

A STRATEGIC HEGEMONIC APPROACH TO FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENTALISM IN DEEPENING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Two competing perspectives have influenced the debate concerning the approach to be adopted in search of continental-wide integration in Africa. Although both perspectives argue for the idea of a “United States of Africa”, the approach of former Libyan leader, Muḥammad Gaddafi, advocated for holistic integration, whilst other African leaders, spearheaded by Thabo Mbeki, argued for incrementalism aimed at first strengthening regional integration. Whereas the African Union (AU) has accepted incrementalism as the preferred approach to continental integration, minimal emphasis has been placed on what this approach should constitute. Drawing from the successes of the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and West African Power Pool (WAPP), this article argues that functional developmentalism is most suitable to strengthening Regional Economic Communities (RECs) throughout the continent. It postulates that functional developmentalism signifies a more effective role for hegemons which is firmly entrenched in the principles and norms of cooperative hegemony. Using the criteria for cooperative hegemony, namely capacities for power sharing, power aggregation and commitment, it illustrates the potential for enhancing regional cooperation.

Keywords: Regional cooperation; regional integration; incrementalism; hegemonic stability; functional developmentalism; regional economic communities; African Union (AU); South African Power Pool (SAPP); West African Power Pool (WAPP).

Slutelwoorde: Streeksamewerking; streeksintegrasie; inkremetalisme; hegemoniese stabiliteit; funksionele ontwikkeling; ekonomiese streeksgemeenskappe; Afrika-Unie (AU); South African Power Pool (SAPP); West African Power Pool (WAPP).

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent crisis within the European Union (EU) is an indicator to the African Union (AU) at the turn of its eleventh anniversary of the potential risks associated with integration. Thus far, the AU’s strategy to resolve the three main impediments

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to realising the Pan-Africanist vision of a “United States of Africa”, namely chronic underdevelopment, a prevailing colonial legacy and the threat of globalisation, appears muddled and directionless. In fact, there continues to be a lack of consensus on whether an incremental or continental-wide approach to integration is most propitious in meeting this ideal. This is exemplified by recent efforts to establish a “union government” assuming quasi-executive powers in a confederate format indicative of continental-wide integration, whilst reviving notions of “decentralisation” advocating for the strengthening of Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Increasing costs to monitor and sustain existing organs in the AU under tight fiscal and resource constraints in an effort to “mirror” the EU institutional arrangement, is testament to the AU’s proclivity towards a top-down approach to integration. The AU has operated on a budget deficit ever since its inception. As of May 2013, “more than half of the AU’s annual budget of \$277m is paid for by non-African donors, while the rest is almost entirely paid for by just five of the member states, including Libya” (*The Economist* 2013). Without the external support from the United States (US), the EU and the United Nations (UN) amongst others, the AU would not be able to address the security needs of the RECs and to finance local development initiatives. The negative effect of this is that donors usually heavily influence the institutions to be set up in this regard (Okumu 2009:105).

Besides financial deficiencies, there has not been any strategy to promote effective integration within RECs. This is reflected in Article 4 of the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty which simply alludes to the, “strengthening of existing regional economic communities and the establishment of other communities where they do not exist” (African Union AEC Treaty: 2002). It merely emphasises greater harmonisation within and between RECs based on the linear market-based integration that is limited, and lacks critical reflection on existing shortcomings of this approach and a proposed long-term strategy towards incrementalism. Whilst scholars have expressed the significance of regional hegemons as primary drivers of integration, little effort has been made to spell out the role they should play in this regard. In addition to this oversight, traditional functionalist and neo-functionalist models of market-based integration have failed to provide a viable solution to the endemic challenges of regional integration on the continent (Gibb 2006:706).

In lieu of the above, drawing from the successes of the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and West African Power Pool (WAPP), the authors argue that functional developmentalism is most suitable to operationalising a strategy to strengthen RECs throughout the continent. It postulates that functional developmentalism signifies a more effective role for hegemons which is firmly entrenched in the principles and norms of cooperative hegemony.

Cooperative hegemony refers to the non-coercive rule by a big power or hegemon within and through cooperative arrangements based on a long-term strategy. Elements of cooperative hegemony such as capacity for power sharing *vis-à-vis* smaller states in a region, power aggregation on the part of the predominant regional state and commitment to a long-term regionalist policy strategy will be used as tools of analysis to illustrate how the exercise of non-coercive rule by hegemonies within Southern and West African RECs resulted in the success of the SAPP and the WAPP. The emphasis on the SAPP and the WAPP is only used in the article as an illustration of how less stable regions without an established hegemon can draw lessons from the initiatives developed and effectively managed by hegemonies in the Southern and West African regions to emulate their strategy in their respective RECs.

Since the identification of potential hegemonies in less stable regions in Africa is highly contentious, the article firstly attempts to locate them within RECs employing the criterion advocated by hegemonic stability theory specifically emphasising economic strength. The *raison d'être* for using the criterion of hegemonic stability theory to identify hegemonies, whilst simultaneously advocating cooperative hegemony appears to be a contradiction, is that cooperative hegemony cannot be applied before a regional hegemon, that has the potential to play this role, is first identified in a respective region.

The article infers that once established, regional hegemonies would be able to achieve greater legitimacy within initiatives such as the SAPP and the WAPP which is predicated on cooperative hegemony. Such an approach emanates from practical experiences on the continent. It will therefore illustrate how cooperative hegemony, which is intrinsic to functional developmentalism, serves as a blueprint for potential hegemonies in other RECs to follow.

2. CONTEXTUALISING THE FAILURE OF MARKET-BASED REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

Current attempts to ameliorate RECs using models of integration drawing from the European experience with functionalism and neo-functionalism are ill-equipped to address the endemic challenges confronting Africa. Open regionalism which underpins current market-based integration models employed in the various RECs exacerbates inherent structural economic weaknesses. There is general consensus that African economies are smaller and lack productive capacity and a broad consumer base required to facilitate industrial expansion and economies of scale advocated by market integration (Söderbaum 1998:78). Unlike the early post-World War II phase, when regional “protectionism” was practiced by the EU as an acceptable strategy to enhance the competitiveness of intra-regional domestic

industries, the post-Cold War era has limited state control of intra-regional markets through extreme economic and trade liberalisation measures (Stephan and Hervey 2008:56-57). Political conditionalities, including privatisation of local industries, relaxation of trade tariffs and currency devaluation as part of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) in Africa has resulted in de-industrialisation and de-skilling of labour (Alden and Soko 2005:370). Crucially, the era of neoliberal reform has weakened intra-regional state relations and sovereignty that compromises regional integration efforts and increases competition between member states of the respective RECs for foreign direct investment opportunities and export markets. Alternative development strategies, including individual states establishing bilateral economic relations with emerging extra-regional economies, such as China, whilst providing infrastructural development, fails to operationalise regional social capital, entrenches neo-colonial relations of dependency and increases intra-regional political instability. For example, China's involvement in the Sudanese conflict has exacerbated tensions between Sudan and the newly independent South Sudan (Ferrie 2012). Paradoxically, the "political spillovers" of heightened political and security co-operation that neo-functional theorist, Andrew Hurrell, highlighted as a positive externality of market-based regional integration, deepens ethno-religious factionalisms within and between individual member states (Hurrell 1995:338).

Besides these external challenges to regional integration there are internal factors that compromise this objective. For example, South Africa entered into a Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) with the EU without proper consultation with SACU member states, thereby appears to be furthering its own development agendas at the expense of the collective interest. The concerns raised by the smaller SACU economies afterwards demonstrate that state sovereignty can compromise broader community interests which in turn may create a perception of a lack of political commitment and will to regional integration. Alden and Soko (2005:372) state that, "in response to concerns broached by Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland about the decrease in real terms of the customs pool as a consequence of the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) entered into by South Africa and the European Union, the growing use of duty rebates by South Africa, and additional rounds of multilateral trade liberalisation, the SACU member states agreed to include in the revised revenue-sharing formula a development component from which the smaller and fragile SACU economies would benefit most".

In spite of this, only a state-led strategy that is internally contrived and driven by regional hegemony would enable RECs to overcome the problem of regional imperialism that prevent effective strengthening of RECs from the bottom-up.

Functional developmentalism in this regard provides a viable state-centred approach that is able to address both internal and external challenges to regional integration.

3. FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENTALISM AS A TOOL OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

The classic functionalist model of integration focuses on the expansion of trade and investment in highly technical commodity production areas where the private sector, operating primarily under the aegis of the market, is the “engine” of industrialisation. It promotes the principle of cooperation, establishing a trade nexus between highly technical commodity markets. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was the predecessor to the European Economic Community (EEC) and later the European Union, was predicated on linking coal and steel industries across the region (Ray 1992:376). The primary objective was to minimise competition for the same commodity markets within the region, expand exports and protect local industries from extra-regional competition. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), implemented much later, was also aimed at protecting local farmers from cheaper more competitive agricultural imports from developing countries (Oatley 2012:160). Based on the European experience, functionalism argued that economic integration determined by the market laid the foundations for the creation of a European Economic Community.

Neo-functionalism, a derivative of functionalism, added yet another dimension to regional integration discourse, the idea of “political spillover”. This approach illustrated how integration led to increased political cooperation and stability between states allaying historical conflicts and political and ideological differences culminating in the creation of the European Union (Stephan and Hervey 2008:56)

Developmental integration, on the other hand, emanates from the developmental state model advocating for state-led development in the public sector where individual states have more control and authority over resources and in decision making on development initiatives to further their national agendas. This enables states to minimise the negative externalities associated with open regionalism whilst promoting international competitiveness of domestic industries through intra and extra-regional market expansion (Stephan and Hervey 1998:60).

Functional developmentalism combines two dominant discourses on integration, namely neo-functionalism and developmental integration. It postulates that cooperative planning and coordinated implementation of collective developmental initiatives between individual member states in technical areas such as transport, communication, water, energy, environment and tourism provides the launch pad from which private industries, trade and local investment can take-off

within the regions that is reflective of developmental integration. However, it also emphasises the notion of “political spillover” espoused by neo-functionalism. This implies that when states collaborate on regional development initiatives, this has the propensity to facilitate greater cooperation on issues pertaining to peace and security in the region.

4. SOUTHERN AFRICAN POWER POOL (SAPP) AND WEST AFRICAN POWER POOL (WAPP) AS EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and West African Power Pool (WAPP) are ideal examples of the collective benefits associated with functional developmentalism. The SAPP came into effect on 28 September 1995 when the national energy utilities of nine SADC member states signed an Inter-utility Memorandum of Understanding. It constitutes utilities and ministries from member states and denies membership to individual power stations. Utilities cooperate and coordinate planning and operations of their energy systems in order to minimise costs and share profits equitably.

The objective of the SAPP was to establish a regional power grid that attempted to diversify energy production based on the comparative advantage that the different economies had in producing electricity from different sources. For example, power stations in South Africa were powered by coal-fired energy; Zimbabwe and Zambia focused on hydro power generated from the Zambezi River, whilst energy needs in Angola and Namibia was derived from natural gas (Stephen and Hervey 2009:69). The project resulted in technological and skills transfer in the energy sector that enabled the various economies to harness their individual energy production capabilities and expand trade and investment flows within the region.

This project was successful on three fronts. Firstly, by combining the various energy sectors, energy production and accessibility was extended across the region. Secondly, natural disasters such as droughts and floods that may hinder hydro-electric energy production in Zambia, for example, could be offset by access to coal-fired energy from South Africa because of the establishment of an intra-regional power grid. Thirdly, in smaller states where domestic energy demands could not support economies of scale, the growing energy consumption of South Africa created an export market to sustain increasing productivity (Stephan and Hervey 2009:69-70).

As a result, South Africa benefited from having access to cheap electricity imports, whilst neighbouring countries were able to benefit from having an export market for a technical commodity. Furthermore, integration in a highly technical area such as energy production provides the necessary impetus for growth in other

more advanced sectors of the economy, which requires specialised knowledge and skills. The Mozal Aluminium Smelter in Mozambique depended on the construction of a power line stretching from Mpumalanga in South Africa through Swaziland to Maputo. This project was a joint venture which involved all three power utilities, the South African parastatal Eskom, *Electricidade de Moçambique* and the Swaziland Electricity Board, and required extensive collaboration in terms of sharing physical, social and financial capital (Stephan and Hervey 2009:69).

South Africa's decision to initiate the SAPP project in order to stimulate development in a technical area that lays the foundation for future industrialisation emasculates criticisms against the country as a regional imperialist. South African private capital interests are ubiquitous in the region and are the primary beneficiaries of regional integration efforts such as the SADC trade protocol of 1996 that focused on increasing intra-regional trade through market-based reforms promoting trade liberalisation. On the contrary, joint development initiatives driven by state-owned enterprises subvert the pessimism surrounding the "interests" that motivates South Africa's involvement in the region (Alden and Soko 2005:377). A shift from private sector investments to state-led investment in technical sectors with a strong developmental agenda exemplified by the SAPP, illustrates the role that regional hegemon could play in stimulating sustainable development.

Similarly, Nigeria's hegemonic role in ECOWAS is expressed in terms of the West African Power Pool (WAPP). This initiative provides a sustainable energy infrastructure network in West Africa and is able to serve as a support mechanism for the Regional Integration Assistance Strategy (RIAS). In order to successfully implement this regional integration initiative, both ECOWAS and RIAS serve as important vehicles (Belguedj 2006:3). Emphasis on the distribution of costs and benefits through the WAPP is clearly outlined in its core objectives which aims to "increase access of ECOWAS member states to more stable and reliable supply of electricity from lower cost regional sources of (hydro and gas-fired thermal) power generation" (Belguedj 2006:5).

The SAPP and the WAPP point to the positive externalities associated with collaborative development programmes. This results in a sharing of economic, political, environmental and social costs associated with energy insecurity. The role of South Africa and Nigeria in initiating and driving the SAPP and the WAPP, in their respective regions, was crucial to the survival and effective functioning of these power pools. However, the hegemonic status of both these countries is crucial to the success of their respective regions, whilst there is a clear lack of distinctive hegemon in other regions. It is therefore necessary to locate hegemon in the other regions as key drivers in programmes replicating the models of the SAPP and the WAPP.

5. LOCATING HEGEMONS WITHIN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs)

This section seeks to locate hegemons in the different regions by repositioning hegemonic stability theory within the context of Africa and therefore makes an argument for its significance in the identification of potential hegemons across the different regions. One of the major obstacles to regional integration within RECs in Africa is the absence of regional hegemons. Except for South Africa in the SADC and Nigeria in ECOWAS, the remaining RECs, notably the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), have failed to identify and provide the necessary support to potential regional hegemons.

The sustainability of RECs is dependent on the establishment of regional hegemons. Hegemonic stability theory, however, provides the most suitable criterion for the identification of potential hegemons. It argues that a single state which has the largest economy, experiences the most stable political conditions and possesses military and political power to provide the necessary governance and epistemological and financial resources required to sustain regional integration within a regional regime structure (Prys 2009:219).

Hegemonic stability theory expounds on the conventional power-based neo-realist conceptions, which posits that powerful states provide more by way of resources to ensure the “robustness” of RECs and thus assuming the role of a benevolent power (Corrales and Feinberg 1999:10). However, the notion of a “benevolent” hegemon and the role that it plays in promoting regional integration is contested as there is no assurance that the regional hegemon is willing to shoulder the burden of integration within regional organisations resulting from external factors and individual state interests. For example, with the onset of globalisation expressed in terms of increasing capital flows, trade and financial interdependency, individual states must forge extra-regional relations in order to protect their individual economies.

Huntington affirms the above by arguing that “increasing pressure to integrate into a global economy has meant that countries are forced into multi-regionalism” (Huntington 1999:37). South Africa, for example, is the regional hegemon in Southern Africa, and ostensibly assumes a regional hegemonic position within the SADC, whilst also being a member of trans-continental trading blocs, such as IBSA and BRICS (Alden and Soko 2005:285).

Many scholars argue that dominant states may abuse their hegemonic status within regions to enhance their own development at the expense of weaker member states. This is seen as a form of regional imperialism. Since South Africa’s

successful transition to democracy in 1994, private capital investments from South African based businesses in the SADC has considerably increased and is ubiquitous (Zondi and Mulaudzi 2010:41). It is also observed that the presence and subsequent dependence on South African business in the region has stymied the emergence of local industries and lead to de-industrialisation and trade and capital dependence amongst weaker economies. Despite these criticisms against the role of hegemon within regions, the socio-economic and political disparities between member states within the various RECs region are too vast and hence necessitate the presence of hegemon in the manner conceived above.

Among the broad functions this hegemon is expected to perform, the following can serve as an example. A hegemon must be able to keep the market open in times of recession, provide liquidity to the system and encourage development in peripheral areas. The role of such hegemonic power in this case is that of a stabiliser. It is therefore within this context that the idea of a benevolent hegemon is conceived. The other approach stresses the “public goods” created by a hegemon. All the states within the regional organisation virtually share the public goods or benefits produced by a regional hegemon (Prys 2009:221).

There are basic principles with which a particular state has to conform in order to qualify as a hegemon and these include, among others, the following:

- unparalleled political and economic strengthening – backed by military strength;
- strategic positioning of a state for security purposes; and
- willingness to play a hegemonic role.

Similar to these principles, Prys (2009:217) provides four criteria to describe a hegemonic system, namely:

- provision for regional public goods;
- regional acceptance;
- projection of preferences and values; and
- self-perception.

Although the aforementioned criteria are important in qualifying a specific country as a hegemon, it should be noted that not all the potential hegemon meet this criteria. Nevertheless, this does not disqualify them from assuming such a position. Although there are many sets of criteria which outline what constitutes a hegemon, most of them point to the same factors. Thus, Prys’s formulation provides a basis to identify potential hegemon in the respective regions.

Using one measure of Prys's criterion, namely the provision for regional public goods, this section therefore assesses the capacity of established hegemon in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as potential hegemon in the East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), to assume the role of a hegemon.

6. WEST AFRICA: ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Nigeria's hegemonic status within the region is determined by the size and wealth of its economy. It possesses large economic resources and is the sixth largest oil producer in the world that supplies the United States of America (USA) with 12% of its oil imports. Furthermore, its large gas reserves can sustain the entire Western European region until 2020 (Adebajo 2010:130-131).

In terms of Nigeria's potential to provide for public goods, its economic wealth enables it to mobilise resources for regional security. Nigeria's initiative to form the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) ensured that it sought consensus among member states in ECOWAS. States such as Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia gave their full support to the project (Souare 2010:4). This exemplifies the respect that Nigeria has for its neighbours and its willingness to cooperate with them in remedying common problems.

The presence of Nigeria as a hegemon in ECOWAS also ties the region together. Nevertheless, Nigeria must first resolve its own internal governance challenges; in particular clientelism, patronage and ethno-religious conflict before it qualifies as a fully-fledged hegemon. For example, Nigeria has to deal with the instability that reigns in the northern region of the country, where, since 2009, Boko Haram, an extremist group, has been waging a brutal campaign against government and civilian targets. Additionally, Nigeria's increasing involvement in regional proxy wars reduces its legitimacy amongst member states which subsequently undermines its benevolent status (Moller 2009:1).

However, the stable presence of Ghana in terms of governance and democracy in West Africa does pose a challenge to the continued hegemonic status of Nigeria in the region. Since its return to democracy in 1992, Ghana has experienced 20 years of peaceful democratic rule which included two peaceful transitions of power between different political parties. In terms of its economic growth, Ghana has ranked in the top ten of the overall growth performers and is considered to be the fifth easiest country in Africa to do business with. The potential of the country to produce oil is currently around 10% and is generating large amounts of foreign

direct investment into the country and government regulatory legislation (Ndhlovu and Spring 2012: 82).

7. SOUTHERN AFRICA: SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

South Africa is the dominant economy in Southern Africa and, in 1990, after the end of apartheid, the country possessed a GDP four times greater than the rest of the region and contributed nearly 30% of all exports within the region. SADC countries were dependent on South Africa's transport and communication infrastructure for much of its exports and South Africa astonishingly accounted for nearly 90% of the region's electricity consumption (Hentz 2005:23). South Africa constitutes 80% of the region's economic wealth and, in terms of the provision of public goods, it has contributed immensely to the AU Peace and Security Council peacekeeping efforts in Burundi and the DRC (Adebajo 2010:6).

Many neighbouring countries, however, regard South Africa's economically dominant status as inherently imperialist. As stated by Zondi (2012:8-9), "critics lambast South Africa for playing the role of a mercantilist, fair-godmother, big brother, and a hegemon. While there are different shades of this argument, the common refrain is that South Africa excessively pursues its economic interests." Adebajo is of the opinion that, in spite of the country possessing the most developed economy on the continent, it faces numerous internal socio-economic challenges in reversing the legacy of apartheid and colonialism (2010:109).

Despite South Africa's dominant status, Angola's recent discovery of expansive oil reserves in conjunction with the recent conclusion of a long and bloody civil war, has meant that the country has attained a certain level of political and economic stability. The GDP of Angola's economy was estimated to be worth US\$61,33 billion in 2007 with 15–20 per cent economic growth expected by 2020. Further, together with South Africa and Mozambique, Angola was one of the best performers in terms of accounting for the increase in flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2002. Nonetheless, the country is faced with extremely high levels of poverty and underdevelopment. In fact, the situation is so dire that Angola is placed 166 out of the 171 countries in the human development index (Zondi and Mulaudzi 2010:37 & 41).

More pertinently, however, Angola continues to preserve and value its trans-continental lucophonous identity. For example, the majority of its media broadcasts come from lucophone countries such as Brazil and Portugal, reinforcing the superiority of a cultural identity that has its roots firmly embedded in the country's colonial past. This cultural identity is also evident in terms of economic trade. Alves (2010:15) states that despite China's growing influence in Angola's construction

sector, its investment is minute in comparison to that of lucophone countries like Brazil and Portugal. Angola's affiliation and recognition of the dominant role played by countries outside the continent, let alone the sub-Saharan region, raises questions regarding its recognition of the existence and authority of a regional hegemon. It has become Portugal's largest export market outside Europe and its fourth most important customer overall after Spain, Germany and France (Sogge 2011:89).

On the contrary, Angola's exports to the SADC constitute a meagre one per cent of its total exports (Kalaba and Tsedu 2008:19). Its decision to consolidate extra-regional trade relations based on cultural commonality, compromises efforts at achieving regional unity. Recognition of the authority of a hegemon, especially by relatively stronger states, is a quintessential requirement to establishing a sustainable and effective regional economic community.

8. EASTERN AFRICA: EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)

East Africa is a region that has been riddled by political conflict and economic strife, which places a greater burden on the provision of public goods, especially security. The region has been defined by civil war, warlordism, factionalism, tribalism and religious tension between Christians and Muslims (Gilbert 2006:144). Most of these conflicts are not endemic to a particular state, but occur across state borders. The porosity of state borders, due to weak governance and limited institutional and resource capacity, has resulted in terrorist groups seeking refuge in states that are inherently politically dysfunctional. For example, weak governance in Somalia has resulted in *de facto* control of the country by the fundamentalist group *Al Shabaab*, spilling across state borders and threatening the stability of the region. As stated by Murithi (2007:10): "Somalia has effectively become a proxy battlefield for the so-called 'war on terror'."

Overlapping membership in the two recognised RECs, namely IGAD and the more recently consolidated EAC, is a product of the growing political and economic instability in the region. The EAC represents a revival of previous institutional arrangements amongst the relatively more stable countries in the region, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Kasule 2004). The East African Common Services and the East African High Commission are examples of regional cooperation and integration during the early to mid-twentieth century. The re-birth of the EAC, initiated by the three dominant and relatively stable economies in the region, namely Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, emerged in response to the ineffectiveness of IGAD which was the primary regional economic community since the 1970s.

The IGAD was a product of the Lomé Convention held in 1974 to consolidate “North-South” relations through the formation of the European Union’s partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) (Gilbert 2006:144). The EU’s main objective in the region was to promote a “developmental agenda” through the extension of donor aid to address the chronic problems of hunger and poverty in the region. It was not until the early 1990s, with the threat of fundamentalism and terrorism looming in the Western world, that donor aid was becoming a tool to enforce political conditionality, such as democratisation of state and public institutions. The growing links between financial repatriation and charity organisations from the diaspora, with fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qaeda, that established their centres of training and operation in Sudan and then later in Somalia, worsened interstate relations in the region (Gilbert 2006:147).

The formation of the EAC by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, which are politically and economically more developed than Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, indicates that these states are unwilling to bear the political and economic costs associated with assuming a hegemonic role in the region in order to harmonise political interests and stimulate economic integration (Grieco and Niemand 1997:171). A greater commitment to regional cooperation and integration within IGAD exposes the more stable countries in the region to the ill effects of terrorism, factionalism and economic underdevelopment (Khadiagala 2009:433).

In such a context, where the Peace and Security Council of the African Union has attempted to promote peace and stability in the region, but have largely failed to reach a sustainable solution, a shift to an incrementalist approach to integration that attempts to attain these goals may be more feasible, despite the challenges that it poses to a potential hegemon in the region. In other words, the benefits associated with assuming an active role in the region outweighs the costs in the long term.

Kenya, as the largest economy and most politically stable in the region, meets the criteria as the most capable hegemon within the framework of IGAD, to assume the reigns of promoting stability through integration. Whilst smaller states, such as Tanzania and Uganda, have experienced higher economic growth rates within IGAD, the relative GDP indicators for 2005 illustrate the vast disparity in GDP per capita between Kenya and the rest of the member states. Kenya had the highest GDP per capita in the region, amounting to US\$530, compared to US\$280 and US\$340 of Tanzania and Uganda, respectively (Ajulu 2010:109).

The magnitude of the security problem, however, requires more resources, especially in terms of military, legal and judicial assistance. Such assistance can be provided by other regional hegemony throughout the continent via the African Union. Nevertheless, such interventions by the AU must be subtle and covert and should be in support of Kenya rather than assuming the dominant role. The logic behind this approach is that it serves to strengthen the political will of these states

to assume this hegemonic role as the catalyst for cooperation, but also serves to limit the financial and political burden of accommodating refugees that compete in a highly saturated labour market and the potential criminal elements that threaten to delegitimise both the formal and informal economy.

9. CENTRAL AFRICA: ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES (ECCAS)

In terms of the qualifying criteria for hegemony, there is very little basis for it within ECCAS and the region is inactive because of the absence of a clear hegemon. Nonetheless, Angola and the DRC are the two possible choices, as both countries possess economic strength. The former possesses significant economic potential with a GDP estimated at US\$61,33 billion, whilst the latter possesses enormous wealth in natural resources such as cobalt, copper, cadmium, diamonds and timber amongst a host of others (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004:5).

Nevertheless, these countries were once embroiled in protracted civil wars which were extremely destructive and are still recuperating from the effects of the wars. In fact, the DRC is still threatened by conflict with M23 rebels in the eastern city of Goma. Kabemba (2005:3) argues that this weakness of the state in providing human security to the Congolese people, despite holding regular elections, is the prevalent feature of most member states, which does not bode well for the REC. The DRC needs both democracy and human security to sustain its development. Until these preconditions are simultaneously achieved, the possibility of it establishing a strong hegemonic presence in this region is, for the moment, very illusive.

The fact that the aforementioned two countries belong to other RECs further complicates the situation, thus creating a challenge of divided loyalties. For instance, other than ECCAS, Angola and the DRC, given their geographical proximity to Southern Africa, also belong to SADC. However, in the short term, if the DRC, through joint extra-regional peacekeeping efforts of *Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) and intra-regionally through the Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (COPAX), it can attain greater internal stability and serve as a regional hegemon in Central Africa (Fraser 2003:287). Nzongola-Ntalaja (2004) further states that the DRC will only be able to realise its true economic potential and subsequently its hegemonic ability if it is able to stop the war in the eastern DRC and the pillaging of its natural resources.

10. NORTH AFRICA: AFRICAN MAGHREB UNION (AMU)

The AMU is the least established and fractured of all the designated RECs on the African continent. Trade relations amongst AMU members remain largely bilateral

and there are numerous non-tariff barriers to trade. In fact, AMU members trade more with the EU than amongst themselves. Trade within the region is constrained by numerous factors such as inconvertibility of their various currencies, the fact that their custom procedures are not harmonised and structural weaknesses in the current payment system that characterises the region (Mistry 2000:562).

The continuing tension that exists between Algeria and Morocco over the disputed Western Sahara also plagues this region. Unquestionably, this REC could have been one of the strongest, since it comprises regional powers of equitable strength, such as Algeria, Morocco and Egypt, who comprise the majority of the region's GDP and hence could serve as its hegemon (Mistry 2000:555). Algeria possesses tremendous oil and gas reserves that could stimulate industrialisation and therefore generate enough financial resources to support the provision of public goods such as security in the region. Nevertheless, its endemic political instability prevents it from realising this potential (Mistry 2000:558).

On the other hand, the relative economic strength of Egypt might qualify it as a hegemon in the region. However, following the 2011 revolution and the military *coup* in August 2013, this possibility is unlikely due to the prevalence of political instability that has deeply divided the country and rendered it volatile. For this reason, it is highly inconceivable that in the foreseeable future Egypt can assume the role of a hegemon. Therefore, North Africa lacks a clear potential hegemon.

11. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF A COOPERATIVE HEGEMONY TO FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENTALISM

The SAPP and the WAPP, that are examples of functional developmentalism, reflect a special type of hegemonic benevolence, one that is predicated on the strategy of cooperative hegemony. Pedersen (2002:683) describes cooperative hegemony as a grand strategy “normally pursued by military weak major powers” as well as “powerful big powers” wishing to establish regional influence through cooperative agenda.

Cooperative hegemony does not purport to explain all aspects of regionalism and it is only relevant and useful here insofar as it addresses and elaborates on the non-coercive aspects and strategies of the regional power in fostering regional cooperation. It advocates a conception of benevolence that is distinct from classic neo-realist understandings of the role of the hegemon that is not patrimonial and patronising of weaker states. Hegemons merely initiate and drive programmes enabling other states to contribute their ideas and assume an active role in decision making on collective developmental initiatives such as SAPP and WAPP. In addition to this, smaller states also provide effective resource mobilisation. Hegemons are therefore able to gain legitimacy and build stronger relations within

RECs. The strategic relevance of cooperative hegemony, where hegemony focus on accommodating the views and interests of weaker states in the region, is more productive than simply providing collective goods in the form of security and development. As Waltz (1997:24 cited in Corrales and Feinberg 1999:11) states, “If the hegemon adopts a benevolent strategy and creates a negotiated order based on legitimate influence and management, lesser [weaker] states will bandwagon with, rather than balance against it”. The Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and West African Power Pool (WAPP) serve as valuable examples of the effectiveness of functional developmentalism as models of regional cooperation that illustrates the role that regional hegemony could potentially play in strengthening RECs (Stephan and Hervey 2008:58).

The strategy of cooperative hegemony is reflected in the SAPP and the WAPP and explained in terms of three key components required to ensure robustness in these projects, namely capacity for power sharing *vis-à-vis* smaller states in a region, power aggregation on the part of the predominant regional state and commitment to a long-term regionalist policy strategy (Pederson 2002:689). The capacity for power sharing refers to the capacity that a big power has to share power on a sustainable basis with its neighbours within common institutions that has significant competences (Felmes 2007).

Sustained collaboration between the various utilities and ministries within the SAPP and the WAPP epitomises the value of the capacity for power sharing. The sharing of technical ideas, expertise, resources and management has improved the competencies of the Southern African energy grid. As part of the signed memorandum of understanding between South Africa and Lesotho in 2008 to implement phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), technicians from both countries and from the SAPP technical advisory board comprising experts from across the SADC region were employed to initiate construction of the Polihlali Dam which started in 2011 (*Engineering News* 2009). Besides creating employment for highly skilled workers within the region, such an initiative also results in the establishment of “nodes for technical knowledge production and sharing” which has significant benefits for neighbouring states that are technically less advanced. The implementation of this second phase in the LHWP expanded energy production of the existing Muela hydropower station and following the completion of the Polihlali Dam, to increase hydropower generation to an expected 1000 MW by 2020. This development will prove mutually beneficial catering for Lesotho’s growing energy demands and increase South Africa’s water supply from 24,6m³ per second to 45,5 m³ per second, feeding its expansive mining-industrial complex (*Business Day Live* 2013).

In light of South Africa’s failed military intervention in Lesotho in 1998, an act considered to be motivated by South Africa’s water security interests in

the LHWP that was established in 1986, it was expected that this would result in political tension between South Africa and its landlocked neighbour that potentially could have derailed the LHWP entirely. However, South Africa's \$12 billion investment in the second phase that will link Lesotho to the Southern African Power Pool grid upon construction of its hydropower stations and which has led to a signed agreement between Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana to investigate the supply of water to the latter two countries, illustrates its capacity for power sharing *vis-à-vis* its smaller neighbours (*Financial Mail* 2013).

In the WAPP, despite Nigeria's technical superiority in energy generation, it adheres to the democratic norms governing decision making within various sub-structures and processes on project planning and implementation. For example, experts from the Ministries of Energy of Benin and Togo and private energy companies from the region worked closely with the Nigerian Energy Ministry and its largest energy producers to jointly finalise and adopt terms of reference for pre-investment studies on its expanded projects in 2011 (WAPP Annual Report 2012: 21). WAPP serves as a "congenial space" enabling smaller states to reach purchasing agreements to assist each other in extending cross-border electrification services to rural communities and enhance energy production capacity of smaller energy producers in the region by creating energy export markets. In 2012, the *Société Nationale d'Electricité du Burkina* (SONABEL) signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Volta River Authority (VRA) from Ghana which will enable the provision of electricity to rural communities in Burkina Faso (WAPP Annual Report 2012: 28). There are many cross-border initiatives signed between smaller states across the region under the auspices of the WAPP and its operational structures supported by technical advisors and private companies that assist both the public and private sectors in smaller states involved in electricity generation. Such initiatives illustrate Nigeria's capacity for power sharing that facilitates the expansion of private enterprises and enhancement of specialized social capital of the public sector in smaller countries.

Power aggregation capacity refers to the capacity that a regional power has to get a significant number of neighbouring states to rally around its political project. The creation of the SAPP, following the signing of an Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Understanding in 1995, inaugurated the establishment of the first power pool outside Europe and America (O'Leary *et al.* 1998). It was established a year after South Africa's transition to a democracy which was pivotal in bringing stability to a region that was riddled by cross-border conflict enabling the building of trust amongst member states of the SADC. This political change was also crucial since any development initiative in the region without South Africa serving as the primary driver *in lieu* of its economic capability and level of technical advancement would have been extremely difficult to achieve (O'Leary *et al.* 1998). Hence,

the establishment of the SAPP with a newly established democratic South Africa at the helm of the expansion of the Southern African power grid enabled the mobilization of more passive states to assume an active role in promoting regional development. As of 2013, membership of the SAPP constitutes 16 utilities across the SADC region (The Southern African Power Pool). Since its establishment in 2001, the WAPP has experienced significant success with Nigeria serving as its main driver, despite the country's internal and regional struggle against terrorism. Cross-border exchanges of electricity amongst member states in the region have continued to grow in the midst of the scourge of terrorism, ethnic factionalism and political difference.

Commitment capacity refers to a big power's capacity to commit its country to a long term policy of regional institutionalisation. In terms of this, South Africa, together with its partners in the SAPP, have committed themselves to a twenty-year generation and transmission plan which will result in a US\$3 billion dollar saving for the power pool (Stephan and Hervey 2008:70). Further, since 1995, the SADC has instigated more than 42 energy projects worth around US\$ 530 million as part of the SAPP (Zondi and Mulaudzi 2010:46). South Africa committed itself to purchasing half of the output from the planned 4500MW Inga hydroelectric power station in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) expected to be completed by 2018 (*Financial Mail* 2013). The objective of this commitment is to give financial impetus to the DRC to start construction of the multibillion dollar project.

South Africa's commitment to the Southern African Power Pool has been steady since its inception. It provided "technical and other support for the refurbishment of the Hwange Power Station, designed to reduce Zimbabwe's dependence on power purchases from its neighbours" (World Energy Council 2003:35-36 cited in Stephan and Hervey 2008:69). This support was provided in the midst of mounting international pressure on South Africa to intervene in Zimbabwe following what was perceived to be a non-credible national election in 2002 alleging that president Robert Mugabe's regime fomented political conflict and economic collapse in the country (Butler 2009:159). As of 2013, the Zimbabwean economy is on its way to recovery with the Hwange power station being central to this process through energy provision.

Nigeria has also demonstrated its commitment to the WAPP, for example, in terms of energy exchanged per country, Nigeria contributed approximately 1900 MWh to other WAPP member states worth more than double the combined energy exchanged by *Cote d'Ivoire*, Ghana and Mali (West African Power Pool). Nigeria continues to commit to the WAPP in spite of the increasing financial, political and military costs incurred by terrorist insurgency within the country.

Although there is evidence of the existence of power pools in East Africa (East African Power Pool) and Central Africa (Central Africa Power Pool) established

in 2003 and 2005 respectively, they are still in the developmental stage. The Arab Maghreb Union countries, on the other hand, are clustered under the Association of Power Utilities, called *Comite Maghrébin de l'Electricité* (COMELEC) established in 1989 (African Development Bank Group). It is therefore necessary that potential hegemonies in these regions, once established, would need to follow the role that South Africa and Nigeria played in their respective power pools.

12. CONCLUSION

This article has emphasised that a strategy of cooperative hegemony reflected in functional developmentalism is most applicable to strengthening RECs in Africa. It is contingent on promoting regional cooperation between states coordinating their individual developmental strategies in specific technical areas into an amalgamated regional development strategy that is state-centred. This will result in political spillovers creating the foundations for regional integration realising the long-term Pan-Africanist agenda. As Habib *et al.* alluded to; “the identification of unity as a goal is helpful, but there is a need to identify the path of integration that will make African unity an irreversible reality” (2006:10).

Through an analysis of the Southern African and West African power pools, the article demonstrates the value of cooperative hegemony to functional developmentalism. These examples illustrated that by assuming a non-patrimonial benevolent position focusing on the capacities for power aggregation, power sharing and commitment, potential regional hegemonies are able to legitimise their position within the respective RECs. This alludes to the fact that regional cooperation is a harbinger to regional integration and not an outcome of it. It subsequently points out the significance of identifying strategies to strengthening RECs that emanates from practical African experiences. Since RECs are riddled by a myriad of challenges that prevent regional unity such as ethno-religious factionalism, political differences due to contested histories and regional asymmetries of power, functional developmentalism advocating for a cooperative hegemony to first building interstate relations within RECs is therefore the basis for regional integration.

An aggregation of state development interests within RECs, under the auspices of a regional hegemon, would force individual states to rally around more divisive issues, notably security cooperation. This strategy towards incrementalism will require a re-evaluation of the functions of the AU, where it initially served a purely supportive and coordinating mechanism for cooperation. As RECs gain strength, the AU will be able to identify complementarities between RECs laying the foundations for the materialisation of the United States of Africa.

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