WHAT MAKES A REGIONAL HEGEMON?

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1 INTRODUCTION

“One of the biggest challenges in the 21st century is how big states relate to small states”\(^1\).

The end of bipolarity and the Cold War overlay from the various regions of the world has set alive a debate about the role of regions and regional powers in this new order. Regional powers have been studied as both facilitators and obstacles to regional institutionalisation under unipolarity; and their role as middle powers or emerging powers in global governance and international institutions has been discussed.\(^2\) Other research has looked more closely at the regional level of analysis and discussed the emergence and maintenance of “regional security complexes” or, more generally “patterns of amity and enmity” that are, among other constellations, at times dominated by one state.\(^3\)

The literature is, however, characterized by a lack of comparative studies of regional systems and regions are discussed in isolation which makes it difficult to learn about similarities and patterns but also differences and the reasons for them. This also leads to conceptual problems. The same terms are applied to different cases, but the necessary empirical links between cases are often not laid out and discussed. This, as a consequence, leads to a lack of serious theory-building about the problems and limitations of regional power, of the particular foreign policies of regional powers, or the impact of global forces on a hierarchical regional system; and the claim for idiosyncrasies and particular historical contingencies becomes reinforced. This is not to say that regions across the world are, in fact, very different from each other and that area studies, that have the possibility to deeply immerse into the local circumstances, do not contribute the bulk of knowledge on these cases. However, simply the circumstance that we use terms such as ‘regional power’ implies that they necessarily have something in common; yet inconsistent application across cases has led to a development of a plethora of different understandings and uses. Particularly the term “regional hegemon” has been contested, misused and politicized in this way; yet, despite its frequent use in single country studies.\(^4\)

One of the reasons why the application of the concept of hegemony to regional powers has caused confusion and puzzlement is that the used theories of hegemony (against which the ‘performance’ of these regional actors is tested) are intentionally stated at the global level and this is where their assumptions, such as the provision of a certain type of global public goods or the existence of a more or less loyal followership, are said to be valid. In contrast to the global hegemon, regional hegemons have

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\(^1\) Jagat S. Mehta, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India from 1976 to 1979, Speech at the Book Discussion Group at the India International Centre, 3 November 2006. This comment was made in reference to a question on how India should best relate to its small neighbouring countries in South Asia.


\(^3\) Outstanding among many others: Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), David A. Lake, "Regional Security Complexes: A Systems Approach," in Regional Orders. Building Security in a New World, ed. David A. Lake, et al. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). Both, however, neglect the inter-regional and regional-global links that make the international system so complex. Regions are discussed in isolation so that it is hard to learn about the patterns of regional power or hegemony as is intended in this study.

to operate within an overarching international system determined by the global distribution of power and by international institutions. In addition to the management of the internal regional order, a differentiation from, as well as an accommodation within, the international environment has to be established, which potentially alters the expected regional dynamics and outcomes in the hegemonic order. Both points have hardly been acknowledged in the existing literature.

Yet, there are good reasons for keeping ‘regional hegemony’ in our analytical vocabulary of International Relations. First, hegemony is a very important concept in the history of International relations. Before the concept and related theories were distorted to be applicable to American hegemony only, it was frequently used to explain a certain type of big-state small-state relations, even bilaterally. Second, as the concept is in fact commonly used even in contemporary analysis of regional relations it cannot be simply discarded, but attempts should be made to get a better understanding of what it actually means. Third, and probably most important, hegemony allows describing a particular relation in hierarchical systems, which cannot be covered by ‘regional leader’, ‘regional great power’ or ‘emerging regional power’, but which obviously exists in a world where India, South Africa and other ‘regional powers’ speak about their ‘responsibility’ as regionally most powerful states and are regularly called to ‘take care of their own backyard’ by external actors. It is my contention therefore, that if the category of ‘regional hegemony’ is to retain any significance, then a regional hegemon’s standing cannot be analyzed solely by assumptions made about hegemony at the global level. This research project is intended to consciously ask the question of “what makes a regional hegemon” and to contribute to a better understanding of the concept by looking behind much theoretical ad-hocism in its application at the regional level.

The dimensions of regional hegemony as well as the facilitating and obstructing conditions of its existence will be analyzed in case studies of India in South Asia and South Africa in Southern Africa. A comparison of these two states should give us more insight about common patterns of behaviour and thus, eventually, serve as a foundation for a new model of regional hegemony and regional power, more generally. To take into account the limits of current research on regional power, this study will explicitly consider both intra-regional and extra-regional relations as well as the implications of the hegemon’s dual or double role both on the regional and on the global level. In contrast to many new projects on the subject of regional powers, emerging powers, or middle powers, this study takes a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach. In other words, the study is a reflection of how the regional roles of these states are the ultimate fundament of their global impact.

1.1 Dimensions of regional hegemony

Underlying my reading of regional power and hegemony are the following two assumptions. First, there are different ways in which a regional power can relate to its region; simply looking at the examples of Australia, Japan, South Africa and the US in the Caribbean in the 19th/20th century illustrates why a comparison between dif-

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6 As hegemony is a complex and contested concept, the process of defining regional hegemony must be carefully designed. As space is limited here, only the outcomes of this conceptual development are presented. The actual process of conceptual analysis and development has been mainly modelled according to the propositions developed in my Master thesis on the “Hegemony in international politics. Analysis of a contested concept”. In addition, I have broadly adhered to the guidelines given in Gary Goertz, Social Science Concepts: A User’s Guide (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
different powers is valuable. The range of possible forms of relations can be conceptualized as a continuum between two corner stones – ‘lazy’ (indifferent/negligent) and ‘greedy’ (imperialistic) and hegemony somewhere in between – see Table 1 for details. Second, it is not easy being a regional hegemon. Regional hegemony, because all of its inherent tensions at the nexus of global and regional politics, is an unstable and difficult position to be in, because there are large incentives to tip over into one of the positions on opposite end of the spectrum of possible relations with the region. Also, regional hegemons tend to be challenged from both inside the region and outside the region and have to direct their foreign policies at various different audiences, ideally without contradicting themselves.

Before we, however, speculate about the reasons of when which form of relation prevails, we have to find a way of actually determining which type of relation we are dealing with. Among the many criteria that can be chosen to describe a regional hegemonic system, I believe three to be the most useful and accurate for my purposes: first, the provision of regional public goods, second, the projection of the regional power’s values and interests and third, internal and external perceptions of the regional power as a state with a special responsibility and capacity to impact on behaviours and outcomes in its sphere of influence. The three criteria have to go hand and hand with regional material preponderance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No role / indifference (lazy)</th>
<th>Hegemony</th>
<th>Imperialism (greedy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision</td>
<td>no particular interest in the region</td>
<td>positive regional public good: e.g. regional loyalty</td>
<td>negative public good, i.e. costs/exploitation, one-sidedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>values/interests – through socialization and manipulation of incentives</td>
<td>interests, through subjugation and force, threat of internal and external sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>focus on domestic/international level</td>
<td>exceptionalism/responsibility regional level of acceptance (through necessity and weakness) / expectations/demands</td>
<td>exceptionalism/superiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td>resistance/opposition/interference?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The three P.’s of regional hegemony*

7 According to Goertz, the meaning attached to a concept can be clarified by explicitly thinking about its negative pole or poles. My universe of cases consists of regional powers that are substantively more powerful than any other state within their region – therefore the pole of “non-regional hegemonic systems” can be excluded from the debate. We thus need to identify “regional non-hegemonic systems” and conceptualize these situations as negative poles. From this point of view, I will argue that regional hegemonic system has multiple negative poles – imperialism/dominance on the one hand and neglect/indifference on the other hand. A forth possible option is a situation in which none of these three options are achievable because of intervening factors that prevent the regional power from having any impact at all.

8 Triepel also makes some comments about the assumed instability of hegemony: states have a highly developed instinct for power, and the leading state is often inclined to cross the threshold between hegemony and domination. This is, in particular, due to the lack of constraints by international law and the forgetfulness of states of the limitations of power, i.e. states generally do not learn from history. See fn. 5.
This table is still work in progress. Suggestions for how to modify and complete the fields are highly appreciated.

In terms of the practical applications of these categories one has to consider that all of them are ideal types and most regional powers probably take a spot in between those points. It is also possible that, with respect to some states, a regional power acts more like a hegemon; in other cases it chooses the tools of a more imperialist state. The three “P’s” are necessarily linked with each other. While for instance, the regional level of acceptance is part of the ‘perceptions’, this acceptance is at least partially created through the ‘projection’ of values/interests and made easier through the ‘provision’ of certain goods. The values or interests projected are, in turn, dependent on the self-perception of the regional hegemon.9

The question of “What makes a regional hegemon” comprises two sub questions of, first, “what is it” and, second, “how is it possible”. In this study, we argue that regional hegemony is partially the outcome of a certain foreign policy strategy and the analysis of strategies and motivations (rather than outcomes only) are very important; regional hegemons do not, by definition, always get their way.10 But as all hegemony is fundamentally relational, foreign policy is not all there is to it. The probably best description of it is as a “role” that a state can both aspire or be brought into. Which role is adopted under what kind of circumstances, can, due to a lack of an analytical framework that includes the global level, only be answered through empirical studies that determine whether a state plays shows the characteristics of a regional hegemon, if so, discuss the circumstances of the assumption of such a role.11 Thus the limitations of regional hegemony as well as the specific differences between regional and global hegemony can be discussed in a “narrative” of South Africa’s and India’s regional relations. This introduces probably a less “generalisable” element into the study as history and path-dependency will certainly play a quite considerable role, but nevertheless the three criteria for regional hegemony will be studied with the aspiration for general applicability.

1.2 Some notes on methods

The two selected case studies are India and South Africa in the post-Cold War period. Both case studies will, first, look at the anterior conditions of regional hegemony, i.e. material preponderance in both economic and military terms and the boundaries of the respective region. The historical background to both case studies will be discussed.12 Very often, the historically idiosyncratic development in the regions has led to a path of dependent developments that have locked a region into a particular “pattern of amity or enmity” that is unique to its specific setting in time and place. Nevertheless, I will argue that it is possible and desirable to look at the similarities as well as the differences in how this so-called “big-state small-state” dilemma plays out in the different regions. A comparison across different regions would allow determining “which forms of behaviour are ‘universally’ regional and which are peculiar to specific types of regions”.13

9 Thus, all the secondary dimensions of regional hegemony are ‘necessary’ and linked with a logical AND. Goertz, Social Science Concepts.
11 One idea that is followed up is the idea of tipping points between ‘no role’ and hegemony, as well as hegemony and imperialism.
12 While in the original research for this study, extended discussions of the historical background of both cases are included, they are not presented in this paper.
The three dimensions of regional hegemony – provision, projection and perceptions (internal and external) – will be traced within the broader context of the Indian and the South African case studies, several sub- or within-case studies will be used to provide more concrete examples and insights into the conditions and mechanism of regional power. The two case studies of India and South Africa serve to illustrate the significance of the developed conceptual framework and to give some empirical insights of how the achievement of a regional hegemonic position is possible, but also how it is facilitated, hindered or obstructed. Due to a lack of theoretical frameworks, I will approach the case studies in an inductive way, however, guided by the dimensions of regional hegemony as outlined here. In terms of the assessment of the ‘how possible’ question, I will look at factors on the domestic, but more importantly on the regional and global level as well as where these levels overlap and possibly contradict each other in their incentives and tendencies. As previously announced, a particular focus will be set on the global-regional nexus with the help of questions such as:

- What is the role of external actors in the region with respect to the provision of public goods and in general?
- Do external actors expect a ‘leading role’ of the regional power?
- What are the regional power’s perceptions of the own role in the region? What are the regional power’s perceptions of the own role on the global level? Does the regional power prioritize the regional or global level?

This tracing of the processes and mechanism of regional power and hegemony will substantially add to the literature on regions and power. Are there any patterns of the regional power relates to its region? How does it cope with expectations of the global level? How do changes at the global level in general impact on regional hegemony? What does this overlap of activities at the global-regional nexus mean for the effectiveness of exercising regional hegemony?

This paper, will only present some insights into the South African case, yet some research has also been concluded on India in South Asia. After the discussion of the anterior conditions and the demarcations of the region of Southern Africa, the second part of the case study will tell the story of South African hegemony with the help of one of three more detailed within-case studies – the ‘Zimbabwean issue’ in Southern African from 2001 to 2006. The other within-case studies are the South African-initiated reform of the Southern African Customs Union in 2002 and the SADC-led intervention in Lesotho in 1997. All of these within-case studies have taken place in slightly different moments of South Africa post-Apartheid regional relations and at the same time constitute instances in different issue-areas, i.e. the political-human rights field (Zimbabwe), the field of economic and trade cooperation (SACU) and peace and security (Lesotho).

1.3 A brief note on case selection

It might be viewed critically that only two case studies are selected and both are actually – at least in parts – cases of regional hegemony. This might cause a bias in the actual determination of how the achievement of regional hegemony is possible. Yet, in the early stages of a research project the focus on two cases with hegemonic attributes, seems to be the only way to begin. For these particular cases – and their within-
case studies – it can be shown if any pattern at all can be observed and whether the proposed dimensions of regional hegemony apply in a way that make the pathways of regional power more comprehensible. In considering both commonalities and idiosyncracies of the two cases of India and South Africa I subscribe to the following statement: The comparative analysis of two potential regional hegemons “together provides one useful way of opening up a series of questions about the pathways of power that are, or have been available to them and about the explanatory factors that might shed light on these varies pathways”.

As the study of regional powers involves a combination of domestic, regional and global level explanatory factors, I hope, rather than looking at one particular variable that explains the assumption of a regional hegemonic role, to identify what could be called the ‘scope conditions’ of regional hegemony.

2 SOUTH AFRICA AS A CASE OF REGIONAL HEGEMONY?

2.1 Competing accounts of South Africa as a regional player

To provide a context for my discussion of South Africa’s role in Southern Africa, I will give a short overview of the existing accounts and perceptions. So what is South Africa’s role in the region said to be and what should it be?

The literature is characterized by a contraposition of various key terms, such as partnership vs. hegemony, pivot vs. hegemon; others speak about South Africa as “emerging regional power” as opposed to a “traditional middle power”. This debate carried out between various scholars is at times polarized and particularly the term hegemon is attached with negative connotations that are hardly justified looking at the more general use of the term in International Relations. Also, often lacking analytical rigour and clarity, the debate is prescriptive and discusses how, if at all, South Africa’s superior economic and military power should be used and whether or not South Africa actually has “moral power”. This also means that important concepts, such as hegemony and pivot often remain unexplained and are thus used in a way which overly simplifies the issue as one of either partnership or hegemony. As a consequence, scholars make conflicting. Whereas Nathan claims that “South Africa has not played the role of a regional hegemon and driven the integration project [...] Its lack of assertiveness might be due to its tensions with Zimbabwe, limited sway over its neighbours and sensitivity to fears that it would bully them [...]”, White assumes that the “so-called emerging powers of the South are often seen by their neighbours as regional imperialists [...] In Africa, South Africa is the undisputed economic power and its influence is demonstrated in its approach to continent-wide development initiatives.”

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18 Laurie Nathan, *The Absence of Common Values and Failure of Common Security in Southern Africa, 1992-2003*, Working Paper No. 50 (London: Crisis State Programme/London School of Economics, 2004), 21. This publication is typical for many of the discussion, stating that space constraints in his research preclude any discussion of the actual or potential role of South Africa in the region; and thus no empirical evidence is provided in any systematic way to prove assumptions. In this way, much ‘knowledge’ about South Africa’s role has been transported without a clear understanding where the statements
Another early example of the contraposition of allegedly irreconcilable strategies is the 1992 discussion of the ‘three scenarios’ for South Africa’s economic relations after Apartheid by the current Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry Rob Davies and then Professor of political economy. The first scenario is a “South Africa first” approach in which the state and South African business pursue narrow and short-term economic interests irrespective of the needs of the region. This reflects the imperialistic position of this study. The second scenario is described as “integration under South African hegemony”. South Africa, in this approach, initiates regional cooperation and integration, but “largely shaped by its own narrow interests and aspirations to regional hegemony”. This would eventually intensify regional inequities as well as regional tensions. The third scenario of “non-hegemonic regional co-operation and integration” was seen as preferable by Davies and in a personal interview he confirmed that this is what currently best characterizes South Africa’s relations with the region. Yet, the description as ‘non-hegemonic regional cooperation’ as well as the overly negative connotation of hegemony misses that in most places of the world, ‘partnership’ is an incremental element of hegemony and hegemonic strategies.

A more practical approach is one that focuses on the actual capacities of South Africa to fulfil any particular, burden-carrying role in Southern Africa. According to one school of thought, calling for realistic modesty, South Africa’s internal challenges of economic underdevelopment and inequality distract it from pursuing a consistent foreign policy in the region. Other clear limits to South Africa’s role are posed by its ‘miniscule’ resources, in international terms. This is an argument for a more withdrawn, domestic-focused approach to the region, which would probably fit best into the category of indifference/neglect. Also external observers such as Buzan and Weaver come to the conclusion that there is a relative clarity in the structure of the Southern African region because of the central role played by South Africa as the regional great power. Nevertheless, the blame for an apparently paralysed regional security community is laid on South Africa for failing to provide leadership, for being inward-looking on solving its own problems of crime, AIDS and unemployment.

A second concept de- and prescribing South African moderation is the one of a pivotal state. Mainly advocated in this form by Chris Landsberg, it is argued that “a pivotal state is one that in comparison to its neighbours is, ipso facto, a powerful state. [...] The pivot state is influential in a region because the internal development in such a state or lack thereof is so significant, that it typically holds major implications for the states in its immediate region.” This usage of the concept of “pivotal state” is, however, flawed for several reasons. First, and probably most significant, its origin – at least in the contemporary use – lies in a publication of American scholars claiming that the United States should focus its development aid donations and other strategic resources on a “small number of countries whose fate is uncertain and whose future will profoundly affect their surrounding region.” Thus, pivotal states are ‘instruments’ to preserve the status quo in the ‘new world order’. Second, while they are assumed to have an important effect on their region and have economic capacities,

20 Interview with Robert Davies, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Department of Trade and Industry, Pretoria, 7 August 2006.
22 Buzan and Waever, Regions and Powers, 235.
there is actually no threshold, in relative and absolute terms, when a state crosses the line to being a pivot. So, in theory (and in practice) there can be several pivotal states in a region; in Southern Africa probably Zimbabwe, Angola and a potentially stable DRC in the future can be pivotal states.

Thus, the concept is one of description rather than of analysis, which makes no distinction between various levels of ‘importance’ and influence. A pivotal state is an “important” state, but it says nothing about the responsibilities it has in the region, the kind of influence it has and how it is exerting this influence. It almost seems, therefore, that the term is used merely to avoid using “hegemony” or “leadership” or “regional great power” fearing it might be misunderstood as a South African ambition to exploit and suppress. South Africa is argued to fit the description of a ‘pivot’ as it, allegedly, has rejected any hegemonic ambition and it directs its energies towards domestic challenges. Additionally, the claims made have not been backed up by empirical data. This seems to be a general problem in the discussion – many assumptions are made about South Africa’s regional policies, but little is actually traced about its underlying principles, strategies, but also the effects, its limits and its constraints.

Other approaches, instead of pointing at the limits of South Africa’s role, direct more attention to its special responsibilities, a position that South Africa only fulfils at times. As an “emerging middle power” (which is a synthesis of middle power and emerging power to create a contrast to ‘traditional’ middle powers), South Africa shoulders “responsibility for stability and order” in its region. This category also attempts to provide a more analytical conceptualization of what South Africa ‘is’, rather than an subjective stance on what South Africa should be. It is an attempt to make a more general statement about a ‘new type of middle power’ that is part of the developing world, and simultaneously takes a position as a regional power. Yet, overall, as middle power leadership is an extremely ambiguous theoretical obstruct, I think a further expansion of the concept to also include regional powers leads to overstretching and, as a consequence, makes it meaningless.

The forth influential idea about what role South Africa does or should play is employed by South African scholars that advocate a more active approach in the region. This role is called ‘hegemonic’, but also the terms of regional superpower or regional leader are used. At times, South Africa is argued to fulfil the expectations that come with the application of these categories, for instance in the negotiations of regional economic relations, in the promotion of the African Renaissance and institutional reforms of SADC as well as the intervention in Lesotho (which, by those authors is largely regarded as a success with regard to its long term positive influence on the political stability in Lesotho). Also, South Africa’s private sector contributes to this by being the largest investor in Southern Africa. Thus, South Africa should and could be a hegemon, (defined by Adam Habib as leadership, initiative, a political and socio-economic vision and the political willingness to implement this vision), which would be both in South Africa’s but also the region’s interests. Yet, currently, the foreign policy of South Africa is allegedly ‘schizophrenic’ as seen in the Zimbabwean issue

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26 Interview with Professor Adam Habib, Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, 28 July 2007.
28 An important point to notice, which probably creates some of the confusion between the term of middle power and regional power or hegemon understandable, regional hegemon’s behaviour – if we only look at the actual outcomes – might seem very similar to that of classical middle powers. Thus, a regional power’s kind of influence might look similar to the influence of a middle power which also prefer a cooperative style of policy-making and negotiations. Cf. Detlef Nolte, Macht Und Machthierarchien in Den Internationalen Beziehungen: Ein Analysekonzept Für Die Forschung Über Regionale Führungsmaehte, vol. 29, Giga Working Papers (Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies, 2006), 40-1.
and, for instance, in relation to the DRC. This way of looking at South Africa’s regional, however, also has its deficits. It makes hegemony exclusively a matter of South Africa deciding to be one. Hegemony, as said above, is both the outcome of a foreign policy strategy but also, and maybe even more importantly, a relational concept which depends on constraints and facilitation from outside. Second, it remains unclear what leadership means and what the region should be led to. This study will contribute to this strand of thinking by looking specifically at the provision of regional public goods in the local context.

### 2.2 South Africa’s regional position today

#### 2.2.1 What is South Africa’s region?

The first step of the analysis of South Africa’s position in its region obviously requires a good understanding of what constitutes South Africa’s region in the first place. There are various criteria for the definition of a region, mostly the more geographical features of proximity as well as an internal and external recognition of the boundaries of this region. The decisive factors in this study are a regional pattern of interactions, geographical proximity, and the internal and external recognition of the region as distinctive area.

While generally, the discussed regions here are taken as given based on the existing literature; a legitimate question is whether we can analytically differentiate between South Africa’s African and Southern African politics. Southern Africa traditionally consisted of the countries south of the Zambezi River. This broadly corresponded with the dimensions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Since 1997, however, the DRC is member of the SADC and it remains contested whether the boundaries of the Southern African region moved northwards with this expansion. The economic rationale for this is strong and the African Development Bank (ADB) justifies the inclusion of (then) Zaire into its study of Southern African regional economic integration, by focusing on the importance of its hydroelectric resources and mineral potential to Southern Africa. The copper industry in the early 20th century also closely linked at least the southern part of the Congo (the Katanga region) to the rest of Southern Africa. This is reflected in maps that show the rail network linking Katanga to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola. A pragmatic way of dealing with this is to adopt a flexible approach to the ‘region’ which account for a variable geometry suggesting, for instance, that for different issue areas, and for instance, economic

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30 A more historical analysis of Southern Africa as a region can be found in Larry W. Bowman, “The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa,” *International Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1968).
31 African Development Bank, *Economic Integration in Southern Africa. Executive Summary* (Abidjan: African Development Bank, 1993), 3. It is often said that South Africa actively solicited DRC’s admission to the SADC. As quite a few other states, however, profit from the DRC’s membership into SADC in terms of mineral wealth and hydro-power, for instance, and no conclusive results could be deduced from interviews or the analysis of the few available government resources, this must remain a point open for discussion and analysis. Cf. Carole J.L. Collins, “Southern Africa: A New Congo in a New Region,” *Southern Africa Report Archive* 13, no. 3 (1998).
32 Maps not included here. Also, as an ethnic group, people in Katanga seems to be closer to their Southern African than to their Central or East African neighbours or even its fellow DRC citizens: “Katanga is at present a frontier state and forms a useful buffer defending the northern border of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. There is no natural border between Katanga and the Federation – groups of the same tribes live on both sides of the frontier.” Gerhard Everwyn, “Which Way in Katanga?”, *African Affairs* 61, no. 243 (1962): 151. Cf. Timothy M. Shaw, “Southern Africa: Co-Operation and Conflict in an International Sub-System,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 4 (1974): 655.: “I share [the] disagreement with those theorists who take the view that a state can belong to only one sub-system; the variety of memberships in different issues areas is contrary to this proposition. Moreover, as Grundy notes, it is feasible for a part of a state to be incorporated in another sub-system: Katanga under Tshombe was really an extension of Southern Africa.”
sectors, we can treat the region differently. In this case, SACU can be understood as the core region, which is well established and strongly institutionalized, and SADC as a more lose construct, which nevertheless describes a membership to an externally and internally acknowledged community of states, which have closer relation amongst each other than with the rest of the world. Occasionally, with respect to South Africa’s regional hegemony it also becomes necessary to refer to Africa as a whole, as the spheres remain difficult to differentiate.

Beyond establishing the physical boundaries of South Africa’s region, we have to assess whether Southern Africa is a ‘policy target’ for South Africa of its own or whether it is an indistinguishable part of South Africa’s broader African diplomacy. Good reasons can be found for looking at Africa as a whole, among them the existence of important continental institutions to South Africa such as the African Union and NEPAD, the existence of a pan-African ideology and (almost) uncontested boundaries of Africa as a region.

Yet, it is only in Southern Africa that South Africa has unique material advantage and where no second or third competitor in terms of size of population and GDP is present. Southern Africa also has its distinctive regional organization with SADC and various historical factors, which among other led to dense and distinctive net of transport and other infrastructure extending within the boundaries of the region but not outside them and well as very “South Africa-focused” patterns of labour migration from the Southern African countries and the rail and infrastructure links discussed above. Thus, Southern Africa is characterized by a history of colonialism and dependence that left structural marks in the spheres of energy, transport and infrastructure that are difficult to overcome even today, so have to be acknowledged in the evaluation of South Africa’s power position in Southern Africa. Beyond these more material factors, we can further point at the internal and external acknowledgements of the distinctiveness of current Southern African politics. The idea of “concentric circles” seems to adequately describe the foreign policy strategy of the ANC:

“We have a special relationship with the peoples of Southern Africa, all of whom have suffered under apartheid […]. The region sustained us during our struggle and our destiny is intertwined with the region; our peoples belong with each other. Southern Africa is, therefore, a pillar upon which South Africa’s foreign policy rests”

Sub-regions and their institutional bodies are seen as the building blocks of continental cooperation in Africa. And while there are obvious commonalities, inter-linkages and mutual influences of South Africa’s Africa and Southern African policies, there is a general trend among foreign policy-makers and the broader foreign-policy elite to acknowledge the distinctiveness in policies, characterized by at least partially diverse principles. The same is valid for policy-makers in the rest of Southern Africa, who reiterate their belonging to one region with a common history, for instance, by frequent references to the liberation struggle in public speeches. Historically, there

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34 This is illustrated in Bowman, "Subordinate State System."
35 Term – with respect to South African foreign policy – has been coined by Chris Landsberg, see for example: Chris Landsberg, "Toward a Developmental Foreign Policy? Challenge for South Africa’s Diplomacy in the Second Decade of Liberation," Social Research 72, no. 3 (2005): 731. This view has been confirmed in interviews with senior officials from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Foreign Affairs, July-August 2006.
37 In 11 out of 12 interviews in which this specific question has been asked, the interviewees (six academics, six government officials) agreed that South Africa’s Africa policies and Southern African policies can be differentiated.
seems no question that the concerned states have seen themselves as members of a Southern African region and have been “drawn together by powerful economic demands that are met in spite of fundamental political differences”, even throughout the years of Apartheid.38

“Southern Africa can be seen as analytically different from Africa because of the purpose of SADC, because of economic dependence and because of heritage of liberation struggle – SA would not break with them”.39

2.2.2 Material preponderance

South Africa has for the most time been and most likely will continue to be in the near and mid-term future the pole of economic activity in Southern Africa. Its economic preponderance in terms of GDP, industrial output and competitiveness is almost indisputable. South Africa produces approximately 80% of SADC’s GDP, the trade imbalance is at about 7:1 in South Africa’s favour, the overall economic output of South Africa ranges at about US$ 160 million (in 2004), whereas the other 13 SADC states jointly produce only about US$ 33 million. South Africa also dominates foreign direct investment in Southern Africa.40 These numbers are at times contested because Botswana overtook South Africa in terms of per capita GDP in 2000. In 2005, Botswana had a per capita income of US$ 3819, while South Africa was listed with US$ 3542.41 Also, the income distribution and levels of poverty are lower in Botswana. This, however, is not reflected in the kind of role that Botswana could play in the region with a population of just over one million.42

Other economically related factors that give an idea of South Africa’s dominance are the fact that one half- of the region’s paved roads and railroads as well as the seven largest ports are in South Africa, in addition to a near monopoly on both telephones and host computers.43 South Africa remains by far the biggest consumer of electricity and accounts for 82% of all consumption in SADC. Eskom is the fourth biggest power generator in the world and dominates the sector in all of Africa.44 The distance between South Africa and its neighbours becomes even more distinct if we compare some global data: South Africa is the only (Southern) African country which is listed on the World Competitiveness Scoreboard of 2006, on rank 60 between Portugal and Slovenia.45 South Africa was referred to rank 37 by Angola on 34 as top trading partner with the United States from Southern Africa. This is, however, exclusively based on Angolan oil imports to the United States whereas South Africa trades a fairly di-

39 Interview with Roger Southall. The basic notion expressed here has been repeated in almost all interviews with South African academics.
41 World Development Indicators, Edition September 2006 (Constant 2000 US$)
42 In addition, if we take a Purchasing Power Parity measure of per capita GDP, which often is considered as a more appropriate but also a more speculative measure of a countries economic strength, South Africa is still ahead of Botswana. Botswana, 2005: US$ 9651.68 (constant 2000 international US$); South Africa, 2005: US$ 11043.64.
45 http://www.imd.ch/research/publications/wcy/upload/Overall%202006.pdf
versified range of commodities in with the United States. All other SADC countries are basically meaningless as both importers and exporters of US goods.46

There are several perspectives on South Africa’s relative military potency in its region. While, for instance, it falls behind in terms of the actual size of the army and the proportion of GDP dedicated to the defence budget, its overall economic preponderance means that its defence budget in absolute terms tops by far any other SADC members’ budget.47 And even if South Africa has a smaller force in terms of military personnel, it has control over a superior number of heavy weapons.48 This equipment is often described as hopelessly outdated, but measures have been taken to turn this situation around. As an outcome of the Defence Review Paper of 1998, “which determined that the specific force design required for South Africa should be a high-technology core force, sized for peacetime, but which could be expanded to meet an emerging threat”,49 the Cabinet decided on a 12-year Strategic Armaments Package (SAP).

A critical assessment of South Africa’s military spending does however direct attention at the relatively low percentage of the GDP that goes towards the defence budget, which arguably puts pressure on the military and the many international tasks, for instance, in the DRC, Darfur and Burundi (Table x). It has been called into question whether the South African military can actually fulfil the expectations and play an important role in all kinds of peace support missions across the region and the African continent as a whole. The deployment of SANDF troops on non-domestic operations has grown by 22.8% between 2002 and 2005, but the budget for this item is calculated to increase just by 3.3%. While this might be sufficient to maintain current deployments, it only allows little room for manoeuvre should other situations arise. In addition, the financing of the additional commitments to purchase between eight and fourteen A400N transport aircrafts between 2010 and 2014 is unclear.50

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Overall, the SAP nevertheless reflects that South Africa is the only country in the region that can and does expand its military capabilities in any notable way. It has started naval procurement programmes that make its ships the most well-armed and capable in the region – South Africa is also the only country with sub-surface capabilities. It upgraded its air capabilities and started a production of an indigenous air defence missile in 2002.51 Nothing in these dimensions could be accomplished by any

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46 http://www.ita.doc.gov/id/industry/otea/usfth/top80cty/top80cty.html (Data of the International Trade Administration)
47 South Africa’s defence expenditure was cut by 50% in real terms from 1989 to 1997 – but South Africa was a highly militarized state at the end of Apartheid. South Africa’s defence budget was at 4.6% of GDP in 1989/90, and it decreased to 1.6% 1999/2000. It currently (2006) stands at 1.5% despite regular increases of funding of SANDF since 2000. Data from Theo Neethling, "South Africa’s Military Potency: Too Lean or Too Mean?," Africa Insight 32, no. 4.
49 Ibid.; 63.
50 "Sub-Saharan Africa," Military Balance 106, no. 1 (2006): 351. According to the acting chief director of budget management the first instalment in 2005 amounted to R788m of which R300m was obtained by cutting payments on other projects, another R163 from stringent cash flow management and R98m from military pension fund.
of the other SADC states or, for that matter and with a few exceptions, in Africa so that, overall, I think one can reasonably reach the conclusion that South Africa is both economically and militarily predominant in Southern Africa, though its economic dominance is more pronounced.

In addition to mere economic and military dominance, and probably enabled by these resources, South Africa can also claim to have the best academic institutions with the highest influx from students from all over Africa. Its NGO sector is very experienced and helps to promote the South African ‘mission’ all over Africa. Training facilities, secondment of high calibre personnel, for instance to SADC but also OAU – turns this material preponderance into actual influence.

### 2.3 What makes or denies South African regional hegemony?

One of the benefits of this study of regional hegemony is that it attempts to develop and apply indicators for regional hegemony. This allows us to look at different cases in a comparative way and to see how each of the potential hegemons actually fares with respect to the three inter-linked dimensions of projection, provision and perception. This will constitute a considerable improvement to the prevalent discussions as it, first, makes assumptions and indicators explicit, and, second, allows for contextual factors to be included into the analysis (for instance with respect to the kinds of regional goods provided). It also specifically makes room for the incorporation of factors concerning the position of regional hegemons at the nexus of regional and global politics. As first step, as said, I will look at the three dimensions in general and see whether South Africa makes a plausible candidate for regional hegemony.

#### 2.3.1 Perception

**Internal**

Under the heading of the self-perception, I will discuss what is often described as the necessary political willingness to assume a hegemonic role. I would like to, however, avoid the terminology of political willingness as it assumes a fairly directional hegemonic project on part of the regional power and I would like to leave it open to empirical observation whether an explicit priority for the establishment of a regional hegemonic system has to exist or whether a regional power can also get pushed and pulled into this direction. A “sense of exceptionalism” is nevertheless hypothesized to link regional powers that become regional hegemons. The second aspect which will be examined here are the global role conception and ambitions of the regional power, i.e. what kind of role the state wants to play and finds appropriate for itself on the global level. It is possible, for instance, that those regional and global roles create conflictual prescriptions of behaviour or that one role is prioritized over the other. In the analysis of national role conceptions and the sense of exceptionalism, we have to go beyond the analysis of public statements. Very often, especially in the case of South Africa, the public rhetoric is coined by statements that deny any ‘hegemonic aspirations’ and emphasize the need for equal partnerships among the states of the region. Yet, often actions seem to paint a very different picture – and thus, the factor of self-perception was an important feature in the interviews I have carried out with both academics and government officials in India and South Africa.

The self-perceptions of a state can at least partially be deduced from official documents that describe the key principles of its foreign policy. In the case of South Africa,
a plethora of sources is available. The South African constitution enshrines, for instance, the “encouragement of global peace and stability and the participation in the process of ensuring regional peace, stability and development” as core values. Similar general statements and declarations of intent are reflected in key national documents such as the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peacekeeping Missions. There, six key principles for South Africa’s foreign policy are listed.

1. The commitment to promotion of human rights;
2. The commitment to promotion of democracy;
3. The commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations;
4. The commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed-upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts;
5. The commitment to the interests of Africa in world affairs;
6. The commitment to the economic development through regional and international cooperation in an inter-dependent world.

Other sources of South African foreign policy are the annual discussions about the strategic policy priorities in the Cabinet lekgotla, the Strategic Plans of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the State of the Nation addresses of the President in Parliament, the Government’s Programme of Action – International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster, government and opposition party election manifestos and, as one of the basis of the ANC’s principles, the 1956 Freedom Charter. In the 2002 Annual Report of the DFA, the guiding principles have been refined to refer to “wealth creation” and security, a commitment to African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all, i.e. strengthening solidarity among developing countries of the South and building partnerships with developed countries of the North which constituted an adaptation of official principles to the actual reality of South African Foreign Policy.

Yet, despite the combination of these far-reaching principles and, apparently, the material capacities to implement them, South Africa, at least rhetorically, has been very timid in confirming both domestic and external expectations of adopting a more influential role in Southern Africa. This has several reasons, one of which certainly is the historical background of South Africa’s relations with its neighbours. As has been show earlier, the ANC foreign policy priorities are firmly rested in “cooperation and equality” in the neighbourhood. Second, however, the prevalent assumption among the South African foreign policy elite of “regional hegemons always playing a negative role”, leads to a ferocious rejection of that term. This is a common feature of regional powers. A ‘strategy of denial’ might be actually necessary to maintain the unstable equilibrium by avoiding the negative consequences of being seen as an imperialistic state.

Early documents of the post-Apartheid South African government on foreign policy principles and its regional policies are, however, much more explicit in talking about the ‘responsibilities’ of South Africa than more recent statements. There are good rea-
sons to believe that statements such as the following would probably be avoided today.

“The economic development of the region is being promoted by demonstrating through South African moral leadership that good governance and democracy are essential prerequisites for development.”

“South Africa should assume a leadership role in Africa in all those areas where a constructive contribution can be made without politically antagonizing the country’s African partners.”

This shows, above all, the importance of learning in South African foreign-policy making. Jakkie Cilliers described this as the “enthusiasm of the newly converted [...] sometimes naïve and unrealistic about foreign policy”. Over time, a more sober and pragmatic assessment has taken over, and the ‘strategies of denial’ are more prevalent. But essentially, the behaviour of the South African government in at least some cases gives no indication that the underlying substance of this earlier conviction has changed where as probably the strategies in how to implement these principles did throughout a period of adjustment. Awareness of South Africa’s ‘special responsibilities’ as well as South Africa’s regional and international profile and the associated demands are shown till today, as well as clear expressions of its own ‘exceptionalism’; for instance in the White Paper on the Participation in Peacekeeping Missions:

“South Africa provides the international community with a unique example of how a country, having emerged from a deeply divided past, can negotiate a peaceful transition based on its own conflict-resolution techniques and its own vision of meaning and enduring development.”

Also, in speeches and statements of South African foreign policy-makers this self-perception becomes clear.

“For our collective experiences as South Africans have placed us in a unique position to understand the challenges facing humanity [...] ours is a reality of two nations, one developed and wealthier, the other marginalised and poor [...]. Hence we have committed our foreign policy to the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment and for the transformation of the continent and the global environment.”

From statements as the above, we can deduce an identity of South African exceptionalism in terms of its foreign policy identity as well as an expectation to be seen as a natural leader. This sense of exceptionalism has both a regional and a global dimension. With respect to the global level, the cooperation in IBSA, the strive for a reform of the United Nations Security Council and its leading roles in the Non-Aligned Movement and UNCTAD are just a few examples.

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57 Ibid. ([cited]).  
58 Cilliers, “Foreign Policy Identity.”  
60 Address by Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa at the Africa Institute of South Africa International Conference *South Africa: Ten Years After Apartheid*, City Hall, Pretoria, 26 March 2004.  
Especially in Parliament, the endeavour for a permanent seat for South Africa in the UN Security Council is a matter of cross-party consensus.\(^{62}\) This has been confirmed in interviews with South African government officials.\(^{63}\) The pursuit of a permanent seat in the UN Security Council also serves as a good example for the difficulties for South Africa in promoting itself as a regional leader and representative, even if it has the conviction that “it could probably do the job best”.\(^{64}\) South African proposals that were negotiated with the so-called G-4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) were forcefully rejected by other (Southern) African states that insisted on rotating African seats.\(^{65}\) South Africa has, thus, so far not openly promoted itself for a permanent seat. The official line is that “it was much more important to first secure two permanent seats for Africa. […] Once the seats had been secured it would launch its campaign”.\(^{66}\)

Yet, unofficially, there is a fairly strong conviction that South Africa is the appropriate African candidate and it seems that, while Nigeria and Egypt have launched more public campaigns, South Africa has chosen to play the ‘financial game’: “We will offer to pay more dues for the AU than anybody else. We will offer to host key institutions of the continent like the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), and if we have foot the bill initially, we will do. We will host the PAP and we will build the building – we will pay for it”.\(^{67}\)

South Africa’s engagement in IBSA also shows a similar inclination towards striving for a global role as regional representative.\(^{68}\) Overall, a duality in South Africa’s foreign policy can be attested. This is both the basis for South Africa’s role as a bridge between North and South, but it also has negative repercussions.

“The diplomatic engagement of Africa displays the same ambivalence — almost as if South Africans do not understand Africa. Certainly, South Africa subscribes to different rules and criteria than do much of the rest of Africa. And when Thabo Mbeki, in frustration, throws this into the face of fellow Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders, as he did in Swakopmund on 27 July 1998, the result is more than a murmur of hostility among de facto life presidents and heads of state”.\(^{69}\)

This again, at times leads to an overcompensation on behalf of the South African government; and as stated above, it resorts to denying its own impact almost paranoidally - “It is often jokingly tagged as the ‘America of Africa’ by other Africans and takes the dig seriously. It knows that there is a lot of resentment of its size, its relative success and still, its whiteness.”\(^{70}\)

**External**

What makes hegemony so hard to understand is that it is both positional and relational. While material preponderance is a precondition of hegemony, there is no he-

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\(^{62}\) Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee, *United Nations Reform: Minister's Briefing*, 31 August 2005.: “All Parties […] also wanted to know about South Africa and the Department’s strategy regarding winning a permanent seat in the Security Council”.

\(^{63}\) Interviews in Pretoria, 8 July 2006.

\(^{64}\) Ibid.

\(^{65}\) At the same time though, a leading negotiator for South Africa in issues of United Nations reform, claimed that when push comes to shove, the SADC states would like to see South Africa as a permanent member rather than Nigeria or Egypt or other states outside the region; Interview, Pretoria, 8 August 2006.

\(^{66}\) *United Nations Reform: Minister's Briefing*.

\(^{67}\) Interview with Chris Landsberg, Centre for Policy Research, 18 July 2006, Pretoria.

\(^{68}\) White, "Developing Ibsa."


Hegemony without the acknowledgement of others. A factor that needs to be briefly discussed is the well-known assumption that a hegemon needs followers and that, for that reason, the secondary states need to voluntarily follow and emulate the hegemon. Heinrich Triepel puts this wisely into perspective. He claims that states in general are hesitant to “joyfully embrace” the lead of others. Most of the time, the acceptance of a hegemon is much more founded on utility or necessity, but, above all, the realization of the own weaknesses. Thus, resistance to hegemony is not necessarily a sign for the absence of hegemony. Resistance is normal and we should expect especially rhetorical resistance of most of the secondary states.

From very early on, some of the leading figures of Southern Africa called upon South Africa to take up its responsibilities as a larger, more resourceful state. For instance, the former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere made a strong call at South Africa’s national Assembly for South Africa to play a more active role in the continent, particularly with respect to the then ongoing conflicts in Angola and the Congo. He clearly dismissed the fears of a big brother South Africa and stated that its superior comparative power is a responsibility. The country should not hide by false modesty or shyness as isolationism of that kind is often an excuse for selfishness: “I am not afraid of an active South Africa, I am afraid of a selfish South Africa”.

Simultaneously, South Africa is also greeted with much suspicion and at times hostility. South Africa’s role in the history of the region is of course an important factor in this and often a reason for South Africa’s caution in its interactions with its neighbours. A second major issue causing tensions with the neighbouring states is the role of South African businesses in Southern Africa. The South African government is taunted with acting hypocritically by tolerating exploitative behaviour by South African businesses in Southern Africa. It has to be kept in mind, however, that these are mostly entirely private enterprises, in whose affairs the South African government can, beyond calling for restraint, hardly intervene, We can, in addition, assume that at least some of these accusations are directed at a domestic audience only, while simultaneously most Southern African countries have at some point in time lobbied strongly for a bilateral trade agreements with South Africa and have emphasized the importance of South African investment for their economies.

In sum, while ‘true followership’ might be unlikely in Southern Africa, the question of a regional level of acceptance of South Africa’s special role and the consequential demands on South Africa to act in accordance with that responsibility can be answered in the affirmative.

The effect of global support remains ambiguous at the moment. Global perceptions and expectations are not directly an element of the definition of regional hegemony, yet, as said in the introduction, they are intrinsically part of what it means being a regional hegemon and are, presumably, part of the scope conditions that facilitate or hinder regional hegemony. South Africa’s ‘miracle’ transition played an important role in raising high expectations on South Africa. A new democratic South Africa be-

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71 Peter Fabricius, "Nyerere Urges Sa to Become Involved in Africa's Salvation," The Star, 16 October 1997.
72 “South Africa, conscious of its obligations to assist with political reconciliation and economic reconstruction sent Deputy President Jacob Zuma to Luanda during April 2002 to consult with the Angolan government and to assess the country’s political and material needs”. During this meeting, Zuma asked President Santos on behalf of President Mbeki “what South Africa can do, because it is ready to take part in the Angolan peace process”. "S. Africa Offers Help to Angola's Peace Process," Xinhua General News Service, 23 April 2002. This has led to a new strategy of South African humanitarian assistance to Angola, among others, in the form of maize deliveries and the establishment of a Joint Committee of Cooperation (JCC) (sources?)
73 Interview with Nhamo Samasuwo, Institute for Global Dialogue, Midrand, 15 August 2006.
74 Interview with Friede Dowie, Chief Officer Strategic Services, Business Unity South Africa, Johannesburg, 2 August 2006.
came a “beacon of light” in what seemed a conflict-ridden, desperate African continent. The international community, particularly Western donors, hoped that South Africa’s economy could pull others along as a ‘locomotive of growth’; that it could bring peace and stability to Southern Africa, strengthen regional organizations and take a leading role in African conflicts.75 These high expectations were partially tied to the persona of Nelson Mandela but important elements of this remain till this day.

On the one side, this promises advantaged access to international institutions and donors. It potentially allows influencing decision-making that will affect the region. It also, in some way, makes South Africa factually more important, as it is the only one with this privileged form of access. On the other hand, this treatment as a representative and as a natural regional leader can impact negatively on regional relations. Alden and Vieira express their concern that “by conferring the status of regional leader upon emerging states in the developing world, actively encouraged in multilateral settings such as the WTO or the G7/8 [...] the industrial states effectively shepherd weaker states into a subordinate hierarchical framework.”76 Hence, this role as intermediary is often not appreciated by other (Southern) African states.

Global-regional overlaps can also take the form of enabling the secondary states to ‘resist’ South African leadership. However, this is probably mostly relevant in regions that are overwhelmingly characterized by imperialist relations. Yet, it can become relevant if there is one “rogue” state in the region whose interests contradict the ‘regional public goods’ that are generally provided by the regional hegemon. This state could, through outside support, act as an effective spoiler for the regional power.

2.3.2 Projection

The discussion of the projection of values and interests by the regional hegemony in detailed, single event within-case studies is challenged by two factors. First, the projection of values and interests is, above all, a long-term process or trend, which is not always deliberate or has a clear source, but rather ‘happens’ over time, whether stimulated by an underlying strategy of socialization or by a series of unintentional consequences. Second, what we generally understand as socialization (which usually seen as the result a projection of values) is a very difficult and probably little understood or at least understudied subject. Most studies that apply theories of socialization in the realm of international politics are informed by a constructivist research programme which often tends to neglect the more power-political aspects of the change of substantive beliefs which is the key factor in hegemonic socialization. Only one article – to my knowledge – addresses specifically the mechanisms and process of socialization, Ikenberry and Kupchan’s article on Hegemonic Power and Socialization. The authors admit that to

“identify the process of socialization within secondary states is a far more difficult task. The process of discerning and measuring shifts in substantive beliefs is difficult when dealing with isolated individuals and is even more problematic when dealing with diffuse elite communities.”77

They conclude that the best and probably only way to go about ‘measuring’ socialization is by a “nuanced reading of history and efforts to infer beliefs from statements

75 Barber, Mandela’s World, 85-6.
and behaviours.” This is, first, not very satisfying and, second, probably impossible for a study that is mainly working on contemporary events. I believe, however, that we can substitute this process by focusing on the South African activities that promote its own vision and values for the region (partially dependent on its self-perception), through activities and initiatives at the multilateral level, the establishment of new institutions, financial assistance and, if relevant, the conditions attached to it. We can also assess whether and how others participate in these initiatives as well as, if possible, the actual and concrete effects these types of activities on the secondary states.

The projection of values too can become visible through the content of regional and global negotiations and the actual agendas of regional organizations and institutions. A more immediate form of value projection is the direct construction of a similar political system in the secondary states through the mediation of conflicts, training of administrative and police officers, but also forms of business cooperation and rules for corporate governance brought in by the private sector. Generally, the role of non-state actors is important for assessing the projection of values because they can often be more explicit and outspoken than governments about bringing the South African model to the neighbouring states. This is also valid in the case of Zimbabwe where Chris Landsberg has criticized, among others, tendencies in South Africa research institutes, back by donors, to invite some of their Zimbabwean counterparts “not to talk to one another but to learn from the South African miracle”, which is “not only misplaced but condescending.”

So, from the available empirical evidence, can a case be made that South Africa has or has attempted to ‘project its own values’ (as at least partially established in the previous section on ‘self-perception’) onto secondary states in Southern Africa?

**NEPAD and APRM**

NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) have often been described as a “brainchild” of President Thabo Mbeki and clearly reflect some of the ideals and principles of South African politics of good governance and a free market as well as strong links with the industrialized countries. While it is, overall, more of an African initiative than a Southern African one, sub-regions such as Southern Africa explicitly are seen as building blocs to the continental project and it seems to be of particular importance to South Africa to “sell” NEPAD and APRM to the neighbours. This has been partially successful; yet the (initial) refusal of Botswana and Namibia to sign the APRM as well as the ongoing violations of NEPAD principles of good governance and the rule of law in both Swaziland and Zimbabwe dilute the outcomes of South African projection.

“While South Africa openly shuns hegemony – hegemony is a bad name in Africa – it has tremendous influence on the continent. It goes the most prepared, for instance at SADC meetings ... it is not that others didn’t want the AU or NEPAD or a new economic model, but the

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78 Linked to this is the discussion of the relationship between coercion and consensus under hegemony. Generally, consensus is linked to a commonality of interests – as a pre-existing matter of fact or as a result of very successful socialization – yet, Ougaard rightfully claims that “there is no necessary relation between the two aspects [...]. A relation perpetuated through voluntary consent is not necessarily based on common or congruent interests”. Ougaard, "Dimensions of Hegemony."


81 Nomazulu Mda and Anne Hammerstad, "Southern Africa: A Review of the Region and Relations with South Africa," in *South African Yearbook of International Affairs* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2003), 44.
AU and NEPAD today are clearly modelled after what [...] President Mbeki wanted”.82

SADC Reform

As said above, the building or forming of institutions is an important aspect of projection and socialization as these institutions will determine future state interaction and cooperation on the issues concerned. SADC is the predecessor of SADCC, an institution in which South Africa was not included, and as such had no impact on its institutional design. As in SADCC, cooperation in SADC was initially organized through country-based sector units. This was problematic in terms of differences in time, financial and administrative resources dedicated to the sectors, for instance. Thus, it was decided to embark on a major institutional reform, which was, as is argued in most of secondary literature, driven by South Africa.

In March 2001, an extraordinary SADC summit approved the proposed recommendations for far-reaching reform of SADC’s institutional framework. This included changes in SADC’s governing structure at the regional and the national level. Yet, the most important among these changes was the plan for the centralisation of the 21 sector co-ordination and commissions located in 12 member countries, which were replaced by four clusters – Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI), Infrastructure and Services (I&S), and Social and Human Development & Special Programmes (SHD&SP) – centrally organized at a strengthened SADC Secretariat.83 Another separate but parallel change was the drive to bring the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security under the control of SADC. After a persistent conflict since 1996 about the relation of the Organ with the SADC structure between South African and Zimbabwe, the South African suggestions ultimately prevailed. South Africa was adamant that the Organ should be integrated into SADC and thus be accountable to the SADC Summit. With the restructuring of SADC starting in 2001, the South Africa’s option has been implemented and the SADC Organ is now under the control of SADC.84

Many observers have argued that South Africa has pushed for the restructuring of SADC and the SADC Organ in line with the priorities of NEPAD and the AU.85 This is both valid for Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), which covers economic and social issues; and is part of the larger institutional reform as well as the ISDSC and the ISPDC, which are the main bodies of the Organ. In terms of the organ’s founding protocol, SADC countries are obliged to promote and defend democracy, peace, security and stability in the region.86 Thus, at least on paper these new projects are informed by ‘South African’ principles, which will therefore determine the future functioning of these institutions.87

SADC Mutual Defence Act

82 Interview with Chris Landsberg, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, 18 July 2006.
83 For more information, see: www.sadc.int
84 Elling N. Tjonneland, Jan Isaksen et al., Sadc’s Restructuring and Emerging Policies. Options for Norwegian Support (Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2005), 4. Tjonneland and Isaksen have monitored the SADC restructuring process over the years and have stated in a previous report that South Africa has taken a strong role in pushing the restructuring of SADC. Jan Isaksen and Elling N. Tjonneland, Assessing the Restructuring of Sadc - Positions, Policies and Progress (Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2001), 27.
87 Geldenhuys, “South Africa’s Role.”
Similarly to developments described above, there has been a split of SADC in the negotiations of the Mutual Defence Act: whereas a group of countries around Zimbabwe, including Angola and Namibia, strongly favoured a pact that obliged SADC members to come to each others help in cases of internal conflict, a South Africa-dominated group insisted on limiting the obligation to intervene in cases of external threat; and they prevailed. This is a pattern that needs to be closely investigated but definitely points in the direction that South Africa does manage to project its own ideas on the whole of SADC in important decisions. This also seems to be the prevalent assumption in most secondary literature.

**Model of conflict resolution**

Another often-cited example is South Africa’s tendency to “export” the South African “miracle” and its particular form of conflict resolution to its neighbours (Inter-Congolese Dialogue, Angola in the mid-1990s, Zimbabwe). South Africa has financed, at least to an large extent, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City in 2002, which resulted a peace agreement brokered by South Africa between the Government of the DRC and Rwanda. This important role of South Africa was acknowledged by its assumption of a Third Party role, in the capacity of a facilitator and as then chairperson of the AU. The Third Party Verification Mechanism comprised four representatives from South Africa and two from the UN Secretary-General.

“Pretoria’s particular interest in the DRC is motivated by the belief that South Africa’s successful transition offers many lessons for the DRC. South Africa is keen to offer its expertise in the building of democratic institutions and the integration of the defence force. In general, the DRC has been very receptive to offers of assistance and the Congo has now formed its own Truth and Reconciliation body”.

**Projection by private actors**

While the attachment of conditions to financial and technical assistance by the South African government seems to be rather the exception, the role of civil society actors in promoting a rather “assertive selling” of the South African model seems to be noteworthy. Examples are the activities of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in Africa and Southern Africa to promote the APRM or the active support of opposition factions in Swaziland and Zimbabwe by trade unionists. Private business is said to make a similarly significant contribution to the spread of South African ideas and values, both to the negative and the positive. On the positive side, business representatives emphasize the “multiplier effects” that the investments of large South African businesses have: “[...] when the breweries arrive, they demand conditions which fit into their global systems. So they need well-developed corporate laws, auditing and accounting systems, and regulations and if they aren’t there they

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90 Interview with Jakkie Cillier, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, 15 August 2006: “In South Africa, we tend believe that we know the things best, so we export the way we have done things in SA to everywhere else […] for example, in the whole restructuring of SADC, we believed that what should happen, like in SA, is a complete overhaul of the entire structure, the SADC Secretariat, with a performance agreement and a whole process of a very formalistic redesign… and the end result is that the region doesn’t really buy into the process. So now you have a SADC Secretariat, which in theory has now concentrated functions and powers but the regional sense of ownership has gone”.
93 Interview with Chris Landsberg, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, 18 July 2006.
help invent them. And once you get a cluster of multinationals, this starts rippling up and all of these institutions, laws, governance systems develop which weren’t there before. Areas of tension are of course remaining, but by and large the net impact is positive.  

So overall, we can come to the conclusion that South Africa has or has attempted to project its values and interests onto the region. Its behaviour in the named circumstances was differentiated from being ‘lazy’ or ‘greedy’. Its initiatives have not always brought about the desired changes in behaviour of the neighbouring states, yet, it has at least dominated the prevalent discourses about governance, economic development and conflict resolution in the region and, what is also important, in the discussions about the region by actors external to it.

### 2.3.3 Provision

The establishment and the existence of hegemonic systems, whether regionally or globally are tightly linked with the provision of public goods. A hegemon and, therefore, a hegemonic system are differentiated from other forms of regional systems exactly by this additional feature of often unilateral provision of all forms of public goods. Conventional theories of hegemony, actually, associate very specific outcomes in that respect, such as an open trading system, the maintenance of a structure of exchange rates and expect the hegemon to serve as a “lender of last resort” and to “coordinate macroeconomic policies”. As said before, this is linked to American hegemony, and the particular public goods associated with American hegemony are a reflection of the principles and norms American governments since WWII have at least aspired to promote. Thus, in other circumstances and contexts, the goods that a regional hegemon provides may be very different; particularly as we are talking about a regional system rather than a global, virtually all-encompassing one. All hegemons will, however, work towards the stabilization if not expansion of their sphere of influence and thus protect the status quo of the system.

Another thing that should be avoided is a very broad and abstract view on regional public goods. Often regional public goods are defined as “goals” such as peace and prosperity, yet this is not particularly useful when it comes to the empirical study of theses goods. Instead, a “means definition” has been proposed by Ferroni and others which refers to the resources, processes, policies and institutions that are necessary for achieving specific goals such as knowledge transfer, the creation of consensus over courses of action, the provision of transport and infrastructure, the provision of regional security through enhanced military capacities, and other forms of provision for enabling regional and domestic stability and economic progress. Mere financial as-

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94 Interview with Michael Spicer, Business Leadership South Africa, Johannesburg, 1 August 2006.
95 While ‘indifference or neglect’ is characterized by the absence of attempts to essentially get the regional states to accept or embrace the regional great power’s interests and values, imperialist projection is characterized by subjugation and force and an interference in both the external and internal sovereignty of the secondary states. See Table 1.
96 Two criteria are used in the identification of public goods: non-excludability and non-rivalry. There can also be ‘impure’ public goods that only partly meet these two criteria and it is generally assumed that “this expanded conception of public goods is widely accepted in the literature.” Patrik Stalgren, *Regional Public Goods and the Future of International Development Co-Operation. A Review of the Literature on Regional Public Goods*, Working Paper 2000:2 (Stockholm: Expert Group on Development Issues, 2000), 9.
sistance will, however, be discussed in the dimension of projection as it is exclusive, rival and often conditional.99

**Asymmetric liberalization in the SADC FTA**

The SADC Trade Protocol and its Tariff Liberalization Schedule100 provide for asymmetrical trade liberalization based on the level of economic development. South Africa, which is the most developed member agreed to lower tariffs on intraregional imports on the fastest schedule while LDC members, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia are to do so on the slowest schedule. In addition, each member state submits two trade liberalization offers, one for South Africa and one ‘differentiated offer’ for the rest of SADC which allows a faster tariff phase down between the ‘secondary states’.101 However, this does not address the problem of the differences in productive capacities which is generally which is identified to be the bigger obstacle for intraregional trade.

**Regional centre of gravity**

As a largest state, South Africa often offers to play a big brother role to the outside of the region. Several examples can be named, for instance when, allegedly South Africa attempted to prevent China from impacting negatively on Lesotho’s textile industry, but more clearly and officially, when it stopped negotiations of a SACU-USA free trade agreement over a dispute about the treatment and special privileges of Southern Africa’s LDCs, mostly in agriculture.102

**Source of help and support in times of need**

Southern African states can rely on South Africa helping them out as a last resort in times of need. Many examples can be given, such as South Africa aid during floods in Mozambique,103 ferry disaster in Tanzania in May 1996 where South Africa sent medical teams, divers and heavy equipment for help in the rescue operation; even early on, in 1994, South Africa provided support for Mozambique’s election.

**Facilitating economic development**

Through its own economic development and projects and, thus, increased demand, South Africa has helped secondary states to grow. One example of many is Mozambique’s advance from a net importer to a net exporter of energy, which has helped to be covered by cooperation with the parastatal ESKOM that implemented a programme for interlinking the various electricity networks in Southern Africa.104

In sum, thus, there are many instances in which South Africa has acted as a provider for regional public goods in Southern Africa. The claim of exploitative behaviour by South African business has elements of truth, yet, a differentiated view has to be

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99 Yet, the provision of public goods is not cancelled out or contradicted by situations in which the hegemonic produces private goods, i.e. goods that serve its own interest only. Most scholars view hegemony as a mixed situation with both compatible and competing interests among the hegemon and the secondary states.


100 Available at www.sadc.int.


104 Ford, "Power Behind Africa."
taken on this. The investment by South African businesses in the neighbouring countries also provides benefits to the host countries, such as additional employment, building of new industries with sophisticated technology that would possibly not be available to local investors. Another frequent point of complaints, particularly in the early years of post-Apartheid government were the immense trade imbalances and an apparent unwillingness of South Africa to do something against them, particularly by leaving its industrial policies and its effects on the neighbours unaddressed. South Africa has been accused of employing unfair competition policies, and for instance, the Namibian government expressed concern that its own industrial ambitions were sabotaged by South Africa.105

South Africa has also deviated from public good provision in the other ways. Observers have claimed that South Africa has not done enough for its own population but also the neighbours to prevent or at least to alleviate various food crises in the region. This might be, however, out of the reach of South Africa, and thus, does not lessen its existence as a regional hegemon. Another example, at first sight, is SADC’s dependence on donors, rather than South Africa paying a larger share for SADC membership. Until very recently, all state paid the same amount independent of GDP, population size or other applicable indicators. Yet, in government communication it becomes clear that this is what most states wanted as South Africa paying according to its economic strength would have allowed it to control most of what is going on at SADC.

Overall, we can come to the conclusion that has in fact frequently played the role of a regional hegemon. This makes it feasible to look into the within-case studies and look at the mechanisms and pathways that lead to the assumption of such a role but also to deviations from it.

2.4 The case of Zimbabwe106

2.4.1 Introduction

The within case study of Zimbabwe is a well-documented, important example of both a bilateral relation between the (potential) regional hegemon and a secondary state, a former challenger, and cooperation in the relevant regional organization, SADC. It also illustrates the importance of global level international politics, regarding the high interest that has been created, especially in the U.S. but, more importantly, in the UK due to its colonial past in the country, in the course of the ongoing economic, social and political meltdown in Zimbabwe. South Africa, and in particular its President Mbeki, have been assigned a particular responsibility for Zimbabwe by U.S. President George W. Bush107 and much of the domestic, regional and international press has explicitly called on South Africa to “do something” about Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean issue has also been the poster case for quite a few scholars that aim to show

106 This section is still in a very preliminary stage.
107 President George W. Bush: “President [Mbeki] is the person most involved; he represents a mighty country in the neighborhood who, because of his position and his responsibility, is working the issue. And I'm not -- not any intention of second-guessing his tactics. We share the same outcome. […] But the President is the point man on this important subject. He is working it very hard […] And the United States supports him in this effort.” Press Conference in Pretoria, Union Building during President Bush’s visit to South Africa, 9 July 2003. Available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/07/20030709.html [last accessed: 9 April 2007].
how little influence South Africa has in Southern Africa and how easily it was “snubbed off” by a resilient President Mugabe of Zimbabwe.108

While the existing literature focuses mainly on the puzzlement caused by South Africa’s policy towards Zimbabwe among observers and analysts, the notion of regional hegemony as put forth here will actually take a slightly different perspective and provide a differentiated framework for understanding the role South Africa has played in this particular context. I think the bulk of existing literature needs to be critically reviewed in that it is using Zimbabwe as a case against South African leadership and hegemony; and while this argument goes a long way, it does not take into account the complex context of regional politics, as well as its limits and constraints and historical intricacies in which the Southern African states often find themselves as well as regional dynamics in much of the developing world in general. Only time and a full access to archives will show a clearer picture, even if, in the beginning of 2007, Zimbabwe seems to have reached a moment of truth: It is estimated that by 2007 at least two million Zimbabweans have sought refuge in South Africa, with hundreds of thousands more moving to Botswana and Zambia.109 Tourism and trade are down and damage has been done to South Africa’s ‘good name’ that attracted both political and economic attention from all over the world. In Zimbabwe itself, hunger, hyperinflation of currently 1400 per cent, unemployment, a near collapse of the energy, transport and water systems, a decline in trade and manufacturing and a drop of the average life expectancy to 37 years down from 63 less than a decade ago are the results of the ongoing economic and political crisis.110

In light of these facts, it seems we cannot but come to the conclusion that, at least in the case of Zimbabwe, South Africa has not provided any regional goods, but rather, by its non-action, contributed to the impairment of economic stability and citizens’ welfare. Nevertheless, we should also have a closer look at what South Africa has attempted to do and the constraints that South Africa is facing. What makes this case particularly interesting and useful for this study, is the important of the conflict between global and regional actors. This constitutes a particularly tricky situation for South Africa that, in general, sees itself as a bridge between Africa and the industrialized world.

The standard narrative about what happened to Zimbabwe refers to the following key points in the recent history. Zimbabwe’s economic crisis has its origin in the 1980s. Over the years, the state had become more and more one of patronage and a tool for the personal accumulation of wealth for a small political elite. This crisis eventually led to a considerable budget deficit and – after much resistance in the 1980s – the Zimbabwean government turned to the IMF for financial help in 1991. In the following years, the standards of living decreased and unemployment increased. During this emerging crisis, Zimbabwe nevertheless intervened into the war in the DRC with 3000 troops behind President Laurent Kabila with further devastating consequences for the state budget.111 This was one of the major strains in South African-Zimbabwean relations in the late 1990s, as this was seen as both an attempt by Presi-

110 Ibid.
111 Supported by Angola and Namibia.
dent Mugabe to gain influence over the DRC’s wealth of natural resources but also, more generally, as a bid for regional influence to the detriment of South Africa.\footnote{A.R. Gibbs, “How Mugabe Hijacked the Renaissance,” *Finance Week*, 16 October 1998. “Should Kabila’s forces win [with the help of Zimbabwe], any African rebirth will exclude South Africa.” President Mandela at this time was very clear that Robert Mugabe should not have intervened. This created a first rift within SADC which has been reiterated in the discussions about the reform of the SADC Organ, the SADC structure in general and, for instance, in the discussions of the SADC Mutual Defence Treaty. Two coalitions – one South Africa-led including Botswana, Mozambique and key role players in Zambia, and one uniting Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia – regularly clash on issues of cooperation in the field of peace and security.}

Mounting signs of domestic ungovernability materialized in 1997 with the first wave of war veterans’ protests which led to payments of Z$ 2.5 billion of unbudgeted funds as a one-off gratuity as well as a tax-free monthly allowance for the war veterans. Eventually the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed by a merging of the dissatisfied working class, urban-based NGOs and the disgruntled white classes. It has often been claimed that the MDC has been heavily patronized by Western powers which had a negative impact on its credibility and reputation, especially in Southern African.\footnote{Rok Ajulu, *Zimbabwe at the Crossroads - What Next?*, Global Insights, No 12 (Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2001), 2-3.} Being seen as a ‘Western puppet’ is an obstacle to achieving ones goals, which incidentally also is an issue that haunts South Africa. The MDC nevertheless developed into a serious challenger for Zimbabwe and led to an unexpected defeat of President Mugabe’s in the constitutional referendum of 2000. The defeat in the referendum is also often seen as the starting point for the more serious troubles in Zimbabwe, a more populist exploitation of the question of land reform. It provides a good starting point for the analysis here, as this is also when new attention started to be paid on the South African-Zimbabwean relations and the impact South Africa can have on Zimbabwe.

South Africa’s Zimbabwe policy has, since then, been scrutinized by domestic and international observers and has led to a plethora of publications of all kinds. Beyond the land reform issue and the illegal occupation of farms both presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2005 have been the largest issue of discussion. In both elections, South Africa and SADC have sent election observers, but, in opposition to international observers, both times the Southern African parties concluded that the election were basically fair and free, while only criticizing procedures in the run-up of the elections. Both land reform issues and potential election fraud were issues in Zimbabwe’s temporary expulsion from the Commonwealth, which eventually lead to the withdrawal of Zimbabwe from this institution.

The Zimbabwean issue has hardly ever been discussed from a comparative point of view, but has been taken as a unique event discussed by itself. It hardly has been seen as part of the larger picture of regional relations, thus, this study offers an opportunity to relate it to South Africa’s regional role in general with respect to the three dimensions of perception, projection and provision and the related categorization as ‘lazy’, ‘greedy’ or hegemonic.

### 2.4.2 Perception, Projection, Provision

- What is South Africa’s role with regard to the Zimbabwe issue according to the South African government?
- What are external actors’ views on this?
- What are the values and interests that South Africa is projection (or not projection) with its behaviour and actions in this issue?
What are the goods that South Africa is or is not providing?
What are factors that impact on the above four points?
[Obviously, this section is not completed. I will attempt to provide more on it during my presentation]

3 SOME EXPECTATIONS AND PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Some first insights can be presented from both the discussion presented in the paper here and other, additional research carried out in the topic.

The assumed instability of the role of a regional hegemon is reinforced by the states’ pursuit of foreign policy goals on both the regional and the global level. As we can see in the case of Zimbabwe, South Africa is attempting to play to both levels and, by doing so, is diminishing its influence and credibility as a regional leader. Simultaneously, regional predominance is likely to be used as a stepping stone for a broader global role. This assumption of a dual role on the global and the regional level brings about a lack of assertiveness with it as well as a potential lack of capacity and motivation to completely fulfil a hegemonic role.

Due to the negative impacts of being seen as a regional hegemon and the negative connotations attached to the concept to of hegemony, predominantly by policymakers, denial is an element of regional hegemonic behaviour. While a US hegemon at the height of its power could very easily claim its influence, regional hegemony will always rest on a strategy of denial. This is an empirically derived pattern, which is emphasized in various degrees by (potential) regional hegemons.

The role of external states is of course important, for instance, by supporting secondary states in Southern Africa to resist South African attempts of influence. Zimbabwe has both turned to China and Libya for financial assistance in order to resist South African leverage.

Thus, preliminarily, we can come to the conclusion that the regional-global nexus has in fact an important impact on what regional hegemony is and how it becomes possible and the dimension of perception, projection and provision have clearly helped to better understand some of the policies of South Africa in its region. 114

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114 [This section is clearly incomplete. Unfortunately, this research is still very much in progress].


