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Conceptualising Regional Power in International Relations: Lessons from the South African Case

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Abstract

Regional powers can be distinguished by four pivotal criteria: claim to leadership, power resources, employment of foreign policy instruments, and acceptance of leadership. Applying these indicators to the South African case, the analysis demonstrates the crucial significance of institutional foreign policy instruments. But although the South African government is ready to pay the costs of co-operative hegemony (such as capacity building for regional institutions and peacekeeping), the regional acceptance of South Africa's leadership is constrained by its historical legacy. Additionally, Pretoria's foreign policy is based on ideational resources such as its reputation as an advocate of democracy and human rights and the legitimacy derived from its paradigmatic behaviour as a 'good global citizen'. However, the Mbeki presidency is more successful in converting these resources into discursive instruments of interest-assertion in global, rather than in regional bargains. In effect the regional power's reformist South-oriented multilateralism is challenging some of the guiding principles of the current international system.

Key words: South Africa, regional power, foreign policy, co-operative hegemony, multipolarisation of the international system

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Zusammenfassung

Zur Konzeptualisierung regionaler Führungsmacht in den internationalen Beziehungen: Das Fallbeispiel Südafrika

Regionale Führungsmächte können anhand von vier Kriterien unterschieden werden: Artikulation des Führungsanspruchs, verfügbare Machtressourcen, außenpolitische Instrumente zur Interessendurchsetzung und Akzeptanz des Führungsanspruchs durch externe Akteure. Die Übertragung dieser Kriterien auf den südafrikanischen Fall zeigt zunächst die zentrale Bedeutung institutioneller Instrumente innerhalb der südafrikanischen Außenpolitik. Obgleich Pretoria bereit ist, die Kosten kooperativer Hegemonie zu tragen (z.B. Investitionen in Regionalinstitutionen und Friedenssicherung), untergräbt das historische Legat der Ära der Apartheid den regionalen Führungsanspruch. Dabei basiert die Außenpolitik des demokratischen Südafrika zuvorderst auf ideellen Ressourcen: Als Anwalt für Demokratie und Menschenrechte hat Südafrika seit dem Regimewechsel viel Renommee und Legitimität erworben. Die Konvertierung dieser ideellen Ressourcen in diskursive Instrumente zur Interessendurchsetzung gelingt der Regierung Mbeki in globalen Verhandlungen allerdings weitaus besser als in afrikanischen Institutionen. Im Ergebnis stellt der reform- und entwicklungsorientierte Multilateralismus der südafrikanischen Regionalmacht einige etablierte Normen des gegenwärtigen internationalen Systems in Frage.

Conceptualising Regional Power in International Relations – Lessons from the South African Case

Daniel Flemes

Article Outline

1. Introduction[1]

Which actors represent the general interest in current international relations? And is there a voice of global justice and democracy leading the developing countries, which are still concentrated in Africa? The 'lonely superpower', as Huntington (1999) has called the United

1 I am very grateful to the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for its generous financial support, which made my research stay at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria in South African Spring 2006 possible. The conceptual approach of this study profited from the fruitful discussions in the working group on regional powers led by Detlef Nolte and Joachim Betz at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, see Nolte (2006).

States, is not speaking as it claims on behalf of the international community, when it comes to issues like poverty, hunger, global warming, the landmines treaty, the international court of justice, and pre-emptive military interventions. On many issues, the community for which the United States speak includes, at best, its Anglo-Saxon cousins; on others we can add Israel, Japan, Germany, and some Eastern European and some Central American states. These are important states, but they fall far short of being the global community. The superpower is definitely not speaking on behalf of the developing world, which represents the great majority of the world's population.

A crucial reason for US hegemony in international relations is its military supremacy. Washington accounts for half of global defence expenditure. In conventional military terms the USA will remain the dominant global power for a long time. But as Nye (2004) argues, for real global unipolarity two other arenas must be dominated as well: global economics and transnational problems like terrorism, crime, global warming, or epidemics. While Washington is a strong – but not the only strong – economy, transnational problems can only be resolved by the cooperation of many players. Huntington uses the term of a uni-multipolar system to describe the current structure of the international system (1999: 37):

> 'Global politics have moved from the bipolar system of the Cold War to a unipolar moment. But the superpower's effort to maintain a unipolar system stimulates greater effort by the major powers to move toward a multipolar one. Now the international system is passing through one or two uni-multipolar decades before it enters a truly multipolar 21st century.'

From a realist perspective a multipolar system can be the result of the emergence of regional unipolarities that build coalitions to balance the superpower (Wohlfort 1999: 30). Linking this statement with the developing countries' lack of power in the international system (measurable for instance in IMF voting power or permanent seats at the UN Security Council) multipolarisation becomes a priority foreign policy objective of developing states. In particular the governments of southern countries that have the capacity to build regional unipolarities, must be interested in finding an effective way to challenge the current international hierarchy and to transform themselves into power poles of a future multipolar system.

But which variables determine the power and powerlessness of those actors in international relations and to what degree do different types of regional powers succeed in influencing the processes and structures of the international system? These questions will be applied to the South African case in order to define the specific features of its leadership role. The following second section defines the term regional power and places it in the broader context of international relations. The third section operationalises regional power and includes the

presentation of a set of criteria suitable for the comparison of regional powers. The forth section tests these criteria in an empirical case study: the South African leadership is based on ideational resources such as its reputation as an advocate of democracy and human rights. Although Pretoria avoids applying material power and focuses on discursive and institutional foreign policy instruments in Africa, the acceptance of its leadership seems to be limited to the global level. The acceptance of Pretoria's regional leadership is constrained by the historical legacy of apartheid.

2. Relating Regional and Global Power Poles

States playing an international leading role in the sense of rule making are given special importance when the treatment of transnational problems is concerned. This applies to questions of world trade as well as to transnational security risks. Attempts to solve problems in these policies can be organised on the regional and global level. In both cases some state actors play a more important role than others in the course of cooperation and negotiation processes and have therefore more influence on the results. The reason can be the greater military or economic potential of these actors. In the same way their legitimacy, diplomatic effectiveness, moral authority as well as their representative function for a region or group of states might generate advantages in international bargaining.

Leading states differ from one another in view of the geographic reach of their leadership (sphere of influence). While there is consensus concerning the status of the USA as the only remaining superpower, several – often overlapping – concepts relating to the definition of the role of other leading states in the international system compete in the literature of international relations: Besides the superpower concept in the following I will distinguish between great powers, middle powers and regional powers.

A superpower is a state with the first rank in the international system and the ability to influence events and project power on a worldwide scale; it is considered a higher level of power than a great power. It was a term applied to the United Kingdom and her Empire, which was followed by the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War. Currently only the United States fulfils the criteria to be considered a superpower.

Great powers (also called major powers) are those states that, through their great economic, political and military strength, are able to exert power over world diplomacy. Their opinions must be taken into account by other nations before taking diplomatic or military action. Characteristically, they have the ability to intervene militarily almost anywhere. They also have soft power (Nye 2004) and the capacity to deploy economic investment in less devel-

oped portions of the world. Besides the permanent UN Security Council members (excluding the USA), Germany and Japan are normally considered great powers. Hurrell (2006) mentions the following four criteria characterising a great power:

(1) The capacity to contribute to the international order;
(2) Internal cohesion to allow effective state action;
(3) Economic power, such as high levels of economic growth or a large market; and
(4) Military power, with the ability to compete with other dominant powers in a conventional war.

A power acting at the global level reflects on the balance of power not only in terms of the existing superpower – it also has to include the great powers in its calculations because of the consequences of their coalition behaviour. In comparison with merely regional powers, others respond to great powers on the basis of system level calculations about the present and near-future distribution of power (Buzan/Waever 2003: 35). The constructivist perspective suggests formal acceptance of great power status by peer states as another criterion to identify great powers in the international system. These perceptions might be a consequence of a self-created identity or ideology of foreign policy behaviour (Hurell 2000: 3). However, this criterion is applicable to middle powers and regional powers as well.

Middle power is a term used in the field of international relations to describe states that are not superpowers or great powers, but still have influence internationally. Keohane (1969: 298) defines middle powers as states whose leaders consider that they cannot act alone effectively, but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution. In a narrower vision middle powers are defined mainly by means of their military capabilities:

> 'A middle power is a power with such military strength, resources and strategic position that in peacetime the great powers bid for its support, and in wartime, while it has no hope of winning a war against a great power, it can hope to inflict costs on a great power out of proportion to what the great power can hope to gain by attacking it' (Wright 1978: 65).

Kelly (2004) focuses on superior material resources such as demographic (inhabitants) and economy indicators (GNP) as preconditions for middle power status. Cox (1996: 245) notes that middle powers had no special place in regional blocs during the cold war period, but they were closely linked to international organisation as a process. According to Cox, a middle power supports the process of international organisation because of its interest in a stable and orderly environment, and not because it seeks to impose an ideologically preconceived vision of an ideal world order. By implication, therefore, a middle power is one active

in international organisations, supporting the objectives of international peace and security, as one of its defined national interests, which leads to a more stable world order:

> '[...] Interests of the middle powers coincide more with the general interest than do the interests of the small powers or of the great powers' (Reid 1983: 161).

Accordingly middle powers' foreign policy objectives overlap with the 'civilian ends' (Maull 1990, Duchêne 1973) of foreign policy, defined as international cooperation, solidarity, domestication of international relations, responsibility for the global environment, and the diffusion of equality, justice and tolerance (Duchêne 1973: 20). These are 'milieu goals' rather than 'possession goals', to use Arnold Wolfers' (1962: 73-76) distinction. Possession goals further the national interest. Milieu goals aim to shape the environment in which the state operates. Milieu goals may only be means of achieving possession goals, but they may also be goals that transcend the national interest and are shared widely. In other words a sense of 'global responsibility' (Schoeman 2003: 351) is present in the case of a middle power.[2] Critical commentators have viewed middle powers as little more than status-seekers: Basically those powers do not qualify for a place in the ranks of the great powers, but they are unwilling to be classified with the 'mediocre rest', and seek alternative roles to exercise leadership. Thus, Touval and Zartman (1985: 252-253) note that mediation by the medium-sized states appears to have been motivated by the desire to enhance their influence and prestige. There should be little wonder that small and medium-sized states seek to enhance their international standing by assuming the role of mediator – they have few other ways in which to do so. Moreover, mediating often saves them from having to take sides when pressed to do so in a conflict.

Middle powers by themselves are unlikely to have overwhelming influence on the international stage. As such, middle power leadership is, in essence, multilateralist in approach, trying to build consensus on certain issues. 'Niche diplomacy' (Cooper 1997) means the capacity of middle powers to increase their global influence and acceptance through the employment of their specific capabilities (e.g. peacekeeping). Wood (1988: 3) attributes a 'functional leadership' to middle powers, which is also viewed in terms of leadership in specific issue areas. Thus while regional leadership is more focussed on comparatively high military and economic capabilities, functional leadership requires expertise in a specific issue area, for example nuclear non-proliferation or environmental degradation.

Regional powers (also called regional leaders, major regional powers or regional/local great powers) are considered powerful in their own regions, irrespective of whether they represent regional relationships of enmity or amity. So Wright (1978) distinguishes between middle powers and regional powers, the latter having a geographically more restricted range:

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2 The Scandinavian countries and Canada, in particular, contributed towards conflict resolution through their own foreign policy emphasis on human rights and democracy.

> 'States with general interest relative to a limited region and the capacity to act alone in this region, which gives them the appearance of local great powers. […] Such regional great powers will probably be candidates, in the state system at large, for the rank of middle power' (ibid.: 63).

The same point is stressed by Huntington (1999: 36) when he argues that major regional powers are pre-eminent in areas of the world without being able to extend their interest as globally as the United States. One of the first efforts to develop a concept of regional powers in the international system was made by Østerud (1992: 12), who used the notion 'regional great power' defining it as a state,

(1) which is geographically part of the delineated region,
(2) which is able to stand up against any coalition of other states in the region,
(3) which is highly influential in regional affairs, and
(4) which, contrary to a middle power, might also be a great power on the world scale in addition to its regional standing.

By the latter criterion the author is mixing the characteristics of regional powers and great powers and making the distinction between regional powers and middle powers more difficult.
Chase, Hill and Kennedy (1996: 35) link the role of regional powers to the notion of 'pivotal states'. They are so important regionally that their collapse would spell trans-boundary mayhem. A pivotal state's economic progress and stability, on the other hand, would bolster its region's economic viability and political soundness.
Regional powers are expected to play the role of regional peacemakers and police as well as taking on the role of a moral authority. They have the responsibility for keeping their back-yard neat and orderly sometimes with a measure of support by great powers. Furthermore regional powers seem to be expected to support and promote acceptable rules and norms in terms of which regional politics and relations are conducted.
Schoeman (2003: 353) proposes the following preconditions for regional leadership: Internal dynamics: the internal dynamics of the state's political system and economy should allow it to play a stabilising and leading role in its region; Willingness: the regional power should indicate and assume the role of regional leader, stabiliser and, if not peacekeeper, at least peacemaker; Capacity: the regional power should also have the capacity or ability to assume regional leadership; and Acceptance: the regional power should be acceptable to its neighbours as a leader responsible for regional security. A broader or extra-regional acceptance is perhaps a necessary condition, but not sufficient, even if supported and promoted by big powers.

Schirm (2005: 110-111) suggests the criteria willingness (as claim), capacity (as potential) and acceptance, too. In addition he mentions activities and influence of the regional power as factors, which allow an evaluation of its role. Claim: international influence seems unrealistic, without the actor concerned making a claim for influence (rule making) for him and others; Potential: without material and organisational resources a regional or even international projection of power is also difficult to imagine; Activities: does the state show leading activities or does it subordinate itself opposite other states?; Acceptance: it is questionable to what extent other states accept the regional power's claim and activities; and Influence: in the end each leading power must be judged according to how much actual influence it has exercised, in the sense of power over resources.

Baldwin (2002: 178-179) suggests a multidimensional concept that includes the possibility that power could increase in one dimension while at the same time shrink in another. Possible dimensions include: Scope: referring to the possibility that an actor's power might vary in different policies (economics, security); Domain: defining the size of an actor's influence on others (regional, global); Weight: describing the reliability of an actor's power (the chance to put one's will into practice against the will of others); Costs: indicating the price an actor is willing and able to pay to achieve other actors' compliance; and Means: including symbolic, economic, military and diplomatic methods of exercising power.

This article aims at identifying and classifying regional powers in international relations by four pivotal criteria:

(1) formulation of the claim to leadership,
(2) possession of the necessary power resources,
(3) employment of foreign policy instruments, and
(4) acceptance of the leadership role by third states. Potential regional powers will be compared by these four criteria and by means of

a) two analysis levels: regional and global, and
b) two policies: economy and security.

This will make possible their classification into different types of regional powers. After discussing and operationalising these criteria in the next section, they will be applied to the South African case. In order to determine the impact of its specific leadership type on international relations, Pretoria's foreign policy objectives have got to be identified. Furthermore it has to be clarified to what degree the formulated aims could be realised. On this basis hypotheses on the relation between the type of regional leadership and power over policy outcomes can be developed.

3. Identifying and classifying regional powers

Firstly, the precondition for regional leadership is that the aspiring state indicates its claim to leadership. This implies willingness to assume the role of a stabiliser in regional security affairs and rule maker in regional economics. Connected questions are, how the claim to leadership is justified and which states are integrated in the claim to leadership. The regional power has – openly or between the lines – to define its sphere of influence.
Secondly, to find out if the regional power possesses the necessary power resources to make a difference in international bargains, I will distinguish between material and ideational resources.

(1) Material resources. From a realist perspective power is defined by the disposal of material resources, focussing on military strength as the key factor:

'I define power largely in military terms because offensive realism emphasizes that force is the ultima ratio of international politics' (Mearsheimer 2001: 56).

Military power is based on the latent power of a country, which consists of its economic and demographic resources. A broader approach to material power potential incorporates competitiveness, technology, infrastructure, geography, energy, and agricultural, environmental and human development factors as well. The national political process is the vehicle to convert these capabilities into military power (Tellis et al. 2000, Treverton/Jones 2005). It is true that the relative wealth of a country is not automatically convertible into military power, but it is a precondition for large-scale military capabilities.
Realists usually neglect that a positive economic performance is a precondition for human development and social progress as well. A high socio-economic standard of a country – e.g. the education system – conditions its human resources that shape a state's foreign policy in the end. Furthermore material resources such as a high level of human development can be operationalised into discursive instruments of interest-assertion by articulating and promoting them as proofs for a superior society system.
For an overall view and as a base for the comparison of regional powers the material resources survey will consist of a set of military (indicators: defence expenditure, military personnel), demographic (indicator: inhabitants), geographic (indicator: area), economic (indicators: GDP, Growth Competitiveness Index, Gini-Index of income inequality) and human development (indicator: Human Development Index) resources.

(2) Ideational resources. Many explanations of ideational power compete in the literature of international relations. Lake (2005: 4) introduces the concept of authority, distinguishing

it from coercion, as the defining character of a relation between two actors. In such a relationship legitimacy and moral obligation are the drivers that motivate the follower:

> 'To build and maintain authority, there are two necessary requirements: to provide a social order that benefits subordinates, and thereby binds them into that order, and to commit credibly not to exploit subordinates once they have consented to one's authority' (Lake 2006: 28).

Other authors describe ideational resources in their symbolic[3], psychological[4] or subjective[5] dimension, but always emphasising the actor's legitimacy and credibility. Treverton and Jones (2005: 12-17) propose the quantity of foreign students in a country, its attraction for foreigners in general, website hits and the number of media subscribers to measure its cultural resources.

Nye (2004) defines soft power, opposing it to hard power, as the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. From this perspective the ability to set agendas and the attraction of the states' behaviour for other actors are important power resources:

> 'Soft power […] co-opts peoples rather than coerces them. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. […] Simply put, into behavioural terms soft power is attractive power' (Nye 2004: 5).

In effect ideational power is based on resources like the culture of a nation, its norms and values as well as its foreign policy reflecting these. Grant and Keohane (2005: 37) argue that public reputation is an ideational power resource and a mechanism of accountability at the same time. To sum it up it can be said ideational resources consist of political and social values and objectives, which can give a public reputation or example to states. On a long-term basis credibility, legitimacy and moral authority can develop from paradigmatic behaviour, which may potentially contribute to a strengthened position within bargaining processes.

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3 'This also means that this is a subjective question and highlights the fact that recognition is the key variable. Perception and legitimisation […] are essential parts of power. A resource becomes power in as much as it is recognized as such and is considered legitimate' (Noya 2005: 7).

4 'Yet there is a final dimension of power that cannot be left out: the psychological. Two things can greatly magnify or diminish the ability of any entity […] to project power: first, its own legitimacy in the eyes of its individual members; second, its credibility in the eyes of other powers […] Power […] is about morale […] therefore come to depend on having credibility and legitimacy. Faith cannot move mountains. But it can move men' (Ferguson 2003).

5 'The power to shape, influence or determine other believes and desires, thereby securing their compliance' (Lukes 2005: 486).

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Thirdly, the foreign policy instruments that regional powers employ can distinguish them. Material and ideational resources are suitable for different kinds of power exercise. From this perspective power is exercised on a continuum between coercion and persuasion. The appropriate instruments of foreign policy do not exclude each other; they are complementary.

(1) Material instruments of interest-assertion. Material instruments, also described as the application of hard power, stand for economic and military means of interest-assertion from economic incentives to military coercion (Lukes 2005: 486). In detail economic instruments include the increase and decrease of (subsidised) foreign direct investment and trade (including trade sanctions), and the increase and decrease of grants (including corruption). Military means stand for the employment of military violence as protective (participation in UN-missions) or coercive power. The building of threat or deterrence scenarios by arms policy or military alliance building are further material foreign policy instruments.

(2) Institutional instruments of interest-assertion. Institutional instruments are applied indirectly to influence the behaviour of states by means of formal and informal procedures and rules. Neo-realists (see Waltz 1981, Mearsheimer 1990) consider international institutions to be merely puppets of the super and great powers with marginally regulatory effects on the behaviour of the state actors:

> 'International institutions are created by the more powerful states, and the institutions survive in their original form as long as they serve the major interests of their creators, or are thought to do so' (Waltz 2000: 26).

Even neo-liberal institutionalism (see Keohane 1988, 1989) ascribes only limited importance to institutions in view of the tendencies to change within international relations. The neo-realist basic premise – institutions reflect the power distribution within the international system and are conditioned by this – is shared by neo-liberal institutionalism (Keohane/Martin 1995: 47). Baldwin (2002: 187) comments that power can be exercised in the formation and maintenance of institutions, through institutions, within and among institutions. If state actors led by the principle of egoism enter into institutionalised negotiations, the question remains, if and how regional powers use international institutions to assert their interests. To answer this question the analysis of Hurrell (2000: 3-4) is instructive:

> 'Indeed sovereignty may be increasingly defined not by power to insulate one's state from external influences but by the power to participate effectively in international institutions of all kinds. […] There is no great puzzle as to the advantages that often lead intermediate states to favour multilateralism and institutions […]: the degree to which institutions provide political space for important middle-level players to build new coalitions in order to try and effect emerging norms in ways that a congruent with their interests and to counter-balance or deflect the preferences of the most powerful; and the extent to which institutions provide 'voice opportunities' to make known their interests and to bid for political support in the broader market place of ideas. So intermediate states will seek to use international institutions either to defend themselves against norms or rules or practices that adversely affect their interest or […] to change dominant international norms in ways that they would like to see'.

Deriving from this observation it is interesting to ask about the regional powers' motivation to participate in regional cooperation processes, because regional institutions empower weaker states by constraining the freedom of the regional powers through established rules and procedures as well. Regional powers are the key players, often creators, of regional governance institutions. The leader's regional influence will depend on its ability to determine the cooperation agenda, which can be achieved either through a cooperative or unilateral hegemonial way of leadership, or one of co-operative hegemony. The theory of co-operative hegemony (Pedersen 2002) explains why greater states pursue regional institutionalisation, stresses under which conditions it is possible for them to rule through regional governance institutions and characterises regional institutions as foreign policy instruments of regional powers:

> 'Regional institutionalisation is seen as typically the product of a grand strategy pursued by comparatively weak or declining big powers' (ibid.: 678).

From this perspective a strategy of co-operative hegemony has the following main advantages for the regional power:

– *Advantages of scale.* Aggregation of power is of particular importance to a regional power aspiring to a global role because it will enable it to use its region as a base for projecting power in world affairs. To do so the leader state has to formulate a political project, which attracts neighbouring countries to identify with. Its capacity to set agendas is pivotal to aggregate power in certain issue areas. If the co-operative hegemon is economically the most efficient state in the region, advantages of a unified regional market are considerable. For a regional power that is surrounded by small and very small economies the advantages of scale are marginal. The existence of an external threat to the region facilitates power aggregation, because external pressure supports the team spirit and growing together of a group.

– *Advantages of stability.* The regional institutionalisation process helps to avoid intra-regional counterbalancing and makes alliances between neighbouring states and external powers more difficult. Stability becomes a very important goal, if the neighbouring states feel threatened by the military or economic superiority of the regional power.
– *Advantages of inclusion.* Inclusion in regional integration processes secures access to scarce raw materials.
– *Advantages of diffusion.* An institutionalised regional system provides an arena for the diffusion of the regional power's ideas and principles. This puts the leader in a position to influence the domestic and foreign policies of its cooperation partners (ibid.: 685-686).
– While the strategy of co-operative hegemony promises (especially long-term) benefits, it also implies costs:
– *Power-sharing.* The regional power shares power with its neighbours on a permanent basis within common institutions with significant competences. In bargains at the global level it pursues not only national, but also regional interests.
– *Long-term commitment.* The regional power has to commit itself to a long-term strategy of regional institutionalisation. Its decision is conditioned by the costs of non-commitment that are larger for a regionalised than for a globalised economy. Constitutional rules and procedures facilitating participation in regional integration, the leader's regional economic interest and the existence of a supportive discourse promote the commitment capacity of the regional power (ibid.: 692).
– *Costly side payments.* The regional power has to take over great parts of integration costs and has to share the distributive outcomes of global bargains with the regional neighbours (ibid.: 687).

Naturally there are linkages between the factors mentioned. Especially power aggregation, power sharing, and commitment capacity of the regional power – defined as well as preconditions for co-operative hegemony – may vary in strength, which implies variation in forms of co-operative hegemony and suggests ways in which it may be transcended:

> 'Where power aggregation capacity and power sharing capacity are strong, but commitment capacity weak, we could expect informal co-operative hegemony or co-operative hegemony at a modest institutional level. Where power sharing and commitment capacity are high, but power aggregation capacity low, we would expect the possibilities of moving towards a symmetrical federation to be good. Where, on the other hand, power aggregation and commitment capacity are high, but power sharing capacity is low, we would expect co-operative hegemony shading into asymmetrical federation' (ibid.: 693).

In order for power sharing to be effective, avoiding asymmetrical federation, the regional structure must cover a certain range, for sectoral issues accord secondary states real influence over the dominant state's politics. Power sharing between the regional power and the secondary regional power[6] is crucial in this regard because secondary regional powers can claim leadership in certain issue areas beyond the region and they are potentially the privileged cooperation partners of the superpower. The superpower is valued by the secondary regional power as a constraint on the dominance of the regional power. Huntington (1999: 6) argues that the superpower and the secondary regional powers will often share converging interests against the regional power, and that secondary regional powers will have little incentive to join in a coalition against the superpower. Nolte (2006) transfers the middle power concept on secondary regional powers – defining them similar to traditional middle powers by their cooperative strategies in international institutions – and stresses the secondary regional powers' key role in the process of constructing and maintaining co-operative hegemony.

(3) Discursive instruments of interest-assertion. Discourse means the process of negotiation of individual requirements for the validity of the participating actors (Habermas 1981). As state actors usually use diplomatic channels to articulate and negotiate their interests, the application of different diplomatic instruments by regional powers has to be analysed. The means of diplomacy range from classical diplomacy characterised by consensus power (Czempiel 1999) to coercive diplomacy. Classical diplomacy consists of agenda setting and discourse control as well as the employment of the instruments of international law, e.g. mediation. A decisive role in the development of formal and informal procedures and rules of bilateral, regional and global institutions may be the result of the employment of classical diplomatic instruments. Coercive diplomacy includes threats with economic and military sanctions and through this the building of pressure or deterrence potential; and it can imply positive sanctions like offering economic and military support possibly with the objective of building or strengthening dependencies (stick and carrot policy). Once these threats or incentives are realized, and action is taken, the line between discursive and material foreign policy is crossed.

(4) The status of a regional power is not least a social category and depends on the acceptance of this status and the associated hierarchy by other states:

6 Huntington (1999) distinguishes between 'the lonely superpower', a second level of 'major regional powers' that are pre-eminent in certain areas of the world, and third level of 'secondary regional powers' whose interests often conflict with the major regional powers' foreign policy goals. These include Britain in relation to the German-French combination, Ukraine in relation to Russia, Japan in relation to China, South Korea in relation to Japan, Pakistan in relation to India, Saudi Arabia in relation to Iran, and Argentina in relation to Brazil (ibid.: 1).

> 'You can claim great power status but membership of the club of great powers is a social category that depends on recognition by others – by your peers in the club, but also by smaller and weaker states willing to accept the legitimacy and authority of those at the top of the international hierarchy. So a constructivist approach would view power hierarchies in terms of shared understandings that develop amongst groups of states' (Hurrell 2000: 3).

Its neighbours should accept the regional power as a leader responsible for regional security. A broader or extra-regional acceptance is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. The acceptance of the leadership role by actors within the region is pivotal for the regional power to avoid a reduced power over outcomes due to obstacles constructed especially by secondary regional powers. Cooper et al. (1993: 16) argue that the dynamics of leadership in international politics are more clearly revealed by an examination of followership. From this perspective it is important to know why and under which conditions followers follow.

4. The South African case[7]

During the apartheid period, the international community regarded South Africa as a pariah, and its foreign policy was termed the 'diplomacy of isolation' (Geldenhuys 1984). From its inception as an independent entity in 1910 to the end of minority rule in 1994, South African governments assumed an interventionist attitude towards the 'African hinterland'. This was particularly so in regard to southern Africa, which was viewed by the regime in Pretoria as its backyard or sphere of interest, an exploitable source of cheap labour and an easily penetrable market for its products (Daniel/Naidoo/Naidu 2003: 368-369). How has Pretoria's foreign policy changed since its first democratic multi-party elections after 46 years of apartheid and more than three centuries of white domination?

South Africa still occupies a prominent position within the regional political economy. It is the most developed state on the continent of Africa and its GNP is twice as large as that of the rest of the Southern African Development Community[8]. The democratic government's approach was informed by an explicit commitment on human rights, and also by a desire to make Africa – southern Africa in particular – the primary theatre of South African foreign policies; to promote regional development; and to participate constructively in multilateral

7 I am indebted to my African colleagues Adam Habib, Peter Kagwanja, Sean Morrow, and Garth le Pere for their very constructive comments and criticisms.

8 SADC member states: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For further information see: http://www.sadc.int/

institutions (Alden/le Pere 2006: 52). Ultimately President Mbeki played an important role in world politics pushing for the reform of global governance institutions. Mbeki said at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) conference in September 2006 in Havana, in his capacity as chairman of the Group of 77 and China that South-South organisations needed to battle poverty, underdevelopment, unfair trade and political and socio-economic exclusion and marginalisation:

> 'The strengthening of South-South co-operation has helped to create a stronger voice for the developing countries in multilateral forums […] especially with regard to the on-going process of fundamental reforms of the UN as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions. [...] We have expressed our strong support for a UN reform process whose outcome would be a more effective and more representative UN' (quoted in Cape Times, 18. September 2006).

This short glance at the development of South Africa's foreign policy highlights a radical change from pariah of the international system to one of its constructive critics, clearly induced by the country's transition to democracy. In the following paragraphs the above-developed criteria will be applied to South Africa's regional and global policies.

4.1. Claim to leadership

For regional power status South Africa has to have the political will to take on the mantle of leader in both regional and global terms. As early as November 1993 Nelson Mandela wrote in a *Foreign Affairs* article, which is still regarded as the foreign policy manifesto of South Africa's first democratic government, that Pretoria's foreign policy choices should reflect the concerns and interests of the continent of Africa (Mandela 1993).

The outstanding feature of foreign policy in the post-apartheid era in deed has been South Africa's identification and engagement with the rest of Africa. Its quest for a leadership role in Africa is most visible in what was originally known as the Mbeki doctrine embodied in the idea of an African Renaissance, which has since found expression in the New Partnership for Africa's Development[9].

9 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an economic development programme of the African Union. NEPAD is a merger of two plans for the economic regeneration of Africa: the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP), led by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa in conjunction with Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria; and the OMEGA Plan for Africa developed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. For further information see: http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/home.php, for a historical overview over NEPAD: http://www.dfa.gov.za/au.nepad/historical_overview.htm.

> 'What is interesting about this doctrine is the fact that South African leadership in an African revival is implied (very cautiously so), rather than explicitly stated. This may be due to the care South Africa has to take projecting itself as a leader for fear of rejection by its African peers. Mbeki and other policy makers, in their public references to an African Renaissance and to NEPAD, seem to take care always to use 'we' and 'us' or the passive form in such a way that it can imply either South Africa, or the whole of the African continent (Schoeman 2003: 359).

South African foreign policy makers' caution is rooted in the country's historical legacy. In particular the former front states are highly sensitive regarding to any behaviour that reminds them of the apartheid regime's aggressive policies of regional hegemony. Hence a pronounced articulation of Pretoria's claim to regional leadership would imply a high risk of isolation. The South African leadership is illustrated by its role in the establishment and development of the African Union[10] of which it became the first chair in July 2002. By late 2002 the country officially offered to host the AU's Pan African Parliament. Since the inception of the organisation South Africa has also actively canvassed support for the ratification of the AU treaty establishing the organisation's Peace and Security Council. This organ is structured in such a way that it offers a strong possibility that South Africa will remain a permanent member of this council.

Independently of the efforts of South African policy makers to hide their claim to leadership, Pretoria's pivotal role in continental frameworks like NEPAD and the AU permits the assumption that the regional power's claim to leadership, in different degrees, extends to the whole African continent. An early remark of a Mbeki aide suggested South Africa's claim to leadership on the global level:

> 'As South Africa assumes the presidency of the Non Aligned-Movement, we need to ask ourselves a question: in what way can the NAM enhance the drive towards the restructuring of the world order and the project of African Renaissance?' (Mavimbela 1998: 33).

Using his position as chairperson of the NAM, Mbeki pressed the members of the G-8 at their Okinawa summit in 2000 to live up to the commitments made at the G-8 Cologne summit of unconditional debt relief to highly indebted poor countries (HIPC). The advocacy of South Africa's president for the HIPC underlined Pretoria's claim to lead the developing world.

South Africa has forcefully articulated critical standpoints on both the issue of international debt and the new round of international trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In both instances one finds evidence of seemingly increasingly confident South Af-

10 The African Union (AU) has 53 member states. It covers the entire continent except for Morocco, which opposes the membership of Western Sahara as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. For further information see: http://www.africa-union.org/.

rica taking up leadership position in and on behalf of the global south, but always with particular emphasis on the needs of Africa (Schoeman 2003: 357). Furthermore South Africa is driving its initiatives in the fields of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament with the clear objective of 'playing a leading role internationally' (Department of Foreign Affairs 1998). The NAM, the Geneva based Conference on Disarmament and various international agencies and UN committees dealing with arms issues and the development or review of international arms conventions are the focus points of South Africa's participation in the field of promoting international peace and security (ibid.: 355).
In global economic and trade policies Pretoria claims leadership of the developing world, while its claim for leadership in security policies is not limited to a certain group of states.

4.2 Power resources

The realist school argues that the military strength of a state is the key factor for power over outcomes in international politics (Mearsheimer 2001: 56), being based on its economic and demographic resources. The South African example seems to underline the importance of a comparatively high GDP that can be converted into military power. Because on one hand South Africa is outnumbered by far by its sub regional neighbours (defined as SADC members) in terms of inhabitants and military personnel – Angola alone has more troops than South Africa. But on the other hand it can spend much more on military capabilities than its sub regional neighbours together for the simple reason that its GDP is twice as large as that of the rest of the SADC combined (IISS 2003: 205-227, 325-331). Pretoria shows the highest defence expenditures in its sub region and on the African continent as well: US$ 3,55 billion. Botswana – ranking second in SADC – spends US$ 340 million on defence purposes, which is more than ten times less. On the continental level only the defence expenditures of Algeria, Egypt and Morocco – between US$ 2 billion and US$ 3 billion – are comparable to South Africa's. Globally South Africa's defence expenditure ranks on place 34. The US spends US$ 518 billion and Germany US$ 35 billion. South Africa's peers and cooperation partners India (US$ 19 billion) and Brazil (US$ 10 billion) publish considerably higher defence expenditures as well. Considering that in modern conflicts high tech arm systems are much more important than the strength of military personnel South Africa's superior defence expenditure leads to military supremacy in its sub region and still a dominant role on the continental level. This military power is projected mainly through multilateral peacekeeping missions on the African continent. In global terms however Pretoria's military power is marginal.
Although smaller in area than the SADC-partners Angola and DRC, as well as Sudan, Algeria, Libya, Chad, Niger, and Mali, and less populated than Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, and DRC,

South Africa presents the highest GDP in Africa. After Botswana it has the second highest GDP per capita and after Botswana and Tunisia the third best macroeconomic growth environment (GCI: 4,21) in Africa. The average rates of literacy, education, life expectancy, and childbirth are only higher in the small population island states of Mauritius and Cape Verde as well as in northern African Arabic countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt than in South Africa (HDI: 0,685). But when it comes to the continental comparison of income equality South Africa drops back: 26 African states' income distribution is more equal than that of South Africa (Gini-Index 57,8). In the SADC only Mugabe's Zimbabwe seems to have a marginally lower Gini-Index than South Africa. As the data suggests, the SADC-partners are well behind South Africa in their socio-economic development. On the one hand South African enterprises profit from these disparities by means of foreign direct investments (FDI); on the other hand the intraregional development gap creates difficulties in sub regional economic cooperation (Table 1).

Summarised South Africa's human and social development comparatively does not reflect Pretoria's economic dominance on the African continent. This becomes most evident in its unequal income distribution. Nevertheless the data indicates an overwhelming South African superiority in the socio-economic sphere at the SADC-level. In effect Pretoria's lead in military and socio-economic affairs is drawn in similar proportions: South Africa's material supremacy extends to the sub region of SADC; South Africa is one (of few) dominant players in continental affairs; and its base of material resources is very modest in global terms. Despite its relative military strength, South Africa's military capabilities play a very low profile role in its foreign policy, besides multilateral peacekeeping operations. One reason is that military force or threats are the ultima ratio of international politics, but what is striking in the South African case is that Pretoria's sub regional supremacy and its dominant African role in economic, social and human development makes its military supremacy redundant.

What ideational resources has South Africa got? The external reflection of South Africa's internal transformation from 'pigmentocracy' to democracy has been a progression from the status of a pariah to that of a paragon. The archetypal norm violator, shunned by the international community, has involved into a model state respected by the councils of the world (Geldenhuys 2006: 93). Its continued existence as a democratic and stable society supports the dominant global value system based on democracy and the free market economy. Although democratic deficits have been identified in Pretoria's foreign policy making: on the one hand a lack of social participation and parliamentary oversight, and on the other hand particularly under Mbeki a strong concentration of foreign policy competences in the presidency have been criticised (Nel/van der Westhuizen 2004). The presidency consists only of

Table 1: South Africa's Material Resources (2005) in Sub Regional, Continental and Global Comparison

ECONOMY	MILITARY
GDP: US$ 212 billion SADC ranking: 1 African ranking: 1 Global ranking: 21	**Defence Expenditure: US$ 3, 55 billion** SADC ranking: 1 African ranking: 1 Global ranking: 34
Growth Competitive Index*: 4,21 SADC ranking: 2 African ranking: 3 Global ranking: 48	**Military personnel: 55,750** SADC ranking: 2 African ranking: 14 Global ranking: 65
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND INCOME (IN)EQUALITY	**DEMO-/GEOGRAPHY**
Human Development Index: 0,658** SADC ranking: 2 African ranking: 6 Global ranking: 120	**Inhabitants: 46 million** SADC ranking: 2 African ranking: 5 Global ranking: 26
Gini-Index*: 57,8** SADC ranking: 2 African ranking: 27 Global ranking: 116	**Area: 1.219.090 sq km** SADC ranking: 3 African ranking: 9 Global ranking: 24

* The Growth Competitiveness Index (GCI) is composed of three component indexes: technology, public institutions, and macroeconomic environment. The technology index is focussing on innovation and technology transfer capacity as well as on information and communication technology. The public institutions index consists of a contracts and law, and a corruption subindex. And the macroeconomic environment index aims at measuring the stability of the domestic economy. A value of 0 represents the worst macroeconomic environment for growth competitiveness, and a value of 7 the best.

** The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of GDP per capita, poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, and childbirth. A value of 0 represents the worst human development performance, and a value of 1 the best.

*** Gini-Index: Data show the ratio income or consumption share of the richest group to that of the poorest. A value of 0 represents perfect equality, and a value of 100 perfect inequality.

Sources:

Demo-/Geography:	Fischer Weltalmanach (2005), http://www.weltalmanach.de/
Economy:	World Bank-database, http://web.worldbank.org/, CIA-Worldfactbook (2005), https://www.cia.gov/ cia/publications/factbook/index.html and World Economic Forum (2005), http://www.weforum.org
Military:	International Institute of Strategic Studies (2005), http://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance and CIA-Worldfactbook (2005)
Human development/ (in)equality of income:	United Nations Development Programme (2005), http://www.undp.org.in/ hdr2005/

80 members that have to cover domestic and external affairs. Further facts that point out a lack of foreign policy resources and capabilities particularly in regional affairs are the following: South African embassies are maintained only in half of the African states. And great proportions of the diplomatic personnel consist of ANC cronies lacking professional diplomatic training; especially skills in African languages are rare.[11] Nevertheless the Mbeki presidency has assigned itself the task of actively promoting democratic values abroad, and has become a prominent norm advocate in multilateral forums, especially in Africa. By doing so, it has lived up to the standards of good international citizenship. One senior Department of Foreign Affairs official, Johan Marx (1995: 9), puts its succinctly:

> '[...] The greatest contribution which South Africa can make to the development of Africa is by demonstrating that effective and corruption-free administration, constant maintenance of existing infrastructure, and in the long run, a democratic system […] are essential prerequisites for sustained development. If South Africa could render that service to Africa, it would be a leadership role of which all Africa could be proud.'

On the bases of these internal achievements, the Mbeki presidency saw an opportunity to extend those norms to favour the socio-economic and political interests of the developing world and promote a normative agenda in world affairs, too. Pretoria presented itself as a bridge-builder among competing interests within the developing world, but also among developing and industrialised nations. The latter has been crucial persuading the leading OECD countries to place Africa in a higher position on the global economic-political agenda than it has been for decades (Carlsnaes/Nel 2006: 21). A central dimension of South Africa's normative role has been its promotion of rules-based multilateralism as appropriate for conducting international affairs.

Examples of paradigmatic behaviour that consolidated Pretoria's credibility as an advocate for multilateralism and ethical objectives in international relations are the following:

- South Africa decided in the early 1990s to destroy its nuclear arsenal. By trading its status as a 'minor nuclear power' for that of being the first denuclearised state, it gained significant moral influence within international institutions seeking to promote non-proliferation and disarmament.
- In order to combat the international proliferation of small arms, the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) decided to destroy rather than sell surplus stocks of small arms, a decision which elicited widespread international praise, and also again put South Africa in a leadership position with its example.

11 The former South African diplomat Tom Wheeler (South African Institute of International Affairs) stressed these points at the workshop 'South Africa as agent of progressive regional and global change?' hosted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation at October 11, 2006 in Johannesburg.

– Since 1994 Pretoria has provided information on its weapon trade for inclusion in the UN's Register of Conventional Weapons.
– In 1995 South Africa became a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) – a multilateral organisation controlling trade in dual-use material – and the Missile Technology Control Regime.
– In 1996 Pretoria signed the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear free weapons zone in Africa.
– South Africa was one of the first countries to enact a unilateral ban on landmines.
– South Africa took a leading role in the Kimberley process aimed at halting the international trade in illegal diamonds to finance regional wars. The process started in 2000 (Schoeman 2003: 356).

The ANC governments succeeded in projecting the fruits of domestic transition to democracy and high human rights standards to the regional as well as to the global level of its foreign policies. With its paradigmatic behaviour Pretoria gained more legitimacy and moral authority at global level than at the African continent.

4.3 Foreign policy instruments

Before analysing the foreign policy instruments, South Africa's foreign policy objectives and interests must be identified. In its Strategic Plan 2003-2005 (DFA 2004) – the South African government's foreign policy blueprint – the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) spells out an ambitious set of goals, many of them ethical ones. The primary foreign policy objectives are to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment in Africa; protect the global environment; promote human rights; resolve conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation; search for peace, security and equity; end xenophobia and intolerance; and pursue global justice through a rules based international system. In a second set of foreign policy goals the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance, and the fight against trans-border crime and disarmament are mentioned. Furthermore the document emphasises Pretoria's commitment to the AU, and the need to achieve the formulated objectives by multilateral means. The objective of multilateral diplomacy is to strengthen a rules-based system, which limits the possibility of unilateral actions by major powers (Nzo 1999). What is striking about the plan is the degree to which it is ethical. Although it notes that the DFA seeks to promote the national interest, it never suggests that the national interest may clash with its ethical goals. The DFA's catalogue reflects the middle powers' sense of global responsibility (Schoeman 2003) and coincides with civilian (Maull 1990, Duchêne 1973) and milieu (Wolfers 1962) ends of foreign policy. In the sense that these widely shared goals may be means of achieving possession goals as well, the contradiction between ethical, civilian, or milieu goals and national interest can be dissolved.

One can draw the conclusion that the Mbeki administration is engaged in a constructivist attempt to transform international relations in Africa (Frost 2006: 91). On a long-term basis the achievements of these idealistic goals would naturally consolidate the stable ground for South African investment and growth. On the global level Pretoria's foreign policy goals are more modest: rather than transforming, it is about reforming global governance institutions like UN, IMF, World Bank and WTO. Central to these processes is the objective of reversing the marginalisation of Africa and other developing regions and of strengthening their participation in international decision-making.

Nel (2006: 115-117) argues correctly that the multilateral reform project of the Mbeki government is partly a rhetorical construction aimed at cementing Mbeki's domestic alliance, especially striving for support among the left wing of the ruling alliance. The quest for rapid integration into the global economy is difficult to combine with the government's stated aims of equitable and sustainable domestic growth. Seen in retrospect, South Africa's post-transition trade diplomacy incorporated three main objectives:

- Substantial unilateral liberalisation of the domestic trade policy regime, through WTO, in the interest of increased competitiveness;
- Improved market access for South Africa's exports to the EU; and
- Consolidation of trade relations with the neighbouring states in SACU[12] and SADC (Blumenfeld 2006: 448).

However these aims not always proved to be compatible either with each other or with other core policies. For example, the negotiations with the EU and with SACU presented significant obstacles for each other; and there was considerable political concern that the employment consequences of reduced protection were inconsistent with the GEAR[13] objective of employment growth. Constructing the democratic transition within the framework of the Washington Consensus required a shift to market orthodoxy for the new South African state, and a correction of its populist economic strategies (Miller 2005: 57). The reorientation from redistribution to liberal market policies becomes very obvious by analysing Pretoria's material and institutional instruments at the regional level.

12 The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) was established in 1910 as a Customs Union Agreement between the then Union of South Africa and the High Commission Territories of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland. In 1969 it was re-launched as the SACU between South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. After Namibia's independence in 1990, it joined SACU as its fifth member. For further information see: http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/Multilateral/africa/sacu.htm.

13 The macroeconomic strategy of GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) was formulated in 1996, see: http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/policy/growth.html?rebookmark=1.

Material foreign policy instruments

Regarding Mandela's pro-Africa promise and the cooperative leadership approach it is true that a distinction has to be drawn between the behaviour of the government and South African enterprises. But the ANC government subsidizes the 'South Africanisation' of the African economy. A cursory glance at the literature shows South African businesses run the national railroad in Cameroon, the national electricity company in Tanzania, and that they manage the airports located in or near seven African capitals. They have controlling shares in Telecom Lesotho and are leading providers of cell phone services in Nigeria, Uganda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Rwanda and Cameroon. South African corporates are also managing power plants in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mali, and building roads and bridges in Malawi and Mozambique. They control banks, breweries, supermarkets and hotels throughout the continent and provide TV-programming to over half of all African states (Daniel/Naidoo/ Naidu 2003:376). It is important to note that it was not simply South Africa's transition to democracy and international respectability that fuelled its economic penetration of the African market. There was an important catalyst: The fact that the transition coincided with the end of the cold war and the triumph of the liberal market model. The latter prescribed a liberal political dispensation accompanied by a deregulated market economy with minimal state intervention as the norm for countries intent on engaging with the global economy.

In its role as a regional stabilizer South Africa acted in a hegemonic manner intervening in African countries in some cases, while in others it hesitated to intervene effectively. Habib and Selinyane argue that 'schizophrenia' is the defining character of South African regional security policy meaning the ability to play a leadership role in Africa and persuade others of the legitimacy of its vision on the one hand, and being pulled by pragmatic factors and becoming only one among many regional actors on the other (2006: 182):

> '[…] a reluctance to lead, using multilateralism as an excuse, and emphasising the country's important yet not dominant position in the region.'

These authors underline their argument by comparing cases considered as demonstrating a lack of South African leadership with cases considered as successful diplomatic and military interventions.

Pretoria intervened militarily in Lesotho in 1998 by 'Operation Boleas' sending 600 troops, backed by 200 troops from Botswana. Eight South Africans and 58 Basotho troops died. Regardless of the fact that it formed part of a so-called SADC operation, the incursion was widely criticised as apartheid-style military adventurism aimed at serving South Africa's economic interests: securing the US$ 4 billion Katse Dam Project, constructed to supply water to the industrial heartland of South Africa. The OAU and UN censured South Africa for taking

this unilateral drastic action without officially informing them (Kagwanja 2006: 164). The official version was another: when the government of Lesotho was rendered ineffective by election protests, Pretoria used its military power to restore order, and remained diplomatically involved until the general elections and the creation of a stable multiparty parliament. The South African emphasis on multilateralism did not constrain its ability to intervene hegemonically in order to bring about and guarantee stability. Using force in this instance has nevertheless been consistent with South Africa's position: While emphasising its commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, Pretoria has also indicated that it would not hesitate to use military means – in accordance with the SADC principles – in the face of a threat to a democratically elected government (Schoeman 2003: 361). In the end South Africa's intervention in Lesotho has brought democratic stability that promises to be long lasting (Southall 2003: 294, Daniel/Naidoo/Naidu 2003: 388, Habib/Selinyane 2006: 183).

After the South African elections in 1994 peacekeeping was not yet regarded as a priority. The strategic planning was still centred on conventional and territorial conflict scenarios. But since then a fundamental reform of Pretoria's defence doctrine and military planning led to considerable results in sub regional and continental security cooperation. The apartheid regime's 'Total Strategy', with its state centric view of security was dropped, adopting a neighbour friendly policy based on cooperation and human security. The apartheid era's South African Defence Force (SADF) was transformed into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). And South Africa's White Paper published by its Department of Defence (DOD) in 1996 points out that after two and a half decades of isolation the country's foreign relations have been transformed from an adversarial mode to bilateral and multilateral cooperation (DOD 1996: 4). The White Paper also notes that South Africa is not confronted by an immediate conventional military threat, and does not anticipate external military aggression in the short to medium term (ibid.: 23). In the Defence Review from 1998 the South African government states its interest in confidence building measures (CBM) in the region that include annual consultations and exchange of information; the establishment of a regional arms register; notification, on-site inspection and verification of military exercises; and communications network and crisis hotline (DOD 1998: 11). Furthermore the Defence Review points out:

> 'South Africa now engages in defence cooperation with a number of countries and participates in regional security arrangements under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community' (ibid.: 4).

The SADC countries have taken significant steps in the direction of combined peacekeeping training. In 1997, a combined peacekeeping exercise 'Operation Blue Hungwe' was organ-

ised in Zimbabwe. In 1999 about 4000 military and police personnel from ten SADC states participated in an exercise code named 'Operation Blue Crane' in South Africa. Nevertheless the formation of a security community[14] in the sub region of SADC is undermined by a military assistance act crafted by authoritarian ruled Zimbabwe[15] with Namibia, Angola, and the DRC, principally to prop up the regimes in the latter two countries militarily, both of which are facing insurgencies (The Mail & Guardian, 16 April 1999). Mugabe's initiative, by de-facto splitting SADC, put it on a collision course with Pretoria, which has been attempting to reach a negotiated settlement to the Congo conflict (Sahni 2005: 23). Thus Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe is the main obstacle for both security cooperation and economic development in Southern Africa. The latter is demonstrated by a 50% contraction of the Zimbabwean economy since 2000, and a massive food deficit since 2002. Formerly being one of the more industrialised African economies and southern Africa's breadbasket, the Zimbabwean crisis affects economic and trade flows, investment and tourism in the SADC region, as well as burdening neighbouring economies through significant flows of emigrants, legal and clandestine. Zimbabwe is Pretoria's major foreign policy challenge at the sub regional level.

At the continental level South Africa plays a prominent role introducing an all-African approach to conflict resolution through the African Union. Since threats of disorder are a menace to its own well being (Harbeson/Rothchild 2000: 12), and impede its own expanding economic presence on the continent, Pretoria has been increasingly compelled to play an important peacekeeping role within the AU. Its interest in permanent membership in a reformed UN Security Council required a demonstration of its good citizenship to the international community. A willingness and ability to provide peacekeepers was one way of showing that it could assume the kind of international and above all regional responsibilities associated with playing a high profile role at the UN. The established great powers were keen on developing peacekeeping responsibilities to African powers, especially since the genocide in Rwanda, and wanted to engage democratic South Africa in peacekeeping as well. In

14 According to Deutsch (1961: 98) the relation between member states of a security community are characterised by peaceful change. Problems are solved without relying on military force, but rather by means of institutional procedures and mutual willingness to compromise. In this situation of stable peace the probability of war is so small, that it does not really enter into the calculations of any of the people involved (Boulding 1989: 13). In a security community defined as such the military has got no longer the internal function of deterring the single members amongst each other. It merely serves the purpose of protecting the states within the security community from external threats (Flemes 2006a: 32).

15 President Robert Mugabe's repressive regime since 2000 is characterised by election manipulation, controls over the media, and human right abuses, including torture against opponents of the ruling party (Zanu-PF). The Zimbabwean case received some international attention when the land reform programme, announced in 2000, was implemented in an environment of violence, lawlessness and chaos (Sachikonye 2005).

1996 Pretoria was still reluctant to commit troops to a Canadian led and US-backed Zaire initiative. The initial involvement in the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution on Burundi and the Comoros was insufficient (Bischoff 2006: 154). A new peacekeeping policy was already introduced by the White Paper on Defence of 1996 providing a framework for South Africa's participation in international peace support operations, spelling out a decision-making regime that involved parliament, and relating peace missions in Africa to South Africa's national interest (Neethling 2002: 3). The Defence Review from 1998 states that peacekeeping operations in southern Africa should be sanctioned by the SADC and undertaken with other SADC states. Similarly the AU should sanction operations in Africa. Furthermore peace enforcement operations, which take place under the auspices of the AU or SADC require prior endorsement by the UN Security Council (DOD 1998: 15). In 1999 the government released a White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions that provided further interdepartmental policy guidelines.

While South Africa was seen as the only African state able to sustain a large peacekeeping operation, some time elapsed before it embarked on its first effort. While, by 2001, Nigeria had 3225, Ghana 2002 and Kenya 1241 peacekeepers on the ground, South Africa had only four (Gemeda 2001: 7-8). Major deployments began fairly rapidly thereafter, when Pretoria sent 651 troops to Burundi in 2002 and 1268 to the DRC in 2003. At present the SANDF is contributing round about 3400 troops to UN and AU missions[16] on the African continent.

The refurbished African peace and security architecture has a strong South African imprimatur. As the AU's first chair (2002-2003), Mbeki helped lay the foundations of a robust continental peace and security framework anchored in sub regional mechanism and linked to United Nation's infrastructure of global peace. The AU's Peace and Security Protocol – endorsed at the July 2002 Durban summit – provides the legal foundation of the continental security architecture. Its most innovative and debated idea is that even it confirms adherence to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of member states, it concedes

> 'the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State […] in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity' (quoted in Kagwanja 2006: 173).

16 SANDF participates in the following UN and AU peacekeeping missions (09/08/2006): Democratic Republic of Congo: Operation MISTRAL embedded in MONUC, 1389 troops and Operation TEUTONIC embedded in a bilateral mission with DRC, 112 troops; Burundi: Operation FIBRE embedded in ONUB and AU, 1518 troops; Eritrea and Ethiopia: Operation ESPRESSO embedded in UNMEE and OLMEE, 6 troops; Sudan: Operation CORDITE embedded in AMIS, 332 troops; Ivory Coast: Operation PRISTINE embedded in a bilateral mission with Ivory Coast, 46 troops; For further information on current and past operations see: http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/

The protocol also established the Peace and Security Council (PSC) providing a continental early warning system, a panel of the Wise, an African Standby Force (ASF), a Military Staff Committee, and a special peace fund as the main pillars of the AU peace and security structure. The 15 member PSC, with a small Peace and Security Directorate, was launched in May 2004, with South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma elected to its chair. The PSC has authority to intervene in the affairs of member states under the above-mentioned circumstances. The council also has the power to intervene under invitation by a member state facing a threat of instability. The protocol establishing the PSC caused serious tensions, especially over the role of the ASF. Old-guard leaders including Gaddafi, Mugabe, and former Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi saw the primary purpose of the force as that of defending Africa from external threats. But many of the club of 'Young Turks', including Mbeki saw the ASF as a peacekeeping force to intervene in the continent's internal conflicts. The latter view prevailed (ibid.).

The conception of the ASF will consist of five regionally based brigades of about 3,000 troops providing the AU with a combined standby capacity of about 15,000 troops trained in peace operations ranging from low intensity observer missions to full-blown military interventions (Neethling 2005: 11). As currently foreseen, the ASF will be put into operation in two incremental phases, the first to be completed by mid-2006, the second by 2010. So far the SADC Standby Brigade and the East African Standby Brigade have completed the first phase of their operationalisation (Franke 2006: 18). Besides its obvious benefit of strengthening African capacity for regional peace operations in the long run, the creation of the ASF also aids the consolidation of inter-African security cooperation, because it epitomises a much-needed common objective, which may finally channel the multiplicity of resources, initiatives and ambitions devoted to African capacity building into one direction (ibid.) Summa summarum the South African government is the driving force of the Union's defence and security cooperation, establishing powerful regional security mechanisms. Hence the Mbeki-administration is contributing crucially to relative peace and stability in Africa, which is one of its priority foreign policy objectives.

Institutional foreign policy instruments

Immediately after the 1994 elections, South Africa joined a variety of international organisations, including the Commonwealth, the NAM and the UN, as well as continental and sub regional bodies, notably the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) and the SADC. Multilateral institutionalism as a cornerstone of Pretoria's foreign policy can clearly be attributed to Mbeki, with South Africa hosting major meetings of a multilateral nature during his first

presidential term[17], accepting an institutional reform of the SACU and promoting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Africa and launching the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral Dialogue Forum on the global level. To outline how the regional power uses these institutional instruments to assert its interests I will focus on South Africa's role in these sub regional, continental and international cooperation processes.

The AU held its inaugural summit in South Africa in 2002. The Pan-African Parliament was inaugurated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2004, but is now hosted by South Africa. The AU promotes democratic principles, institutions, stability and human rights at the continental level, especially contributing by peacekeeping operations in its member states. AU's objectives depart fundamentally from those of its predecessor, the OAU. The good governance discourse in the OAU was, in large measure shaped by Mbeki. At the OAU summit in Algiers in 1999, Mbeki called on Africa's political leaders to adhere to norms and standards of governance based on the considerations of ethics, equity, inclusion, human security, sustainability, and development. Without hectoring or condescension, Mbeki has highlighted the need for African governments to accept the imperatives of change in their domestic policies in order to realise the higher goals of sub regional and continental integration. The institutional architecture of the AU is meant to overcome the many structural deficiencies of the OAU. And South Africa – under Mbeki's government – has used the opportunities to influence these changes to further shape its Africa diplomacy (Alden/le Pere 2006: 59-60). To reach this aim Pretoria also is ready to pay great parts of the integration costs. The economically most solid African countries, namely South Africa, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria and Egypt, are supposed to contribute 75 percent of the AU budget. Until May 2006 only South Africa had paid its membership fee (iafrica.com news, 12 May 2006). Until 2005 the membership fee was calculated relative to the member states' GDP and South Africa paid much more than 15 percent. Poorer AU-members feared Pretoria's dominance criticizing South Africa would own the Union. Since then the South African government makes voluntary contributions to AU-solidarity funds to avoid being criticized for paying to less.

The NEPAD is a tool used by Mbeki and other African leaders to link pan-Africanism to economic liberalism and to restructure the continents relationship with the industrialised countries. At the heart of NEPAD is the innovative African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which can be named an institutional instrument of interest-assertion 'par excellence'. The APRM obliges signatory governments to submit themselves to a thorough analysis of their conformity to a host of economic liberalism and good governance criteria. This

17 The Commonwealth heads of government meeting (1999), the World Conference against Racism (2001), the inaugural summit of the African Union and the World Summit of Sustainable Development (both 2002).

process is designed to privilege participating states as preferred sites of FDI and development assistance from developed countries. These benefits are intended to seduce authoritarian African leaders into participation and maintenance of democracy and economic discipline. Politically NEPAD demonstrates a shift away from national autonomy. National economic sovereignty was sacrificed on the altar of Africa wide economic objectives. The South African government has strongly committed itself to this initiative, and has been prepared to provide the infrastructure and material support needed to implement it. The NEPAD and APRM secretariats are hosted and financed by South Africa. Pretoria's NEPAD-leadership (together with Algiers, Cairo, Dakar and Abuja) is the lever to claim economic jurisdiction over the African geographic entity (Miller 2005: 54). The underlying message to the main players of global trade and economy (USA, EU, G-8, WTO) is that an African leadership core is able to exercise a considerable degree of control over African states and that investment in Africa is attractive. Pretoria has also encouraged South African businesses to develop a far stronger focus on Africa than ever before, thus contributing to the industrial, financial, transport, and communications infrastructure of sub-Saharan Africa (Carlsnaes/Nel 2006: 19). A core element of the NEPAD is the privatisation and growth of infrastructure, especially information and telecommunication technology. Underpinned by modernist visions of telecommunication and infrastructure development it is argued that technological progress will be the route of Africa's economic regeneration. The targets set in the NEPAD programme are for an African GDP growth of 7% per annum, even more ambitious than the target growth rates set during Africa's 'developing decades'. Regarding the earlier mentioned 'South Africanisation' of the African economy it is hardly a coincidence that the FDI of South African corporates focuses on infrastructure projects in Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa. In effect large amounts of NEPAD-generated profits will flow to South African enterprises and to Pretoria's national budget and eventually make an annual growth of 7% possible, but just for South Africa's GDP. In summary: by using strong synergies between material (aggressive FDI-strategies) and institutional (NEPAD) foreign policy instruments the Mbeki administration manages to secure national growth, which is a crucial foreign policy goal.

At the sub regional level SADC aims at socio-economic development and cooperation. SADC's free trade protocol has been ratified by most member states. It sets a target of 2012 for zero tariffs on all intra-SADC trade. As the most competitive and liberalised economy (besides Botswana) South Africa naturally is benefiting most from the gradual elimination of sub regional trade barriers. Despite attempts to bring the timetable forward, implementation remains slow (Blumenfeld 2006: 440). It is true that the SADC Treaty defines peace and po-

litical stability as preconditions for economic development and reflects a clear commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, but as long as the reality in any member state is marked by authoritarism and human rights abuses, the political pillar of SADC will remain relatively fragile. Its vehicle for playing the role of a stabilizing and pacifying institution is the redesigned Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation. In terms of the organs founding protocol – bearing South Africa's distinct imprint – SADC countries are obliged to promote and defend democracy, peace and security in the region. Member states may consider enforcement action under international law as a final means.

At the global level South Africa was the driving force forming a foreign policy triangle with India and Brazil. IBSA[18] is firstly an alliance between three southern regional powers to pursue common trade and security interests at the global level. It is secondly a platform for concrete bi-, trilateral and interregional multi-sector cooperation. After the first ministerial meeting of the IBSA-Forum Brazilian Foreign Minister Amorim was keen to emphasise that IBSA does not want to create new geopolitical divisions:

> 'This is a group to spread goodwill and the message of peace – we are not against anyone' (quoted in Miller 2005: 52).

Since then developing synergies through sector cooperation between the three economies marked the IBSA process much more than the social justice issues underlying the north south divide. Therefore the first IBSA summit at the presidential level – held in Brasilia in September 2006 – was focussed on agreements aimed at stimulating trade[19] between and economic growth in the three countries. Another pivotal cooperation area that was spelled out at the summit is energy security. Apart from the petrol sector, alternative energy sources, such as ethanol and nuclear technology are collaboration topics. The joint declaration issued at the end of the one-day Brasilia summit said:

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18 The India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) was launched in June 2003 in Brasilia by the foreign ministers of the three states after informal talks during the G-8 meeting in Evian, France in the same year. This was followed by the formal foundation of the G-3 by the three presidents during the 58. UN-General-Assembly in September 2003. Brazil, India and South Africa contributed crucially to the failing of the WTO-conference in Cancun (also September 2003) by arguing over the reduction of agricultural subsidies in the industrialised countries as well as other common trading interests of the developing world. Furthermore the three states lobby for an UN-reform that assigns a stronger role to developing countries, which represent the majority of the UN-member states. In September 2006 the three presidents celebrated the first IBSA Summit in Brasilia.

19 Trade between India, Brazil and South Africa currently totalled about US$ 8 billion a year (Indian Deputy Foreign Minister Anand Sharma, quoted in Business Day, 14 September 2006). Trade between Brazil and India contributes the largest and Indian-South African trade the smallest portion of the total amount.

> 'They [the three presidents] agreed that international civilian nuclear cooperation, under appropriate IAEA safeguards, amongst countries committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives could be enhanced through acceptable forward-looking approaches, consistent with the respective national and international obligations.'

Brazil controls the full nuclear fuel cycle since March 2006 (Flemes 2006b) and is the current chair of the NSG, South Africa is among the most influential NSG members and India concluded a deal on civilian nuclear cooperation with the US in March 2006. When Prime Minister Singh visited Pretoria, only two weeks after the IBSA summit in Brasilia, President Mbeki announced that South Africa would back India's bid to be given access to international technology for a civilian nuclear energy programme in the NSG (Business Day, 3 October 2006). Supporting the deal between the US and India, which has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, indicates a major shift from a rule and principle based to a more pragmatic proliferation policy of Pretoria. The three southern powers seem determined to seek large-scale synergies in nuclear energy production.

It is true that the incentives for a more confrontational approach generated by the G-3/G-20 at the WTO conference in Cancun were decreased, but from the beginning the troika's goal was a reform of the existing system and not an alternative order for the developing countries. The IBSA initiative locates itself within the existing international order, as the Brasilia Declaration[20] suggests:

> 'Respecting the rule of international law, strengthening the United Nations and the Security Council and prioritising the exercise of diplomacy a means to maintain international peace and security.'

While the IBSA initiative may be seen as an effort to increase the bargaining power of developing nations, the utilisation of bilateral free trade agreements (e.g. between the SACU and the USA) suggests a shift of Pretoria towards efficiency, pragmatism and reduced multilateralism. Similarly the cooperation between South Africa, India and Brazil is marked by a pragmatic emphasis on concrete focal points of collaboration aiming at economic growth. Crucial gains are expected to derive from interregional free trade areas between SACU-India, SACU-Mercosur[21] and India-Mercosur (WTO 2003: 254). Furthermore South Africa's sheer participation in IBSA and G-3 as one of the representatives of the global south is consolidating its leadership role at home and abroad. In effect Pretoria is using this institutional

20 For the text of the Declaration following the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, South Africa and India, in Brasília, on 6th June 2003, see: http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2005/ibsa_brasilia.htm.

21 The *Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR)* includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela as full members; Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru are associated.

instrument to achieve two foreign policy objectives: Firstly stimulating trade and economic growth, and secondly gaining international prestige and recognition as a regional power. Ideational power resources like the reputation of a spokesperson of the developing world and the according legitimacy can be operationalised by discursive instruments of interest-assertion.

Discursive foreign policy instruments

South Africa plays its role as a norm advocate on behalf of the developing countries by institutional and discursive foreign policy instruments. Generally speaking Pretoria's socio-economic justice discourse aims at countering the 'marginalisation of the global south' in the international political economy. In more detail the Mbeki presidency argues on several issues: the promotion of global free trade obstructed by the protectionist measures of developed countries; attracting more FDI from the developed to the developing world; debt relief for HIPC reducing their burden of debt servicing at the expanse of socio-economic upliftment; the restructuring of key multilateral institutions to make them more democratic and representative. The multilateral forums South Africa uses to engage the industrialised countries in the quest to reform the rules of the global economy have been institutions in need of reform (IMF, World Bank, WTO) as well as the UN Conference on Trade and Development, which South Africa chaired in the end of the 1990s, and the Cairns Group[22] of agricultural exporters. When the WTO conference in Cancun failed because the industrialised countries were not willing to reduce their agricultural subsidies in a sufficient extent South Africa (together with Brazil and India) was not speaking as it claimed on behalf of the global south. Developing countries, which are net food importers (like most of the least developed counties), are not interested in the reduction of agricultural subsidies in Europe and the US that keep prices low. Behind its global justice discourse, its national trade interests determined South Africa's position in Cancun.

In the security sphere South Africa was instrumental in brokering an agreement between the so-called 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' groupings during the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review and Extension Conference in 1995. Pretoria was initially criticised as being too much pro-West in its stance, but it succeeded in getting the conference to adopt an indefinite extension of the NPT, tightened two other decisions concerning the strengthening of the review process of the treaty and a set of objectives and principles (non-binding) on non-

22 The Cairns Group is an interest group of 18 agricultural exporting countries inaugurated 1986, composed of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay.

proliferation and disarmament. South Africa as well played a major role in the negotiations on the international convention on the banning of anti-personal landmines in 1997, chairing the Oslo talks dealing with the final text of the treaty (Schoeman 2003: 355).

In both occasions Pretoria applied the instruments of classical multilateral diplomacy mediating between the pivotal actors thus playing a decisive role in the development of international regimes. In effect South Africa's performances at the NPT conference and the conference on anti-personal land mines exemplify the successful application of consensus power at the global level. A significant part of South Africa's credibility as a leader in these international bargains was due to its earlier mentioned moral authority as a denuclearised state and landmine banner.

South Africa's leadership role has at times been actively encouraged and even solicited by major powers when they needed such assistance and support. During his official visit to South Africa in January 1999, Britain's Tony Blair discussed the Lockerbie issue with Nelson Mandela. Britain's approval of South Africa's relation with Libya only became clear when Mandela was able to strike a deal with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi on the extradition of the Lockerbie suspects. The suspects were subsequently extradited to the Netherlands in April 1999, raising South Africa's stature as a mediator and illustrating the success of its continued conviction that, in the words of Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, Aziz Pahad, 'political differences should not be solved by force' (cited in Schoeman 2003: 357). Pretoria has also been one of the movers behind the adoption of the Treaty of Rome, which led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002.

Before analysing Pretoria's diplomatic activities at the continental level, another mighty discursive instrument shall be mentioned: The state owned South African Broadcasting Company (SABC) is currently received in 23 African countries. From the perspective of cooperative hegemony the Africa-wide diffusion of the regional power's culture, ideas and principles is highly favourable. Regional institutions put the leader in a position to influence the domestic and foreign policy makers. But the SABC network reaches and influences the African peoples as well.

As mentioned above post-apartheid foreign policy shows a mixed record in applying discursive instruments to resolve political crises in Africa. Examples of the successful employment of diplomatic instruments by the Mandela and Mbeki administrations are the conflict between Angola and Zaire, as well as the internal crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

In July 1994, President Mandela convened a meeting in Pretoria with the Heads of State of Angola, Mozambique and Zaire to act as a facilitator between Angola and Zaire on the issue of alleged Zairian support for Jonas Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola

(UNITA). This resulted in a follow-up meeting, which witnessed the revival of the Joint Security Commission (JSC) between the two countries (Marx: 1995: 8).

South Africa pushed for peace in the DRC in 1999. Pretoria introduced a clear plan that stressed a ceasefire and troop standstill, a conference of reconciliation and reconstruction, an all-inclusive transitional government, a new constitution and general elections. In November 1999 it financed a joint military commission. South Africa's involvement was so determined that President Mbeki in August 2002 announced a 90-day target to return to peace, after Paul Kagame and Joseph Kabila had signed a deal in July 2002 under a Mbeki-Annan brokership, and in the presence of the SADC chairman, Bakili Muluzi of Malawi (Mail & Guardian, 16 August 2002). Pretoria's position eventually saw the withdrawal of a number of countries' troops, amongst them those of Zimbabwe, and the signing of the Final Act in Sun City in South Africa in March 2003, according to which a transitional government would be set up that would oversee democratic elections after two years (Schoeman 2003: 362). When the final agreement was concluded, the then South African Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, appropriately reminded public that persistent pressure kept both sides at the negotiation table through the CODESA[23] process (quoted in Habib/Selinyane 2006: 183).

The involvement of Pretoria in the Burundi peace process since 2000 proofed a determined commitment to the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts as well. It contributed troops to an AU peacekeeping force in Bujumbura after negotiations in which former President Mandela and Deputy President Zuma played significant roles.

Examples of unsuccessful South African diplomatic efforts have been observed in Nigeria (1995), in Morocco/Western Sahara (1996), in Zaire (1997), as well as in Zimbabwe and Swaziland until today. Habib and Selinyane (2006: 182-183) identify a lack of Pretoria's regional leadership, as reflected in its engagement with Nigeria during the Abacha period, as the cause for the diplomatic failures: When in November 1995, the Abacha regime executed various members and activists of the Movement for the Salvation of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), including its leader, the author Ken Saro-Wiwa, South Africa took a critical stand, calling for comprehensive sanctions against Nigeria and Abuja's expulsion from the Commonwealth (van Aardt 1996). However, it quickly revised its position as the Western capitals rushed back to flank the Abacha regime only one year later and took a position of constructive engagement at the 1997 Commonwealth meeting, where the situation in Nigeria was under review. After the diplomatic appeal failed, Pretoria did not consider increasing

23 The Convention for Democracy and Salvation (CODESA) is an alliance of political parties in Congo. The convention includes the Union for Democracy and Republic, the Rally for Democracy and Development, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, the National Convention for Democracy and Development, the Congolese Party for Renewal, and the National Convention for the Republic and Solidarity.

the pressure by means of coercive diplomacy or the employment of material instruments of interest-assertion.

A similar pragmatism influenced South Africa's relationship with the Polisario Front. In 1996 Pretoria went back on a commitment made in 1995 to recognise the Front diplomatically in order to procure a trade and cooperation agreement with Morocco, which continues manipulating UN-resolutions against its occupation of the Western Sahara. South Africa has since stopped short of recognising the Western Sahara Democratic Republic, ostensibly to avoid a direct confrontation with France and the United States.

But perhaps South Africa's lack of leadership has been most patent in respect of its relations with Mobutu's Zaire, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. In all three cases initial leadership was effectively abandoned. In 1997, in the twilight of Mobutu's kleptocracy, South Africa played a double role of having friendly relations with the regime in Kinshasa while also helping to establish contacts between South African companies and the rebels in Lubumbashi – thereby risking its credibility as a resolute catalyst for regional stability.

Similar weaknesses have plagued South Africa's interventions in Swaziland and Zimbabwe. In both cases South Africa argued that the problems of democracy can only be resolved by the peoples of these countries on the one hand, and that it will only act within the SADC framework on the other. This has not prevented it from warding off international condemnations of Zimbabwe's human rights and governance record. It may be more useful to typify South Africa's stance on Zimbabwe as one of appeasement, and that on Swaziland as one of an absence of strategic interests (Habib/Selinyane: 183). To sum it up it can be said that in Nigeria, Western Sahara, Zaire, Zimbabwe and Swaziland the South African government neither acted determined nor crossed the line between classical and coercive diplomacy. Pretoria could not crucially contribute stabilizing or democratising these countries in those historical moments.

Independently of the success of these diplomatic efforts it can be said that South Africa prefers discursive instruments to influence regional affairs. Besides the participation in peacekeeping missions post-apartheid Pretoria has intervened militarily only once (1998 in Lesotho). Why Pretoria was able to exert influence in one case and not in another, must be the subject of a comprehensive analysis of each case. But it can be concluded that there is a borderline of South African capacity to project power on the African continent, and – like the Zimbabwean case demonstrates – this borderline can run right in front of its doorstep. To explain the contradictoriness of the regional powers' powerlessness in its region I will focus on the question of acceptance of leadership by third countries.

4.4. Acceptance of leadership

Peers like Brazil and India accept South Africa's leadership role as Pretoria accepts theirs implicitly when these countries cooperate in multilateral institutions like IBSA, WTO (as G-3), NAM or the UN. When the US and European and Asian great powers negotiated trade issues with South Africa, e.g. at the WTO-conference in Cancun, they accepted it as an advocate of the developing world (especially of Africa). And the invitations to President Mbeki together with his Indian and Brazilian colleagues to the recent G-8 summits or to the World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, Switzerland, reflect substantial acceptance of South Africa's leadership role by the most powerful players of the international system.

In security affairs South Africa is encouraged in its role as a regional power and supported to this end by the international donor community as well. South Africa is one of the African countries targeted by the US, UK and France in the so-called P-3 Initiative, an offer of training, instruction and equipment related to peacekeeping in African crises. This effort is viewed with scepticism by most African countries, including South Africa, and feared to be an indication of 'constructive disengagement'.

On the other hand South Africa's vision of multilateralism as the appropriate institutional means for promoting international cooperation and conflict resolution has often required its leaders to resist immense pressures, especially from the United States. There was widespread admiration for the way in which South Africa helped African countries to withstand Washington's pressure over the extension of the nuclear test ban treaty (1996), the acceptance of the anti-personnel landmine ban convention (1997), the institutionalisation of the International Criminal Court (1998), and unilateral actions like the US-led intervention in Iraq since 2003 (Carlsnaes/Nel 2006: 19). The South African position and its role in finding a compromise during the NPT review conference in 1995, and its success in ensuring the survival of the NPT, reflects a leadership role as well, and one that was accepted by both camps in the debate (Schoeman 2003: 355).

While many extra-regional actors have welcomed Pretoria's self-assigned role as Africa's pre-eminent advocate, some fellow African states are not so sure about its true intentions. Far from being a benevolent hegemon, they view South Africa as a selfish hegemon bent on advancing its narrow economic interests at the expense of less developed African countries. Cooper, Higgott and Nossal (1993) have argued that leadership is based on some measure of consent among followers. However, the level of consent among South Africa's neighbours on the issue of its leadership can be characterised by ambiguity.

So the earlier mentioned aggressive foreign direct investment practices of South African companies in African states, despite the desperate need of investment, have not always been

welcomed. Speaking in the Kenyan Parliament an opposition legislator reflected a regionally representative criticism by complaining that,

> 'If we continue doing this we'll end up owning nothing in Kenya […] they bulldoze their way around. It seems they still have the old attitudes of the old South Africa' (New York Times, 17.02.02).

On the other hand the critical attitude of many actors in the economically penetrated African countries towards South African big companies does not lead to a more protectionist legislature in these countries. In effect the 'liberal market leadership' of South African business is accepted in the region because of global market forces.

Western encouragement of South Africa's regional leadership results in South Africa being characterised as having a Western orientation in its foreign policy. Pretoria's experience of criticism of being the 'lackey of the West' has resulted in punishment by its African neighbours by means of ostracism (Schoeman 2003: 358). This is best illustrated by the aftermath of the earlier mentioned public criticism of the Nigerian regime after the execution the MOSOP-activists. Africa distanced itself from Pretoria's stance, both at the levels of the SADC and the OAU. Many African leaders consider public criticism as 'unafrican'. And the OAU ruled Mandela's push for international sanctions against Nigeria 'not an African way to deal with an African problem' (quoted in: Olivier/Geldenhuys 1997: 112). This brought South Africa face to face with the politics of African solidarity, revealing the unwritten code that African states do not turn against each other in international fora (van Aardt 1996: 114). Instead 'private criticism' between the African 'big men' is seen as an African way of problem resolution.

However, by April 1996, South Africa's ambassador was back in Abuja while his minister joined African resistance to a UN resolution that would have appointed an international human rights watchdog over Nigeria (Bell 1997: 16). Clearly, the lesson is that Africa will not simply follow because 'the Rainbow nation is blowing the whistle' (Solomon 1997: 4). For instance, when the civil war in the DRC broke out in 1998, President Mugabe did not invite either President Mandela or Deputy President Mbeki to the Victoria Falls meeting of the SADC in August of that year, and African countries also 'punished' South Africa by withholding their support for the country's bid to host the Olympic Games in 2004 (Mbeki 1998: 215).

On one hand these 'failures' are partly balanced by the leading role Pretoria has played in resolving the crisis in Zaire, and by calls from Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania for the South African Navy to protect their maritime resources, by South Africa's crucial role in the AU, by its election to chair SADC, and soon also by its leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement. But on the other hand they demonstrate clearly that South Africa cannot impose measures, which are not accepted by other African powers.

Fermenting its neighbours' distrust is the apparent rivalry between South Africa and Zimbabwe – which could be named a 'secondary rogue power' at the sub regional level – perhaps best illustrated by problems encountered in the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (van Aardt 1997). The conflicts in Lesotho and the DRC also clouded relations between South Africa and other SADC members. After criticisms by European countries, especially Britain, of the Mugabe government's handling of the land and human rights issues, South Africa's dilemma is how to admonish the Zimbabwean regime without appearing to side with 'the West' against an African brother nation again. A comment of Malawi's Foreign Minister, Lilian Patel, demonstrates the conspiracy theory inspired and ignorant understanding of regional solidarity making sanctions against Mugabe difficult:

> 'SADC would not go along with evil machinations of some Western powers using the neo-colonialist press […]. SADC would remain on Zimbabe's side because blood is thicker than water' (The Herald, 12. December 2001).

Pretoria's dilemma how to juggle between sensitivities in SADC and AU, and the need to apply pressure on the Harare government, has been bridged by South Africa's 'silent diplomacy' rejecting condemnation of the democratic deficits and human rights abuses of the Mugabe regime on the one hand, and tries to initiate an 'inter party dialogue' between the regime and its opposition on the other. A simple cost balance also explains Pretoria's non-intervention policy, because 'transforming a totalitarian regime into a democracy is far easier and less costly than getting a country out of anarchy and reintroducing democracy' (unnamed senior South African government official, quoted in Kagwanja 2006: 167). But silent diplomacy has not had great impact until today.

In short, South Africa continues to face major challenges in Africa, and is still learning how to deal with its diverse and complex landscape. These challenges are about to peak when the reform process of the UN Security Council gets under way. While many in the international community promote South Africa's candidacy as one of the new permanent members (if this proposed reform is ever implemented), the regional support is not clear. The country cannot push its candidacy unilaterally and it cannot go for it together with Brazil, Germany, India and Japan (G-4) because it has to seek general consensus in the AU first.

At the continental level Nigeria is competing for the leadership role and for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council as well. Nigeria justifies its claim to regional leadership with its historical role as such, its population (each fifth black African is Nigerian), its military strength (84000 troops) and its great contribution to African peacekeeping (in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Sudan). President Obasanjo is one of the central actors implanting the NEPAD, Abuja chaired the AU (2004-2006), and not at least Nigeria is the fifth big-

gest oil supplier of the US. As Huntington (1999) many authors see Abuja as a second African regional power at the same level as Pretoria. I will argue that Nigeria is a secondary regional power because of its comparatively poor economic performance, its weak democratic consolidation, and its minor significance in global affairs. It is true that by his active participation in the United Nations and the Commonwealth and by mediating in African trouble spots (in Liberia and Sudan/Darfur for instance) President Obasanjo gained a lot of international prestige. But South Africa's role and impact in global bargains is much more pronounced as illustrated before.

Additionally Nigeria cannot compete with South Africa's leadership in regional economic affairs in the long term, although Nigeria currently enjoys a positive trade balance with South Africa and is its only major non-SADC African trading partner. The bilateral relation is shaped by the facts that South Africa is the continent's strongest and most versatile economy, while Nigeria is Africa's largest consumer market. Further, Nigeria's trade link to South Africa is in one commodity (98,3% of its exports was comprised of oil in 2003), while South Africa's is diverse and includes a range of products that Nigeria's massive consumer market clearly wants. Therefore South Africa's trade into the Nigerian market can only grow. The opposite does not apply, because, oil apart, Nigeria has little to offer to the South African consumers (Daniel/Naidoo/Naidu 2005: 558-567).

Nigeria is weakened by both, economic crisis and political decay. As Kumar (2005) points out, its democratic transition was more of an obligation than a choice for the political class of Nigeria. The recent democratic openings have failed to reconcile, if not aggravated its ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious and cultural differences. Nigeria is in need of democratic solutions and consolidation while facing a crisis in the form of an overall absence, deterioration or breakdown of social, economic and political institutions of governance[24]; the safeguard of human security; a dependent political economy of oil; and the dereliction of physical infrastructure.

24 This critical analysis was underlined in October 2006, when President Obasanjo declared the state of emergency in troubled Ekiti State after local Members of Parliament voted to impeach its governor Ayo Fayose after finding him guilty of siphoning state funds into personal bank accounts. Oppositional politicians stated that the unconstitutional declaration of emergency rule were part of complex political scheming ahead of the general elections in April 2007, where Obasanjo seems determined to influence the choice of his successor. For a solution in Ekiti, President Obasanjo, himself a retired army general, has appointed another retired general to run Ekiti State for the next six months. All democratic institutions in the state, including the local legislature, which impeached Fayose, will remain suspended (BBC World, 24 October 2006). Nigeria only returned to multi-party democracy in 1999 after being ruled by the military for most of the previous 30 years. Former military rulers Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and General Muhammadu Buhari are expected to be top contenders in April elections. A retired army colonel also heads the ruling People's Democratic Party. The declaration of emergency rule in Ekiti could be used as an argument for postponing the elections. In May 2006 Nigeria's parliament rejected a plan to change the constitution to let Obasanjo seek a third term in office.

From the perspective of co-operative hegemony Nigeria's support is of great importance for the South African regional power, despite of its difficult internal dynamics. Independently of naming Abuja a secondary or regional power, Abuja has many options to undermine Pretoria's regional leadership. And it is true that many African leaders' accept Nigeria's leadership far more than South Africa's because of the earlier mentioned criticism and scepticism towards Pretoria.

How does one account for this ambiguity among so-called followers? South Africa's level of development, the stature of its leadership and its relative military and economic strength are being called upon to aid the continent. At the same time, there are real fears of being sidelined or overshadowed by South Africa. Its role, generally, is seen in terms of benevolent leadership by Pretoria. But concomitant to this is that the neighbouring countries are accorded a rather passive role: The relationship is characterised more by paternalism than by partnership and South Africa's ideational resources are constrained by its historical legacy. As the case of Lesotho showed South Africa's intervention in poor and weak African neighbours is likely to be suspected of reviving apartheid's hegemonic interventionism. Summarised in many cases Pretoria's regional leadership has been more acquiesced than welcomed, accepted, or solicited. Given these ambiguities Solomon (1997: 7) pleads for a foreign policy shift in favour of what could be termed co-operative leadership, emphasising on consensus seeking among the various players. And Schoeman (2003: 364) similarly advises an even stronger focus on continental multilateralism.

5. Conclusion: the South African type of regional leadership

Which statements about the South African type of regional leadership do the findings permit? The governments of democratic South Africa avoid articulating their claim to regional leadership directly. But between the lines African and extra-regional players understand Pretoria's quest for leadership, because it is implicit to its role in many regional and global multilateral cooperation processes. As we have seen South Africa articulates its claim to regional leadership in economic and trade policies through SACU, SADC (both sub regional) and NEPAD (continental); and in regional security and defence issues as well through SADC (sub regional) and the African Union (continental). At the global level Pretoria's claim to lead the developing world in economic and trade affairs is articulated more openly and becomes most obvious, reflecting its rhetoric and behaviour, in multilateral institutions like NAM, IMF, WTO, UN Conference on Trade and Development, IBSA-Forum and the Cairns Group. In international security policies the claim to leadership is less pronounced than in economic issues, but Pretoria's leadership claim is not limited to the developing world:

When it comes to international disarmament, non-proliferation and human rights issues, the South African claim to leadership is universal.

South Africa's power over material resources is reflected by its defence expenditure that leads to military supremacy in Southern Africa and to a dominant role on the continental level, potentially according influence in regional security and defence affairs. In global comparison Pretoria's military power is marginal. South Africa's economic base is overwhelmingly superior at the SADC-level, securing still a lot of influence in continental trade, and ranking 21st in global GDP comparison. Besides this South Africa's economy is more competitive than its peers' India and Brazil. But the social 'collateral damages' of the liberal market strategy can undermine long-term growth: The level of comparative human development does not reflect Pretoria's economic dominance on the African continent and the rainbow nation's income distribution is highly unequal. Nevertheless Pretoria's sub regional human, social and economic development record still makes its military supremacy redundant.

South Africa's ideational resources consist in its reputation as an advocate of democracy, human rights, disarmament, and non-proliferation based on its paradigmatic behaviour in the domestic and international context. This makes South Africa a shining example, particularly in the African context, and leads to high levels of legitimacy and moral authority. Although the relative economic success of South Africa reflects a positive balance of financial and trade policies, the example function from the regional perspective is more connected with Pretoria's role as an upholder of 'good-global-citizenship-norms' or 'peaceful regional stabilizer' than as a 'motor of continental growth'. In comparison, players at the global level, especially the Bretton Woods institutions, praise Pretoria's economic performance much more and its role of a spokesperson of the 'poor South' is a mighty ideational resource in global economic and trade affairs. It is true that some authoritarian African regimes' rhetoric does not reflect any esteem for these achievements, but this is mainly because the recognition of the South African human rights and good governance records would imply too much self-criticism.

South Africa's use of material foreign policy instruments is limited to the regional level. On one hand South African commercial FDI in Africa, partly subsidised by the ANC governments, secures a lot of influence in many African countries, especially because these investments are concentrated on national infrastructures (airports, railroads, electricity, telecommunications etc.) that are of strategic importance for any state. On the other hand Pretoria uses material instruments to stabilize the region: Exceptionally it intervened in a unilateral manner in Lesotho in 1998. But usually South Africa projects its military power through multilateral peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the UN, AU and/or SADC, which

already hints to the crucial significance of institutional instruments within Pretoria's foreign policy strategy.

Pretoria's high preference for projecting power by means of multilateral institutions at the regional level reflects a strategy of co-operative hegemony. As the largest and most efficient economy in the region South Africa expects considerable advantages of scale from a unified regional market. South Africa's role in the process from Mbeki's African Renaissance to the New Partnership for Africa's Development suggests a high agenda setting capacity of South African foreign policy makers. The continental economy project formulated in the NEPAD is marked by Pretoria's footprint and inspired by its national liberal market strategy. NEPAD's review mechanism (APRM) binds the states of the continent to the project of 'pan-African market liberalism' in the long term, because governments that do not act in conformity with the free market and good governance conditions will be sanctioned by less foreign investment and less development assistance. But the verification of the APRM criteria exposes the member states to the earlier mentioned 'public criticism', which explains partly why only 23 states joined NEPAD so far (10/25/2006). SADC's free trade protocol aims at zero tariffs on intraregional trade by 2012 and means access to the sub regional consumer markets and access to the natural resources of southern Africa, thus securing energy sources for South African industries. In comparison the costs of non-cooperation would be large for South Africa's regionalised economy. Further advantages of Pretoria's cooperative approach are: Firstly the diffusion of its ideas and principles about trade and finance, that – promoted by the regional frameworks – influence the domestic and foreign policies of its neighbourhood. And secondly the aggregation of sub regional and continental power that is used to influence multilateral trade negotiations at the global stage, when South Africa speaks on behalf of Africa.

The political project of democracy, stability, peace and human rights formulated in the African Union (and in SADC as well) with its South African flagship is attracting Africa's peoples to identify with it. Pretoria's power of agenda setting in the AU is very high and there is an implicit AU-owned 'African mandate' at the United Nations and elsewhere at the global level, although not always welcomed by all African states. Pretoria's pivotal status in the African Union is tightly linked with its contribution to relative regional stability achieved by its increasing engagement in African peacekeeping and peaceful conflict resolution. This includes many mediation efforts, partly embedded in diplomatic AU or SADC missions. But the advantages of stability are limited, because sub regional cooperation could not avoid attempts of intraregional counterbalancing. Zimbabwe's defence alliance with Namibia, DRC and Angola is a latent threat to Pretoria's co-operative hegemony.

The costs of co-operative hegemony for the South African DFA are relatively low. It is true that Pretoria has to share power with its neighbours, while participating in the several re-

gional cooperation processes. But the degree of formalisation and institutionalisation remains still low. The AU is most institutionalised, having an assembly composed of the heads of state that gradually passes decision-making powers to the elected Pan-African Parliament, and to the African Commission. But at the end of the day an intergovernmental structure characterizes the AU-institutions and their very limited competences cannot really restrict state power. The more powerful and effective institutions like the PSC and APRM do not limit governmental policies that do not cross the normative lines of the AU-framework.

It is important that Pretoria pursues the interests of its regional neighbours in international bargains even more than is does and shares the distributive outcomes with them, although this implies disadvantages for itself sometimes. If South Africa is not ready to pay this price, its legitimacy as regional spokesperson and the regional acceptance of its leadership in Africa will further decrease. The same applies to great parts of the integration costs that the regional power has to take over: Pretoria maintains several institutions like the PAP, the NEPAD and APRM secretariats in Midrand and contributes generously to the AU budget. And although the costs of peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy are high, South Africa carries this burden. The Mbeki-administration faces the difficult task of convincing its internal critics that investing heavily in capacity building for African institutions is in the best interest of South Africa that is shaken by high unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS. But in the long term these side-payments contribute to regional peace and prosperity – preconditions for South Africa's well being.

At the global level South Africa's participation in multilateral institutions is even more convenient. Pretoria's engagement in the NAM, the WTO, or the UN hardly implies side payments. South Africa uses global governance institutions and summits to build new coalitions to pursue common interests: the IBSA-forum was launched at the 2003 G-8 meeting in Evian and the G-3 during the General Assembly of the UN in the same year. Other important motives for Pretoria's participation in global multilateral organisations are the following: influencing emerging international norms, changing existent dominant norms, and counterbalancing the preferences of the major powers. The overall objective of South Africa's diplomatic actions is to halt the lack of representation of the developing world, which is predominantly African and including itself. At the first presidential IBSA-summit in September 2006 in Brasilia the three presidents coordinated their standpoints and voting behaviour, for the NAM conference in Havana and the 61st UN-General Assembly in New York, where South Africa was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2007-2008) for the first time in the same month.

Especially at the global level there are several overlaps between the application of institutional and discursive foreign policy instruments. Apart from the above-mentioned institu-

tions that Pretoria uses as a stage for its global justice discourse demanding debt relief for HIPC and reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, in some occasions the DFA's consensus power was projected on more specific issue areas, like non-proliferation, banning of landmines and human rights. Sites of South African 'niche diplomacy' were the according UN-conferences, and the formation process of the ICC. The civilian or milieu ends Pretoria struggles for in these global institutions, suggest strong parallels between the general and national interest and reflect South Africa's middle power status in the international system.

The ANC-government's discourse on the regional economy and trade is quite contradictory. On the one hand Pretoria promotes the liberalisation of the African economies, particularly through NEPAD; and on the other hand the first priority of democratic South Africa's foreign policy is to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment in Africa. But it is common knowledge that a liberal market policy, neglecting redistribution measures, leads to income inequity with a great proportion of poverty, at least at a first stage. Particularly the commitment to NEPAD and the subsidised, aggressive, regional FDI strategy of South African enterprises suggest the 'growth before equity' as well as the 'South Africa first' approach of Pretoria's regional policies. Therefore behind its discourse on African development, naturally South Africa's trade and economic policy is determined by its national interest.

In regional security affairs Pretoria's first choice to maintain or create relative stability on the African continent is the employment of discursive and institutional instruments. Usually the presidency and the DFA apply instruments of classical diplomacy channelled by the AU or SADC to resolve conflicts between African states or domestic crises in the region, mediation in particular, not always successfully though. The use of material foreign policy instruments is limited to peace missions sanctioned by the SADC/AU/UN. Only exceptionally the Mandela-administration employed coercive instruments (Lesotho intervention 1998).

While South Africa's leadership is fully accepted on the global stage, the acceptance in Africa is lower. And if many African states accept Pretoria as a regional power, it does not mean necessarily that they welcome it. Often acquiescence of leadership is the more suitable term to describe the relationship between Pretoria and its followers. Especially in regional economic affairs the question 'why do followers follow?' is far better explained by the force of existing facts and implications of the global market economy than by any attractive political project of the regional power.

Some authors recommend, very generally, an even more cooperative or multilateral foreign policy approach to gain more leadership acceptance in the region. But Pretoria would be ill advised to take a more cooperative stance towards the Zimbabwean regime that is undermining South African (sub) regional leadership most. The soft handling of the 'secondary rogue power' has not brought any results and critics of Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy' suggest

coercive instruments instead. Indeed South Africa could use its economic muscle to back up its silent diplomacy. Pretoria does not because it fears regional isolation that would imply the loss of its regional leadership role. Too much is at stake in South Africa's role in the AU, NEPAD and SADC, which form Mbeki's bases for projecting power in world affairs at the same time. Human rights issues and Harare's negative impact on the sub regional economy cannot counterbalance these power potentials in Mbeki's calculations. But some observers believe that there is a 'secret plan' of Zimbabwean regime change behind South Africa's quiet diplomacy, which would reflect much more leadership capability than just waiting until great powers take action.

Regarding Nigeria, the secondary African power, an even more cooperative foreign policy approach is more advisable to maintain co-operative hegemony. Like Pedersen (2002: 693) argues, the regional power must cover a certain range for sectoral issues accord secondary states real influence over the dominant state's politics to avoid asymmetrical federation. Additionally power sharing between Pretoria and Abuja is crucial because Nigeria can claim leadership in certain issue areas, like peacekeeping. And Nigeria is potentially a privileged cooperation partner of the superpower, especially because it is the USA's fifth biggest oil supplier. But South Africa is already sharing considerable amounts of power with Nigeria in the African Union and Nigeria's President Obasanjo is the chairperson of NEPAD's Heads of State Committee. Finally a tendency of asymmetrical federation – in view of a South African regional power that shows a considerable power aggregation capacity and long-term regional institutionalisation commitment, but partly a lower power sharing capacity – can be verified for the disparate SADC context, but not for the continental level (summarised and simplified these conclusions can be expressed in Matrix 1).

Without establishing direct dependencies between the variables, the matrix shows some parallels regarding the criteria's classification: Firstly, as expected the preference of the South African regional power for the use of institutional instruments of interest-assertion is most pronounced in both policies and at both analysis levels. Pretoria's foreign policy is an example for exercising power by participating effectively in regional and international institutions; the latter underlines its middle power status in the international system. The cooperative strategy effects emerging norms at the global level and prevents major interventions of the great powers in Africa that are not congruent with Pretoria's interests. South Africa's ability to determine the regional cooperation agenda through a strategy of co-operative hegemony mostly avoids the empowerment of weaker states that could constrain its own freedom. But Pretoria did not succeed in preventing intra-regional counterbalancing like the defence alliance between Zimbabwe, Namibia, DRC and Angola highlights. Nevertheless advantages of scale are high. Pretoria's regional aggregation of power enables the Mbeki-

administration to play a global role using Africa as a base for projecting power in world affairs. Furthermore the regional cooperation secures advantages of inclusion and diffusion to the regional power: access to the African markets and raw materials as well as the diffusion of its ideas and principles. In comparison the costs of Pretoria's co-operative hegemony are negligible. Power sharing is constrained by South African dominance in the regional institutions. And the long-term commitment to regional integration is so deeply embedded in the ANC's foreign policy discourse and South African political culture that its governments do not really have a choice. Only the side payments for regional institutionalisation and relative stability in Africa are costly and often difficult to justify to the public.

Matrix 1: The South African type of regional leadership

		Economy		Security	
		Regional level	Global level	Regional level	Global level
Claim to leadership*		++	+++	++	+++
Power resources**	Material	+++	++	+++	+
	Ideational	+	+++	+++	+++
Foreign policy instruments***	Material	+++	+	++	+
	Institutional	+++	+++	+++	+++
	Discursive	+	+++	+++	+++
Acceptance of leadership****		++	+++	++	+++

* The claim to leadership is articulated subtly+, clearly++, or pronounced+++
** The power resources are comparatively low+, middle++, or high+++
*** The preference for the respective foreign policy instrument is low+, middle++, or high+++
**** The acceptance of leadership is low+, middle++, or high+++

Secondly, regarding potential interdependencies between material and ideational power as well as between the regional and global analysis level the matrix suggests the following: On

the one hand the relative power over material resources is higher at the regional than at the global level. And not surprisingly Pretoria's preference for the use of material foreign policy instruments is higher at the regional than at the global level as well. On the other hand South Africa's relative power over ideational resources as well as the preference for the use of discursive foreign policy instruments is higher in security than in economic policies at the regional level, and high in both policies at the global level. In effect Pretoria operationalises its material resources by means of material instruments and ideational resources through discursive instruments of interest-assertion. But there is little indication that material capabilities are converted into discursive instruments and vice versa. In addition interactions between the regional and global level seem to be limited.

Thirdly, South Africa articulates its claim to leadership in a more pronounced way at the global than at the regional level. And accordingly the acceptance of its leadership is higher at the global than at the regional level. Therefore the claim to leadership does not ensure acceptance, but it is a necessary precondition for it. The South African case shows that regional acceptance determines if the claim to leadership is articulated subtly, clearly or pronounced. On which factors does the acceptance criterion depend? The matrix indicates that where leadership acceptance is high, the power over ideational resources and the preference for discursive and institutional foreign policy instruments are high as well. Further case studies must be realised, to verify a positive correlation between the employment of discursive and institutional foreign policy instruments on the one site and leadership acceptance on the other, respectively a negative correlation between material instruments of interest-assertion and acceptance of leadership. Regarding the regional acceptance the pivotal significance of secondary powers – namely Nigeria and Zimbabwe – was highlighted. Future studies should focus bilateral relations between regional and secondary powers including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews amongst the foreign policy elites to gain more insights into the acceptance criterion.

These preliminary assumptions can contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of regional powers in international relations by way of comparing South Africa's leadership features with the ones of other regional powers. As a base for regional power comparison South Africa's capacity to influence the processes and structures of the international system must be determined. This is a difficult task due to the long duration and multi-variable dependency of many of Pretoria's foreign policy projects at the global level, such as the UN Security Council or Bretton Woods institutions reforms. But the fact that the democratic South African government is actively challenging some of the guiding principles of the international system through its reformist south-oriented multilateralism seems to demonstrate an inherent possibility of change of the current hierarchy. The Mbeki administration is pursuing

these interests predominantly by means of discursive foreign policy instruments on the base of ideational resources, as highlighted by the constructivist approach. But what makes Pretoria's foreign policy effective is the parallel employment of institutional instruments embedded in a strategy of co-operative hegemony.

However, South Africa's success in influencing the processes and structures of the international system will depend largely on its ability to build a coalition with its peers, Brazil and India for instance. As the realist approach emphasises: a mulitpolar system can only be achieved by the emergence of cooperating regional unipolarities that balance the superpower.

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