continental level. The Kenyan government sent top

⁷⁸ The AU commission chair is the head of the Secretariat of the AU. It is an important position because the hold and the country from which he/she comes from has the power and influence to shape affairs in Africa and influence global spaces as far as African and global affairs are concerned. However, this has not always been due the lack of political will and solidarity among African leaders which lenders the AU largely dysfunctional.

⁷⁹Kenya perception that it would clench the top AU post was based not least on the professional credentials of its candidate. Amina is a seasoned diplomat with vast professional experience internationally and in the continent. The Standard.2016.

⁸⁰ The Standard.2016.

⁸¹ Kimutai.2015.

officials including President Uhuru on several bilateral diplomatic exchanges with heads of states and government in the region to drum up support for Ambassador Dr. Amina C. Mohammed. Kenyan diplomats, for instance, met the leaders of the following countries: Nigeria, Gabon, Rwanda, Seychelles, the Comoros, and Sudan and sent emissaries to 53 African countries.⁸²

On the voting day, Kenya's candidate lost to Chad's candidate, Moussa Mahama by 38 votes to 26. The failure by Kenya to win the AU post unmasks the challenges that it faces in projecting its power and influence in the region. First, it demonstrated that while Kenya perceives itself as having the ability to provide regional leadership, Kenyan neighbours challenge this perception. Indeed, reports indicate that Kenya's closest neighbours, Djibouti, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania did not vote for Kenya's candidate. A diplomatic source argued that Uganda refused to vote for Amina because of Kenya's perceived dominance in the region.⁸³ Second, it indicates that while Kenya might perceive itself as a regional hegemon, the assertion it tries to project is not willingly accepted by other states. However, this rejection of its influence is consistent with being a hegemon in that the hegemonic state's position is consistently challenged by other states in the region.⁸⁴ Moreover, it is consistent with the gap between expectations and actual achievements of a hegemon. Indeed, preponderant states appear to be less influential than what theoretical assumptions hold about them and their hegemonic influence is always challenged by secondary states.⁸⁵

⁸² Olouch. 2016.; Mutambo. 2017

⁸³ Onyango. 2017.

⁸⁴ Prys. 2008. p.2

⁸⁵ Ibid.

3.2 Internal security challenges and their impact on Kenya's role in regional security

Regional security is a public good that every regional hegemon seeks to provide. Through the provision of a regional public good such as security, the hegemon both projects its power in the region, and shapes the perception of it by secondary states. The projection of power (both soft and hard) occurs through the maintenance of regional security and the fight against terror, mediation of conflicts, and peace building. The element of self-perception entails a sense of duty and responsibility. Analysing how regional security is maintained and by who, allows one to understand the potential hegemon's ability to project its power and pursue its interests. In the case of Kenya, this is demonstrated, for example, through a focus on the fight against terror. Analysing the country's internal security dimension also allows one to understand how Kenya's internal security is connected to regional security.

Kenya faces a variety of internal and external security challenges, many of which have regional ramifications. Kenya's strategic importance to the Global War on Terror lies in its strategic location in the Horn of Africa and relative proximity to the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. The security issues include the threat of violent extremism; pastoral conflicts, refugee crises, and political violence which also have a negative impact on the country's economy and global profile. For example, the country has experienced a number of terrorist attacks with the two large scale attacks being the Westgate mall attack on 21 September 2013⁸⁶ and the Garissa university attack on 2 April 2015.⁸⁷ These attacks had an adverse impact on Kenya's global image with international news outlets such as CNN international referring to Kenya as "a

⁸⁶that killed more than 67 people

⁸⁷that killed 147 people

hotbed of terror”.⁸⁸ Additionally, the series of terrorist attacks had a negative impact on the country’s economy, particularly the tourism industry.⁸⁹

While terrorist attacks pre-date 2011, the year Kenya intervened in Somalia, the country has been slow to respond to these threats and attacks. There were limited measures to fight terrorism before the abduction of tourists which indicated the failure of policies that seek not to antagonize the constituencies of Islamists. A regional comparison would be important here because it is indicative of Kenya’s limited willingness to project its power in the region and therefore the competition that other countries pose to her hegemonic aspirations. Ethiopia, which has seen only limited terrorist attacks, intervened in Somalia in 2002 to quell Al-Itahad Al-Islamai, and in 2006 to crush the Union of Islamic Courts. Though this by no means constitutes hegemony, defined in terms of willing acceptance of dominance by others, it indicated active engagement to deal with security threats in the region. Though Kenya has been attacked a number of times, it did not take strong measures against such security threats in the region until 2011 when it intervened in Somalia.

The launch of the military operation into Somalia was justified on the basis of protecting the country’s territorial integrity. It demonstrated the ability and willingness of the country to project its military power in the region in order to secure its interests. This unilateral military intervention underscored Kenya’s ability and willingness both to provide regional security goods and to secure its interests. Despite the financial costs of the intervention, Kenya continues to affirm its long term commitment to bringing security and stability to Somalia, underscoring its willingness to provide regional order and security.

The military intervention in Somalia also demonstrated the internal challenges that might hinder Kenya’s hegemonic aspirations. In particular,

⁸⁸ Mutiga. 2015.

⁸⁹ Morris. 2015.

Kenya's hegemonic prospects are undermined by its reactive rather than proactive foreign policy in dealing with the threat of terrorist attacks. Reports claimed that the intervention was poorly planned; politically, diplomatically, and militarily.⁹⁰ As a result of this unilateral decision, Kenya was forced to go into a hasty diplomatic offensive in order to gain the moral and diplomatic support from various international and regional governments who claimed that they were not informed of Kenya's decision to intervene.⁹¹ This belated diplomatic shuttle included meetings by the Kenyan's foreign affairs minister with Somalia's President in Mogadishu, Ethiopia's President, and the Chair of the AU Commission in Addis to seek diplomatic acceptance for the military intervention.

Similarly, Kenya's lack of effective foreign policy planning that can sustain and achieve its hegemonic aspirations was demonstrated when the country decided in 2016 to withdraw its troops from a UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). This was in response to the sacking of the Kenyan commander of the UNMISS Force following a UN inquiry that accused the UN Mission in South Sudan of failing to respond to an attack on a Juba hotel.⁹² The Kenyan government argued that the mission was "no longer tenable and is inimical to the (its troops) safety and well-being of its troops".⁹³ Kenya also threatened to pull out of the South Sudan peace process and to stop plans to contribute troops to the planned deployment of regional forces.⁹⁴

This decision to withdraw Kenyan troops from South Sudan calls attention to several important issues with regards to Kenya's hegemonic ambitions. First, the lack of long term thinking-which is evident from its reactive foreign policy-making. Though Kenya's massive investments in South Sudan's economy means that lasting peace and stability is in its best interests,

⁹⁰ International Crisis Group, 2012, p.

⁹¹ Ibid. pp.3-4.

⁹² Reuters, 2016.

⁹³ Biryabarema, 2016.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

the country failed to stay engaged in spite of criticisms.⁹⁵ It is also indicative of the lack of hegemonic ambition on matters of regional security because a hegemon remains engaged in securing its interests in the long term. Though Kenya's long term interests would have been served by continuous engagement in South Sudan, it demonstrated Kenya's lack of a principled stance on regional security issues that are crucial for its hegemonic interests.

3.4 Mega-regional infrastructural projects as a means to hegemony

Massive infrastructural projects that connect neighbouring countries is also one of the principal means through which Kenya seeks to maintain its potential for economic hegemony and regional importance. Through these infrastructural projects, Kenya seeks to provide regional economic public goods such as a connecting regional transport system as a means through which a state can secure and maintain its hegemonic profile. Kenya has invested massively in mega infrastructure projects that include a Railway line, Super highways, new ports, and new and refurbished airports across the country. The development of large scale infrastructure is one of the objectives of the country's vision 2030 that seeks to transform Kenya into an industrialized middle-income country.⁹⁶

The most important elements of this infrastructure boom include regional networks such as the Lamu Port and Lamu-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) project connecting Ethiopia, South Sudan and Kenya, and the Silicon Valley that can serve as a technology incubation centre not just for Kenya but also the wider region and the continent. These constitute an important instrument for projecting Kenya's soft power. By taking the lead

⁹⁵ South Sudan is a major export destination for Kenyan goods. It is also a major investment location for Kenya's service sector notably banking, communication and retail. However, the continued civil war has sharply reduced trade between the two countries and forced a number of Kenyan businesses to close or scale down operations. Jelly.2015.

⁹⁶ Government of Kenya. 2007.

on regional infrastructural projects, Kenya provides incentives for cooperation on terms favourable to it. This can also be viewed as increasing Kenya's ability to provide regional public goods. More regional road connections means more economic integration and stability for the region which is the pillar of Kenya's regional policy. It is also used to sustain Kenya's potential economic hegemony in so far as it is useful to boost the country's economy.

However, these capital-intensive infrastructure projects have had a negative impact on Kenya's debt sustainability. Kenya is now spending more than a third of its revenue to service the debt which is 50% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁹⁷ As of June 2018, Kenya's internal debt was more than \$ 23.8 billion dollars and external debt was \$ 25.7 billion dollars, a 2.3 fold increase from Sh1.5 trillion (US\$18 billion) at the end of 2012.⁹⁸ China accounted for 60% of Kenya's bilateral debt up from 25% four years ago.⁹⁹ The 2017/2018 budget for servicing foreign debt services was Sh97 billion up from Sh36 billion four years ago, a 170 per cent increase, as compared to an 80 per cent increase in revenues.¹⁰⁰ The construction of the railway line, for example, accounts for at least 22 % of Kenya's total public debt with at least \$ 10 billion debt from China.¹⁰¹ The International Monetary Fund raised concerns about Kenya's debt sustainability, while economists have questioned the ability of the economic dividends from the infrastructure projects to repay the loans.¹⁰² The growing debt levels call attention to the ability of Kenya to provide regional public goods and project its power. Debt levels and budget deficits limit the material preponderance of the country as a potential hegemon. High levels of foreign debt also open up Kenya to influence from external interests, diminishing its

⁹⁷The East African.2018.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid,

¹⁰² Mwanza. 2017.

ability to forge and articulate its own national interests and therefore hegemonic ambitions.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the various ways through which Kenya is trying to achieve its hegemonic aspirations. Through various means such as, increased influence at the AU, its military intervention in Somalia and through mega-infrastructure projects Kenya has sought to project its power and influence towards hegemonic ambitions. However, the country's hegemonic prospects have been undermined by various internal challenges not least of which are increased insecurity, run away debt levels.

Chapter 4: External Opportunities and Challenges for Kenya's Hegemonic Aspirations

4.0 Introduction

Kenya's hegemonic aspirations and prospects lie within a shifting regional context that is characterized by challenges presented by the political and economic emergence of Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. These various external challenges have had an adverse impact on Kenya's hegemonic aspirations. In particular, they call attention to Kenya's base for power projection and its ability to underwrite the implementation of its national interests; and to provide regional public goods and to articulate a vision for the region. They also highlight the gap between expectations and actual achievements of Kenya as a potential regional hegemon. They are also indicative of Kenya's self-perception as a potential regional hegemon by its peers. This chapter examines the ways in which these regional actors undermine Kenya's potential hegemonic prospects and the extent to which they pose a threat to its core national interests as articulated in its foreign policy document.

4.1 Rising Regional Economies and their challenge to Kenya's hegemonic prospects

It is important to examine Kenya's economic strength relative to its neighbours in order to determine Kenya's material base for hegemonic claims and thus its ability to project its power and provide regional public goods. For decades, Kenya has remained the economic powerhouse in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. There was a certain acceptance by secondary states in Eastern Africa of Kenya's status as the region's economic powerhouse and of its material preponderance. In part, this was due to the various political and

economic challenges including conflict, large scale insecurity and underdevelopment, that confronted the various states in the region not least Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. However, recent relative stability and massive public investments have resulted in unprecedented economic growth in these countries. As a result, these countries have begun to challenge Kenya's status as the economic powerhouse and with it, Kenya's influence in the region.

The biggest challenge to Kenya's material preponderance and influence has been the rapid economic growth of Ethiopia. In 2017, Ethiopia overtook Kenya to become the largest economy in the Eastern African Region opening up a \$ 3.61 billion gap between the two economies.¹⁰³ Driven by double-digit GDP growth that hit \$ 72.52 billion in 2016 compared to Kenya's \$ 68.1 billion,¹⁰⁴ Ethiopia effectively became the region's economic powerhouse. Similarly, Kenya's East African peers have recorded impressive economic growth that challenges Kenya's dominance and influence as the region's top economy. For example, Rwanda and Uganda have both recorded rising economic growth averaging 7% over the last ten years compared to Kenya's 5.0 % in the same period.¹⁰⁵ In particular, Tanzania's steady economic growth directly challenges Kenya's economic dominance and influence in the region. More than 20 years ago, Kenya's economy was more than double that of Tanzania's recording a GDP of \$ 13.7 billion in 1997 against that of Tanzania which stood at \$ 6.4 billion.¹⁰⁶

Kenya's economic relations with its East African peers have also begun to wane and are indicative of the country's diminishing dominance and influence in the region. Two particular events are illustrative of this. First, Kenya's failure to persuade Uganda and Tanzania to sign the Economic Partnership

¹⁰³ Otuki. 2017a.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Okwaroh. 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Otuki. 2017b.



Agreement¹⁰⁷ with the European Union. By convincing Uganda and Tanzania to sign the deal, Kenya was hoping to protect its preferential access to the European market. The regional East African parliament had resolved to enter negotiations as a block in order to afford them stronger bargaining power.¹⁰⁸ The failure of Kenya to convince her neighbours of the urgency to ratify the agreement before the deadline passed, demonstrates the challenge the country faces in projecting its power when neighbouring states do not see the benefits in the arrangement Kenya seeks to project. This is despite the fact that the country was leading the talks and chairing the East African Community (EAC). It demonstrates the challenge and even rejection that neighbouring countries pose to Kenya's potential hegemonic influence.

Second, Kenya's isolation in the development of mega regional infrastructural projects is also illustrative of the country's declining hegemonic political and economic influence in the region. For example, a number of neighbouring countries including South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda opted out of the building of mega regional infrastructural project in preference for alternative countries in the region.¹⁰⁹ Ethiopia also entered into a pipeline deal with Djibouti, thus rivalling and undermining the construction of the LAPSSET project with Kenya- meaning that Djibouti would rival Kenya's Lamu as the major regional shipping hub under the LAPSSET project.¹¹⁰ Kenya is being outmanoeuvred in the provision of regional public goods by neighbouring countries. In part, this decline is due to the overwhelming focus by the Kenyan government on the internal challenges, and failure to prioritize

¹⁰⁷The EPA is meant to replace the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000

¹⁰⁸ Tanzania in particular remained adamant about signing the deal sighting concerns with the implications of the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Brexit) arguing that signing the deal was not in the best interests of the country. Signing of the EPA as a bloc was meant to give the region more bargaining power against the EU See Kajilwa. 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Uganda for example opted out of building an oil pipeline with Kenya preferring instead an alternative route through Tanzania. See Wafula. 2016..

¹¹⁰Sudan also opted out of building an oil pipeline through Kenya instead choosing an alternative route via Ethiopia to Djibouti. As a result, Kenya was forced to build its own oil pipeline. Kenya's failure to prioritise the LAPPSET project made it lose the deal with Uganda. See Wafula. 2015.

its regional vision and goals and interests. For example, Uganda cited the increased insecurity caused by Al-Shabaab and the higher cost of the construction of the railway line through the North Eastern Kenya- due under-development and remoteness of the region- as the reasons for opting out of the pipeline deal with Kenya.¹¹¹ These instances point to the challenge and rejection of Kenya's hegemonic influence by neighbouring states. This rejection is a feature that is consistent with being a hegemon.

4.2 Regional Security

Kenya lies in a geopolitical position which is characterised by a variety of conflicts and large-scale insecurities. Kenya's security landscape is shaped by protracted crises in Somalia, Darfur, South Sudan and Burundi. Kenya's security universe is also shaped by a multiplicity of security threats with regional dimensions. These include the pastoralist conflicts in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, and Uganda, and the threat of terrorism from Somalia and Yemen; as well as the democratic reversals in Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.¹¹² These conflicts and insecurities have regional ramifications for Kenya's security due to the associated refugee and humanitarian consequences. Given this regional security context, it is important to understand if and how Kenya provides hegemonic leadership in the region- and secures its interests and provides regional public goods (security and stability). This section seeks to understand whether Kenya is providing hegemonic leadership in articulating a vision for regional security and a political willingness to underwrite this vision. This section interrogates this by also examining whether other countries in the region are competing with Kenya in

¹¹¹ Okwaroh. 2016,

¹¹² This weakening of democratic governance structures include the lifting of presidential term limits and constitutional terms limits and the narrowing of the civic space.

articulating a vision for security in the region and therefore challenging Kenya's relative potential hegemonic position.

There are several indications of Kenya's hegemonic aspirations and prospects in the region. First, Kenya has articulated a vision and willingness to underwrite a vision of regional security and stability. The country's foreign policy through the pillar of diplomatic Peace "seeks to consolidate Kenya's legacy in promoting peace and stability as necessary conditions for development and prosperity in countries within the region".¹¹³ Kenya's involvement in a variety of regional conflict mediation and conflict management and resolution processes in the region is illustrative. Kenya has been actively involved in various conflict management and peace processes in the region through the IGAD and the EAC.¹¹⁴ It seeks to fulfil its hegemonic aspirations by generating trust between conflicting parties as an impartial mediator and reliable partner in brokering peace. These include the peace processes in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and Burundi.¹¹⁵ Its provision of security and stability as means of being a hegemon are also driven by the need to secure its national interests. For example, in 2015, it is estimated that Kenya stood to lose as much as \$ 24 billion in economic output from the continued intensification of the civil war in South Sudan.¹¹⁶

Kenya's determination to manage its security interests is illustrated by its military intervention in Somalia in 2011. Kenya's military operation

¹¹³ p.12

¹¹⁴IGAD is a regional mechanism created by states in the Eastern Africa to deal with the variety of regional security and political issues in the region. The EAC is a also a regional mechanism created by states in the East Africa region in order to pursue regional integration

¹¹⁵ Kenya for example played a significant role in the Somali peace process including hosting the Somalia peace talks between 2002 and 2004 and providing a base from which the Transitional Federal Government operated from until it moved to Mogadishu in 2005. Kenya was also leading the peace process in Sudan that resulted in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Kenya that ended decades of armed Conflict between North and South Sudan. Kenya is also actively involved in the IGAD Plus mediation process to end the armed conflict in South Sudan and is also a facilitator in the Ogaden Peace Process between Somalia and Ethiopia.

¹¹⁶South Sudan is a major export destination for Kenyan goods. It is also a major investment location for Kenya's service sector notably banking, communication and retail. However, the continued civil war has sharply reduced trade between the two countries and forced a number of Kenyan businesses to close or scale down operations. Jelly. 2015.

(Operation Linda Nchi) in Somalia to create a buffer in Jubaland was justified on the grounds of protecting the territorial integrity and national security of Kenya. The military deployment was a statement of Kenya's willingness to deploy hard power to secure its interests-an element that is characteristic of regional hegemons. The military operation in Somalia demonstrated Kenya's willingness to provide regional public goods of stability and security-though security is by no means yet ensured in Somalia. President Kenyatta insisted that Kenya would not pull its military from Somalia, as exiting would create a security vacuum leading to greater instability in Kenya and her neighbours.¹¹⁷ This willingness and determination to remain in Somalia to secure regional peace and stability is consistent with hegemons which seek to provide stability in their regions by projecting their power capabilities and material preponderance.

However, while Kenya's military intervention in Somalia illustrates the country's willingness to articulate a regional vision for security and stability, its ability to underwrite this vision is limited. In 2012 for example, it is estimated that Kenya spent about \$ 2.8 million per month on personnel costs alone.¹¹⁸ Implementing a vision of regional peace proved unsustainable. Faced with a total budget deficit of \$ 3.1 billion¹¹⁹, and increasing personnel maintenance and, procurement costs, Kenya requested the UNSC and the AU to re-hat Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) into African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to ease the military and legal burdens of the military operation.¹²⁰ Kenya's financial inability to support its military intervention in Somalia calls into question its ability to deploy its relative material and military capability to secure its national interests; to project its power and to provide regional public

¹¹⁷ Obala. 2017. .

¹¹⁸ Luckstar. 2012.pp.3-4

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

goods.¹²¹ This financial burden is however characteristic of hegemons which expend extra measures and resources in the maintenance of the regional system. Kenya therefore sees regional peace and stability as more beneficial to its hegemonic interests even when the maintenance of the regional system is costly in the short term.

However, Kenya has been just one actor that sought to provide regional public goods in the region. Uganda has a more dominant military role in the region, as Uganda's military has intervened directly in a number of conflicts in the region including in the Central African Republic, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in South Sudan, and in Somalia. Additionally, Ethiopia assumes greater military leadership in the region as it has been able to efficiently and effectively project its military strength in the Eastern Africa region. Ethiopia plays a central and influential role in regional peace and security processes through military deployments in Somalia, Darfur and in Abyei; and is actively involved in mediation processes between Sudan and South Sudan and in South Sudan.

This race for hegemonic leadership in regional security among Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda is best illustrated by their roles in the South Sudan Conflict. Kenya's foreign policy in South Sudan, especially in the resolution of the conflict, is driven by the need for stability that can secure its economic interests and growing diplomatic profile regionally and globally. However, Kenya has not led in the process, and has preferred a more neutral position, that is contrast with its neighbours, namely Uganda and Ethiopia.¹²² Ethiopia is perceived as the driving force being the mediation, and views itself as the lead nation in the IGAD charged with maintaining regional stability. While Uganda's interests in military activities in South Sudan are driven by political and financial interests, its willingness to deploy its military at a huge

¹²¹ Prys. 2007.

¹²² International Crisis Group.2015.p.9

diplomatic and financial cost given its relative material resources illustrates its willingness to secure its interests in the region.

Despite the competition from Uganda and Ethiopia, Kenya continues to provide leadership in the provision of regional security goods through the maintenance of peace at the regional level. This trait is characteristic of hegemony that exercise leadership within their defined regions through both consensual and hard power means in regional security affairs. This is despite the competition and in some cases rejection of that leadership by neighbouring states in the region.

4.3 Conclusion

Kenya's material base for hegemonic aspirations and prospects are limited. Moreover, the rise of economies of secondary states in the Eastern African region challenges Kenya's material preponderance. They challenge the influence the country can wield in shaping a hegemonic project that is based on the pursuits of its values, interests and goals. It also calls into question the ability of the country to provide public goods in the region and implement its vision of security and political and economic agenda and development. However, despite the lack of a solid financial and material base that sets Kenya apart as a hegemon, the country demonstrates features of hegemony and continues to use its foreign policy to project its influence in the region.



5.0 Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in light of its objectives and research questions. The study has established that there are varied definitions and approaches in the study of hegemons. It also noted that conventional conceptualisations of hegemons tend to be characterised by conceptual ambiguity, making it difficult to use them as useful tools of analysis at the sub-regional level, especially in the African context. For example, they are biased towards global and regional level understandings and analyses of hegemons. While these conceptualizations may be “concept-stretched” and used to analyse hegemons at sub-regional levels, their utility is very limited because of the distinct and context-specific nature of the dynamics at play at this particular level.

It is against this background that this study used the eclectic approach to analyse Kenya’s aspirations, and prospects for regional hegemony in Eastern Africa. This approach focuses on a number of key variables which enable the study to critique the nuances and complexities of the East Africa region. These include questions such as: what the hegemonic state does for other states in the region and beyond? Whether other states accept or reject its assertion of influence? Whether the hegemonic state projects and or supplies economic and military power and resources? Whether it is able to set and project, peddle, and entrench values, norms, and practices which are acceptable to other states in the region where hegemony is sought?

This analytical framework is not without its own weaknesses. However, its major strength is that it is sensible and applicable to the contextual dynamics and realities of the chosen region. The study sought to achieve two broad objectives: to examine how and whether Kenya’s security, economic, and

foreign policy position are anchored on aspirations to be a regional hegemon; and to critique how internal and external challenges have impacted its hegemonic ambitions. This chapter discusses the findings of the study in respect of these core objectives.

5.2 Kenya's foreign policy and hegemonic aspirations

This study examined whether Kenya's foreign policy reflects hegemonic ambitions within the region. This is particularly important because a country's foreign policy is the key instrument which can be used to pursue a hegemonic agenda. It has been argued in this study that Kenya has managed to increase its global profile on the basis of its foreign policy which is geared towards hegemonic ambitions within the East African region.

As discussed in this study, traditionally, Kenya's foreign policy was not characterised by hegemonic ambitions. However, over the years, Kenya has faced existential threats, particularly from terrorist attacks. It also became clearer that the stability of Kenya was strongly linked to the stability of the region and that regional security, stability, and developments were very important for Kenya's development agenda. For example, the economically debilitating effects of the post-election violence of 2007-8 were felt across the region. This is one of the essential characteristics of a hegemon: when it sneezes, the region catches a cold.

It was against this background that the trajectory of Kenya's foreign policy took a new path in 2015; ostensibly to enable the country to play a leading role in the economic, political, and peace and security dynamics in the region. It was at this point that its foreign policy became the bedrock of its hegemonic aspirations. However, this study notes that Kenya's foreign policy objectives in and of themselves are not an indication of the hegemonic ambitions of Kenya. These are objectives which are common in the foreign policy thrusts of different states, even those which do not seek to attain

regional or global hegemony. It is the spirit and manner with and in- which the objectives were sculpted, and have been pursued, which shows Kenya's hegemonic ambitions in the region.

Through the pursuit and application of its foreign policy objectives, Kenya has emerged to be a major player in the promotion of regional peace and security, especially in respect of the war on terror in neighbouring Somalia. Kenya's role in the fight against terror and the promotion of peace and security in the region enabled it to develop strong partnership with some of the world's most powerful states, especially the USA. It is therefore argued in this study that Kenya's foreign policy has enabled the nation to emerge as an influential actor in the region.

5.3 Internal and External Challenges to Kenya's hegemonic aspirations

This study does not assert that Kenya is a regional hegemon. However, it argues that Kenya has made notable progress in the quest to be a regional hegemon. The study has established that Kenya's hegemonic aspirations have faced a number of challenges which are both internal and external. The most serious internal challenges have been violent conflicts, terrorism, and contested legitimacy. The next sections discuss the findings of the study in terms of how internal and external challenges have undermined Kenya's hegemonic aspirations in the region.

Chapter 3 of this study extensively discussed the various internal challenges and how they impact on Kenya's hegemonic ambitions. This study noted that in order for Kenya to make progress in its hegemonic aspirations, it has to be able to set, practice, and institutionalise some values, norms, and practices which are acceptable to other states in the region in particular, and the international community in general. Such values and norms should respect and promote established international norms and practices. This is important in two respects. First, it enhances the chances of Kenya to be perceived and

accepted as a state which is committed to promote and deepen universally acceptable norms and practices as illustrated by its setting the Agenda at the AU on the ICC. Second, it is important to institutionalise political, social and economic stability in the country. Taken together, these factors are important in enhancing Kenya's hegemonic aspirations.

However, Kenya has struggled with myriad internal challenges, especially contested elections which have, in some cases, witnessed the eruption of violence. The election of Uhuru Kenyatta and his running mate, William Ruto, during the 2013 elections, caused a number of challenges to many governments as they contemplated how and whether to relate with a state whose president and deputy president allegedly committed heinous crimes. However, the ICC case witnessed Kenya's intensification of its lobbying prowess, including at the AU level. This witnessed the AU's request for the suspension of the ICC cases, with some African nations threatening to withdraw from the court. There is a view that there was little enthusiasm to make Uhuru and Ruto accountable through the ICC processes because of the fear that, given the geopolitical importance of Kenya, its instability would destabilize the wider East African region.

It is argued in this study that internal challenges have undermined Kenya's hegemonic ambitions in a number of ways. First, they have tainted Kenya's image in the region and globally. Second, by focusing more on the domestic issues or internal challenges, the government has limited its ability and willingness to pursue its interests at the regional level.

5.3.1 External Challenges to Kenya's hegemonic ambition

Apart from the internal challenges, this study noted that Kenya's hegemonic ambitions have also faced challenges which are external. But it is important to note that internal and external challenges may influence each other. For example, internal challenges may influence how other states in the

region perceive and/or relate with Kenya. This can have a strong bearing on their acceptance or rejection of the country's projection of its influence. It has emerged from the study that Kenya has provided economic, social, political, and security leadership in the region. This leadership has helped to stabilize and to promote peace and security in the region.

However, as discussed in this study, it is important for the hegemon to be perceived and/or accepted as such by other states which are in the region where hegemony is sought. The question is whether countries in this region perceive and/or accept Kenya as a hegemon. But as noted in other sections of this study, a real or perceived hegemon always faces challenges from other states, especially those with hegemonic ambitions too. It is normal for hegemonic ambitions to be resisted by other states. That alleged hegemonic status is rejected/not perceived by other states is therefore not evidence that a particular country is not necessarily a hegemon.

As discussed in this study, external challenges to Kenya's hegemonic ambitions mainly emanate from economic competition from other states in the region; whether they have hegemonic ambitions or not. While there are many states in the region, the challenges have mainly emanated from countries such as Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Economically, Ethiopia is becoming increasingly powerful, while projections are that Tanzania is emerging into a big economy in East Africa. These developments pose significant challenges to Kenya's hegemonic aspirations. However, in terms of the promotion of regional peace and security, global appeal, and influence, both regionally and globally, Kenya has remained a major player.

It is important to note that the external environment offers both challenges and opportunities. To make progress, a hegemon needs to constantly counter the challenges, and to create and exploit diverse and lasting opportunities. Although Kenya has faced external challenges which are mainly of an economic nature, it has managed to create and exploit external

opportunities to advance its hegemonic ambitions in the region. It has achieved this through the use of its lobbying skills and diplomatic prowess to influence other states bilaterally and multilaterally. Singling out Kenya's engagement efforts at the AU level between 2013 and 2017, this study argues that Kenya has demonstrated that it has the capacity to influence events at the regional level. Kenya's lobbying and diplomatic efforts influenced the ways in which many African states perceive the ICC. This shows the ability of Kenya to mobilise support for its interests and ideas from other African countries. A regional hegemon which is not able to project its influence beyond the region is a weak one.

This study also noted that apart from the region, it is important for a regional hegemon to be accepted and/or perceived as such by other nations beyond the region, especially by emerging and established powers. The influence of a regional hegemon should therefore go beyond the region, and should include its ability to engage and forge strategic partnerships at the global level. This study argues that Kenya's ability to host a number of global leaders and events demonstrates the international community's confidence and trust in its role, not only in the region, but globally. It can be concluded that although Kenya's hegemonic aspirations have faced existential external challenges, the country has tried to counter them by creating and exploiting opportunities at both regional and global levels in a manner which other countries in the region have hardly matched.

5.4 Conclusion

This study used the eclectic approach to critique Kenya's aspirations, challenges, and prospects, to be a regional hegemon in Eastern Africa. The study sought to achieve two main objectives. to examine how and whether Kenya's security, economic, and foreign policy position are anchored on aspirations to be a regional hegemon; and to critique how internal and external

challenges have impacted on its hegemonic ambitions. The study argues that Kenya's foreign policy, as enacted in 2015, marked a new trajectory in its hegemonic aspirations. The country used this foreign policy to pursue these aspirations. It did this through playing a leading role in many key areas. These include the promotion of peace and security in the region, especially through the fight against terrorism; its role as a regional economic hub; the construction of infrastructure which plays a key role in regional trade and integration; the hosting of leading international events and leaders; the hosting of international organisations and institutions; and its role in hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees in the region.

However, Kenya grapples with a number of internal challenges and impediments which have undermined its hegemonic ambitions. Externally, Kenya has faced challenges from other states such as Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. In the final analysis, despite the internal and external challenges; Kenya remains very important in the political, social, economic, and peace and security dynamics in East Africa.



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