



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**HEGEMONY AND REGIONAL STABILITY IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL  
ANALYSIS OF KENYA, NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA AS REGIONAL  
HEGEMONS**

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## DECLARATION

I, Mugambi Lee Mwiti, hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Signed.....

Date.....

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor;

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Date.....

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## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family; my fiancé-soon-to-be-wife Zazi Molobane for her unwavering support and encouragement through the long often lonely hours, and keeping me focused on the goal when it seemed much easier to fall off the wagon. To Chizara our daughter—you are the real reason I do this. To my mother, Terry Mugambi, thank you for your tremendous support and sense of family, and for getting me here in the first place. More appreciation to all my friends who rarely saw me but still kept me on their invitation lists, and to my classmates, who identify only too well how much effort and sacrifice goes into this kind of project. Special appreciation to my direct report, Charles Onyango-Obbo , the editor of the Mail & Guardian Africa for enthusiastically allowing me to attend to this, even when the balance many times favoured school over work. And finally, to my Maker, I am because You are.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Problem Context.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	2
1.3 Objectives of the Research .....	5
1.3.1 Main Objective .....	5
1.3.2 Other Objectives.....	5
1.4 Justifications of the Study .....	5
1.4.1: Academic justification .....	5
1.4.2 Policy justification.....	5
1.5 Literature Review .....	6
1.5.1 The clash of realists and idealists .....	7
1.5.2 Bipolarity or multi-polarity? .....	10
1.5.3 The Nigeria-South Africa axis .....	11
1.5.4 Current discordance in the status quo?.....	17
1.6 Theoretical Framework .....	19
1.7 Hypotheses .....	20
1. 8 Methodology .....	20
1.8.1 Secondary data.....	21
1.8.2 Primary data.....	22
1.9 Scope and Limitation of Study.....	22
1.10 Chapter Outlines.....	23

<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF NIGERIA, KENYA AND SOUTH AFRICA .....</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1 Nigerian Foreign Policy 1960-2015 .....	24
2.2 Kenyan Foreign Policy 1963-2015 .....	30
2.3: South Africa’s Foreign Policy 1994-2015 .....	33
2.4: Conclusion.....	35
<b>CHAPTER THREE: EXAMINING AFRICA'S HISTORICAL AND CURRENT BALANCE OF POWER.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	36
3.2 Balance of Power (BOP) .....	36
3.3 Strategies of Balance of Power .....	37
3.4 Hegemony in Africa .....	39
3.5 Eastern Africa Leadership Struggle .....	42
3.6 Southern Africa Leadership.....	43
3.7 West Africa Leadership.....	45
3.8 Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya Power Parity .....	46
3.9 Africa in the International System. ....	47
3.10 Organization of Africa Unity and African Union .....	49
3.11 The Anglophone-Francophone Dichotomy.....	51
3.12 The Post-Cold War Era and Africa .....	52
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF BALANCE OF POWER.....</b>	<b>55</b>
4.0 Introduction .....	55
4.1 The Theory of Tripolarity .....	55
4.2 Tripolarity Between Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria.....	64
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>70</b>
5.1 Summary .....	70
5.2 Conclusion.....	72
5.3 Recommendations .....	72
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>74</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Military strength of Kenya compared to Ethiopia.....	42
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Chart 4.1.1: Nigerian military expenditure (2010-2014) .....	61
Chart 4.1.2: South African military expenditure (2010-14).....	61
Chart 4.1.3: Kenya military expenditure (2010-2014).....	62
Chart 4.1.3: Kenya military expenditure (2010-2014).....	63
Chart 4.1.4: Interaction Opportunities.....	65
Chart 4.1.5: Share of Attention in a conflict .....	67
Chart 4.1.6: Difference if South Africa is removed .....	69

## ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANC	African National Congress
BP	British Petroleum
BOP	Balance of Power
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSSDCA Africa	Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social, and Cultural Council
ECOMOG	Economic Community of Western African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HST	Hegemonic Stability Theory
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGCLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

OAU	Organisation of African Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

## **ABSTRACT**

South Africa and Nigeria are often in Africa projected as the dominant powers. But internal structural deficiencies have damaged their capacity to consistently project their power resources geopolitically. According to classical mechanics, when an existing balance of power equilibrium is disturbed, as has in recent years been reflected in the dysfunctional Abuja-Pretoria axis, the system adjusts itself to regain its balance. In practical terms this has mean the emergence of new countries seeking to stake a claim either as regional hegemonies or counterbalances. This paper uses the Deutsch-Singer model of polarity to make a case for a tripolar system that includes Kenya as a new player, and argues that more powers, not less, make for a more stable African international system.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Problem Context

African leadership is currently in a vacuum, leaving the region exposed in an increasingly competitive and often unforgiving global system. Nigeria, the region's leading economy by size and population, is hobbled by internal structural and institutional weaknesses, many drawn from both its pre and post-colonial period, and leaving it struggling to project its potentially sizeable geopolitical influence into the continent.<sup>1</sup> South Africa, the perceived *de facto* leader of the last two decades on the continent by virtue of having its richest economy and Africa's most sophisticated military, is also heavily weighed down by the deficiencies of its internal struggle to anchor down its post-apartheid transition, the dividends of which would allow it to emerge as the region's uncontested leader.

Of academic note is that both Nigeria and South Africa have at times been seen as reluctant leaders in Africa, their status often questioned: are they hegemons, in the African sense of the word, or just pivotal states? The answer to this has a direct impact on the future, and even current, stability of the African continent. Early global thinkers held that a bipolar balance of power system allows for more stability, but as the US-Russia relationship over the issue of Ukraine has recently shown, there is a resilient argument that more poles, and not less, are the more reliable guarantor of a stable system. The argument for this has seen new poles put forward—Germany and China are much discussed, the latter much more so—suggesting a more competitive world is receptive to, or even demands, a multipolar system in its pursuit of sustainable global stability. This research seeks to devolve the key tenets of the same argument—that the

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<sup>1</sup> References to Africa in this paper are about the geographical region classified as sub-Saharan Africa, unless otherwise specified.

introduction of new poles into the current African system dominated by Nigeria and South Africa allows for more stability in a region that has seen more than its fair share of conflicts in recent decades, recently so in South Sudan, the Great Lakes, and in pockets of West Africa including countries such as Mali. Specifically, it argues for a tripolar system, with the new pole being Kenya, for geopolitical reasons to be advanced.

Countries such as Algeria, Egypt and Ethiopia have often been put forward in contemporary writing as capable of filling this role, but this research project will, for arguments to be stated, focus on the role of Kenya as a potential hegemon and counter-balance to the Nigeria-South Africa axis, which it suggests is unbalanced. It will focus on the East African country's geopolitical orientation, drawing from its economy, population, geography and foreign policy to lay out a case. This paper thus examines how the East African country can realistically play the role of a much-needed third, if not middle, hegemon.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As studies of international political systems show, when an existing balance of power equilibrium becomes disturbed, the system adjusts itself to regain its balance, according to the classical mechanics model of L. F. Richardson<sup>2</sup>. The concept of balance-of-power cannot be steered clear of by students of both diplomacy and the role of foreign policy in international relations. An understanding of the nuances around it will help deduct why for example Nigeria has struggled to assert itself geopolitically in Africa, a notable reversal from the 1990s and early 2000s when it commanded regional respect on the back of a dominant military and diplomatic deployment. Its rival for regional domination, South Africa, has in recent years also struggled for legitimate

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<sup>2</sup> Richardson, L.F., 'Weather Production by Numerical Process', (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922) p.3

continental goodwill, with recent weak foreign policy points including its perceived diplomatic arrogance and the nature of recurring xenophobic attacks on nationals of other African countries that it seeks to dominate, greatly weakening its ability to offer the regional goods needed to efficiently project its considerably untapped diplomatic political capital beyond its northern borders. The inability of Africa's two leading economies to assert themselves in the region has thus opened the door for other countries to insert themselves into the existing void. It is in this time and space that another alternative pole finds itself.

Kenya has a robustly and consistently growing and diversified economy, currently the fourth largest in sub-Saharan Africa, and whose size will expand even faster when its oil comes online by the end of the decade, further cementing its position as the region's existing economic powerhouse on the back of a regulated free market economy. Political and military power usually tend to follow economic might, but the country has gone further ahead of the curve by intervening militarily in Somalia in an attempt to stabilise the Horn of Africa country, while protecting its own economic and security interests. In addition, its vibrant and innovative population of 46 million is the sixth largest in sub-Saharan Africa, while its multinationals have in recent years ventured into their immediate eastern African environment, and even as far into south Africa.<sup>3</sup> Kenya also has the major advantage in geography, with its ports serving as vital trade conduits to its vast hinterland which counts major countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, while attracting to it several global multinationals. Significantly, following decades of a pacifist foreign policy that had allowed neighbours such as Uganda to claim themselves as pseudo-regional hegemony, Kenya's military involvement in Somalia resulted in an extremist challenge, seeing it evolve into a "soft" military state,

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations, World Population Prospects, key findings and advance tables, Revision, 2015.

even if many commentators, including this researcher, have argued the shift has not been by design.<sup>4</sup>

Kenya also has earned much recent diplomatic capital from its contemporaries, whom at recent times had tended to overlook its potential geo-power, but as its recent spat with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and on which it successfully lobbied African Union member states shows, Nairobi has been able to tap this standing to further its political interests. In part, it was its lack of a coherent foreign policy until recently that had seen its neighbours threaten to overshadow it in East Africa, but this year it launched its first ever written foreign policy, in which it declares that its main body for protecting and advancing its interests will be the East African Community (EAC), and that this will be achieved largely using economic diplomacy.<sup>5</sup>

While globalisation and other emergent issues such as the rise of non-state actors has meant that partnerships and regional integration are the only way that weaker states can stand up to developed ones, the conflict stations increasingly concentrated around the region make the stability of its immediate neighbourhood a priority for Kenya, a foothold it can use to further its regional ambitions.

This research believes the country can play an even higher geopolitical role and provide an alternative centre of power in the sub-Saharan Africa region, based on some of the strengths enumerated in preceding passages, and those to be outlined further, and thus contribute greatly to African regional stability and its sustainable development along the new Sustainable Development Goals unveiled this year.

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<sup>4</sup> Mwiti, Lee, 'Al-Shabaab's greatest achievement could be remaking Kenya into a soft military state', <http://mgafrica.com/article/2014-12-05-al-shabaabs-greatest-achievement-could-be-the-remaking-of-the-kenyan-state>, December 7, 2014

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Kenya foreign policy', <http://www.mfa.go.ke/policy-matters/Kenya%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf>, November 2014.

### **1.3: Objectives of the Research**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

- To examine the role of South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria in stabilising the African continent through their (tripolar) role as regional hegemons

#### **1.3.2 Other Objectives**

- To examine the foreign policies of Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya
- To examine Africa's historical and current balance of power settings
- To advance arguments for a more prominent and assertive role for Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa in the regional system

### **1.4 Justifications of the Study**

#### **1.4.1: Academic justification**

In the face of a rapidly changing global environment, there is need to understand how foreign policy is a potent tool to navigate it, including through the advancement of academic arguments that seek to examine current gaps in contemporary African relations, especially in balance of power relations in a regional context, and recommend solutions.

#### **1.4.2 Policy justification**

Currently South Africa and Nigeria are projected as Africa's potential hegemons, with other countries relegated to a second tier level and referred to by some as 'bargainers'. But scholars who advance this duo-axis argument admit that it is an analysis that needs to be taken forward in the light of new developments, including globalisation and the search for resources, and the emergence of terrorism as the number

one security challenge of our times, and how it is changing the nature of affected states, including Kenya and Nigeria. This paper proposes to highlight the weaknesses of some of these arguments, while elevating Kenya to a position of acting as a geopolitical counterweight to what existing literature shows are weak poles, and to suggest future paths for African cooperation to advance the regional economy-heavy agenda.

The generated knowledge will hopefully be of use to those seeking to understand the interplay of diplomacy, trade and military considerations on the continent and how they can be harnessed for the continent's continued growth.

### **1.5 Literature Review**

The argument for bipolarity as having kept the system stable especially in the Cold War regime for a while reigned supreme among scholars, until the geopolitical ground shifted with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the US as the world's sole superpower nearly 30 years ago. Now new powers have re-emerged, including a reinvigorated Russia and a resurgent China, while major European powers like Germany continue to be key actors as shown during the Greece-instigated crisis in the European Union, the various interests of these countries making a case for multipolarity as contributing to keeping the international system more stable.

This paper devolves this argument to the African setting, where Nigeria and South Africa have traditionally held sway, but the weakness of their alliance, a lot of it inherent, has seen the regional system remain unstable, with conflict stations around the continent continuing to persist. A key example is the recent instability around Burundi—none of the two countries were able to assert themselves in negotiating an acceptable political settlement, while Kenya, which has the chance to bring the country into its geopolitical ambit, has however struggled to dominate the EAC, the key body for

achieving this. This would appear to make the case for other poles, or countries, to act as counterbalances to Nigeria and South Africa, and these include Kenya, Ethiopia, Algeria and Egypt, but for research capacity reasons, with a focus on the former.

### **1.5.1 The clash of realists and idealists**

Since the Westphalian state order of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, the overarching world paradigm has been one of anarchy, essentially a system that lacks a preponderant nation-state to organise the others. This classical tradition concept has been widely used to explain why states behave the way they do, from making war to negotiating for peace, how they earn and use power, and also to provide for the conditions that would be needed to sustain this system. Proponents of this classical view have included recognised thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, Hans Morgenthau and Hugo Grotius. The basic argument of this premise is that the international political system is composed of a multitude of states having unequal capabilities, with each pursuing its perceived national interests, and often engaging in war.

The counterargument to this classical view was offered by liberal-leaning groups, who instead focused on the need for a multiplicity of actors. Other arguments were those of Marxists, who were more concerned with the nature of the redistribution of state resources, while behaviourists sought to break down the idea of the state as the only actor in the international system. This paper, while recognising that a hybrid of these is possible by offering the nation-state as the established pillar of actor interactions, and looking specifically at its conflict in interests, the causes and conditions for peace; the nature of the many actors, and their resulting balance of power in the African setting (liberal values) to understand its external behaviour, chooses to however focus on the

realist argument, and will offer arguments of trends in arms capacity to show that classical realism remains predominant.

There is little doubt realism continues to be the eminent strand of power relations globally, and even in Africa, despite the growing, if resistant, efforts at multilateralism. The natural inference would be that war is the only effect of such a system, but modern writers have since broadened this to look at all those forms of behaviour, short of war, that also follow logically from the system of states including diplomacy, bargaining, crisis management, and deterrence. Because the international system is perceived as an anarchical grouping of self-interested units (states) who cooperate only in so far as it suits them, it would follow that it would be a weak system. But this is not necessarily the case. Two stand-out arguments that have since come to define the opposing views in foreign relations were advanced on this. Thomas Hobbes described human beings as competitive by nature and that their natural state was one marked by a war of all against all, with the life of man being solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.<sup>6</sup>

He also, crucially, believed that however ruthless and self-interested individuals could be, they were still interested in signing a social contract as long as it would create power in form of a central government with some monopoly of coercive authority to keep all individuals in check. This model appeals to realists because its Rational Actor assumption includes the self-interest motivation, which realists ascribe to nation states.<sup>7</sup>

John Locke, who came to be known as the father of classical liberalism, adopted a less harsh view of human nature. To him, co-operation among individuals was natural. Peace, not war, was the inherent state of nature. He saw people as being tolerant and opting for a pluralistic government influenced by civil society. Locke appealed more to the idealists who argue that since peace rather than war is the natural state, then

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<sup>6</sup> Hobbes, T., 'Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill', (Penguin Classics, 1981, First published 1651.)

<sup>7</sup> Maluki, Patrick., International Political Systems, (Lecture Notes, November 08, 2014)

harmonious international relations do not need a world government having coercive power. Lockesians saw a very limited role for international systems, ascribing to the idea that it was the nature of the actor instead that needed reform.

For realists, the international system was important because its anarchical structure required that to avoid war, the mechanisms of diplomacy, international law and balance of power operate effectively. Their view was that of a power-politics model, and anarchy was central in explaining how it operated. Essentially, the nature of the international system determined the basic foreign policy orientation of any particular state.

In his widely cited 1957 book, *Man, the State, and War*, Kenneth Waltz outlines three levels of the individual, state and system structure, which might explain the occurrence of war.<sup>8</sup> Waltz would also later in 1979 argue that bipolar systems were more stable than multipolar configurations, defining stability as the lack of war between great powers.<sup>9</sup> Another leading behaviourist thinker, Morton Kaplan in 1956 identified two rules for systems:

a) A set of characteristic behavioural rules that were necessary for the system to stay in equilibrium, and;

b) A set of transformation rules dealing with how it might change to another type of system.<sup>10</sup>

But by the mid -1960s, the key topic was not the importance of anarchy, but whether the post war stability between superpower relations was due to the fact that the international system was bipolar in character. Waltz specifically argued that the bipolar

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<sup>8</sup> Kaplan, M., 'Systems and Process in International Politics', (New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons, 1957) pp34-40.

<sup>9</sup> Waltz, K., 'Theory of International Politics,' (1979), *American Political Science Review*, Vol 85, No. 2 J (1991) p2

<sup>10</sup> Kaplan, M., 'Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis', (New York Columbia University Press, 1956) p. 15

structure of the international system was the reason for the absence of great power conflict since 1945. In his defence, he alluded to the weakness of multipolar systems that preceded the two world wars and also preceding the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> His argument was countered by those who highlighted that he had relied on a small number of cases, and that he did not consider alternative explanations for the different levels of war in the three periods he singled out.<sup>12</sup>

These kind of opposing viewpoints highlighted the heated debate on the rival merit of multi-polarity and bipolarity in maintaining systemic stability. What came out of the debate was a strong theory which saw the international system as so strongly determining the behaviour of states that there is no need to consider what goes on within them. The motives and beliefs of individual decision makers drop out of account and so do the ideologies and political processes within the states, to be replaced by the workings of the international political system with its power structure. The two main concepts in play are thus anarchy and polarity, anchors of realism.

### **1.5.2 Bipolarity or multi-polarity?**

This opposing views explain some of the great debate as to whether multi-polarity or bipolarity is the most stable system with regards to how each maintains equilibrium in the international system. The critical question is why the post-war system has remained stable, and in particular whether and how nuclear weapons have helped the maintenance of peace between great powers by making war too costly.

The answer to this question can be based on either a state level or a systemic level of analysis. At the state level, bipolar stability can be explained by looking at the internal workings of the two superpowers and the history of their relationships since

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, Waltz, p.15

<sup>12</sup> Ted, H., 'Polarity, the Offence-Defense Balance, and War,' *American Political Science Review* Vol 85, No.2, (1991), pp.475-493

1945. At systemic level, bipolar stability can be explained by the simple structure created by the only two super powers, which allowed less miscalculations and misperceptions. The premise was that international behaviour was easily understood and predictable. Also, whereas multi-polarity works through a balance of power, bipolar stability functions through a balance of terror.

This research paper proposes to examine if these type of global prisms can be applied to the African context, with a focus on the role of multi-polarity, and specifically tri-polarity, in stabilising the system. Can this general picture appeal, even loosely, to the roles of Nigeria and South Africa as the region's supposed bipolar poles, and if so why should Kenya be offered up as the middle power, as a precedent to later leading others such as Angola and Ethiopia to step up to make sub-Saharan Africa a multi-polar region? Or should Africa instead, aware of its limitations, adapt its own brand of power politics, much like when former South African president Thabo Mbeki called for an African Renaissance? Is there even need for such balance of power thinking—which some might say is rarefied-- at a time when Africa's concerns are more economically existential and geared towards making up on years of disadvantage? The researcher takes this analysis further.

### **1.5.3 The Nigeria-South Africa axis**

A lot of the literature around this problem has centred on the nature of the South Africa-Nigeria relationship, suggesting a situation where other African countries including Kenya are relegated to satellite players or what some scholars have termed as "bargainers", with the potential balancing role of these other African actors not too much the focus of sustained research in recent years. This is despite the premise of the current Pretoria-Abuja axis as the only regional anchor of note being an analytical weakness, an

obstacle conceded by many scholars working in this area. In 2007, the executive director of the Cape Town-based Centre for Conflict Resolution and a renowned scholar in this area, Adekeye Adebajo, agreed that the Nigeria-South Africa bipolar analysis needed to be widened: “At the moment, Africa is like a team with two wings, South Africa and Nigeria, but we are lacking a centre”.<sup>13</sup>

Adebajo offered Algeria as a possible power to the North, and highlighted Ethiopia’s growing clout as a possible candidate of the hegemon in East Africa, the latter by virtue of having all the requisite tools in place: a strong army that it has not been afraid to call upon, a fast-growing if statist-led economy, a strong diplomatic base that has earned it regional respect, stemming from a ‘soft spot’ for it by other countries on account of its rich history, and which has allowed it to host the headquarters of the African Union and of many other continental bodies. However, its geopolitical ambitions have rarely extended past its Nile Delta sphere, on which it has come into direct opposition with another regional power, Egypt, its economy remains in gross terms weaker than some of its peers, and its role in Somalia remains controversial. But this concept of Ethiopia, ahead of even Kenya has received recent backing by others. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in April 2015, Harry Verhoeven, a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Oxford, wrote of Ethiopia’s vision of regional integration under emerging Ethiopian hegemony increasingly becoming a reality, drawing African and Arab states alike to its cause, and opposition.<sup>14</sup>

But Ethiopia’s rise as a hegemon was not inevitable, Verhoeven said, adding to the analytical strand that there is wide scope for countries to position themselves as regional guarantors in their sphere of influence, and that there was yet to be a clear balance of power. Egypt and Algeria both deserve mentions, but they would struggle to

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<sup>13</sup> Adebajo A., ‘South Africa and Nigeria in Africa: an axis of virtue?’ (Unpublished, Paper presented for the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Open Dialogue, South Africa, 23 May 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Verhoeven, H., ‘Africa’s Next Hegemon’, *Foreign Affairs*, April 12, 2015.

gain acceptability in non-Arab nations, which form the majority in Africa, while Angola is still rebuilding following ruinous internecine war, and like Nigeria, remains very much hampered by the volatilities of international commodity markets. Additionally, Luanda's ambitions have rarely advanced past its national borders, although its foray into the Democratic Republic of Congo during the 1998 'Great War of Africa' showed it is not completely disinclined to the use of force externally.

To highlight the deficiency of the bipolar power view, University of Johannesburg professor Chris Landsberg described relations between South Africa and Nigeria as resembling "a rollercoaster without a safety bar."<sup>15</sup> The two countries had for long stretches shared a close relationship, but their ties had also been marked by volatility and tension, making the critical bilateral alliance to "wobble dangerously", Landsberg noted.

To understand why this focus on the two countries as potential hegemon remains pre-eminent, a look at their bilateral relations since Nigeria's independence suffices. Nigeria's foreign policy has always considered itself as the natural leader of the continent, drawing on its population size. But modern articulation of its foreign policy was hobbled right from the start at independence, because the country retained vestiges of British rule such as indirect rule, setting off internal tensions as the concept of nationhood struggled to take root. France's outsized influence in its immediate neighbourhood among its former colonies also remained a major thorn in Nigerian attempts to control its immediate environment.

Some of Nigeria's more coherent statements on its foreign policy with Africa came during the transition from colonial rule, when Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the federal prime minister, voiced his opposition to the formation of a European Economic

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<sup>15</sup> Landsberg, Chris., 'Nigeria-South Africa Tensions Leave African Leadership Gap', World Politics Review. April 18, 2012.

Community saying it would impair existing trade patterns to the detriment of primary producers in African countries.<sup>16</sup> Balewa held that Nigeria belonged to Africa, and “Africa must claim first attention in our external affairs”, and called for Africa to cooperate in matters of common interests. In one of its efforts to project itself as a national leader on the continent, which the premier said was a natural outcome of the country’s size and population, the country tried to intervene between the radical and moderate pan-African integration groups in 1961, but largely came off second-best, seen as having taken sides. But even at that early stage, Nigeria had no doubts about its regional aspirations, a perception that has informed its continental dealings to date. Said Balewa: “Our foreign policy has never been one of neutrality, but rather [of] non-alignment. We have never, for instance, been neutral in African affairs, nor can we be neutral in matters pertaining to world peace.”<sup>17</sup>

This tone and later actions spoke of a country looking to be the African spokesman, allowing it to strongly enter the anti-apartheid and decolonisation struggle. It also took advantage of South Africa’s international isolation, which had the effect of denying it a global stage, to assert itself on the continent. This included the provision of financial and material backing to liberation movements, for which it set up a fund, while it also for long chaired the UN’s Special Committee Against Apartheid and hosted summits against white-minority rule on African soil. Its support for South Africa bordered on that of actual frontline states, and it is notable that after Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, the South African leader visited Nigeria within three months to thank the West African country for its role. Adebajo notes that there were “great

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<sup>16</sup> Balewa, A., ‘Nigeria Looks Ahead’ in Quigg, P. W., Africa. A Foreign Affairs Reader. Council on Foreign Relations, (London, New York. Frederick A. Praeger 1964), p.309

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p310

expectations that the impending installation of an ANC-led government in South Africa would usher in the birth of an alliance between Africa's two economic powerhouses.”

But the relationship soured, not unlike the UN-USSR Cold War divide, when Mandela tried to isolate Nigeria's military leadership led by General Sani Abacha following the saga around the internationally-condemned execution of activists including Ken Saro Wiwa. The South African-backed attempt imploded, with even other African states from its perceived southern Africa sphere of influence instead accusing Pretoria of acting as a front for Western countries. The fallout from this made South Africa realise that it needed to create strong alliances on the continent, instead of seeing itself as the sole moral, democratic and economic voice of the continent.

Adebajo shows that the outcome was South African backpedalling quickly, with the bilateral relationship only fully repaired after Olusegun Obasanjo and Thabo Mbeki, who were close friends, took office.<sup>18</sup> In parliament, Mbeki defended the new shift and orientation of his government's pro-African and pro-Nigeria policy. “We should not humiliate ourselves by pretending that we have a strength which we do not have.”<sup>19</sup> The two leaders were to go on to be critical in developing a lot of African architecture, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the idea of an African Renaissance, giving rise to talk of a ‘golden’ period for intra-African relations.

Mbeki is recognised as the intellectual father of NEPAD, which was essentially a doctrine for Africa's political, economic and social renewal and a call for political democratisation, economic growth, and the reintegration of Africa into the global

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<sup>18</sup> Adebajo A., ‘South Africa and Nigeria in Africa: an axis of virtue?’ (Unpublished, Paper presented for the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Open Dialogue, South Africa, 23 May 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Adewale, S B., ‘South Africa-Nigeria Diplomatic and Economic Relations, 1994 to 2004, Africa Review, Volume 2, Issue 1, 2010, pp81-93

economy. It called on Africans to adapt democracy to fit their own specific conditions without compromising its fundamental principles of representation and accountability.<sup>20</sup>

Obasanjo in turn had the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) initiative, which was later integrated into two of the African Union's key institutions: the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and the Council of Elders, to help mediate disputes. Adebajo noted that this idea had been first discussed at a conference in Kampala in 1991.<sup>21</sup> CSSDCA's final report proposed developing a continental peacekeeping machinery; promoting conflict prevention and military self-reliance in Africa; establishing an African Peace Council of Elder Statesmen to mediate conflicts; and drastically reducing military expenditures in Africa.

The two leaders were also key in retooling the African Union from the Organisation of African Union, which was widely seen as toothless, insisting that there was need to intervene in the sovereign affairs of other African states in the instance of gross human rights abuses or to manage conflicts that posed a threat to regional stability. Their strong partnership also saw them lobbying the G8 on behalf of Africa, and they also intervened militarily in conflict areas, more so Nigeria in the civil wars in Sierra Leona and Liberia and which quickly drew in the rest of the region. Their strong regional role further strengthened the two leaders' view of themselves as the natural compasses of the continent.

'Our location, our destiny and the contemporary forces of globalisation have thrust upon us the burden of turning around the fortunes of our continent. We must not

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<sup>20</sup> Thabo Mbeki. 1999. 'Prologue'. In: Malegapuru William Makgoba (ed). African Renaissance. Cape Town: Mafube and Tafelberg, p. 15

<sup>21</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo and Felix Masha (eds), 'Africa: Rise to Challenge'. (New York: Africa Leadership Forum, 1993) p.16

and cannot shy away from this responsibility, “Obasanjo said in 2000, while hosting Mbeki in Abuja.<sup>22</sup>

To further strengthen their relationship and regional influence, they established a Binational Commission, institutionalising a relationship that during the “golden” decade from 1999 had depended on the personal chemistry, or lack of, of their leaders. Their overall moves toward regional dominance were not as smooth as they would have wished, often running into opposition from African countries suspicious of their partnership. These included countries such as Angola, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo and notably Kenya, and also the Francophone countries that continue to fall under the ambit of their colonial power France.

#### **1.5.4 Current discordance in the status quo?**

“It is, however, worth noting, that the idea of South Africa and Nigeria as continental leaders is far from universally accepted. The strategic alliance between both countries is seen by some as little more than a new breed of African imperialism,” Adebajo wrote.<sup>23</sup> The two countries however in the so-called golden-period saw their multinationals expand all over the continent, a phenomenon no more pronounced by the case of South African corporates.

However the close relationship seemed to enter decline after they left office, their successors failing to replicate their pan-African energy, and it is a rift that continues to this day. Their taking of different positions on key issues defined this best, with three points of departure identified as defining the variance. The most high-profile is the competition for a permanent African seat in a reformed United Nations Security Council, which neither has been willing to give up for the other, and their claims to which have

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<sup>22</sup> Adebajo A., ‘South Africa and Nigeria in Africa: an axis of virtue?’ (Unpublished, Paper presented for the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Open Dialogue, South Africa, 23 May 2007).

<sup>23</sup> op cit

been since challenged by other African countries, suggesting they also see a weakness. Nigerian and South Africa also differed sharply over the NATO bombing of Libya, which led to the removal of long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi', the Libyan leader who was a strong backer of the AU, even if for the self-interest reason of leading such an amalgamation.<sup>24</sup>

The resolution of conflicts in Ivory Coast and Guinea Bissau were also battlegrounds, leading to the bipolar rivalry spilling into arenas such as the votes for the AU Commission Chair and the African Development Bank. The controversial treatment of Nigerian nationals in South Africa has also been a consistent sore point, analysts say, a rancor that has often played out in the open during the recent xenophobic attacks and the deportation of each other's nationals in 2012.

Noting the vacuum, analysts argue that only the co-opting other African states will assuage the concerns of all, allowing the two powers to become the beacons of democracy and engines of economic growth to which their leaders clearly aspire.<sup>25</sup> South Africa and Nigeria need to restore their African Concert, for if they are strong Africa is strong, and conversely, if they are weak so is Africa, said Landsberg.<sup>26</sup>

“In the absence of a purposeful Africa focused partnership between South Africa and Nigeria, and mutually reinforcing continental initiatives, Africa's integration and development risk being indefinitely postponed,” Dr. Alfredo Tjiurimo Hengari, a Senior Research Fellow in the Foreign Policy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs, wrote.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Adebajo A., 'South Africa and Nigeria in Africa: an axis of virtue?' (Unpublished, Paper presented for the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Open Dialogue, South Africa, 23 May 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Hengari, A., 'Pitfalls and prospects: Nigeria and South Africa in Africa', SAIIA, March 23, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Landberg, Chris., 'Nigeria-South Africa Tensions Leave African Leadership Gap', World Politics Review. April 18, 2012

<sup>27</sup> op cit, Hengari A.

The effect of the dysfunction has been apparent by the number of conflicts, both armed and unarmed, in the region that continue to hold Africa back.

All this opens the door for the multi-polar argument. Crafted by Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, it argued that as the world system moved towards multi-polarity, the frequency and intensity of war were expected to diminish, or in other words, stability would increase. Their definition of stability was that the system retained all of its key characteristics, no single nation becomes dominant, most of its members continue to survive and that large scale war did not occur. The advantage of this system to states was that they retained their political independence and territorial integrity, strong attractions for the African continent enjoying self-rule following its experience of colonialism. As it shall be shown in following chapters, this has been a double-edged sword.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study proposes to examine the balance of power and practice of African foreign policy through an integration of realist theories, bringing out how power has been traditionally distributed by the two countries of Nigeria and South Africa, and how a new polar point can be beneficial. It will then highlight how Kenya can play this role, and propose possibilities of partnership, while remaining alive to the integrated approach of theories that continue to define relations on the continent. The realist view for example would assert the concept of the nation-state as supreme, while liberalism would acknowledge the role of other actors in the international arena, and which have an impact on how African nations project their power.

The current opposing viewpoints of bipolarity or multi-polarity have highlighted the heated debate on the rival merits of each in maintaining systemic stability. What has

been seen to come out of the debate was a strong consensus which saw the international system as so strongly determining the behaviour of states that there is no need to consider what goes on within them. The motives and beliefs of individual decision makers drop out of account and so do the ideologies and political processes within the states, to be replaced by the workings of the international political system with its power structure. The two main concepts in play are thus anarchy and polarity, anchors of realism.

Some mention of the Hegemonic Stability Theory suffices. Rooted in economics, political science and history, HST argues that the international system is likely to be stable if a single-nation state is dominant or an outright hegemon. Conversely, the absence of such a state would be associated with disorder. But it has in recent years been shown to be only a special case of international cooperation<sup>28</sup>. Also, because this research paper argues for three powers, its applicability in the African context would be a cause for further research, a recommendation that is made in its concluding chapter.

### **1.7 Hypotheses**

- Kenya has the resources necessary to become a regional hegemon
- Nigeria has the resources to be a regional hegemon
- South Africa has the resources necessary to be a regional hegemon

### **1.8 Methodology**

This research will rely on multidisciplinary models, integrating several IDIS disciplines including diplomacy, international political systems, international law, research, and economic analysis and policy making.

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<sup>28</sup> Snidal, Duncan., 'The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory', International Organisation, MIT Press, Vol 39, No. 4. Pp579-614

### **1.8.1 Secondary data**

It relies heavily on analysis of secondary data for its working, due to the difficulties of measuring current African thinking around bipolarity and tripolarity, or any of the other multipolar models using conventional primary sources. There exists little reliable theoretical or empirical research—both globally and regionally, on this kind of inquiry—giving more scope for the researcher to apply own arguments and thinking. Towards this the researcher majorly discusses the multipolarity model advanced by Karl Deutsch and David Singer. The initial state is to examine if there is an arms race between the focus countries of Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. Towards this the research examines military expenditure of the three nations and extrapolates this backwards to look at the trend over the last five years.

It then examines the case for more countries acting as regional powers having more interaction opportunities and consequently weighing if these would contribute to regional stability. It also studies the share of attention-to-conflict calculations to show which country would give higher precedence to messages from another hegemonic country in the region. Deutsch and Singer grounded their argument in signal-noise calculations, and this research seeks to extrapolate the same model to the African situation.

The paper also examines objections to tripolarity in favour of either unipolar, bipolar or other polarities, and endeavours applies them to the sub-regional scope. The significant challenge to methods around polarity studies in Africa is that due to the continent being weakly covered in international relations, there is little precedent to build on. Reviews of the more recent analyses also rely on a focus on secondary data. Towards this, the researcher puts forward critical thought as his contribution towards filling this lacuna, and in an attempt to spark more conversation and research around this.

### **1.8.2 Primary data**

Primary sources will be used for data that has not been extrapolated before, including the researcher's own arguments using the available evidence such as on arms races and military expenditures in the countries of study. He will also draw from his experience and writings as a journalist covering pan-African developments, including interviews with key decision makers, but which will only be referred to in relevant passages.

The researcher also advocates for more critical thinking in our institutions of higher learning to fill the significant gaps in this area—a deficit of which has seen reliance on learning by rote, resulting in Africa remaining on the periphery of the world stage, with contemporary history still reliant on external actors. Encouragingly though, African scholars who advance localised theories are emerging—ownership of Africa knowledge is paramount.

### **1.9 Scope and Limitation of Study**

- This study will restrict itself to the role of three countries in Africa; Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya
- It may be difficult to travel to these countries due to both time and financial resource constraints

## **1.10 Chapter Outlines**

Chapter One introduces the topic of our research study by first setting the broad context of our research study, the statement of the problem, the justification, theoretical framework, literature review, hypotheses and the methodology of the study.

Chapter Two examines the foreign policies of Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria with a view to grounding the topic by understanding the factors that have led to the three countries' international orientation.

Chapter Three examines Africa's historical and current balance of power, a term loosely applied as the global model is only analogous, not identical to the regional use of the term.

Chapter Four discusses and analyses the polarity models, with an emphasis on tripolarity in the light of the hypotheses and realism theoretical framework already stated, and applies this to the African scenario.

Chapter Five provides conclusions of the study, gives recommendations and provides suggestions on areas for further study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF NIGERIA, KENYA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

This chapter examines the factors that determine foreign policy behaviour in the countries, with a historical tilt at the nature of their decision structures and processes, national attributes and capabilities, their political system, and the idiosyncracies of their leaders. The import is that while the balance of power theory relies on the nature of the international system, one cannot wish away the municipal goings on in a country and which dictate how it relates with other nation-state units. It will also lay some foundation for the next chapter, which examines the wider nature of the international system, with a focus on Africa.

#### **2.1 Nigerian Foreign Policy 1960-2015**

While the well-accepted concept of Nigerian foreign policy only crystallised at independence, as with most other African nations, the West African country had before British administration had contact with other regions, only that they were largely in the form of empires. Northern Nigeria had been subject to external influences from the large medieval kingdoms of the western Sudan (Ghana, Melle and Songhai), from the Maghreb and Tripolitania, and from Egypt via Lake Chad, and the Nile-Niger traverse.<sup>29</sup> The majority of these were trade, with a bias towards Tripoli and Egypt, and which only reoriented with the formal arrival of the British, who begun their administration in 1861, having been already present for three centuries in the form of the slave trade.

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<sup>29</sup> Coleman, J., 'Nigeria: Background to Nationalism' (University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965.) p.38

Modern articulation of Nigeria's foreign policy would have vestiges in the tenets that British rule such as indirect rule took, including the division of the country into four areas of administration, and the boundary tensions brought by imposition of Berlin Conference agreements. Unsurprisingly, because of the arbitrary nature of the boundaries drawn by European powers, a lot of the interactions with other regions at the dusk of colonial rule and the first independent regime were mainly territorial. There were agitations by some Nigerian elites in the affairs of neighbouring Dahomey (modern day Benin) in the late 1950s, including a call for Dahomey to join Nigeria due to their shared ethnic peoples.<sup>30</sup> Post-independence, there were suggestions of a merger with Niger and Cameroon. In 1960 there were demands for annexation of the Spanish island of Fernando Po following reports of mistreatment of Nigerian workers.

But of internationally recognised Nigeria, some of the more coherent statements on its foreign policy with Africa came during the transition, when Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the federal prime minister voiced his opposition to the formation of a European Economic Community saying it would impair existing trade patterns to the detriment of primary producers in African countries.<sup>31</sup> Sir Abubakar said that Nigeria belonged to Africa, and "Africa must claim first attention in our external affairs", and called for Africa to cooperate in matters of common interests.

In one of its efforts to place itself as a national leader on the continent, which the premier said was a natural outcome of the country's size and population, Nigeria had in 1961 tried to mediate between the rival pan-Africanism groupings known as 'Brazzaville' and 'Casablanca' with little success: "Our foreign policy has never been

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<sup>30</sup> Akinyemi, A. B. 'National Unity Within the Context of Regional Relations: The Nigerian Experience', in Smock, D.R., Bentsi-Enchill, K., *The Search for National Integration in Africa*. (London, The Free Press. Collier Macmillan Publishers. 1975, 1976). p.68

<sup>31</sup> Balewa, A., 'Nigeria Looks Ahead' in Quigg, P. W., *Africa. A Foreign Affairs Reader*. Council on Foreign Relations, (London, New York. Frederick A. Praeger 1964. p.309

one of neutrality, but rather non-alignment. We have never, for instance, been neutral in African affairs, nor can we be neutral in matters pertaining to world peace.”<sup>32</sup>

Balewa called for an end to colonisation for a reform of the United Nations Security Council, an organisation which he said was core for world peace.<sup>33</sup> But for all the prime minister’s assertion that Nigeria would never be neutral in Africa, his regime followed a pacific route, bending over backwards to accommodate its neighbours and maintain good relations with them. In 1963 for example it hired 80 non-Nigerians in its civil service, from Cameroon, Dahomey, Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo, and notably, South Africa and southern Rhodesia.

Balewa’s government was constrained by internal tensions—the country had only minimal unity as most of its many sub-national primordial units were yet to transfer their loyalties to the state. Due to this vulnerability it was in Nigeria’s interest to maintain good relationships with regional neighbours even as others like Ghana practiced a more belligerent foreign policy and called Nigeria “big for nothing”. This moderate, if timid stance by Balewa seemingly paid off, these countries supported the country’s unity during the civil war). That civil war (Biafra) had the intent of strengthening Nigeria’s internal cohesion, and this was reflected by the centralisation of foreign policy. Under Balewa and Yakubu Gowon, it was argued that Nigeria was not pulling its weight on the African scene, especially bearing its potentially dominant military and economic position.<sup>34</sup> Many called for caution, but as Akinyemi noted:

“It does seem that a happy middle ground would be achieved if the state with the physical and economic capability to dominate a region interprets its role in terms of advancing proposals while leaving the course and content of the regional cooperation to the determination of the majority of the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.313

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.312

<sup>34</sup> Akinyemi, A. B. ‘National Unity Within the Context of Regional Relations: The Nigerian Experience’, in Smock, D.R., Bentsi-Enchill, K., *The Search for National Integration in Africa*. (London, The Free Press. Collier Macmillan Publishers. 1975, 1976). p.75

states in the region. This course looks like the one Nigeria has been following and should continue to follow.<sup>35</sup>

Under Nigeria's succession of military rules, the country shed off the tag of being reluctant to lead, and while they were careful not to appear high-handed, they went into matters such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, including nationalising BP's assets in Nigeria due to the oil firm's perceived complicity in providing oil to South Africa.

But Nigeria remained resolutely politically non-aligned, despite having sub-Saharan Africa's largest army, navy and air force due to the civil war, its largest population and the moral strength of having emerged from internecine conflict intact and more united. However, in view of the fact that much of its wealth came from oil, it was termed as economically aligned with the West, complicating its diplomatic role in Africa. In partnership with other regional states, <sup>36</sup>especially Togo, it was however instrumental in launching ECOWAS, what Shehu Shagari in 1980 called "one of the most successful experiments in bilateral cooperation in this part of the world and a living example to others." To Nigeria, Ecowas was more of a benefit to making West Africa self-reliant, and freeing up weaker states.

Africa and African interests constituted the centrepiece of Nigerian foreign policy, Shagari said often, and was instrumental in rallying other OAU states to now focus on economic freedom, with the first regional trade summit taking place in Lagos in 1980. But this pro-African stance was questioned as being bureaucratic, vague and possibly out of tune with the aspirations of our country...<sup>37</sup> Former Nigeria Foreign Affairs minister and leading foreign policy analyst Ibrahim Gambari identified the key

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<sup>35</sup> Akinyemi, A. B., *Ibid*, p.75

<sup>36</sup> Shagari, Shehu. 'My vision of Nigeria', Selected speeches, in Tijjani, A., Williams, D., (London, New Jersey, Frank Cass and Company, 1981, p.63

<sup>37</sup> Gambari, I. A., 'Theory and Reality in Foreign Policy Making. Nigeria After The Second Republic', New Jersey, Humanities Press International, 1989). p.13

phases of Nigeria's diplomacy in Africa. The first was the moderate Balewa era, the second the post-civil war era by Gowon. This was seen as being tentative but positive, especially after some African states had recognised Biafra, and included aid to liberation movements in southern Africa and a raft of visits to African states. The third phase was under Murtala Mohammed, who significantly recognised Angola's MPLA, taking along with it the OAU. He memorably took on Western powers in 1976 speech to the OAU.

Olusegun Obasanjo is seen to have soft-pedalled on this activist foreign policy, in part due to decreasing oil revenues, a reversal of which saw a resumption of an activist foreign policy. He was instrumental in shaping opinion on Zimbabwe's elections, but Nigeria also found itself mediating in Chad, Western Sahara, Ethiopia-Somalia and Tanzania-Uganda. This brought with it recognition of Nigeria's growing influence. Shagari's regime was seen as hostage to a rapidly changing world, under the pressures of which it crumbled. The net result was a weakened Nigeria, which saw its neighbours having scant respect for it, and regularly tested its borders, bringing comparisons with the 1960s.

Muhammadu Buhari's short-lived regime was seen as giving a distinct focus to foreign policy, though some dispute this because as a military regime, the highest decision making body was the Supreme Military Council, which dealt with only the most crucial foreign policy issues, and again only in a general manner.<sup>38</sup> It would have been of immediate interest to draw parallels with Buhari's new government, but for the very significant departure that he is this time elected, having come to power in the 1980s through a coup. But during that time, Nigeria's relations were significantly influenced by economic factors, including a significant debt burden. Like present,

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<sup>38</sup> Inamete, U, 'Foreign policy decision- making system and Nigerian foreign policy during the Buhari Era', *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* Volume 79, Issue 314, (1990) p.6

security was also a major consideration, from an enduring war in Chad to border conflicts. It is worth noting for purposes of our research that the former apartheid regime in South Africa was also an important element of Nigeria's external relations. Ibrahim Babangida's military government placed more emphasis on the economic components of the country's foreign policy, with an intent to create markets for its manufactured goods in its immediate sphere, but also battled with border conflicts.<sup>39</sup>

Sani Abacha's leadership is widely accepted as brutal, and neglectful of both African affairs and international relations, but while he was a keen actor in the conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the haemorrhage in democratic credentials saw power shift to South Africa.<sup>40</sup> It also reached out to the East, largely out of necessity following international blowback to his isolationist regime propped by oil. His successor, Abdulsalami Abubakar set the tone for a democratic government, and following historic elections in 1999, saw the election of Obasanjo, who would form the solid partnership with Thabo Mbeki of South Africa that came to be seen as a golden age in African politics, and that this paper concerns itself with. Obasanjo's regime used Nigeria's external relations as a platform to cancel Nigeria's external debt, encourage foreign investment, improve the telecommunication sector, and also mediate in conflict areas in Africa.<sup>41</sup>

The general summary of Nigeria's foreign policy throughout the years is that it has not been cohesive, and has been subservient to the elite who craft it, rather than serving the masses or borne of any overarching and deliberate international goal.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Inamete, U, 'Foreign Policy Decision Making in Nigeria', (New Jersey, Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp, 2001). pp.122-153

<sup>40</sup> Onoja, A, 'Towards the East in Search of New Friends', Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria Vol. 1 No. 2, (2005), pp.115-120

<sup>41</sup> Bankole, Olorunyomi, 'Nigeria's Foreign Relations under Olusegun Obasanjo's Civilian Administration'. Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs, Vol 2, No. 1, (2014), p3

<sup>42</sup> Bankole, O., Ibid, page 5

## 2.2 Kenyan Foreign Policy 1963-2015

Despite, or perhaps because of, its dominant and geographically advantageous position in eastern Africa Kenya's foreign policy has been about extreme caution and moderation, one referred to as 'quiet diplomacy'.<sup>43</sup> At independence, the country had been expected to adopt a radical and socialist approach to its foreign policy on the back of its liberationist Mau Mau grouping that counted many socialised workers in its ranks, and the socialist sympathies of its early leaders including Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga and Bildad Kaggia.

But instead it unfurled a low-profile approach, in recognition that its under-developed status instead called for 'developmental diplomacy'<sup>44</sup> that would balance economic and political interests. Some have argued that a more radical foreign policy would have had great gains for the country attaining an elusive nationhood and integration,<sup>45</sup> but others hold the country needs to relate more to the effectiveness of its institutions instead. As such, Kenya's foreign policy has for a long time never been an electoral issue, though with the security implications of its invasion of Somalia in 2011 this is increasingly changing.

Three key factors are identified for the moderate thrust of Kenya's foreign policy. The first was the attempt by its north-eastern region to secede to create a Greater Somalia, which cost it tens of millions of unbudgeted revenue to militarily maintain its territorial integrity. The second was the agitation by Coastal Arabs for secession to the power of the Sultan of Zanzibar. Both issues were settled in favour of Kenya, both by treaty, making the country aware of the benefits of a good-

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<sup>43</sup> Okumu, J., 'Kenya's Foreign Policy' In Aluko, O., 'The Foreign Policy of African States', (Surrey, Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1977), p.136

<sup>44</sup> Eugene R.B., 'The Diplomacy of Economic Development', (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp24-26

<sup>45</sup> Howell, J., 'An Analysis of Kenya's Foreign Policy', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 1. No 1, (1968) p.30

neighbourhood policy. Notably, it developed close relations with emerging 'hegemon' Ethiopia because they shared the common enemy of Somalia, a relationship that has stood to this day.

Kenya's unsuccessful mediation on the auspices of the OAU in the Congo-crisis, which foundered on the altar of Cold War politics, only crystallised this, in addition to informing its policy of non-alignment on East-War rivalries. Kenya thus focused on its immediate neighbourhood of eastern Africa, to which it plays a vital role. Accommodating Uganda and Tanzania helped strengthen East African economic co-operation, but ironically it was its perceived dominant position that led to the collapse of the original EAC bloc. But because of its vested interest in inter-territorial trade in East Africa, the country has had a direct interest in maintaining the EAC, and was thus instrumental in the revival of the current five-member bloc. Its position in East Africa was in the mid-60s tested by the rise of socialist governments in Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia, but it navigated this to remain on a capitalist path that has had a strong grip on its current foreign policy leanings, despite identifying African socialism as a pillar of its foreign policy.<sup>46</sup>

Nairobi recently unveiled its new foreign policy, which it says aims to achieve several national objectives, *inter alia* to: Protect Kenya's sovereignty and territorial integrity; Promote integration; Enhance regional peace and security; Advance the economic prosperity of Kenya and her people; Project Kenya's image and prestige; Promote multilateralism; Promote the interests of Kenyan Diaspora and partnership with the Kenyans abroad.<sup>47</sup> To achieve this it has identified the five pillars of peace, economic, diaspora, environmental and cultural. Its guiding principles are the sanctity of

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<sup>46</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs, 'Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)', Sep 28 - Dec 9, 1982, p.752

<sup>47</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Kenya Foreign Policy' November 2014

sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful co-existence with other nations, resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, promotion of regional integration, and respect for international laws and norms.

The economic pillar is important, in that it identifies the EAC as its most important foreign policy vehicle. Other key institutions for Kenya are the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IGCLR), and the African Union (AU). Its objectives under the AU are to “to boost intra-African trade and realization of Africa’s potential as a pole for global economic growth. Kenya will also continue to support Africa’s strategic partnerships with other regions aimed at promoting global peace and security and achieving the sustainable development agenda in the Post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period.”<sup>48</sup> Kenya also identifies multilateralism as important, including through the United Nations, and the Commonwealth.

The major role of economic concerns in its relations with other African countries roll back to independence, when the nationalist government promised to expand opportunities in education, wages, infrastructure and welfare. Because its quiet diplomacy has paid such big economic dividends and guaranteed domestic security, it has been Kenya’s preferred pillar for its dealings with other states. But in a rapidly changing regional environment, is it enough? The country has modified some tenets—its invasion of Somalia saw it abandon its non-interference stance, its battle against the International Criminal Court has rolled its strong support for multilateral institutions. What scope remains going forward? What is the likely, and preferred orientation in the next 20 years? This project continually examines this.

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<sup>48</sup> Kenya Foreign Policy, Ibid, page 30

### **2.3: South Africa's Foreign Policy 1994-2015**

Contemporary South African policy is traceable to its transition from apartheid. Before then the National Party (NP) had run into international isolation, following its strategies of political belligerence and global defensiveness as it sought to sustain itself in power. But 1994 brought in new actors, notably the African National Congress (ANC), which went on to form government.

Since then South African foreign policy has evolved from inherently liberal values to a mix of both realism and liberalism, as it seeks to project its economic, diplomatic and military strength into influencing affairs on the continent.

The Nelson Mandela years saw South Africa pursue a human rights-oriented foreign policy, and which saw some analysts describe it as naïve.<sup>49</sup> It had its success: the opposition to Sani Abacha's regime following the execution of top activists including Ken Saro Wiwa was a major point, as did Mandela's negotiations with Mobutu Sese Seko just before he was deposed in 1997. But the South African government failed to isolate Nigeria, and the resulting backlash from Africa convinced Pretoria that it had to adopt a co-operative approach to issues on the continent.

Thabo Mbeki is credited with evolving South Africa's foreign policy on a more realpolitik base, with the country now involved in regional affairs on the continent in four main ways. First, it is a notable actor in peacekeeping, with its troops stationed in Sudan, Burundi, the DR Congo, Lesotho, Eritrea-Ethiopia and the Central Africa Republic. It has also been a mediator in conflicts from Kenya and Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Mozambique. Pretoria has also been active in Africa's regional institutions, including the establishment of the retooled African Union, its development

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<sup>49</sup> Habib, A., 'South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation', *South African Journal of International Affairs* (2009), Volume 16, No. 2, pp.143-159

arm NEPAD, the African Development Bank and the Southern African Development Community among others.

It has also used its positions in regional groupings such as the G20 to act as a regional spokesman for the region, on issues such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN. It has further seen its corporate firms expand rapidly north, in areas as diverse as telecommunications, retail and financial services. This effort has not been restricted to private investors; state-run bodies are also major investors in other African countries, making it a major contributor to foreign direct investment flows into the region.

Many have however criticised this, arguing the neo-liberal capitalism it practices have been detrimental to the continent's state-led developmental agenda.<sup>50</sup> Mbeki is seen as part of the country's second generation nationalists, with three key tenets of their foreign policy identified. The first is an appeasement strategy, where South Africa has courted other world powers to obtain political and economic benefits, in exchange for taking on a variety of obligations, including in Africa. This is essentially a recognition of its weak position in regards to the international power architecture.

The second was more aggressive, taking on a distinct anti-imperial hue. But the country has not sought to delink from the situation but has sought to engage with a focus to changing the order of the system and get the best possible deal for itself, and by extension the continent. The country has identified its foreign policy principles, but for our report the continental principle is of interest, stating that the country's foreign policy should "reflect the interests of Africa."<sup>51</sup> The ANC identified marginalisation of Africa as a concern, and highlighted the concentration of the global economy into

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<sup>50</sup> Habib, A., 'South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation', *South African Journal of International Affairs* (2009), Volume 16, No. 2, p150

<sup>51</sup> African National Congress, 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa', 1994

trading blocs that promoted protectionism, depressed commodity prices and shifting investment patterns that enriched the North, and mounting debt to Africa's detriment. Pretoria said these were inimical to democratic governments, and served notice of its intention to play an "active and leading role in the development and strengthening of multilateral fora that empower the nations of the South."<sup>52</sup> But as noted, the country has struggled to gain full acceptance.

## **2.4: Conclusion**

By looking at the above overview, it is apparent that the three countries have responded to the international environment in different ways, and which has shaped their foreign policies. Kenya's pro-market policies have seen it pursue a pacifist approach, as it looks to make space for its economic growth, including the expansion of its multinationals.

South Africa's initial foreign policy was a reaction to the isolationist path adapted by the international community due to the regime policies of apartheid, and after independence, initially pursued a pacifist human-rights oriented approach. However, it is now looking to capitalise on its diversified economy to position itself as the continental leader, and while it had at times looked to be unilateral, it has realised the essence of partnerships in Africa. Nigeria's foreign policy has struggled to articulate its continental position, hobbled by internal structural weaknesses despite having Africa's largest economy, and being the continent's most populous nation.

The next chapter will give an in depth overview of the African environment, which provides the system a tripolar argument is made for.

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<sup>52</sup> ANC, *ibid*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **EXAMINING AFRICA'S HISTORICAL AND CURRENT BALANCE OF POWER**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter discusses the foreign policies of the three influential powers in West, East and southern Africa i.e. Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. The historical analysis provides a launch pad to understanding why the three countries have had varying degrees of influence within their sub-regions in the last five or so decades. To understand the power differentials in the three African states, the study will analyse power in this chapter using the Balance of Power (BOP) theory. While some analysts may be sceptical about the efficacy of the balance of power principle in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, citing globalisation, international organisations and the increasingly significant role of non-state actors in international affairs, it suffices to note that national interest remains preponderant. Accordingly this chapter will depict the centrality of BOP in the race for the mentioned three sub regional powers to become the continental hegemon.

#### **3.2 Balance of Power (BOP)**

The concept of balance of power is one that stokes debate and heated attempts at justification; it is at the core of a realism that traces its roots to works of renowned realists including Machiavelli, Hobbes and Meinecke Friedrich. Indeed, balance of power is deemed as the oldest and essential concept in international relations.<sup>53</sup> The modern international system is made up states each struggling to amass means to

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<sup>53</sup>Paul, Thazha V., Wirtz, J. J., and Fortmann, M., 'Balance of power: theory and practice in the 21st century' (Stanford University Press, 2004) p 29.

defend itself against conceivable threats to its integrity.<sup>54</sup> Balance of power arises because of the unequal distribution in the system where some states wield more power than others. Small weaker powers are disadvantaged in that they cannot adequately ensure their own security, as such they depend on more powerful states to safeguard their security. Small powers thus form alliances with friendly powerful states in a bid to attain parity with a stronger powerful foe or threatening state. This forms the basis of the concept of BOP which in essence is aimed at distributing power in such a way that no one single state becomes preponderant such that it dominates the other state actors and becomes an existential threat.

### **3.3 Strategies of Balance of Power**

The traditional balance of power has had at its core the active deliberate efforts of a state or a collection of states to match or reduce the power of the most powerful and threatening state in the system. In this regard, concerns for security have figured large in world politics for millennia as typified by the Peloponnesian and the First and Second World Wars.<sup>55</sup> States being the dominant actors in international relations have historically employed various balance of power strategies to ensure their security and survival. Undoubtedly, war is likely to arise where there are pronounced shifts in the distribution of power and in extension capabilities coupled with state's failure to commit to an agreed pact.<sup>56</sup> According to Thazha et al.,<sup>57</sup> balance of power has three strategies including:

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<sup>54</sup> Naseer, R., Musarat A., 'Balance of Power: A Theoretical explanation and Its Relevance in Contemporary Era' Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 1, No. 10, 2011 p. 3

<sup>55</sup> Naseer, R., Musarat A., 'Balance of Power: A Theoretical explanation and Its Relevance in Contemporary Era' Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 1, No. 10, 2011 p. 5

<sup>56</sup> Robert Powell, "The Inefficient Use of Power: Costly Conflict with Complete Information," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004), p. 231

<sup>57</sup> Paul, Thazha V., James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann. *Balance of power: theory and practice in the 21st century*. Stanford University Press, (2004) p. 2

(i) Hard Balancing strategy: Adopted where there is prevalence of deep seated interstate rivalry and such states resort to building up their military capabilities and creating and sustaining formal alliances and or counter alliances aimed at matching the capabilities of the major actor. This is the traditional conception of realism and neo realism.

(ii) Soft Balancing strategy which involves inferred balancing absent formal alliances. Here states enter into alliances or limited security arrangements to counter a deemed threatening actor or a rising power. This strategy exhibits a limited degree of arms build-up, random cooperative exercises or collaboration in institutions either regional or national. If the powerful state continues with the threatening behaviour or competition becomes intense, soft balancing may morph into hard balancing.

(iii) Asymmetric Balancing which connotes states' efforts to contain and balance indirect threats emanating from sub-national actors like terrorist groups that are incapable of challenging key states with the use of conventional military capabilities and strategies and vice versa. That is deliberate effort by sub-national actors and their state backers to challenge and decimate established states by use of asymmetric ways like terrorism.

Another significant BOP strategy is bandwagoning; here a weaker state aligns itself with a threatening powerful state to either neutralise hostility towards it by the threatening power of share in the spoils of triumph.<sup>58</sup> Traditionally, the widespread metric of balancing includes investments by an actor to convert latent power (economic, social, natural resources & technological resources) into military abilities.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Schweller, R., 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in,' *International Security* 19, (1994) pp 72-107

<sup>59</sup> Lieber, Keir A., and Gerard Alexander. 'Waiting for balancing: why the world is not pushing back.' *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 109-139, 119

Detractors of realism however believe that balance of power is a relic of the past in an increasingly globalising world.<sup>60</sup> This view is not shared by realist proponents who for example see the resurgence of balance of power in the future more so with the continued ascendancy of the United States (US) in global politics. They forecast that the US will become too powerful and threaten other states who will initiate a counter balance to avoid the international state system becoming an American empire. Some would even go as far as seeing the recent behaviour by Russia in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, the assertive behaviour of China in the South China Sea and the increasingly assertive Iran as clear signs of balance of power in this day.

Balance of power was best demonstrated by the Cold War, where the two superpowers made alliances and heavily invested in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the US formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization while the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact. This balance has been cited as one reason why there was de-escalation compared to the post-Cold War period where the world has witnessed numerous international conflicts. Super power contention is absent in Africa and as such regional powers have a wider leeway to pursue their national interests. As a result, security regionalisation has emerged as the preponderant pattern of conducting international security relations in the continent.<sup>61</sup>

### **3.4 Hegemony in Africa**

In Africa, there has never really been a single dominant hegemon like by illustration the US in the Americas. Instead, the continent has three states that have emerged as key players based on their region. In the past several years, regionalism has emerged as the most effective way to coordinate political, cultural and economic affairs

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<sup>60</sup> Elman, Colin, and John A. Vasquez. "Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate." Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, (2003) p9

<sup>61</sup> Buzan and Wæver, 'Regions and Powers, p3

for states and nongovernmental organisations among neighbours and interdependent countries.<sup>62</sup> South Africa is the dominant player in southern Africa, it led initiatives in Lesotho's intervention in 1998 and Burundi in 2003, Nigeria has provided leadership in western Africa and was the foremost champion in the creation and sustenance of Economic Community of Western African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in Eastern Africa, Ethiopia has been the major power and has been involved in fighting Islamic terrorist groups in the Horn of Africa from as back as 1995.<sup>63</sup>

But to say this does not tell us what a hegemon is and what it is not, so it becomes incumbent to state what or who a hegemon is in a region. The whole idea behind hegemony is attainment of balance in the international system, an observation that has been observed throughout human history.<sup>64</sup> According to Brown, a hegemon is a state that has the capability to set out rules of action and by extension enforce them, the state also needs to have the alacrity to act on this ability.<sup>65</sup> Countries in a region recognise the power of a regional hegemon due to three main reasons (i) a state fears the punishment that set out rules comes with, (ii) it perceives the rules as beneficial to attainment of its national interests and (iii) it sees the set out rules as legitimate and thus ought to be towed.<sup>66</sup>

Becoming a hegemon in a region needs not be treated with suspicion all the time. The assumption that hegemonic ambitions lead to aggressive tendencies is not without cause as history has proven, but hegemons have a pivotal role to play in stability. The essence of a hegemon is providing stability and establishing institutions

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<sup>62</sup> Alagappa, 'Regionalism and Conflict Management,' 362; Asche and Brücher, 'Myth and Reality of African Regional Integration,' 170

<sup>63</sup> Gebrewold Belachew, 'Legitimate Region Powers? A Failed Test for Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa', *Journal of African Security*, vol. 7, Issue 1 (2004) 1-23

<sup>64</sup> Waltz, K. N., 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics,' *International Security* Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993), p. 77

<sup>65</sup> Brown, C., 'Understanding International Relations'. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 49

<sup>66</sup> Hurd, I., 'Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics,' *International Organization* Vol53, No. 2 (1999): pp.379-87

or rules that may render the necessity of a hegemon void, in so doing it has the potential to fashion a post-hegemonic status quo governed by rules and institutional competence.<sup>67</sup>

To become an effective hegemon, an actor needs to have the ability to set out attractive rules of the game that are acceptable to others, this way the actor can attain its own interests and prompt side payments developing a sort of self-sustaining system that can run with the hegemon in the background. Hegemony does carry with it overtones of consensual attributes on norms and values that other actors can buy into, to attain this however requires security, stability and economic development which have cost implications that the hegemon essentially foots making its role a positive one.<sup>68</sup> In Africa like elsewhere in the globe, an analysis of the objective characteristics including relative military power and economic strength determines which state becomes a pole.

Overall, three conditions are necessary for a state to attain the status of a leading power in a region. To begin with they must have domestic legitimacy, this is based on their domestic economic and political performances, regional legitimacy which entails recognition by regional states and the compliance by these states of rules set out by the actor in question and international reliability which has to do with the international alliances the aspiring power has and whether these alliances reinforces their regional leadership or not. Legitimacy is vitally important for a state's ascension to regional power status.

There are two types of legitimacies that states use to gain pre-eminence and become major powers. Judicial legitimacy has to do with sovereignty while empirical

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<sup>67</sup> Keohane R.O., 'After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy'. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984

<sup>68</sup> Qobo, Mzukisi. 'Refocusing South Africa's economic diplomacy: the 'African Agenda' and emerging powers.' South African Journal of International Affairs Vol17, No. 1 (2010): 13-28

legitimacy is de facto practice that makes some states regional leaders.<sup>69</sup> The latter legitimacy makes the US the leader of NATO and Germany, France and Britain the leaders of the European Union. In Africa, Nigeria, South Africa and Ethiopia possess strong domestic juridical legitimacy but weak empirical legitimacy due to political, economic and security reasons.

### 3.5 Eastern Africa Leadership Struggle

In regard to eastern Africa, it's sufficient to recognise the role of Kenya as another major power. It's an economic powerhouse in the region and over the years, Nairobi has become the multinational capital of the region. Its market-based economy and its relatively robust democracy give it an appeal that Ethiopia does not have. Addis Ababa has had authoritarian regimes and was aligned to the socialist and communist Soviet Union during the Cold War.<sup>70</sup> In terms of the size of the economy and military strength, Ethiopia dwarfs Kenya. Addis Ababa long involvement in Somalia, the horn of Africa unstable state which has for the longest time been a destabilising force due to its 'Greater Somalia' ambitions that cannot be over-emphasized as the table overleaf shows:

**Table 1: Military strength of Kenya compared to Ethiopia**

Country	Active Troops	Reserve	Paramilitary	Total Troops
Ethiopia	182,500	0	0	182,500
Kenya	24,120	5,000	0	29120

*The figures above were last updated in 2005.<sup>71</sup>*

<sup>69</sup> Belachew, G., 'Legitimate Region Powers? A Failed Test for Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa', *Journal of African Security*, vol. 7, Issue 1 (2004) 1-23

<sup>70</sup> Vestal, Theodore M. 'Ethiopia: A post-cold war African State'. (Praeger Publishers, 1999).

<sup>71</sup> Africapedia, 'Balance of Military Power in Africa', Accessed August 29, 2015

Clearly for Kenya to emerge as the region's hegemony, it would have to use its economic muscle to prop up its military. Kenya has been reluctant to project its military prowess and has chosen to focus on the economy instead.

### **3.6 Southern Africa Leadership**

Since the fall of apartheid and crystallization of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the country has pursued economic integration in to the global economy, it has sought to benefit Africa as a whole and on several occasions has acted as the link between the North and the South.<sup>72</sup> The country has played a seminal role in Africa's affairs and has become a vocal advocate for developing countries in the international stage making Pretoria a major player in the post-Cold War international system.<sup>73</sup> South Africa is not just an African player but has in the last decade become an increasingly major actor in the world. As such, it exhibits tendencies to become the major player in Africa, outshining the largest economy, Nigeria.

South Africa however, though has the residue to ascend to prominence in the South African region, it has chosen to approach its inherent advantages in a sophisticated way. Its foreign policy since 1994 has shifted from one marked by hegemonic domination to one of multilateral partnership vis-à-vis its south African neighbours, the country has fully reintegrated itself in the region and now plays a significant and positive role in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in

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<sup>72</sup> Qobo, Mzukisi. 'Refocusing South Africa's economic diplomacy: the 'African Agenda' and emerging powers.' *South African Journal of International Affairs* Vo17, No. 1 (2010): 13-28.

<sup>73</sup> Alden, C. and G. Le Pere, 'South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy: from reconciliation to revival?' *Adelphi Paper*, Vol362, p 8. The Hague: Institute for Security Studies, 2003

addition to being an active member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).<sup>74</sup>

Many have been critical about South Africa's position of not embracing its hegemonic status. The low development levels prevalent and weak democracy in southern Africa can only be overcome when the regional hegemon (South Africa) will be ready to take up its hegemonic role.<sup>75</sup> There is high likelihood that if South Africa fails to take up its rightful place, other established external factors including the European Union and China will not hesitate to take up the role in the region. Africa does have a role in determining who emerges as the continental hegemon.

If African states do not recognise the importance of one of their own taking up this role, then it becomes difficult to have such, for power after all is all about perceptions. South Africa as a member of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) since 2010, now takes charge of investment and trade between Africa and emerging markets.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, BRICS foreign direct investment in Africa is expected to reach 40% by 2017.<sup>77</sup> In 2010, the proportion of BRICS investments in the extractive industries in Africa was Brazil (30%), China (13%) India (10%), with South Africa accounting for 9%.<sup>78</sup> As such South Africa is set to maintain its dominance in Africa bearing in mind the plummeting oil prices in the world.

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<sup>74</sup> Adedeji A, 'South Africa and African political economy: looking inside from the outside', in Adebajo A, A Adedeji & C Landsberg (eds), 'South Africa in Africa: The Post-apartheid Era'. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007, p. 59.

<sup>75</sup> Habib A & N Selinyane, 'South Africa's foreign policy and a realistic vision of an African century', in Sidiropoulos E (ed.), *Apartheid Past, Renaissance Future*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2004, p. 54

<sup>76</sup> White, Lyal. 'Emerging powers in Africa: Is Brazil any different?.' *South African Journal of International Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2013): 117-136.

<sup>77</sup> White, L, 'Africa: The West and the rest', in Games D, 'Business in Africa – Corporate Insights'. Penguin: South Africa, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> 'This is Africa: A global perspective', *FT Business*, April/May 2011

### 3.7 West Africa Leadership

Nigeria has positioned its self a major player not only in West Africa but in the continent too, indeed, the country has made Africa its foreign policy focal point.<sup>79</sup> It has played a major role within the Africa Union and has thus emerged as the undisputed dominant player in the sub region. Its vast population and its oil wealth has made Nigeria the biggest economy in the region.

Some of Nigeria's more coherent statements on its foreign policy with Africa came during the transition from colonial rule, when Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the federal prime minister, voiced his opposition to the formation of a European Economic Community saying it would impair existing trade patterns to the detriment of primary producers in African countries.<sup>80</sup> Balewa held that Nigeria belonged to Africa, and “Africa must claim first attention in our external affairs”, and called for Africa to cooperate in matters of common interests. In one of its efforts to project itself as a national leader on the continent, which the premier said was a natural outcome of the country’s size and population, the country tried to intervene between the radical and moderate pan-African integration groups in 1961, but largely came off second-best, seen as having taken sides. But even at that early stage, Nigeria had no doubts about its regional aspirations, a perception that has informed its continental dealings to date.

Together with Kenya and South Africa, the three countries have resisted US policies and even gone on to deny support for US major initiatives which has uplifted their status as sub region leaders globally.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Nweke, Remmy Chuks. ‘The Role of Nigeria In Restoring Peace In West Africa.’ Doctrinal Dissertation, University of Malta (2010).

<sup>80</sup> Balewa, A., ‘Nigeria Looks Ahead’ in Quigg, P. W., Africa. A Foreign Affairs Reader. Council on Foreign Relations, (London, New York. Frederick A. Praeger 1964), p.309

<sup>81</sup> Whitaker, Beth Elise. ‘Soft balancing among weak states? Evidence from Africa.’ International Affairs 86, no. 5 (2010): 1109-1127.

### **3.8 Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya Power Parity**

To understand how the three countries of South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya stand in relation to each other, following the development of their foreign policies as identified in the preceding chapter and anchor the setting for the tripolarity analysis that follows in the next chapter, it is imperative that we revisit the continent's geopolitics. The concept is understood to mean the links between political power and the geographic variables that combine to shape a state's policies, strategies and programmes, especially their foreign policy. As prior identified, a nation's location, natural resources, demography, technological development and political history are key for towards predicting how it will relate with others.

The study will tend to lean more towards the system as opposed to the nature of domestic politics, but it is understood that one cannot downplay the role of the municipal nature of a country in this. A coastal state will tend to have more advantages than a landlocked one--the power of the sea has long been recognized. None of our three countries are landlocked. Indeed they face the same challenges on a geographical nature, such as climate change, and this would affect their position at key forums, such as the environmental conference of parties, and inform how strongly they look to represent the continent. Colonial history also plays a role—South Africa for example has had socialist practices interspersed with free market policies, while Kenya and Nigeria are almost pure capitalist economies. Indeed, China, known for its Communist sympathies, is South Africa's largest trading partner.

Governance and institutional structures also come into play. South Africa only become independent two decades ago, and as such its institutions were more influenced by western values than Kenya and Nigeria, which had more time to "Africanise" their institutions. Their longer period as free nations have given more space for post-colonial

dynamics to take root, and the resulting structural weaknesses have meant they have struggled to accumulate sufficient political capital to become outright hegemon in their regions, or project strength on a continental scale.

The nature of the national economy also plays a role: South Africa and Nigeria are resource-dependent economies, while Kenya has until now relied on agriculture and services. The former have thus had more clout regionally, but nothing is ever constant—Kenya is set to become an oil producer, while services now account for the largest share of Nigeria's gross domestic product. Social identities are other factors that play into how a country projects itself regionally. Kenya and Nigeria have for decades been weighed down by ethnic concerns, while South Africa's chief identity challenge is linked to the racial nature of its demography. Add in the global environment such as Cold War politics before the fall of the Berlin wall, the current trend of globalisation and the entire political economy and the role of geopolitics becomes even more apparent. Another relevant example is that of non-state actors: Kenya and Nigeria have had to expend time and resources in battling extremist threats within their borders, leading to the weakening of both national borders and sovereignty, and the resulting threat to regional security.

But after the inward looking specifics, which we have laid out in depth in the preceding chapter, comes the overall system in which these countries sit.

### **3.9 Africa in the International System.**

A wide oversight of the history of African international relations will suffice. The three countries' policy orientation owes a lot to their colonial inheritance. Pan-Africanism and liberation politics featured heavily in their agenda, and this was especially apparent when South Africa remained under colonial rule when the rest of

Africa had become self-ruling, leading to solidarity with the cause of the liberationist African National Congress (ANC), a role that Nigeria was to play with relish, including setting up a fund, and leading the freedom call including at international arenas such as the United Nations. There was also the adoption of the non-alignment policy during the Cold War—the resulting groupings such as the G77 would soon become vehicles for agitation for a new economic world order, as the chasm between the global south and north became apparent. Ironically, this numerical strength these groupings gave to the continent at forums such as the UN, Commonwealth and World Trade Organisation blinded the units, allowing them to overestimate their ability.

The two decades between the 1960s and 1980s are generally accepted as Africa's "Age of Innocence". The continent was optimistic about its growth and future trajectory, and failed to negotiate solid terms of engagement with the international community, such as on terms of trade. This weakness burst to the fore when the Cold War ended, and the protagonists withdrew their support, as the US emerged as the clear winner. Africa lost the negotiating strength it had gained from being able to play off the two world rivals, and found itself increasingly marginalized. Values such as economic liberalisation and rights issues were impressed upon from without, leading to adjustments such as the Strategic Adjustment Programmes that were prescribed by backers of the neo-liberal Washington consensus, with the added disadvantage that failure to subscribe would see little support to battle prevailing challenges such as reduced commodity prices and the mounting debt cycle.

The decade from 1980 has been described as the "lost decade" as Africa battled numerous crises, leading to Afro-pessimism--the view that African people – their societies, cultures, mindset and structures – are incapable of running their states and

their economies and hence would remain in a permanent state of crises – stagnation and negative growth.

The negative heritage of colonialism and the weakness of the international commodity and financial systems were seen as the causes of the problems Africa was facing. The direct intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions and donor nations in African economies through SAPs, were on the surface meant to help Africans overcome their crisis, but instead perpetuated the unequal and exploitative relationship between the region and the global system.

### **3.10 Organization of Africa Unity and African Union**

Africa has always had its own organs to further its agenda both in the region and globally, and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed with the objectives of<sup>82</sup>:

- promoting the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- coordinating their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- Defending their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- Eradicating all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- Promoting international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This was outlined in the OAU Charter, as were the key principles, which were heavy on non-interference in internal affairs and observation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of members. The charter also called for the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-alignment, and significantly, for the “total emancipation of the African

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<sup>82</sup> OAU Charter; [http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU\\_Charter\\_1963\\_0.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU_Charter_1963_0.pdf)

territories which were still not independent”, a category that South Africa fell into. But the weaknesses of the OAU led to its retooling as the African Union (AU), with Nigeria and South Africa key “midwives” of this new organisation, as their leaders, Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo sought to have a greater say on the trajectory of the continent’s development. The AU encompassed some of its predecessor’s objectives, but also emphasised socio-economic development, democratic principles, integration and projecting the region globally. In toto, its key principles were<sup>83</sup>:

- To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the people of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
- To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;

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<sup>83</sup> Constitutive Act of the African Union;  
[http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Constitutive\\_Act\\_en\\_0.htm](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Constitutive_Act_en_0.htm)

- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

It has however not been smooth sailing. The ever—present battle between retaining sovereignty and giving up power to a supranational body has hampered integration, linguistic divisions remain strong with former colonial powers such as France still influential in Francophone Africa, conflicts over national resources from borders to water and oil continue to rear their head, international capitalism has continued to challenge the desire for a better place in international trade, and debt and vulnerability to exogenous shocks have continued to challenge continental developmental ambitions.

### **3.11 The Anglophone-Francophone Dichotomy**

A limited examination of the Francophone-Anglophone divide is in order. Even controlling for South Africa, English-speaking African countries account for half of sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product. Francophone countries, according to

measures such as the World Bank's ease of doing business survey, tend to be among the hardest to do business, and are ranked on the lower rungs of indices such as the Human Development Index (HDI). A number of reasons are offered for this<sup>84</sup>, including the outsized role of the French-pegged CFA local currency. English colonial and post-colonial training also emphasized the role of private business in development, as opposed to French socialist training. The latter have also for years tended to have opaque revenue arrangements with international buyers of their vast natural resources, creating avenues for leakages. Their shared culture is yet another barrier to full integration, and there could be a case made for inclusion of a Francophone polar in later works.

### **3.12 The Post-Cold War Era and Africa**

However, the proliferation of key challenges means the continent must act in "concert" or sink. These include threats such as narcotics, climate change, the growth of non-state actors and globalisation, among others. Notably, the rise and fall of regional powers in part due to extra-continental economic and political pressures e.g. post-apartheid South Africa has become a powerhouse in southern Africa while others in Africa have declined, signalling the continuing fragility and vulnerability of the African development project.

There is also the challenge of emerging powers—China, India, Brazil and Russia. Africa for example last year traded an estimated \$222 billion worth with China, (three times more than with the US), showing that western dominance continues to be challenged by an Africa looking for options, as it seeks to chart its own path. Of

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<sup>84</sup> Faujas, A. 'Why Francophones are lagging behind Anglophones'. Last updated January 12, 2012. <http://www.theafricareport.com/News-Analysis/africa-why-francophones-are-lagging-behind-anglophones.html>

course the West has not taken it lying down, as the US-Africa summit of August 2014, the first ever, showed.

But there is still debate over what the end of the Cold War meant. Realists argue that the main features of the international system have not changed even though globalization has become a growing force in international relations. The international system is still anarchic and states have to still provide for their own security. There is no international authority capable of providing security for one and all. States, they contend, are still the dominant actors in the international system and states are still determined to preserve their survival.<sup>85</sup>

But some liberalists argue that the nature of the international system is indeed changing, backed by powerful, technology – driven developments – the advancement of information revolution, the proliferation of global telecommunication systems and growing economic interdependence are changing the nature and distribution of power in the international system. Proponents of this line of thought such as Thomas Friedman and Jessica Matthews argue that states have lost their information monopolies and control over their economies and are therefore becoming less important while non-state actors, including transnationals, are gaining ground.<sup>86</sup>

The concept of a New World Order was also coined following the Gulf War, where disputes would be settled peacefully, pacts drawn up in the face of aggression, arms races halted and reversed, and all people treated as equal. The world is now seen as layered, with a military power, the US, at the top, then a tripolar economic layer that also ropes in Europe and Japan in addition to the US, and a bottom “soft power” layer.

It is in these changed times, of sober but ambitious objectives, that South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria find themselves, with a need to provide leadership for a continent

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<sup>85</sup> Maluki, P., Lecture Notes, November 2014

<sup>86</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ op cit

looking to ratchet up its newly found strength, sometimes referred to as an Africa that is Rising but which has been criticised for not being inclusive enough. There is also the African Solutions to African Problems mantra that is used in support of continent-driven solutions to existing problems. For it to work dominant countries need to step up in their regions and act as guarantors of peace of it is to remain more than rhetoric that covers for poor governance.

The next chapter discusses how this can be anchored to make Africa a more stable region.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF BALANCE OF POWER

#### 4.0 Introduction

Having traced the development of the three countries' foreign policies and their setting in Africa, this chapter proceeds to argue that tripolarity is a better prospect for Africa than the current bipolar model, and relies heavily in the pioneering work of two scientists, Singer and Deutsch. Positioning South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya as tripolars would be a hark-back to the 1970s argument that the US, Soviet Union and China were the key poles, the latter introduced by virtue of an increasing stockpile of arms, and extensive human and material resources. It is an argument that is coming back at current times as China has roared past other economies to become the second-largest economy, while significantly increasing its ability to project its power globally, not less so in Africa.

Tripolarity generally referred to a structure dominated by three states (or blocs, but for our purposes we remain with the nation-state) that had global political interests, the military capability to act globally, and sufficient political conflict to make war between any two of them a possibility. Noguee and Spanier referred to stability as a system that had little or no war or violence involving polar actors.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4.1 The Theory of Tripolarity

There are three possible relationships in a tripolar world calculation: that it is a stable one compared to other forms, that it tends to be unstable, or that there is no agreement on its stability. The argument has been that a multipolar system tends to be

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<sup>87</sup> Noguee, J. L. And Spanier, J. W., *The Politics of Stability*, World Affairs, Vol.139, No. 4. (Spring 1977), p.320

more stable than a bipolar one, because an increase in the numbers of actors brings more flexible diplomacy, allowing for a balance of power to shift without threatening its actors. But it becomes difficult to apply the same argument for tripolarity, because three powers are too few to allow for the alliances necessary for stability in a multipolar world. As such, a balance of power equilibrium can only be attained if there are no alliances in a tripolar system, because allowing two powers to confront the third would cause the equilibrium to come apart and instead yield a bipolar system. The counter-argument is that because of the possibility of this risk, nations in such a system would be reluctant to seek to threaten any other, thus helping to stabilise the equilibrium. Tripolarity is also criticised for assuming that there is a neutrality between its component states, when we know that countries rarely have equal relationships. Kaplan highlighted this weakness:

‘An important condition for stability concerns the essential national actors. If there are only three, and if they are relatively equal in capability, the probability the two would combine to eliminate the third is relatively great...Different combinations of cooperation and conflict are possible at different times over different issues.’

Unfortunately, history has very little empirical cases for global tripolarity, because at no point in world history has the system been truly one of three dominant nations, but there is more progress on this when regional systems are brought in, which might help anchor the argument for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya as African tripolars helping to stabilise the system. But it is not so clear cut, transposing the attributes of a global tripolar system onto a regional one. This is because global powers such as the US and China have global ability and interests, regional ones do not. In other words, we cannot say that the rules that apply globally will be directly applicable

in Africa, but we can say they are comparable, as we will draw on the following case from Noguee and Spanier.<sup>88</sup>

Between 1933 and 1939, Europe existed as a tripolar system, with the liberal democracies of Britain and France on one side of a triangle, the Soviet Union on another apex and Germany on the third triangle point. Going by theory then the need for one pole to prevent an alliance between the other three would have provided for stability, but as the Second World War would show, it did not happen, because they could not decide who was the main enemy, or what was the status quo, among a host of other calculations.

This paper seeks to advance the theory of tripolarity in Africa, for all its weakness, in arguing that because the three countries of focus do not have global but regional ambitions, they can be attributed some of the arguments without overplaying their strengths. Adding a third pole to the existing Nigeria-South Africa axis only makes diplomacy more flexible. The three countries (including Kenya) are for example unlikely to form an alliance aimed at starting a war or making the system unstable. We can thus take out the concept of an arms race or global domination ambitions and look at the three countries from the angle of view of not threatening the balance of power by providing more pivot points. Also, despite being regional competitors, it would be arguable that they enjoy neutrality, because they are still at the stage where they are more concerned with getting the benefits of agricultural and industrial revolution, as they seek to urbanise and then develop socially. The countries that give rise to balance of power theory have been through or are undergoing this transition. However, it might be worth paying attention to the actions of South Africa, which has aligned itself with China, Russia and Brazil. The fact that this even happened suggests the alternatives for

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<sup>88</sup> Noguee, J. L. And Spanier, J. W., *The Politics of Stability*, World Affairs, Vol.139, No. 4. (Spring 1977), p.325

it regionally are few, but it also betrays Pretoria's admiration of the China model, and its long-term goals of African domination by building its economic—and consequently military capacity. But currently, as will be shown using data, there is no evidence that an arms race of any manner is underway in the three countries—indeed Nigeria buys arms from South Africa. As such it allows us to concentrate on diplomatic and economic arguments.

In diplomatic studies, one of the more recognised tenets is that of a balance of power. Power is defined as control over the minds and actions of others, and for purposes of our research, as the ability of a state to define the actions of another state. The essence of balance of power is to establish a psychological relationship between two states where one is perceived as being strong enough to influence the actions of the other. This influence is exerted either through the expectation of advantages, the fear of disadvantages or the respect for institutions. The strategic use of power resources—money, military ability, information and allies—is a vibrant field but which is on the periphery of this work.<sup>89</sup>

Because power is the ultimate aim of a state, the international system is seen as one in which several nations try to maintain or overturn the status quo. When there is a balance between competing interests, the system is said to be in equilibrium. This is a model that has produced many strands, but among the most enduring has been the relationship between the number of actors, and the stability of the holding system. The widely accepted scholarly argument was that as the system moves away from bipolarity, where you have two dominant and competing powers, to multi-polarity, where you have more competing powers, the frequency and intensity of war should be expected to diminish.

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<sup>89</sup> Kindleberger, C., 'Power and Money', (New York and London, Macmillan Publishers, 1970) p.14

This is a classical or traditional paradigm, and its obvious reliance on the system made it a target for the so-called behavioural revolution, which rejected the depiction of world politics as separate from the domestic actions of states. Behaviourists attempted to replace classical ideology with empiricism, and argued that states were not the only actors in the international system. To them, the balance of power was illusory and would most likely lead to instability instead. Their arguments for empiricism however came up short on the major point that they did not offer an alternative to classical tenets, while they also were splintered in their thinking, moving between both the liberal and realistic school of thoughts.<sup>90</sup>

Realists had five main views about the world:

- States are the major actors in world affairs.
- The international environment severely penalises states if they fail to protect their vital interests or if they pursue objectives beyond their means hence states are sensitive to costs and behave as unitary- rational actors.
- International anarchy is the principal force shaping the motives and actions of states.
- States in anarchy are pre-occupied with power and security and; are predisposed towards conflict and competitions and often fails to cooperate even in the face of common interests.
- Finally international institutions affect the prospects of cooperation only marginally.<sup>91</sup>

Liberals countered by arguing for the importance of other actors apart from states, the decentralisation of authority, and decreased concern over peace and security.

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<sup>90</sup> Maluki, P., Lecture Notes, December 2, 2014

<sup>91</sup> Kindleberger, C., 'Power and Money', (New York and London, Macmillan Publishers, 1970) p.48

It is to its credit that the enduring arguments around this topic have sought to bridge both schools of thought, and this report takes cognisance of both. Stability is defined from the systemic school of thought as the probability the system retains its essential characteristics, that no single country becomes dominant, that most of the members in it continue to survive, and that conflict on a large scale does not occur.<sup>92</sup>

Because politics in the individual states also matter, for these countries stability is seen from the probability of their continued political independence, their enduring territorial integrity, and that the state is also not subjected to conflict-- either limited or one for its survival.<sup>93</sup> There are those who argued for equilibrium in non-political (and non-probabilistic) terms. L.F Richardson proposed a model of classical mechanics: to him stability was any set of conditions under which the system would return to its equilibrium state, and instability therefore was one under which the status of affairs would not return but would continue to change until reaching a limit or breakdown point.<sup>94</sup> In his analysis, if Nigeria and South Africa for example spend more money on arms at a low but exponential rate, this would represent instability, but if their internal economies both grew to accommodate this spending, the system would essentially return to equilibrium, or retain the balance between the two countries.

On the surface, this seems true—many African countries have increasingly been spending on the militaries over various years, as 2014 data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows<sup>95</sup>. But the trend is the opposite in our countries of interests—South Africa has held spending steady over the last five

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<sup>92</sup> Deutsch, Singer and Karl, JD. *Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability*. World Politics, Vol. 16, No. 3. (Apr., 1964), pp. 390-406.

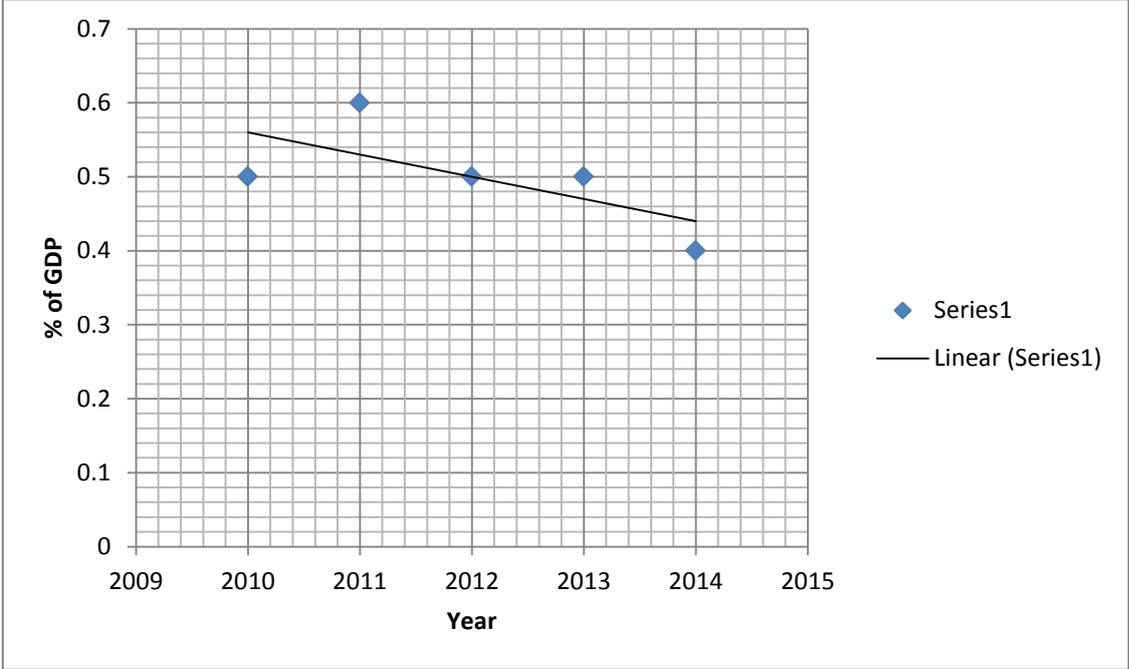
<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>94</sup> Richardson, L.F., 'Weather Production by Numerical Process', (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922)

<sup>95</sup> 'Military Expenditure Database', Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014

years, and in Nigeria and Kenya the expenditure as a function of gross domestic product has even declined in recent years as the following three charts show:

**Chart 4.1.1: Nigerian military expenditure (2010-2014)**

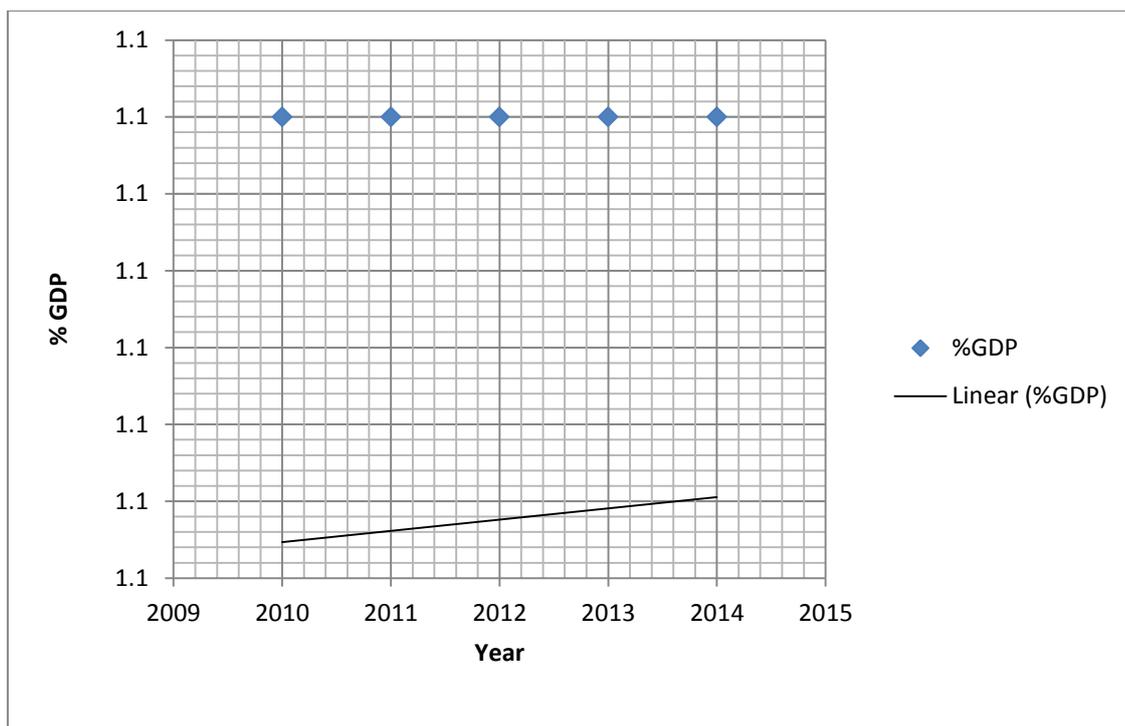


SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014

The graph above suggests that despite Nigeria being the largest economy and facing a host of internal challenges, it has been spending a reducing amount on its military, which is not what would be expected to a hegemon, but if one keeps in mind that its economy has almost doubled following its rebase, this trend would add up.

**Chart 4.1.2: South African military expenditure (2010-14)**

It is of note that despite South Africa’s ability to manufacture arms, it has kept its military expenditure constant over the last five years as the graph overleaf shows:



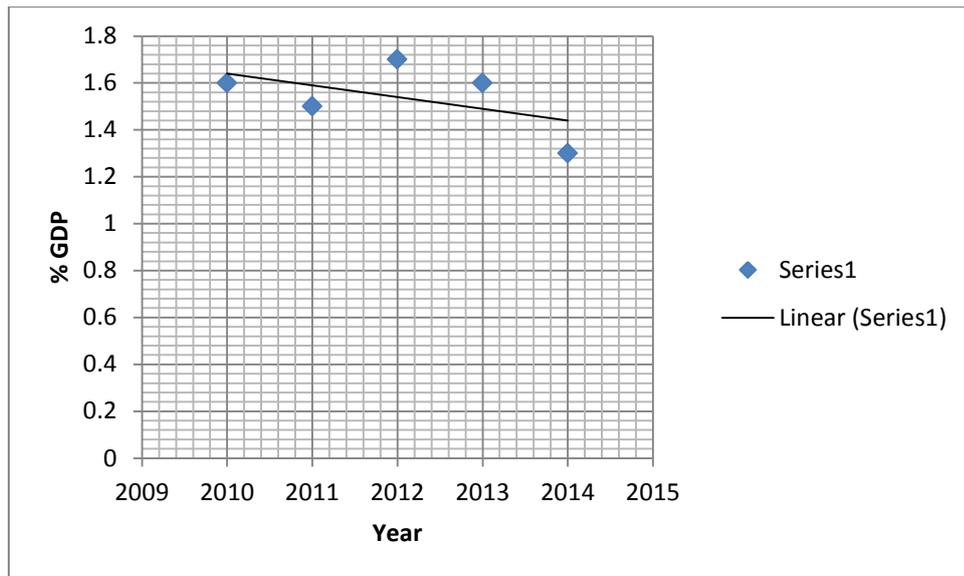
**Chart 4.1.2: South African military expenditure (2010-14)**

SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014

This is in contrast to perceived rival Nigeria. The spending of both countries would suggest that there is little evidence of an arms race as would have been expected, or drawing from the Cold War rivalries of the USSR and US and their allies. But it is also relevant to keep in mind that economies have grown over the last five years, however, the failure of arms spending to rise concurrently is more evidence of any build of arms.

**Chart 4.1.3: Kenya military expenditure (2010-2014)**

Kenya has been fighting internationally in Somalia, but its arms uptake also as a percentage of GDP has been declining, again not what would be expected, but also taking into note its fast expanding economy, as the chart on the next page shows:



**Chart 4.1.3: Kenya military expenditure (2010-2014)**

SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014

While it is accepted that the question of international security cannot be wished away as the liberalists would argue, it is also accepted that the margin of safety has widened, as foreign policies become more encompassing and multilateral organisations like the UN maintain their relevance.

For the observed reason using the shown SIPRI data that there has not been signs of an arms race between our countries of study, (though this thinking might apply to, say, Ethiopia and Eritrea), or that arms form a major share of the GDP, indeed for the size of their growing economies this has actually fallen, this analysis will rely on the recognised work of Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, whose political concept focused on national income, defining an arms race as one in which rival states stimulated each other to divert increasing proportions of their national income to the military, up to a point where political and economic limits intervened.

## **4.2 Tripolarity between Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria**

Because on the basis of evidence this research paper does not focus on the concept of an arms race between South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, even if military expenditures are a facet of power resources, but on a more holistic view of the three countries, (thus buying into Morton Kaplan's argument that specific variables must be chosen beforehand), it will apply only the more generic principles of the two writers' arguments.

Deutsch and Singer put forward what they termed as a formal, semi-quantitative argument as to why stability was seen to increase as the number of actors grew, in a pioneering attempt to bridge the gap between historical illustration, and empirical test of the theory. They also provided a path for both the political and non-political definitions of stability. For this, they examined two key lines of arguments, for which we apply to our chosen actors of South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. The first focuses on the number of interaction opportunities between the actors in the system.

### **I. The Accelerated Rise Of Interaction Opportunities**

It is generally accepted that when the number of independent actors increases, there is an increase in the number of possible dyads or pairs, using the standard formula  $N(N-1)/2$  for pairs. The assumption is that the independent actor would want to enter into an alliance, and is aware of the limiting impact that membership to such an alliance has—such as on its interactions with non-alliance members.

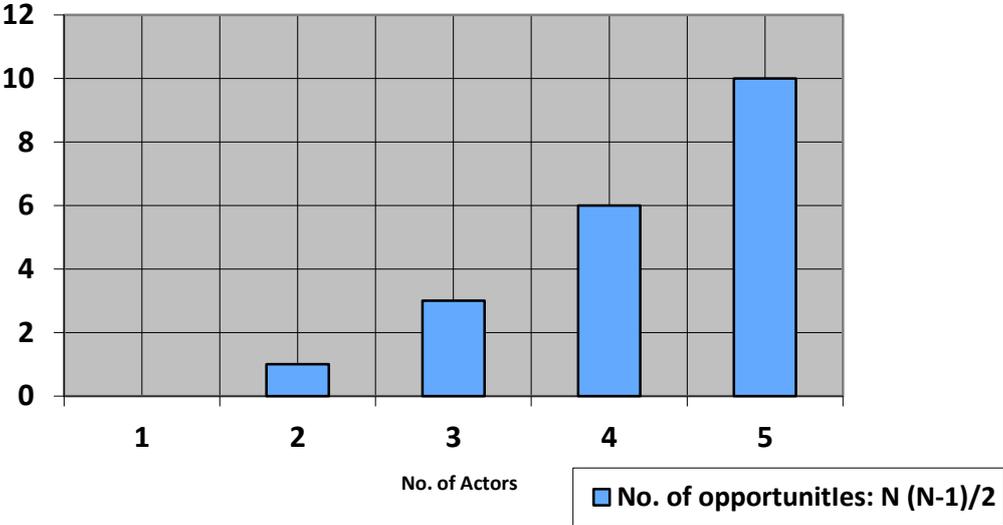
This reduction in the number of relations that distinct dyads can have means a reduction in the number of opportunities for interaction with other actors, with the overall effect of less stability. This is especially so for a bilateral relationship. But as the number of independent actors increases, in our case from two to three, the range of possible interactions open to each, and thus to the system, increases. This means that

the range of pluralistic interests increases. Therefore in a bipolar system involving only South African and Nigeria, we have, using our formula,  $N(N-1)/2$ , only one dyad possible.

When we bring in Kenya, we have three possible pairs, or a tripling of the range of interactions possible. Hypothetically, bringing in even more players such as Ethiopia, Angola and Egypt would increase the dyadic pairs possible, and suggest even more stability on the continent, but this research has for the purposes of its tripolar argument limited itself to the three identified actors.

The chart below graphically shows how the number of actors affects the dyads, and the interaction opportunities available.

**Chart 4.1.4: Interaction Opportunities**



SOURCE: Deutsch, Singer and Karl, JD. Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability

As we move from a bipolar to a tripolar system, the number of interactions automatically triple. The assumption is that nations are alike in their interests and goals, but we know this is not the case: Nigeria is for example an oil producer, and has

Africa's largest population, South Africa has the continent's best infrastructure, and Kenya is big on agriculture and services. This assumption would on the surface appear a weakness, but it in essence provides for even more interaction opportunities and confluence in interests, and more stability as links are built.

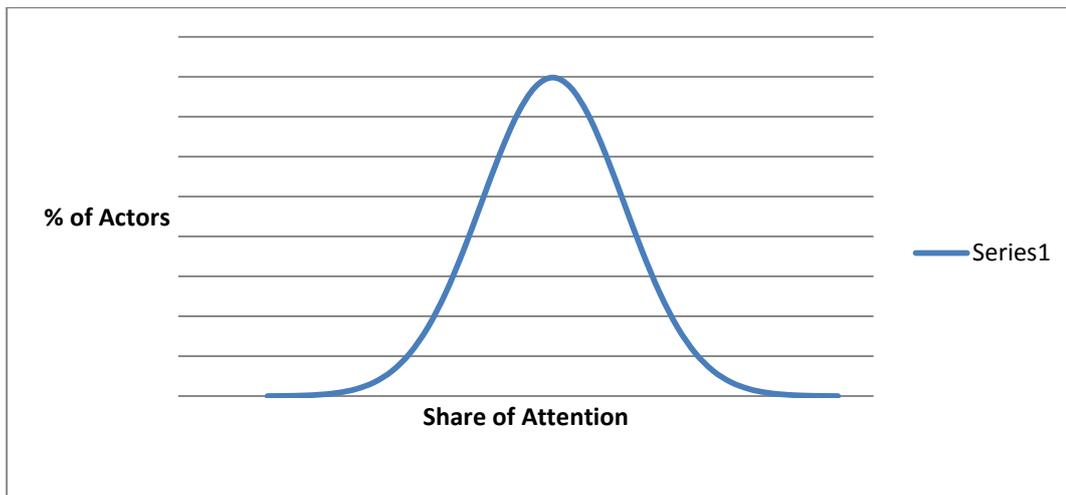
Therefore, an increase in the number of independent actors in the system increases interaction opportunities, which in turn generates cross-pressures to inhibit social cleavages and enhance social stability. In a system characterised by conflict-generating scarcities such as the African international system, each and every increase in opportunities for cooperation will diminish the tendency to pursue a conflict. This is so because the more nations there are, the greater will be the number and diversity of trade-offs available to the total system, making the possibility for compensatory and stabilising interactions more likely to occur.

Therefore, in a continent like Africa where there are many conflict triggers including resources, the integration of needs can help reduce the potential for escalation, while the presence of a stabilising hegemon can amplify the possibility of stability, by reducing the impact of non-alignment to a pole.

## **II. The Accelerated Diminution In The Allocation Of Attention**

A second argument in support of multipolarity and its positive effect on stability was put forward by Deutsch and Singer and focused on the attention available for conflict. As more actors come into a system, the share of attention that each can give to the other will expectedly reduce. The share that each nation will get from the other is not, and would not, have been equal—it is dependent on many factors. The two researchers postulated that the total external attention of a country, ie the resources it can give and the information it can process, would have been distributed according to a normal curve, as in the chart below:

**Chart 4.1.5: Share of Attention in a conflict**



SOURCE: Deutsch, Singer and Karl, JD. Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability

The distribution would be interpreted as such: for example some countries receive very little of Kenya's attention, most receive a moderate share of Kenya's attention, and some very few receive the majority of Kenya's attention. This could also be applied to South Africa and Nigeria, which give differing attention to the countries they interact with depending on their foreign policy orientations, with the result being that all receive a varying share of attention. This has an effect in this way: if those countries receiving a little of Kenya's attention join a coalition, they would have little effect on how much attention Kenya gives to other countries, but if those receiving a bigger share coalesce, Kenya would be able to deal with them by using fewer resources, and thus have more left over to give to the rest. This would be shared depending on which partners are in its dyads, such that Kenya would for example be now able to focus on its EAC partners, while South Africa would give more attention to its partners in the SADC, and Nigeria in ECOWAS. This would have a stabilising effect on the sub-regions, and build up towards making the continent less volatile.

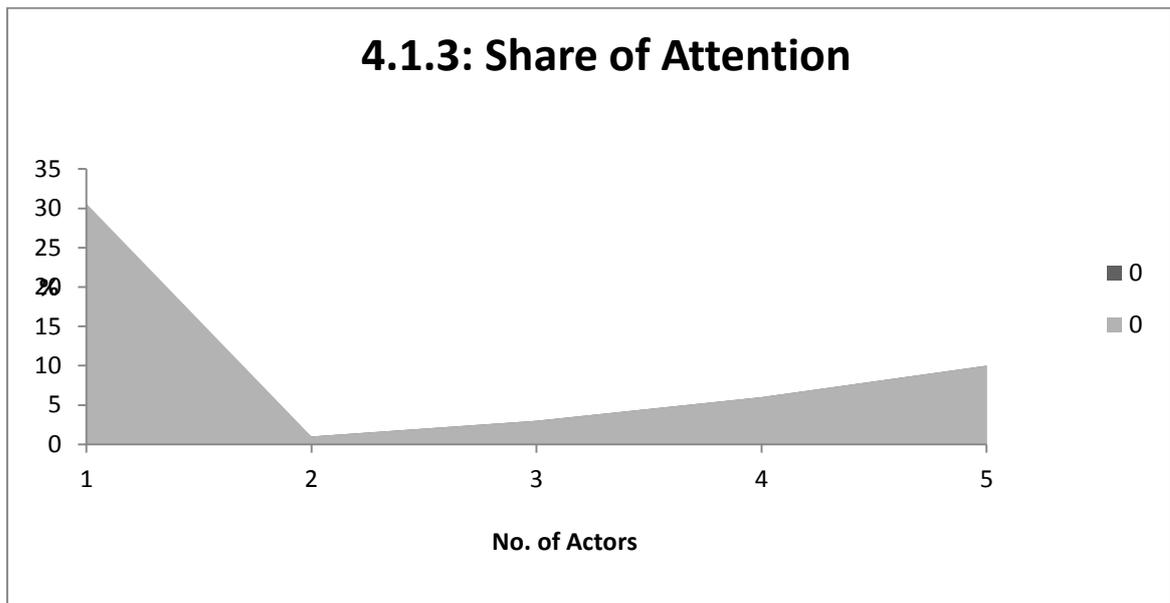
The general argument is an increase in the number of independent actors reduces the share of attention (information-processing and resource-allocating capabilities) that any one state can devote to any other. Given that there has to be a minimum level of attention in order for a conflict to escalate, the increase in number of independent actors is likely to have a stabilising effect upon the system. This is important: In 2014 alone there were more than 4,500 clashes between armed groups and more than 4,000 instances of armed violence against civilians in Africa. Even in the absence of active conflicts, which data shows has actually increased in recent years, many countries carry the scars of violent struggles from the past as they seek to grow.<sup>96</sup> It is not all negative news—according to data from Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project there has been intermittent progress in arresting violence over the last decade, but the international community needs to play a larger role, especially in meeting the ‘African Solutions to African Problems’ mantra.

But because the region has tended to view South Africa and Nigeria as the bipolar powers in Africa, it would be useful to show the effect of moving away from that bipolarity towards tripolarity by adding Kenya, and even multi-polarity for later research, by plotting on a graph. Using the formula  $N-1$  to cater for the increase in dyads of which, say, South Africa is a member, we find that with each increase in dyads of which it is a member, its share of attention would fall. Therefore, three actors would mean two dyads, which is 50% of South Africa's attention to each. Four actors mean three dyads, or 33% of attention, and five actors get only 25% of the attention of South Africa. If we remove the requirement that South Africa has to be a member, the graph (4.1.2) would fall sharper as shown in the chart overleaf:

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<sup>96</sup> Trend 1: Rates of Violence in 2014, ‘Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project’ [http://www.acleddata.com/rates-of-violence-in-2014/#\\_ftnref1](http://www.acleddata.com/rates-of-violence-in-2014/#_ftnref1), Retrieved August 24, 2015

**Chart 4.1.6: Difference if South Africa is removed**



SOURCE: Deutsch, Singer and Karl, JD. *Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability*

Countries tend to treat interactions with a major partner during conflict at a higher priority, and this falls as the number of actors increases. The preceding graph by Deutsch and Singer, drawn from the work of Rapoport and Schelling,<sup>97</sup> shows how fast the increase in actors tends to drop the likelihood of conflict. The inference is that the average attention available for a conflict drops as soon as there are more actors, helping reduce the conflict parameters. The assumption is that if a country's response to an increase in the arms expenditure of a rival is proportional to that part of the increment in the rival's armament, the arms race would tend to be slower under multi-polar conditions than under bipolar ones, since the more great powers there are, the less increase there has to be in one's military expenditure in order to balance the increase in the rival's arms expenditure.

The next chapter concludes on this and makes some recommendations.

<sup>97</sup> Rapoport, 213.22; Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 83-118.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary

Given the number of conflicts in Africa, it is worth exploring ways of reducing them, because for a continent that is struggling to grow its economy, disputes only set back such efforts. As students of international politics, understanding both the system (which gives rise to the balance of power theory) and the nature of the system helps give us an understanding of what can be done to reduce such conflicts. The experience of the international system both before and after the two world wars and the Cold War gave rise to the arguments for hegemons, the main question then becoming how many great powers were needed to keep a system stable and reduce the incidence of conflict. It also led to prescriptions from both realists and liberalists.

It is an argument that can be devolved to the continent, even if honed in developing countries, even if only for inspiring more debate. This research paper chose to argue for a tripolar system as opposed to the bipolar system that has been preponderant until now: where South Africa and Nigeria dominated. It argues that introducing another pole has the benefit of further stabilising the African system, and chose Kenya mainly for geopolitical reasons. There remains scope for advancing the argument further to include other major African players such as Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia and Angola.

Richardson's classical mechanics model focused on escalating competitive behaviour, where one country's increase in such behaviour was perceived as a threat by another, and led to reciprocal and retaliatory behaviour by the other. Such a race, for example in buying weapons, would go on until some limit came through, and for both bipolar and tripolar systems. Using our  $N(N-1)/2$  formula, either of Kenya, South

Africa or Nigeria will only have to maintain their competitive behaviour ahead of the nearest rival, automatically keeping it ahead of the other.

This is different if only South Africa and Nigeria dominated as bipolar, they would only have themselves as the key players, and the possibility of conflict would be higher. But adding a third independent actor such as Kenya means competitive behaviour is slowed down, leading to more chance of stability. Richardson argued that this was a result of national culture. Others, such as the respected economist Adam Smith, argued that the system itself was competitive, and only those able to exploit it rose above the rest.

Deutsch and Singer examined this further, and found multi-polarity works under two scenarios: the first is that an increase in the number of independent actors in the system increases interaction opportunities, which in turn creates cross-pressures to inhibit social cleavages and enhance social stability. In a system characterized by conflict-generating scarcities such as Africa's, each and every increase in opportunities for cooperation will diminish the tendency to pursue a conflict. This is so because the more nations there are, the greater the number and diversity of trade-offs available to the total system, making the possibility for compensatory and stabilising interactions more likely to occur.

The second scenario was that an increase in the number of independent actors reduces the share of attention (information-processing and resource-allocating capabilities) that any one state can devote to any other. Given that there has to be a minimum level of attention in order for a conflict to escalate, the increase in number of independent actors is likely to have a stabilising effect upon the system.

They however made the point that that if domestic regimes are unstable, then an increase in the number of independent actors may not be conducive to international

stability. Additionally, in the long run, multi-polarity is unstable because (1) it does not provide the possibility for the creation of new states, and hence predicts an eventual bipolar world or the survival of a single power; and (2) the balance-of-power world produces eventually dramatic and catastrophic changes. But in the short and middle terms, a multi-polar world is more stable than a bipolar one. This suggests that more research is needed to find out what works in an African setting, but the time might be what Africa needs to get its house in order.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In the absence of discernible arms race in Africa, the focus is on how the key players in the continent's regions can cooperate together to reduce the incidence of conflict. For this to happen there needs to be active strong countries in sub-region, which act as guarantors in the respective regions. Using the Deutsch and Singer multipolarity model, but sifting this to a tripolar system, this research argues that having more dominant countries has a stabilising influence, because it increases interaction opportunities that would be used to mediate conflict, and also moderate the share of attention that any of Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria can allocate for specific conflicts. The outcome in a tripolar model is of gains for continental stability, but more research is needed on bringing in more powers, as will be highlighted in the following recommendation sub-heading of this section.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

That policy makers in Africa seeks to reduce the continent's internecine conflicts by pursuing a multi-polar balance of power system that brings in more players in guaranteeing its stability.

That more research is carried out to integrate the liberal and realists views in an increasingly interconnected world, with a special emphasis on Africa where there is a dearth on information on how the continent has adapted to, or failed, to changing balance of powers.

That more research be carried out on polarity models in Africa, and investigate if they still remain relevant in a period of globalisation.

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