

State-Society Relations and Regional Role: Comparing Egypt and South Africa

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Abstract

The study explains the regional roles of Egypt and South Africa in the last two decades by reference to the state's relationship with society, a variable that has long been underplayed in international relations and foreign policy literature. It suggests that the different character of this relationship in each country has shaped the opportunities and constraints affecting the foreign policy choices of both the state and societal institutions in the two countries. The study adopts a cross-disciplinary approach using debates on state capacity and its relationship with regime type in comparative politics and political economy to understand and evaluate the two countries' foreign policies in their respective regions. After analysing the impact of state-society relationships on the regional role conceptions of the state and societal actors, the study compares the performance of these actors in two case studies; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the case of Egypt and the Zimbabwean crisis in the case of South Africa. It concludes that although the role of each state in resolving its respective regional conflict has been less than effective, the post-apartheid democratic dispensation has provided opportunities for South African social forces to play roles that complemented, checked and balanced the role of the state, compared to their Egyptian counterparts. On the other hand, the soft authoritarian Egyptian state used its role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to maintain the international alliances that helped to sustain its domestic control. This constrained the state's foreign policy options. It made marketing peace as 'a strategic choice' and containing resistance movements the priorities of Egypt's intervention in the Palestinian issue. The co-optation of the Egyptian business community and the exclusion of Islamist forces by the state weakened their roles in conflict resolution, depriving the state of tools of effectiveness. In the case of South Africa, racial politics, the ANC's liberation movement psyche, and the domination of the presidency over foreign policy making have hindered the promotion of NEPAD's principles of democracy and respect for human rights in the case of Zimbabwe. However, South African civil society played a crucial role in supporting its Zimbabwean counterpart, holding the South African state accountable to its foreign policy principles and its democratic institutions, and intervening where the state's role was missing or insufficient.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DIRCO	South Africa's Department of International Relations and Co-operation
DTI	South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IBSA	India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
MAP	Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NALEDI	National Labour and Economic Development Institute
NBF	NEPAD Business Foundation
NDP	Egypt's National Democratic Party
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
QIZ	Qualifying Industrial Zones Agreement
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACCAWU	South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union

SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTWU	South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SATUCC	Southern African Trade Unions Co-ordination Council
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZCTU	Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions

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Introduction

Egypt and South Africa are two pivotal states in their respective regions; the Middle East and Southern Africa respectively.¹ However, they have exhibited different capacities to maintain and consolidate their regional roles over time. The present study examines the development of the two countries' regional roles since the beginning of the 1990s. It aims at explaining this development by reference to the transformation of the relationships between the state and society in the two cases. It suggests that the different character of state's relationships with society have shaped the opportunities and constraints affecting the regional role of both the state and societal institutions in the two countries. After analysing the impact of state-society relationships on the regional role conceptions of the state and societal actors, the study compares the performance of these actors in two case studies; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the case of Egypt and the Zimbabwean crisis in the case of South Africa.

The state-society explanation has long been underplayed by most international relations and foreign policy literature. Writings on regional powers often focus on the position of these powers as second-tier or middle-size states in the international system. They examine how the international system poses pressures and provides opportunities for these powers. The only domestic factor of interest is the capabilities that enabled these powers to occupy their status as leading states in

¹ Pivotal states are defined as those whose stability affects the regional, and international, system. They also 'influence their neighbours through extensive political and economic linkages'. See Chase, Emily and Kennedy (1998, 4-7).

their regions. These capabilities often include economic, political, military and human resources.¹

However factors related to the international system or the state's physical and human capabilities do not present an exhaustive explanation to the difference in the regional role performance of the two countries. The two countries pursue their regional policies under the same international system. However, their approaches to the opportunities and constraints provided by this system are clearly different. The Egyptian state under Mubarak considered the alliance with the United States the only available strategic option. Conversely, South Africa has joined forces with rising powers of the South (Brazil, India and China), forming groupings that aim at enhancing the terms of their integration in the international system. Thus, it is not the structure of the international system that matters, but rather the way in which the state defines, and deal with, this system, something that is arguably attributed to its domestic politics. Similarly, depending on the capability theory does not explain why South Africa was not able to establish its regional hegemony in the apartheid era in spite of its abundant economic resources and why Egypt enjoyed regional preeminence in the 1950 and 1960s in spite of its relatively limited resources.

¹ See for example Hurrell (2006, 1-19), the studies on China, India, Brazil in vol. 82, no.1 of International Affairs Journal (Jan 2006), and the papers presented in the conference on "Global; and Regional Hegemonic Dilemmas in the South" organised by the Asian Political and International Studies Association (APISA), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Latin America Social Science Council (CLACSO), Bangkok, 29-30 January 2007.

In conducting this study and selecting its cases, I was motivated by the increasing debate in academic and diplomatic circles about the decline of Egypt's regional role, a debate that gained much momentum since the 1990s.¹ A number of scholars cite different indicators to support this decline. The country is no longer part of the axis leading the global South and representing its region in international forums. Its role in conflict resolution has clearly been challenged by other actors (Qaddafi's Libya in the African continent and Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar in the Middle East). Egypt has been sidestepped from every major regional development. Its warnings on waging a war against Iraq in 2003 were ignored and it ended up providing logistical support and mobilising Arab backing for the American military operations. Its role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been undeniable, but with very little influence on the proposed guidelines for the resolution of the conflict or on the developments of events. In other cases, like the negotiations to end the conflict in Southern Sudan, it was left out of critical stages. In short, Egypt's role is seen as either being absent or non-influential (Alterman 2005, 357-69; Furting 2006). These developments gave credit to the argument that Egypt's hegemonic role, which manifested itself clearly in the 1950s and 1960s, has been in decline.

¹ This debate is reflected in a number of studies in Egyptian and western research institution, including think tanks connected to the Egyptian government and the American administration. See for example edited volumes Ezz- Eldin (2006), Mustapha and Abdel-Azeem (2003); Mohamed (1997), Al-Mashat (1995) and Korany (2006a); Alterman (2005), pp.357-69; Furting (2006). See also the background paper of the project on Egypt's national interest and the development of its regional role sponsored by the International Centre for Future and Strategic Studies in Cairo in 2007 and the deliberations of the conference on policies on regional issues and support for US goals in the Middle East sponsored by the American National Intelligence Council in 2008.

The decline in Egypt's regional role has represented a source of rising frustration among the Egyptian intelligentsia and middle class, who have long taken their country's centrality in the Arab world for granted. These groups have followed with envy the rise of other regional powers of the South like South Africa, Brazil and India and their co-operation under newly established frameworks (India-Brazil-South Africa, IBSA and Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa, BRICS). The established belief that Egypt was 'bound to lead' by its geographical and historical realities has been seriously shaken. Not only has Egypt's decline been frustrating to domestic constituencies, it has also been disappointing to the Arab intelligentsia as a whole. This is not surprising since the country is considered a mirror for the Arab system (Ajami 1992, 91-3).

The decline thesis was challenged by the state elite and a number of intellectuals. They argue that it is other countries' roles in the region that are on the rise, rather than Egypt's role that is in decline, or that Egypt has voluntarily chosen to focus on its developmental project, and accordingly restructure its regional and international alliances (Olwy 2003, 74; Al-Feki 2003, 23-38).

Whether it is voluntary or imposed, the decline in Egypt's regional role begs an explanation that can be teased out by comparing it with a case of another regional power. South Africa is a good candidate for such a comparison. Since the mid-1990s, South Africa has sought to reinforce its leading regional role. It has gradually moved from concern about domestic reconciliation to pursuit of an active foreign policy and formulation of a developmental blueprint for the region.

Its leadership presented the idea of the African Renaissance, which was later translated into the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and mobilised western support for it. It has sought to take part in the resolution of a series of conflicts on the continent (Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of Congo, settlement of Libya's Lockerbie crisis). The country has won two terms as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2007/08 and 2011/12. Recently, its candidate, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, has been elected the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.¹ Beyond the African continent, it has fostered cooperation with like-minded powers in the framework of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping (Schraeder 2001, 229-43).

South Africa's foreign policy has not been above criticism. A number of scholars and observers have described South Africa's foreign policy as lacking coherence and coordinated vision, or even as being schizophrenic. Although South Africa has promoted a regional agenda based on promoting democracy and human rights, it faced challenges in promoting these principles in the African continent (Le Pere and Alden 2004, 283-97; Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan 1998, 5-38). Its voting behaviour in the UN Security Council was criticised as contradicting with these principles (Konegay 2012; Nathan 2008). However, this does negate the fact that since the mid-1990s, South Africa has moved from a pariah state to a regional leader.

¹ The election of the Chairperson of the AU Commission was so fiercely contested that it took Dlamini-Zuma four rounds of voting to secure the required two-third majority.

Thus, although Egypt and South Africa are two pivotal states in their regions, their regional role has developed in different directions. This raises two questions: *to what extent have Egypt and South Africa been able to pursue an active and effective regional role in the last two decades? And to what extent can their different state-society complexes explain their regional performance?* These are the two central questions of this study.

Based on related literature, answering these questions requires an examination of several further questions: what is the nature of the relationships between the state and influential domestic social forces in Egypt and South Africa? And how do they affect the ability of the state to mobilise domestic resources to implement its regional policies? How do these relationships affect the state's capacity to mobilise social forces around a common vision for the region? What regional roles are played, or fail to be played, by the social forces in Egypt and South Africa? And to what extent does the mobilisation or demobilisation of social forces at home impact on their contribution to the state's foreign policy objectives in the region?

This comparative analysis of the cases of Egypt and South Africa is new and brings new perspective to the study of each country. The study's analysis of the questions above suggests the following:

- The Egyptian state's reliance on excluding or containing social forces and its attempt to sustain its clientelistic policies towards society has led it to be more concerned with mobilising external resources to maintain domestic

control than with mobilising its domestic resources for an active and effective regional role. This has constrained its foreign policy choices in the region. Conversely, the South African post-apartheid state that has shown a capacity to engage social forces and implement economic reforms has had more leeway for directing domestic resources to regional activism and more independence from external powers in its foreign policy choices.

- The state's capacity to elaborate a regional project (represented in the idea of the African Renaissance and the Nepad initiative) has allowed the South African state to contribute to the regional agenda and to represent the African continent in international forums. This stands in contrast to the failure of the soft authoritarian state in Egypt to develop a regional project. However, elaborating a regional project is not a sufficient condition for playing an effective regional role. The relative failure of President Thabo Mbeki to provide wide regional and domestic support for his regional project, other than from business, has hindered the co-operation of state and societal institutions to achieve a common agenda. Further, his inability to form an African reformist coalition to induce other African countries to abide by NEPAD principles has limited the influence of his regional vision.
- The activeness and independence of social groups from the state in the case of democratic South Africa has provided an opportunity for these forces to play different regional roles that complemented, checked and balanced the regional role of the state or transferred the state's model to other countries

in the region. Conversely, the demobilisation of social groups in the case of Egypt has weakened both the domestic and regional roles of these groups. This has deprived the state of tools of activeness and effectiveness in the region.

Further, the comparison between the Egyptian performance in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the South African intervention in the Zimbabwe crisis raises another set of interesting questions, these include: if what distinguishes South Africa's regional role, compared to Egypt, is its elaboration of a regional project that governs its regional policies, to what extent was South Africa able to apply the principles of this project to resolve the Zimbabwe crisis? Given that South Africa has more tools of influence in relation to Zimbabwe, compared to Egypt's tools in relation to Israel, was South Africa more able to influence the policies of the Mugabe regime? And if not, why? To what extent was South African diplomacy in Zimbabwe and Egyptian policy towards the Palestinian/Israeli conflict acceptable to the parties to the conflict? Why was South Africa more able than Egypt to show its independence from western powers in its intervention to resolve regional crises? And given the activity and independence of South Africa's civil society compared to its Egyptian counterpart, what were the roles played by civil society in the Zimbabwe crisis? And to what extent did they contribute to the state's objectives?

The examination of the two selected case studies indicated that the role of the state in resolving the two conflicts has been less than effective. Egypt under Mubarak

deployed its role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to maintain the international alliances that help sustaining its domestic control. This constrained the state's foreign policy options. It made marketing peace as 'a strategic choice' and containing resistance movements the priorities of Egypt's intervention in the Palestinian issue. In the case of South Africa, racial politics, the ANC's liberation movement psyche, the domination of the leadership over foreign policy making, Mbeki's tense relationship with COSATU, and the division among social forces on the nature and resolution of the Zimbabwe crisis have hindered the promotion of NEPAD's principles of democracy and respect for human rights in the case of Zimbabwe.

Yet, the post-apartheid democratic dispensation has provided opportunities for South African social forces, compared to their Egyptian counterparts, to engage in foreign policy debates and play roles that paralleled, complemented and balanced the ineffective role of the state. The role of trade unions, together with civil society, in supporting their Zimbabwean counterparts and assisting the Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa were cases in point. In some instances, they checked the role of the state holding it accountable to its foreign policy principles and to its democratic institutions. Blocking arms transfer to Mugabe's regime was a clear example.

In the remaining sections of this introduction I highlight why state-society relations promise to offer new insights into the study of foreign policy in general and the regional role of the two countries in particular. In so doing I review the

literature that links domestic and foreign policy and the narratives about the two countries' regional policies, and underline why the present project contributes to both groups of literature. I introduce the definition of the main concepts of the study; state-society relations and foreign policy as a role. I then move to discuss the relevance of the comparative method to this project and its challenges and limitations. I also highlight the study's time frame and its justification. I explain the data sources on which this study depends and the limitations of these sources. I conclude with setting the structure of the study.

State-Society Relations and Regional Role: Defining the Concepts

This study links the state's foreign policy to its relationship with influential social groups. A number of concepts are worth defining here. The state is defined as a set of institutions manned by public officials and assigned the functions of governing society and managing relationship with other states (Hall and Ikenberry 1989, 1-2). In this sense, the state is not a unitary actor as the realist paradigm assumes. Rather, it constitutes of a number of institutions with visions that may converge or diverge. This entails starting the analysis with defining the centers of power within the Egyptian and South African states.

Equally important, the state and society are not two separate and completely autonomous spheres of action. As Katzenstein noted the state's top institutions are occupied by individuals that belong to certain social groups and classes, but are not supposed to represent the interests of these groups or classes only. At same time, societal groups are not supposed to be just subsidiary agents for the state

(Katzenstein 1978, 15-8). Rather, they are social institutions and associations representing the interest of certain groups and although supposedly independent, they actually stand at different distances from the state. In some societies, they are manipulated by the state and used as a conduit for its dominant ideology. In others they exhibit a high level of organization and representation of their constituencies. It is thus important to analyse the capacity and independence of social organisations and the extent to which the vision and conceptions of central state institutions converge or diverge with the visions and interests of influential social groups at a certain historical period.

These connections between state and society raise the question of how to define the state's capacity in relationship to social forces. State capacity is defined as the ability of the state to engage with social forces to implement its policies and achieve its policy objectives. This engagement can take different forms and is analysed in literature using different terms. Concepts like 'infrastructural power', 'governed interdependence' and 'embedded autonomy' all reflect forms of collaboration between the state and societal institutions to design and implement negotiated policies, although they describe different historical models and experiences (Weiss 1998; Evans 1995; Mann 1984; Ayubi 1995, 449-50; Hall and Ikenberry 1989, 95).

In this sense, state and society affect one another. Societal groups enhance or constrain state capacity to perform its functions, including conducting its foreign policy. This depends on whether their relationship to the state is based on

cooperation or resistance. The state also shapes society directly or indirectly. It can tolerate, support or suppress autonomous organization of social groups (Huber 1995, 172-82).

This conception of state capacity also invites the discussion of whether there is a type of regime that enhances the capability of the state and social forces compared to others. For a number of scholars, democratic regimes are more competent. Bargaining of policies and social consent legitimise the state's policies and help it mobilise more resources to implement these policies (Dorman 2007, 32). Democratic systems also empower and enhance the capacities of social forces, which feeds positively into the ability of societal groups to contribute to the state's policy goals (Huber 1995, 174). The definition of state capacity and the different arguments about its link to regime type are detailed in chapter 1.

The study's dependent variable, foreign policy, can be conceptualised and analysed using different approaches. This study approaches foreign policy as a role. In other words, it is not concerned with foreign policy making or the motivation behind a certain foreign policy decision. It rather focuses on the role played by states in their regional system. Based on the role theory, analysing the role played by the state and societal institutions includes two levels of inquiry. The first is the attitudes, objectives and interests of these institutions, which defines 'role conception'. The second is the actions and behaviour, which represent 'role performance'.

Since the current study deals with the foreign policy of regional powers, it resorts to literature on foreign policy evaluation and writings on regional powers to define an inter-subjective set of indicators to compare the regional role performance of Egypt and South Africa. This leads to identifying two indicators; the level of activity within, and the intensity of commitments towards, the region, and the effectiveness of the role, measured by its influence, independence, and acceptance by other states inside and outside the region. The full operationalisation of these concepts is presented in chapter 1.

State-Society Relations and Regional Roles: A Literature Review

A. State-Society Explanations of Foreign Policy

By the end of the 1980s, a number of analysts had noted that schools or paradigms of international relations do not examine systematically the impact of domestic factors on a state's external role. Domestic factors in general and the strength or weakness of the state in particular were often treated as a residual category.

This applies for different reasons to various schools of international relations. Within the realist paradigm the state is often seen as a unitary actor undivided by social tensions, group conflict, or bureaucratic competition and thus presumed able to pursue its goals rationally (Katzenstein 1976, 1-45; Kugler and Domke 1986, 39-69). This leads to domestic attributes of states being taken for granted rather than being treated as variables (Moravcsik 1993, 5). Earlier writings of the interdependence school, including Richard Haas' work on regional integration in Europe, pointed out the role of some domestic factors and actors in the integration

process. However, in the later writings of this tradition, including Robert Keohane's and Joseph Nye's works on interdependence and transnationalism, domestic factors increasingly slipped out of focus (Putnam 1988, 430-1). Therefore, for these different approaches, the systemic (related to the international system and dynamic) has been regarded as more important than the domestic.

In foreign policy analysis, some scholars tried to open the state's black box by searching for the domestic bases of foreign policy. For some of these scholars, the role of a state's bureaucratic institutions or the personality of its leadership stand as explanatory variables. For others, an examination of the input of societal forces, namely interest groups, public opinion and mass media, served to give an understanding of a state's foreign policy. Thus systematic investigations of the state's relationship to society and the social roots of the state were largely overlooked. It is, therefore, unsurprising that at the end of the 1980s one of the main challenges of the field was integrating these questions into foreign policy analysis (Rosenau 1987, 3).

Taking up this challenge, since the end of the 1980s a growing literature has explored the impact of domestic politics on a state's foreign policy (Fearon 1998, 289). At the top of the research agenda of this literature have been questions surrounding the effect of regime type (democratic or autocratic) on the state's external conflict behavior,¹ the domestic bases of economic interdependence, or

¹ There is an established literature discussing the relationship between democracy and peace, the following can be mentioned just as examples: Doyle (1996), pp.1151-1169; Ray (1995); Russett (1993); Mansfield and Snyder (2005).

the domestic interests behind the state's negotiating policy (Putnam 1988; Evans, Putnam and Jacobson 1993). Reviewing this literature, I could claim that the debate on the domestic- foreign policy nexus has been hijacked by the controversy over the democratic peace theory and the concern about how state failure endangers regional and international security. This claim is consistent with Putnam's observation that 'linkage politics' (i.e: the study of the link between domestic and foreign policy) has generated little cumulative research except for work on the domestic and international conflict behavior (Putnam 1988, 430).

This is not to suggest that scholars did not recognise the impact of state's domestic capacity on its foreign policy. Several scholarly generic statements highlighted this connection. For example, in his study on state capacity in the third world, Migdal (1988, 21-2) points out that 'the role and effectiveness of the state domestically are highly interdependent with its place in the world of states'. He suggests that the capacity and strength of the state at home, especially its ability to mobilise the masses around a set of institutions and values, improve the capabilities of the state in the international arena. Thus, the state's relationship with society, through which it mobilises human and material resources, can be seen as an important foundation of its external strength.

Arguing along the same lines, Krasner (1977, 164,178) maintains that a state's regional and international role is not only based on economic, political and military resources, but also on how the state can manage its relationship with other internal social groups. It is this relationship that enables the state to make the best

use of its resources to fulfill its foreign policy goals. If certain social groups were able to control these resources, one would expect the state's foreign policy to reflect the interests of these groups, and this may lead to the undermining of the state's regional role. Krasner's central claim is that a state's position in the regional and international arena results not only from its position in the centre or periphery, but also from its domestic capacity and social interactions.

So, generic statements have linked the state's domestic and external capacities. But very little research has analysed case studies of third world regional powers that could verify, illustrate and develop the theoretical discussion about this relationship. This is a lacuna that the present research aims to address using the comparative cases of Egypt and South Africa. There are different interpretations as to why domestic politics in general, and the relationships between states and societies in particular, has been inadequately treated in international relations theory. Fred Halliday (1994, 78-9) claims that the answer lies in the very definition of the state in international relations theory. This definition is one of a territorial association of people administered by a government. In other words, the state is defined in its 'social- territorial totality' and thus is not distinct from society. This is different from some traditions in sociology, comparative politics and political economy that regard the state as a set of institutions distinct from the broader political and social context in which it exists. This distinction raises questions about the nature and character of the relationship between the state and societal groups.

Another interpretation relates to case studies. According to this interpretation, international relations and foreign policy literature has often focused on developed, industrialised, and democratic states. This has led to an underplaying of the impact of different state's domestic structures and the relationships between states and societies on foreign policy. Bruce Moon, for instance, notes that analysis of the class structure of the state and its economic management is seldom found in foreign policy research. This is because most comparative analyses of foreign policy emphasise developed nations. Accordingly, they systematically oversample democratic nations in which policies are often governed by a pluralistic compromise between social forces (Moon 1987, 33-52). Similarly, Peter Katzenstein (1976, 3-4) notes that international relations scholars tend to see advanced industrial states as generally similar in their competitive political and economic systems. This explains the little attention given to state domestic structures and their relationship to society.¹

This second interpretation is important as far as research in the state-society bases of a state's regional role is concerned. The few writings that do try to present a sophisticated discussion of the impact of the relationships between states and societies on states' foreign policies predominantly look at how this link is played out in developed industrialised countries (Katzenstein 1976; Katzenstein 1978).

¹ The rise of the emerging powers of the South including China, India, Brazil and South Africa since the end of the 1990s has increased the interest in studying these powers. However, this interest has remained focused on the impact of the rise of these powers on the international regimes and institutions rather than on the domestic bases of these powers' international influence. See for example Khanna (2009); Cooper and Antkiewicz (2008).

Thus, when referring to third world countries, they generally apply simplistic generalisations. This can be clearly seen, for example, in Krasner's reference to third world states as generally weak (Krasner 1977, 163-4). Other writings in this category employ narrow definitions of state-society relations and/or the state's external role. Kugler and Domke (1986, 39-69), for example, concentrate on the impact of a state's capacity to mobilise societal resources on its ability to win interstate conflicts.

The scholarly treatments of the link between a state's relationship with society and its role abroad have influenced studies of regional powers. As referred to earlier, writings on regional powers often resort to an ad hoc listing of international and domestic determinants of a state's leading role in its region. In defining domestic bases, they refer to the state's economic, geographical, demographic and political sources of power.¹ However, as established earlier, power capabilities do not stand as a sufficient interpretation of the state's regional role.

In addressing this link, this research project positions itself between comparative politics and foreign policy analysis. This position rests on a realisation that, taken on its own, each sub-field does not offer a satisfactory answer to the central question of this study. Comparative politics literature offers interesting accounts of relationships between states and societies. However, it does not go beyond the generic observation that a state's capacity at home and its role abroad are linked. On the other hand, literature that examines domestic bases for foreign policy tends

¹ See for example Neumann (1998); Dessouki and Korany (1991) and see also Lebovic (1985), pp.47-67.

to concentrate either on statist or societal actors, thus telling just a part of the story. Writings on regional powers do not go beyond listing the power capabilities on which a state's regional role rests. Bridging comparative politics and foreign policy, this research project explores how the study of relationships between states and societies can offer a better understanding of states' regional roles. In other words, it links state capacity to sustain its role abroad with its capacity to manage its relationship with societal forces at home. In so doing, it attempts to present a more inclusive and dynamic analysis of the domestic bases for a state's performance in its region.

B. Narratives of Egypt's and South Africa's Regional Roles

In analysing the change to the regional policies of Egypt and South Africa, literature has generally paid little attention to how state- society relations have shaped their capacities to play their particular regional roles which have changed over time. In the case of Egypt, the emphasis has always been on the state downplaying the role that was played, or could have been played, by non-state actors. Additionally, most of the writings resort to systemic or statist interpretations for explaining the change in Egypt's regional role. Some scholars believe that the change in Egypt's foreign policy results from transformations in the international and regional systems, from the demise of the cold war and the advent of the new world order to the post-September 11 era. Others focus on the shifts in the perceptions of leadership from idealism under President Nasser to pragmatism under President Sadat and moderation under President Mubarak.

To mention a few examples, in his seminal work on the foreign policies of Arab countries, Dessouki maintained that the change in Egypt's foreign policy can be attributed to three variables; the structure of the international system, the personality traits of the leadership, and the nature of the relationship with the superpowers. Accordingly, change in foreign policy, defined as the state's external role conception and performance, is explained by systemic and leadership-centered variables (Dessouki 1991, 156-84).

Transcending this approach, Hinnebusch (2002, 91-114) tried to integrate neo-realist power explanations with constructivist identity-based rationale and the structuralist economic dependency argument to explain the foreign policy options of successive Egyptian regimes. For him, the change in Egypt's role relates to the difference in leaders' perceptions of the level and nature of external threats, their vision of pan-Arab versus Egyptian-centric identity, and their policies to deal with Egypt's dependent economic structure. Despite attempting to combine structural factors with leaders' perceptions Hinnebusch's approach remains largely centered on idiosyncratic factors. In another example, Marr (1999), writing at the end of the 1990s, predicted that Egypt's future regional role will be shaped by its domestic stability and economic achievements. But she failed to analyse how the relationship between the state and society affect both.

Writings that pay attention to the domestic environment often follow the approach of literature on regional powers in mentioning an ad-hoc listing of domestic material and human resources on which the exercise of Egypt's regional power

rests. They explain the decline of Egypt's regional leadership by reference to the increase in the resources of Arab oil-producing countries. Hence, Egypt's main foreign policy dilemma is, according to these writings, the tension between its limited resources and regional aspirations (Korany 2006b; Ayubi 1991, 291; Badawy 2003; Al-Mashat 1995).

While the leadership-centered factors are important, they do not sufficiently explain the continuation of some foreign policy orientations in spite of the change in leadership, or the change in this orientation, in the style of diplomacy, or in foreign policy decisions under the same leadership. These factors do not explain, for instance, why Egypt had relatively improved its economic relationships with Israel in the last decade of Mubarak's regime after rejecting Arab economic cooperation with Israel in the 1990s making it conditional on improvements in the peace process. Similarly, they do not explain why Egypt did not withdraw its ambassador to Israel in response to the Israeli war in Gaza in 2008/09 while resorting to this diplomatic option in response to similar Israeli aggressions on Lebanon in 1982 and against the Palestinian Intifada in 2000. The shortage of capabilities does not offer a satisfactory explanation to these changes in foreign policy decisions or to the general decline of Egypt's regional role. As established earlier, systemic factors alone do not explain why Egypt's response to the uni-polar system has been different from other regional powers that joined forces to reform the international economic system.

This does not mean that international factors do not affect Egypt's regional policies. As the analysis in this study demonstrates, in conducting its regional policies, the Mubarak regime sought to maintain its alliance with the U.S. However, this alliance was, in turn, shaped by domestic politics and aimed at maintaining the state's domestic control. Owing to its efforts to achieve peace and security in the Middle East, Egypt has become one of the top recipients of American aid. This aid constitutes a tiny percentage of Egypt's GDP. But importantly, most of the American aid to Egypt takes the form of military assistance (equipment and training), something that serves the interests of the powerful military institution in Egypt.¹ Further, the American support of the Egyptian government negotiating position in the International Financial Institutions has helped the Egyptian state delaying the implementation of economic reform and, thus, maintaining its clientelistic policies at home. The maintenance of these policies was also helped by debt forgiveness in return for Egypt's supportive foreign policy to the American policies in the region. In 1990, the U.S forgave an Egyptian debt worth \$7 billion in return for Egypt's participation in the war of liberating Kuwait (Momani 2004, 889-94; Dessouki 2008, 173). In this sense, Egypt's international alliances affect its regional policies, but both are arguably shaped by its domestic politics.

Few studies investigate the relationships between the state and society to explain specific foreign policy decisions. Karawan (2005, 325-38), David (1991, 233-56) and Barnett and Levy (1991, 369-95) argue that it was the state's desire to reduce

¹ For more information about the American aid to Egypt see: Tarnof and Lawson (2011)

domestic threats and augment its power in relation to society, rather than leadership choices per se, that led to the change in Egypt's external alliances and its peace initiative with Israel in the 1970s. They share the view that the limited legitimacy of the leadership and its prioritisation of its survival influence the state's foreign alignments and policies. The present study tries to extend this discussion about the state's relationship with society to explain Egypt's regional role performance in the last two decades of Mubarak regime, especially since the end of the 1990s. It does not, however, agree with David's and Barnett and Levy's generalisations about third world countries that consider all these countries' leaders to be hardly legitimate or deriving their legitimacy from external powers. It is the comparison between third world countries where different state-society complexes exist that could verify or falsify this generalisation. Importantly also, the current study does not agree with Karawan's definition of state capacity as the ability of the state to enforce its decisions through centralised power. As the end of Sadat's and Mubarak's rule suggests, the state's control enables it to enforce its policy choices in spite of opposition, but only on the short run.

In another study, Stein (2011, 737-58) also combined statist and societal explanations of foreign policy to explain Egypt's 'cold peace' with Israel. Through analysing the discourses of the state and the intellectual and social movements from different ideological trends, he argues that a division of labour has occurred between state and society through which the state pursues 'an official policy of peace' with Israel while society sticks to its 'culture of war'. Stein's contribution is relevant to the current study in highlighting the role of social forces as foreign

policy actors and the difference between the positions of the state and these of social forces. It also draws the attention to the importance of analysing how ideas of foreign policy are marketed and instrumentalised by both state and societal institutions to increase their legitimacy. The current study seeks to conduct a similar analysis in relationship to the regional role conceptions of state and selected societal groups in Egypt and South Africa. However, I argue that ideas are not enough in explaining foreign policy or regional role performance. Stein's domestically acceptable 'division of labour' does not sufficiently explain, for instance, why Egypt has co-operated with Israel against Hamas or why it signed the gas export deal with Israel in 2004 after more than a decade of rejection. This indicates that one has to look at how the state's relationships with influential societal forces at home shape the state's foreign policy choices. It also shows that analysing Egypt-Israeli relationships through the lens of 'cold peace' downplays the progress of these relations in the last decade of Mubarak rule.

Turning to literature on South Africa's regional role one finds that African and non-African scholars have shown remarkable interest in following how the dramatic transformation of the state with the end of apartheid is reflected in its foreign policy. Yet most of these scholars have focused on evaluating this policy rather than explaining it in relation to its domestic bases. For instance, in analysing South Africa's foreign policy under Mandela, a number of studies focused on emphasising the inconsistencies of that policy. Some of these writings combined this analysis with an investigation of the opportunities and constraints faced by the

new state in pursuing its foreign policy.¹ Under Mbeki, some scholars and observers defended South Africa's role as a promoter of neo-liberalism in the African continent.² Others criticised this role inviting South Africa to develop a purely African alternative to the western paradigm of development.³ Resultantly, both groups judged the country's foreign policy depending on their ideological inclinations. As Vale noted, they tended to prescription rather than reflection and confused values and facts (Vale 2004).

This tendency towards evaluation and prescription may have resulted from the fact that the new post-apartheid state had to deal in its foreign policy with a number of contradictions. It was thus interesting to evaluate the state's performance against the balancing up of these contradictions. A number of scholars referred to the dilemma of managing the tension between the desire to be active in the region and the fear of being seen as a bully that steps into the shoes of its apartheid predecessor. A related tension is that between defending the principles of democracy and human rights and abiding by the principle of respecting other states' sovereignty or between the former and achieving the state's national interest (Broderick 2001; Sidiropoulos and Hughes 2004; Nathan 2005, Southall 2006).

¹ See for example Bischoff (1995); Crawford (1995); Evans (1996), Landsberg and Masiza (1995) Mills (1996).

² See for instance Mills (2000).

³ See for instance Bond (2006)

In addition to policy evaluation, some writings have focused on the foreign policy making process. Van Nieuwkerk and Le Pere (2004) examined the institutions and actors that affect and participate in the making of foreign policy and the change in their impact and roles under Mandela and Mbeki. Other scholars focused on the role of specific actors including civil society organisations, especially think tanks, and businesses (Dlamini 2004; Naidoo 2004). This focus on decision-making is useful for the present study in identifying the influential actors that affect the state's foreign policy and the institutional mechanisms through which they exert their influence. It is, however, important to put it in its broader framework of the state's relationship to these influential actors in a specific historical period, the preferences of each actor, and the state's management of different preferences in the making and implementation of its domestic and foreign policy.

Accordingly, this research aims at contributing to the literature on the regional roles of the two countries by adopting a different approach; that is of linking these roles to the states' relationships with societal actors. Without ignoring the impact of both international and regional factors in affecting a state's regional role, the study argues that the change in that role cannot be understood without accounting for a state's relationship to its society.

C. The Study's Objectives and Contribution to the Field:

In the light of the preceding review, the present study aims to contribute to the literature that integrates the dynamics of relationships between states and societies into the analysis of foreign policy, particularly at the regional level in developing countries context. In so doing, it seeks to achieve four objectives.

Firstly, offering useful insights that transcend concerns with democratic peace or the role of regional powers in the international system to the examination of the impact of a state's relationships with social actors on its foreign policy. These domestic variables are acknowledged by international relations scholars to be under-researched. Keohane and Milner (1998, 773-4) have noted that more studies that contribute to theory building for bridging domestic politics and foreign policy in a systematic way are needed. Similarly, Hagan (1987, 363) called for a transcending of the 'if' to the 'how' in studying the link between domestic politics and foreign policy behavior. For him, literature that links the international and the domestic failed to provide systematic analysis of domestic politics. This is largely because it assumed an unrealistic polarity between the state and society and thus remains one-dimensional. Therefore, the current research seeks to address an apparent gap in international relations and foreign policy literature.

In this regard, the present study not only bridges sub-fields of politics, but also keeps foreign policy analysis at pace with recent debates and new directions in defining the concepts of state capacity and power. In doing so it follows Halliday's suggestion of reassessing the debate on the state in international relations by studying parallel discussions in other sub-fields, like comparative politics, and related disciplines, like sociology (Halliday 1994, 77). This is important given that although the connectedness of these sub-fields has increased significantly, it is still inadequate. Scholars of foreign policy found it striking that there is little interaction between foreign policy scholars and scholars of other disciplines (Hudson 2007, 190). This adds credit to the use of political economy and

comparative politics analysis in explaining foreign policy and regional role performance.

Secondly, the study aims at transcending the generalisations about developing countries found in some international relations literature. This literature has the merit of pointing to the different nature of the state in the developing world compared to the developed north. This has formed the basis for arguing that international relations theories developed in reference to the latter may not be easily applicable to the former. However, all that is particular to the state in the developing world according to this literature is that it is artificial, weak, and imposed (Neumann 1998; Clapham 1996). This reductionist account blurs interesting differences between states in the developing countries on the one hand, and overlooks the dynamics of relationships between the state and society in each case, on the other.

Thus, although the study does not aim to generalise about regional powers based on the study of Egypt and South Africa, it demonstrates the variation of state-society complexes in developing countries and the impact of this variation on their regional role performance by comparing the two different models of these countries.

Thirdly, the study seeks to contribute to the literature on regional powers. In spite of the rising interest in studying the role of rising regional powers in the South, there is no established theory for regional powers especially in relation to how domestic factors impact on these powers' performance. The contribution to the

study of regional powers is not only academically important but also relevant practically. Regional powers, by definition, have a significant influence in their regions. This influence has often been referred to in security terms (i.e: how the regional leaders help to sustain peace and security in their respective regions) (Buzan and Waever 2003; Chase, Hill and Kennedy 1998). However, one should also think of their role in other political, economic and developmental terms. Viable and strong regional powers push for economically prosperous and internationally influential regions. Conversely, the absence or a decline in the role of a regional leader is often accompanied by the retreat of a region's coherence and international influence.

On the international level, since the world has increasingly been organised into regional blocs, the study of the role of regional power has gained more currency. In order to maintain national security and foster cooperation with key regions in the South, American policy makers and intellectuals have focused more and more on 'pivotal states' in each region (Chase, Hill and Kennedy 1998). Other rising international powers seeking cooperation with developing countries follow the same strategy.

Finally, and also in relation to the study's policy relevance, the exploration of the reasons behind the different role performance of the two countries opens the space for mutual learning between both countries. The recent changes witnessed by both countries make this objective particularly important. The revolution of the 25th of January 2011 which brought down the 30 years old regime of President Mubarak

has opened a new chapter in the country's domestic, and probably regional, politics. As the first mass-led revolution in Egyptian history, it is hoped to pave the way for the building of a democratic state based on social justice domestically and restoring Egypt's leading role regionally. It is, indeed, very early to speak about a change in Egypt's foreign policy in the aftermath of the revolution. One would also be mistaken to expect a radical transformation in Egypt's regional relations given the continuation of some factors that shape these relations as will be identified in this study. However, as the post-revolutionary state rethinks its foreign policy, it should learn not only from its past, but also from the experiences of other regional powers. This is equally important for South Africa that is witnessing a rising wave of social protests in response to its economic policies.

Method and Data Resources

1. The Comparative Methodology: Importance and Challenges

A. Why Egypt and South Africa

Why is the comparative method relevant to the study's objectives set above? First of all, cross-case comparisons offer more opportunity to explore causal ideas and mechanisms behind different outcomes. This is consistent with the objective of contributing to theoretical discussions on bridging domestic and international politics, especially the link between state-society relations and foreign policy. In other words, since the main objective of this study is not to test an established theory or competing explanations for one outcome, but to explain the causes of the

difference in outcomes, cross-case comparisons are more relevant (Collier, Mahoney and Seawright 2004,92-3).

Secondly, the comparative methodology helps deriving mutually beneficial lessons for the two countries, especially for the Egyptian state in its current transitional period, an aim that would not be achieved through single case analysis.

Thirdly, selecting Egypt and South Africa is intentional because of the lack of studies comparing the two countries. This novel comparison brings new perspectives to the study of each country and provides insights into the study of the impact of different state-society relations on the conduct of regional policies. Given the position of the two countries as regional powers in the developing world, this comparison will also help transcending the generalisations on developing countries in some foreign policy literature.

As noted before, however, one cannot draw general causal inferences from cross-case comparisons (Collier, Mahoney and Seawright 2004, 100). Thus, this study cannot draw generalisations about regional powers or foreign policy in developing countries from the cases of Egypt and South Africa. What the study of the two cases offers is helping to suggest causal linkages between state-society relations and the regional role performance in a way that explains the variance in the performance of these two countries and paves the way for drawing generalisations if these linkages are tested in other cases of regional powers in the future.

The primary challenge in the comparative methodology is dealing with cases that have different 'histories and identities' (Ragin 1987, 9-10). Scholars of methods rightly noted that 'perfectly comparable cases for comparative analysis seldom exist'. This relates to the difficulty of controlling the different variables that affect the outcome or the dependent variable (George and Bennett 2005, 164). To deal with this challenge, I followed a number of procedures:

Firstly, selecting the cases based on the objective of the study. As pointed out by comparative foreign policy literature, there is no minimum set of criteria that must be met in a comparative inquiry. The aims and variables of the study are the factors that determine the selection of cases (Rosenau 1974, 15). Because I am interested in the ways and extent to which state-society complexes constrained Egypt's foreign policy choices and its regional role performance compared to other regional powers, I had to compare Egypt with another case that has a different, but not a totally dissimilar, domestic context.

Admittedly, the two countries differ in a number of significant respects and these should be kept in mind in our analyses. They are different in terms of demographic composition, economic capabilities and the nature of historical ties to their respective regions. But both Egypt, until the January 25th revolution, and South Africa have had a dominant party system although the bases of legitimacy of such a system clearly differ. In both cases there is also a significant role for the president in designing policies and a considerable concentration of power in the presidency compared to other institutions. The way and extent to which state

institutions and power centres relate to social forces are, however, different. It is the impact of this difference that is being explored in this study.

Importantly also, the two countries generally enjoy some of the domestic bases of regional leadership. These include, to list a few, the economic resources and miracle of peaceful democratic transformation in the case of South Africa and the geo-strategic location, cultural heritage and demographic weight in the case of Egypt. Both countries also face challenges in performing their regional roles and sometimes harsh criticisms of their regional policies. But they vary in their relative capacities to pursue active and effective roles in their region. This opens the space for an analysis that offers mutually beneficial lessons for the two countries.

Secondly, I combine cross-case and within-case analysis. Within-case analysis can serve to make up for the limitations of the cross-case comparisons and the difficulties of finding perfectly matched cases (George and Bennett 2005, 214). I analytically trace the causal relations between state's relationships with social forces and the regional performance in each case to uncover the extent to which these relationships have causal significance. Additionally, I try to eliminate competing explanations by highlighting why other variables (leadership-centered, international factors, capability theory) are not sufficient in explaining the regional role performance of the two countries in the selected case studies. In linking the choices made by the two states in the selected foreign policy issues to the state's relationships with social forces, I also consider, as much as possible, what course

of action would have been possible, or was possible in other times, under a different mode of relationships.

As highlighted in the section on data sources, collecting data on the regional engagements of the state and social forces in Egypt and South Africa that fully satisfy the requirement of the three methods of data analysis; process tracing, elimination of competing explanations, and counter-factual analysis, is not easy. Combining these strategies addresses the limitations of using a single strategy and is hoped to provide sufficient evidence of the extent to which the state's relationship with society in the two countries impacted on their regional performance.

B. Regional Environment and the Selected Foreign Policy Issues: Similarities and Differences:

The two regions in which Egypt and South Africa seek to play a leading role; namely the Middle East and Africa share a number of commonalities and differ in some respects. The two regions share the concern with regional stability. In the Middle East, the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict represents an important variable affecting the security environment. Interestingly, it has also been used by some states in the region, including Egypt, as a pretext for increasing their domestic social control. The endurance of this conflict, in addition to the abundance of oil resources, has made the region strategically important for, and infiltrated by, major international powers, especially the U.S. It is argued that the Middle East is the most vulnerable region to international intervention. Although

Arab countries signed a Common Defence Pact in 1950, they failed to develop a regional security regime that manages regional conflicts. In the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, most Gulf countries signed security agreements with the U.S and welcomed American military bases on their territories believing that this is the only guarantee to their security. These countries have even failed to agree on common position towards the international interventions in the region including the American-led coalition operations to liberate Kuwait in 1991 and invasion of Iraq in 2003. The two invasions had also engendered the mutual suspicion between Arab governments given that military operations against an Arab country were waged from Arab territories (Ibrahim 2003, 81-100). In Southern Africa, by contrast, the last two decades have witnessed the official resolution of a number of conflicts in the region. However, fighting continues in some parts of the DRC with political instability affecting Zimbabwe and Madagascar.

There is thus little wonder that both Egypt and South Africa give a special priority in their foreign policy to the resolution of regional conflicts and link their domestic development to regional stability. And like the Egyptian role in the Middle East, the South African role in Africa in general, and in Southern Africa in particular, is seen as essential for the region's stability. There are high expectations for the role that the two countries can play in resolving the conflicts in their regions from segments of the domestic constituency and regional and international actors.

The two regions also lag behind in terms of integration compared to other regions of the world. While Europe, Asia and the Americas have rapidly integrated their

economies and sought to challenge the uni-polar character of the international system, Africa and the Middle East have largely fallen short of presenting an internationally competitive regional community. Scholars explain this shortcoming by reference to factors common to the two regions including the artificiality of state border and the related heterogeneity and weakness of the states and regimes in the two regions. According to some scholars, this is partly attributed to the historical experience of colonialism and the role of colonial powers in state building and/or in preventing the emergence of great powers in the two regions (Lustick 1997, 653-4; Fawcett 2009, 192; Clapham 1996; Khadiagala 2001, 131-2).

A third common concern and debatable issue in the two regions is the tension between support for democracy and human rights on the one hand and the respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in other countries' affairs on the other. In the African continent in general, and the Southern African region in particular, the historical relationship between liberation movements sometimes gives the principles of African solidarity and of respecting the sovereignty of other states precedence over principles of human rights and democracy. In the Middle East, Arab countries have resisted pressures for political reform and rejected external initiatives for democratic transformation. The positions of state and societal actors in Egypt and South Africa on this debate as they relate to their regional conceptions and performance in the selected case studies will be illustrated in chapter 3 and 4.

The balance of power within the two regions is, however, different. The Middle East has witnessed a change in the distribution of power since the 1970s. The oil boom led to the economic preeminence of Gulf countries which provide aid and investments and attract labour from other countries in the region. In addition, the role of non-Arab states in the region (namely Israel, Iran and Turkey) has been on the rise (Mattar and Dessouki 1986, 62-3; Ahmed 1985). Against these factors, a number of analysts consider the Middle East to be a region with different centres of power which at times coordinate their course of action, but conflictually compete at other times. Others depict the region as leaderless with no single regional power, no clear borders, and no harmonisation of roles between its member states. Evidently, no single state has been able to play an uncontested hegemonic role in the region (Abdel-Salam 2009; Korany 2009; Fawcett 2009, 190-1)

The situation is different in the African continent. The low level of development in most African countries puts South Africa in a privileged position as the top industrial country in the continent. South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 40 times larger than the average sub-Saharan economy, representing one third of the total GDP of sub-Saharan Africa and two-thirds of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) economy (Grobbelaar 2009, 2). In spite of the rivalries that prevail between some countries in Southern Africa, the region is referred to as a region of allies, at least in security terms (Schoeman 2007, 168).

Although the regional contexts are different, this does not undermine the comparison of the regional performance of the two countries. It is not the aim of this study to present a detailed record of the regional integration in the two regions. One cannot also hold Egypt and South Africa responsible for the shortcomings in this record. What the study is interested in is the extent to which Egypt and South Africa have been able to elaborate a regional project that responds to regional and international changes and challenges and mobilise their domestic constituencies in the implementation of that project.

The impact of the state's relationships with social forces on the ability of the state to elaborate a regional project and on its regional performance is tested in two cases; the Palestinian- Israeli conflict since the beginning of the 1990s and the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe since 2000. The two cases seem to be among the most, if not the most, crucial cases of conflict in the two regions. They have thus attracted most of the diplomatic effort of the two states for a long period and have sometimes exposed them to a harsh regional and international criticism.

Although different in character, the two conflicts share a number of common features. They are both multidimensional conflicts where historical, political, economic and symbolic (religious in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and racial in the case of the Zimbabwean crisis) factors overlap. The interaction of domestic, regional and international factors has also complicated the two conflicts. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the most protracted conflicts in the world, dating back long before the creation of the state of Israel. On the surface of it, the

conflict seems to relate to the contested historical territorial claims of the Jewish migrants and the indigenous Arab population in Palestine. However, the conflict's deep roots lie in the Arab resistance to the Israeli nation and state-building project. The stumbling blocks towards resolving the conflict do not, thus, lie in the liberation of occupied lands and the dismantling of the expanding Israeli settlements in these lands only. They also relate to the attempts of Israel to force the Palestinians to admit the Jewishness of the Israeli state and its rejection of the return of the Palestinian refugees to their lands, the disagreement on the powers and sovereignty of the future Palestinian state, and the dispute between Palestinian factions about the ways to manage the conflict with Israel. At the same time, the establishment of the state of Israel at the heart of the Arab world was seen as an attempt to weaken the pan-Arab project. That is why the conflict with Israel was seen, at least until the mid-1970s as a collective Arab cause. It is also why Arab countries aspiring for regional leadership at different historical phases have used the Palestinian cause to increase their domestic legitimacy and outbid their regional rivals. The establishment of the state of Israel and the continuous western support to it are based on the claim of the founders of the Israeli state that they will 'civilise' the Arab population of Palestine and represent the western interests in the region (Milton-Edwards 2009, 10-31; Lesch and Tschirgi 1998; Miller 1986, 4-7).

The crisis in Zimbabwe, that manifested itself in the simultaneous political and economic decline since 2000, represents a case of interplay between race, nation-building, and addressing colonial inequalities and the consequences of post-colonial economic structural adjustment. The politics of land after 2000 has been

deeply connected with the state's relationship with the rising opposition forces. The rise of this trade union-based opposition and its ability to mobilise supporters, especially in urban areas, are in turn attributed to the negative impacts of the structural adjustment programmes applied in the 1990s. To demonise and delegitimise this opposition, the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), has promoted a racialised notion of citizenship that emphasized the centrality of land and depicted the opposition as enemies of the nation and defenders of white interests (Raftopoulos 2009, 212; Feltoe 2004; Muzondidya 2009, 188-94; Zeilig 2008, 4-5). Based on principles of African solidarity and support to liberation movements, the attempts of western government to ostracise Mugabe regime have been met with opposition from most African countries. Dealing with Mugabe regime has been an issue of contention between African and western governments.

Both Egypt, in relationship to Palestine, and South Africa, in the case of Zimbabwe, have been well positioned to play a central role in conflict management and resolution. Without holding Egypt or South Africa responsible for the impasses of the two conflicts, the study examines the role of the state and selected social forces in the two conflicts. It argues that the active and independent involvement of the South African social forces in the Zimbabwean conflict has balanced the biased state intervention in favor of the Zimbabwean ruling party. Conversely, in some issues (Palestinian reconciliation or supporting the right of resistance) Egyptian social forces have largely missed the opportunity of a more effective intervention owing to state control. Other foreign policy decisions (like

economic deals with Israel since 2004) reflected the narrow interests of a single social group rather than an attempt to use new tools to influence the positions of the parties to the conflict.

C. Selected Social Forces

The impact of state-society relations, represented in the politics of domination and exclusion in the case of Egypt and that of engagement and negotiation in the case of South Africa, can be illustrated through a detailed analysis of the state's relationship with selected social organisations in the two cases. In the case of Egypt the politics of containment and exclusion is illustrated in the state's relationship with the business community and the most powerful opposition force, the Muslim Brotherhoods (MBs), respectively. The increasingly liberalised economic policies have made the business community amongst the most, if not the most, powerful social groups. The state has faced the rise of the business community by co-opting top business figures within its structures, thus preventing it from constituting an autonomous social force.

While the state resorted to containment and cooptation to deal with the rising power of business, it used exclusion towards other actors whose increasing influence threatened to change the prevailing political order. This is reflected in the state's relationship with MBs that have emerged as an important political, economic and social actor. Politically, they proved to be the most powerful opposition to the former ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). In addition, the decline in the welfare role of the state has given credit to the movement's service

provision activities. The study sheds light on the state's capacity in competing with this group for domination and control. The exclusion of the MBs from the political process by the denial of their right to form a political party reflected the exclusionary nature of the Egyptian political system before the 25th of January revolution.

As for South Africa, the negotiated transition in the case of South Africa paved the way for a state-society complex based on engagement and compromise between the state and the two influential social forces, organised business and labour. Through its organisational capacity and contribution to the South African economy, business has managed to protect its interests and maintain its autonomy vis-à-vis the state in the transition process. It extended its operation in different African countries undertaking business operations whose impacts have been mixed. While carrying the South African economic model to other parts of the African continent, business has been accused of seeking to dominate African economies and of disrespecting local norms.

In addition to business, the role of the labour movement, especially the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), cannot be ignored. Through its multiple strategies, COSATU has combined a high degree of autonomy with the ability to pressurise the government to shape policies in favor of its constituencies. It has used its alliance with the ANC, its ability to mobilise mass action, and its use of corporatist institutions and advocacy tactics in co-operation with social movements to influence the state's policies. This was supported by its large

membership base and a relatively high degree of institutional cohesion and accountability to its constituencies (Buhlungu 2006).¹ In the African continent, COSATU has performed different roles from building the capacity of its counterparts in a number of African countries to defending the values of democracy and human rights.

In addition to their illustration of the politics of the two countries, the business community and the MBs in the case of Egypt and organised business and labour in the case of South Africa were selected for the following reasons; Firstly, different social groups have different levels of influence on a state's domestic and foreign policies. Accordingly, the study focuses on the influential actors whose relationships with the state are regarded as most important and who have clear foreign policy position or active regional engagements. This also makes the scope of relationships between states and societies specific, and thus researchable. Secondly, these actors are active in one or more of the political, economic and cultural spheres. This allows the coverage of different areas of the state and societal regional engagements. Thirdly, the selected social actors stand in different

¹ The state's co-optive strategies towards trade union leaders, its intervention in unions' elections, and the use of coercion if necessary against workers' actions, have left the labour movement in Egypt less autonomous and cohesive compared to its South African counterpart. One cannot deny that workers have influenced the implementation of neo-liberal policies in Egypt and have been able to get some concessions from the state in return for their political support. However the political and mobilisational capacity and the autonomy of trade unions in Egypt remain limited compared to those of their South African counterparts. Further, although Egypt and South Africa have undergone economic liberal transition that has affected labour's benefits, the fact that this was accompanied by democratic transition in the case of South Africa has given the labour movement more autonomy and influence in policy making. For these reasons, I focus on trade unions only in the case of South Africa. See Fahmy (2002, 154-60); Pratt (1998, 32-5); Paczynska (2009, 163-71).

positions in relation to the state. They include those with an alliance with the state or the ruling party (COSATU in South Africa and business in Egypt), those that enjoy autonomy from the state (business in South Africa), and those standing as a competing force vis-à-vis the state (the MBs in Egypt). This enables the analysis of the impact of their relationship to the state on their regional role.

The two states' relationships with the selected social actors are examined to judge the extent to which the state's relationship with these forces impacted on the state and societal regional role conception and performance. I analyse the extent to which the state is able to elaborate a regional project that attracts the support of these forces. I examine the extent to which the state's ability to connect to these forces to legitimise its policies at home impact its ability to direct resources to the region. Empirically, the role of the state and these societal actors in the two case studies selected (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Zimbabwean crisis) is examined. Evidently, the involvement of Egypt and South Africa in these two foreign policy issues is not only political. The economic and soft power involvement of non-state actors from business and civil society actors are no less important. The two cases illustrate that the state has not been the only actor engaged in the conflict. In the case of Egypt's role in the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, the business community has increasingly promoted Egypt's economic relations with Israel after two decades of cold peace between the two countries. In addition, the affiliation of a Palestinian faction, Hamas, to the MBs in Egypt clearly links the state's relationship with the brotherhoods at home to the role of both the state and the MBs in the Palestinian internal conflict.

Similarly, in addition to the role of the South African state in the Zimbabwean conflict, business and civil society have not been absent. In spite of the challenging political environment, most of the South African businesses continue to operate in Zimbabwe. Additionally, trade unions and other civil society groups have actively criticised the diplomacy of the South African state and co-ordinated the stances of their counterparts in different parts of the continent on this issue to put pressure for a policy change.

The crucial question here is the extent to which the state-society complexes in the two countries have affected the performance of the state and the selected social forces in the two case studies. The role undertaken by the state and those performed by social forces is examined to judge whether they contribute to an active and effective role in the concerned conflict.

2. Data Sources and their problems

To uncover the state and societal regional conceptions and examine their performance, the study uses five major data sources.

A. Official documents and speeches

The first source is each state leader's and top officials' speeches and foreign policy documents. These speeches and documents delineate the state's self-perception of its role in the region. It is worth emphasising, however, that a systematic discourse analysis using methodological tools that analyses words, sentences, warrants and speech acts is beyond the interest and scope of this study. As established earlier, I argue that ideas and discourses do not stand as sufficient explanations for the state

and societal regional performance. Rather, both conceptions and performance are the result of a certain state-society complex in a specific historical period. Thus, for my purpose, I am interested in two aspects in these speeches and documents; Firstly, whether or not the discourse clearly identifies a certain regional role or roles for the state and the domestic attributes on which this role rests. This actually includes two lines of inquiry; whether or not there is a clear, specific regional role or roles that can be identified in the state discourse. If so, this role is to be identified and if not, the implications of this lack of role conception will be analysed. This requires the interpretative examination of statements, speeches and documents of a general nature. Accordingly, in addition to general foreign policy strategic plans and documents, speeches on the state of the nation, or on the occasion of national day celebrations and regional summits are examined.

The second inquiry is the extent to which the state is able to successfully project this vision and build domestic and regional consensus around it. This means investigating how the discourse sells and rationalises the state's foreign policy and which actors and interests this discourse addresses.

B. Reports and statements on societal regional conceptions

These include statements and writings by organisations and individuals representing the selected social actors. A challenge faced here is that while some social actors may have active regional engagements, they may not have developed a single and/or coherent conception for their role or the aspired role of the state in the region. This is most apparent in the case of business in Egypt. As is the case

with the statist vision, the question in this case will be how to explain the lack of a conception.

A related remark is that each of the different societal actors should not be seen as a single player representing coherent set of interests and positions. Divisions and differences occur inside each group. For example, reference is often made to the difference between big corporations and small business in the two countries in terms of their interests and their level of consultation and coordination with the state. Furthermore, businesses of different sectors vary in the degree and nature of their interest in the state's regional role. The same observation can be made in reference to the labour unions of different industries. While the study sheds light on some of these differences, it attempts to identify the general conception and common ideas presented by each actor.

C. Data and statements on regional engagements

These cover the data published by the state and societal groups about the level of engagement in the economic, political and cultural affairs in the region and their stances on crucial regional issues, especially on the two selected foreign policy issues. Thus whereas the first two data source cover the state and societal conception, this source reflects state and societal performance.

The reports and statistics consulted in this regard cover the selected actors and issue areas mentioned in the previous section. In the field of economy, reports published by governmental institutions (Departments of Trade and Industry and Foreign Affairs) and the South African multinational corporations on their

investments in the African continent, and statements issued to reflect their viewpoints especially in the Zimbabwean crisis are important sources. Similarly, statistics concerning the size of investments made by Egyptian business according to the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) with Israel and the U.S as well as the size of their investments or joint ventures in the Arab world shed light on the interests of national and foreign businesses. The declarations, statements and engagements of the other selected social actors (trade unions in South Africa, the MBs in Egypt) especially in the two selected foreign policy issues are also examined.

The main challenge arising here is that some of the engagements, especially by non-state actors, are not officially documented and made public through press releases or media reports. To address this challenge the study benefits from articles, biographies and memoirs written by senior officials who were engaged in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations and the negotiations between the Zimbabwean competing political forces or by journalists close to policy circles. It also benefits from leaked confidential diplomatic cables and reports made available through wikileaks and other means. Interviews have also been conducted with representatives of state and societal institutions in the two countries to reveal some of these engagements. The details of these interviews are presented in the next section.

D.Interviews

The fourth source of information is semi-structured interviews. I conducted twenty-eight interviews in Egypt and twenty-four interviews in South Africa. The

interviews targeted four groups. The first included officials of the foreign policy-related ministries in the two countries. These include the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry in Egypt and the departments of International Relations and Co-operation and Trade and Industry in South Africa. Officials targeted were especially those responsible for general planning and for regional files that relate to the two selected case studies; the Palestinian- Israeli conflict in the case of Egypt and the Zimbabwean conflict in the case of South Africa.

The second group included representatives of corporations that have regional operations. In the case of South Africa, managers and directors of the African division in a number of South African corporations operating in the fields of construction, mining, banking and energy were interviewed. Recognising that expectations and demands of co-operation with and support from the state vary according to the sector, interviews targeted different sectors as much as possible. In the case of Egypt, business representatives that have regional and international engagements were interviewed.

The third group included representatives of selected civil society groups and a number of scholars and academics. In the case of Egypt, two members of the MBs, selected for their position in the movement, were interviewed. One was a member of the Egyptian parliament and the spokesman of the MBs parliamentary bloc. The other was the head of the political bureau of the movement and one of its prominent intellectuals. In the case of South Africa, representatives of COSATU, its international secretary and its spokesperson, were interviewed.

Since a state's role depends on its acceptance by other actors in the region, foreign diplomats were targeted as a fourth group. Although investigating the other countries' view points through interviewing its diplomats may have limitations, it represented a practical alternative to visiting these countries. In this group, the selection of interviewees depended on the two foreign policy issues identified above. Accordingly, Palestinian and Israeli diplomats in Cairo were interviewed. After repeated attempts, the Zimbabwean embassy in Pretoria declined to recommend a representative to be interviewed. The reason stated was that commenting on the role of South Africa in an ongoing process may compromise the negotiations between the two partners of the Zimbabwean government. The head of the external assembly of the Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai faction (MDC-T) was interviewed.

These interviews were conducted in the period from December 2008 - April 2009 in Egypt and from October 2009-February 2010 in South Africa. Fortunately, these were periods of intensified debates on the regional policies of the two countries. In Egypt, my fieldwork started at the time of a critical regional crisis, that is the Israeli attacks on Gaza. This event presented a tough test for Egypt's regional role. It opened a lively debate about the tension between domestic security and regional commitments. Holding the interviews amid and in the aftermath of this regional crisis represented both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, the crisis made the stances of the state and different social groups on regional orientations and commitments clearer. Crises often trigger different actors to think about their priorities in the light of the contradiction that may emerge between regional

commitments and national interest. On the other hand, the crisis led actors to adopt extreme positions and discourses. These positions and discourses are thus taken with caution and compared to positions in other cases.

In the case of South Africa, the inauguration of President Jacob Zuma in May 2009 ushered a debate about South Africa's foreign policy after Mbeki. State institutions started an internal discussion and a dialogue with civil society on the new posture of the state's foreign policy. New initiatives were introduced to coordinate with social actors that have a strong presence in the African continent, especially the business community.

To facilitate the conducting of interviews I arranged to be affiliated with the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs and the Africa Institute of South Africa as a visiting research fellow.

Ethical rules of compliance with the Data Protection Act were followed in the conducting of interviews. These include presenting an introduction about my research at the beginning of the interview, confirming that the opinions expressed and information provided will be used for academic and research purposes only, offering to provide the transcript of the interview before using it, and keeping the source of opinions and information anonymous whenever the interviewee wished it so. Most of the interviewees were recorded, except when this was refused by the interviewee. Few interviewees preferred to be anonymous. Anonymity is also used in referring to off-record discussions.

In addition to holding interviews during my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars that addressed issues related to the two countries regional roles and their foreign policy. This helped in following the local debates on regional policies.

E. Secondary resources

Lastly, data sources are supplemented by scholarly writings on the relationships between states and societies, and on each state's foreign policy and regional role. These are included in the bibliography listed at the end of the study.

Time Frame:

The study focuses on the period from 1990 to 2008. The 1990s ushered in a new phase in the state's relationships with influential social groups in the two countries, which, I argue, has impacted on their regional role. In Egypt, the enforcement of structural adjustment programmes and the unprecedented acceleration of economic reform challenged the social contract that prevailed since the mid-1950s. While the state's alliance with business started from the mid-1970s, it was only since the 1990s that the political role of business and their direct involvement in the design and implementation of state policies started to increase. Both changes raised doubts about the autonomy of the state and raised questions about the interests that the state represents. They have also led to a wave of social upheavals that endangered the stability of the long serving regime. Additionally, since the mid-1990s the state changed its policies towards moderate Islamist movements, represented in the MBs, from accommodation to confrontation. The intensity of

this confrontation increased in 2005 in the wake of the parliamentary elections in which the MBs gained 20 percent of the People Assembly's seats. Evidently also, the 1990s and 2000s witnessed a tendency towards restricting political and civil liberties. These variables shaped the domestic environment that defined the opportunities and challenges of both the state and societal regional role.

In South Africa, the 1990s brought a dramatic change that put an end to the apartheid rule and set the bases of a new democratic dispensation. On February 2, 1990, President F.W. de Klerk announced the unbanning of liberation organisations, starting a negotiation process that culminated in the first democratic elections in April 1994. The negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy defined the state's relationship with influential social forces, especially business and labour. The ANC emerged as the centre of power and established links with social forces and institutions of policy negotiation. Strong and largely independent social forces and civil society groups redefined their domestic and regional role and their terms of engagement with the post-apartheid state. Although this character of state-society relationships remained largely the same under Mbeki, his tendency to concentrate power in the presidency affected the relationships between the alliance partners and the state's engagement with civil society. These continuities and changes defined the domestic variables affecting the state and societal regional engagements.

To allow time for analyses, I selected 2008 as the end of the study's time frame. This year witnessed significant domestic and regional events for the two countries.

On the 21st of September 2008, President Mbeki addressed the nation announcing his resignation after being called upon to do so by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the African National Congress (ANC). In December 2008, Egypt faced a significant regional crisis, the Israeli attack on Gaza. The crisis, and Egypt's policy towards it, left the country's eastern border vulnerable and brought Egypt under heavy domestic, regional and international criticism.

While the analysis may refer to historical periods before this time frame, presenting a systematic comparison between the last two decades and the past historical phases is beyond the scope of this study. Equally important, although there have been continuities in both the state's institutional setting and its relationship with society in the two countries over the last six decades, different variables may affect the applicability of the central arguments of this study in past historical phases. For example, it could be argued that although the state-society relationships in Nasser's era were not very much different from these relationships under Mubarak, Egypt was able to play a more active and effective regional role. My answer would be that Nasser's charismatic leadership provided a basis of legitimacy that was non-existent under the Mubarak regime. As Stein noted (2011, 745), state and society were held together by 'Nasser's charisma and revolutionary myth'. This also allowed Nasser to attract the support of domestic and regional constituencies to his pan-Arabist project. In other words, the appeal of its socialist, anti-imperialist project and its charismatic leadership provided the necessary consent for Egypt's leading hegemonic role in the Nasserite era.

Similarly, it could be argued that apartheid South Africa was able to play a role that is more influential than post-apartheid South Africa. Based on the study's theoretical framework laid down in chapter 1, the answer would be that influence is not the only indicator for evaluating a state's regional role performance. Regional powers have also to enjoy acceptance by other states in the region and beyond, an indicator that the distabilising regional policy of the apartheid state did not enjoy. Additionally, the collapse of the apartheid system indicates that its domestic and foreign policy proved to be unsustainable on the long run. It is, however, worth re-emphasising that the analysis and conclusions in this study applies to the selected historical periods and may not be applicable, for different reasons, to other phases.

Structure of the Study

The study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the study's analytical framework. Consistent with the study's position between comparative politics and foreign policy, it engages with different sets of literature. Although it relies on some writings that present a state-society approach to foreign policy analysis, it modifies their definition of state capacity depending on comparative politics literature. Since the study approaches foreign policy as a role, the second section reviews the concept of role in foreign policy literature. The chapter concludes with a set of questions that integrate the relationships between states and societies into the interpretation of a state's regional role to serve as an analytical framework for the study.

The second chapter investigates the state's relationship with society in the two countries. This is based on an examination of the state's relationship with the influential social actors mentioned earlier as well as the nature of the political institutions that govern this relationship. The analysis of state capacity in the two countries is presented in two sections each of which covers one country followed by a third section for comparison and conclusion.

The third chapter investigates the state and societal regional role conception and performance of Egypt. It is divided into two sections. The first section analyses the state's discourse concerning its regional role and the way in which this discourse rationalises this role in relation to domestic relations. It also examines the vision and conception of the selected social organisation and the extent to which this vision reflects the state's relationships with these groups. The second section evaluates the role of the state and the selected social actors in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It looks at the roles performed, and those that are not played, by these actors and the extent to which the state's relationship with society contributed to this performance.

The fourth chapter moves to an investigation of the state and societal regional role conception and performance of South Africa. The first section gives a special attention to Mbeki's African Renaissance and its programme of action, *Nepad*. It examines the extent to which other social forces buy into the state's regional blueprint and the ways in which these forces define their role in the region. The

second section of this chapter looks at the role of the South African state and non-state actors in the resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis.

This is followed by a conclusion that summarises the major findings of the study.

1.

State- Society Relations and Regional Role:

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study relies on the literature of more than one sub-field of politics. This is consistent with the position of the study between comparative politics and foreign policy. The study engages with literature that attempted to present a state-society explanation of foreign policy. This literature is both indispensable and inadequate. It presents useful insights into the process of interpreting a state's foreign policy choices. It shows that international factors alone cannot explain these choices. However, it has significant limitations. It lacks sufficient analysis of the interactions between states and societies, its definition of state capacity is often problematic, and its contributions are primarily focused on developed countries. Accordingly, integrating the literature on state-society relations, and the developing debate about state capacity and its relationship with legitimacy and democracy, improves our understanding of how domestic politics affects a state's external role. This integration suggests the modification of the definition of state capacity in foreign policy analysis from one based on control and domination to one measured by the degree of engagement and consent. This is illustrated in the first section of this chapter.

In its second section, this chapter defines how the study approaches and evaluates foreign policy. Depending on the review of the different sets of literature, I conclude this chapter by introducing an analytical framework that integrates the state-society complexes into the study of foreign policy.

1.1. State- Society Approach to Foreign Policy: Rethinking State Capacity

How can a state's regional role performance be explained? This question may be more broadly related to another which is: what can explain a state's foreign policy behavior?

The literature provides different answers to both questions. A number of scholars, especially those following the realist tradition, consider that a state's foreign policy can be better explained in reference to external variables. According to them, precedence should be given to the pressures, constraints and opportunities emanating from the international system and the state's interactions with other states (Waltz 1979, 65). What is relevant for the analysis at the domestic level is only a state's configuration of economic, political and military capabilities. Treating the state as an invariant unitary actor, this explanation does not give enough attention to the state's structure and its relationship with societal actors.

Other writings show more interest in domestic politics as explanatory variables for a state's foreign policy. Accordingly, they move towards deconstructing the state's structures and delineating its relationship with societal forces. Some of these writings are state-oriented, focusing on the impact of the political leadership (political psychology literature)¹ or the bureaucracy (the bureaucratic policy paradigm).² These studies have made useful contributions to the literature as they

¹ See for example Hermann et al (2001, 83-131); Kaarbo (1997, 553-581); Hermann and Preston (1994, 75-96).

² See for example Clapp and Halperin (2006); Rourke (1972).

question the assumptions of state rationality and its unitary nature. However, they have been criticised for overlooking the impact of non-state actors. This criticism has paved the way for the emergence of a body of literature that examines the societal determinants of foreign policy, including the impacts of interest groups, the media and public opinion. These writings either follow a pluralist model, or fall within the interest group or, more widely, the social blocs framework. The former sees foreign policy as a reflection of the desire of elites to gain public support. The latter considers this policy as a reflection of the preferences of one group or a result of the corporatist mediation between various groups.¹

But both statist and societal treatments remain one-dimensional. As Rosenau noted, the literature on domestic variables in foreign policy tends to present 'single-factor analyses rather than systematic attempts to link basic societal processes to the behavior of the officialdom' (Rosenau 1987, 2-3). Eventually, as established in the introduction of this study, there are reasons to think that domestic power structures and relationships between states and societies affect the content and conduct of foreign policy. Thus, each of the statist or societal approaches seems to be telling just one part of the story. The question is not only how interest groups or social forces apply pressure in certain foreign policy decisions. Nor does it concern how a state's leadership, or its bureaucracy, determines foreign policy decisions. It is rather how a state's relationships to social actors affect its foreign policy decisions and its role abroad.

¹ See for example Terry (2005); Herman (1993, 23-46); Skidmore and Hudson (1992).

1.1.1. State Capacity in Foreign Policy Literature

The argument that a state's capacity to manage its relationships with social forces at home influences its foreign policy is not new. It was first put forward in research on the historical formation of the state in Europe, in which the competition between neighboring countries forced the state to increase its domestic social control in order to mobilise resources for war. The claim of 'wars make states and states make war' was thus one of the first theoretical assumptions that brought together the state's domestic capacity and its prospects in the regional and international arena (Tilly 1975, 3-83; Lustick 1997, 653-83). Other scholars built on this argument, linking the ability of states to win major international wars, or direct resources to foreign policy implementation more generally, with their political capacity to extract resources from society (Kugler and Domke 1986; Lamborn 1983).

Apart from wars and state formation, a number of scholars have attempted to investigate how states relationships with societies affect both the intensity and the nature of their foreign policies. In the following three parts of this section I review how these scholars define state capacity and how they classify states according to this definition. I illustrate how they link capacity to the state's foreign policy. I finally demonstrate why their conception of state capacity is problematic.

A. How is capacity defined?

One of the most sophisticated attempts to link state capacity to a state's foreign policy was presented by Stephen Krasner and Peter Katzenstein who brought the question of the relationship between a state's foreign policy and its domestic capacity into foreign policy analysis. They presented a number of studies that explored domestic factors affecting the foreign economic policies of industrial states as a way for understanding international political economy.

In their definition of state capacity or strength, controlling society and insulation of the state's institutions from societal pressures are central (Katzenstein 1978, 20; Krasner 1978, 52-3; Krasner 1977, 161-2). For Krasner, a state's capacity can be measured by dealing with the following three questions (Krasner 1978, 60)

- a) 'Can the state formulate policy goals independent of particular groups within its own society?
- b) Can the state change the behavior of specific groups?
- c) Can the state directly change the structure of the society in which it operates?'

According to these criteria, weakest states are those that cannot design and/ or implement independent foreign policies, either because they are completely dominated by pressure groups or because they lack the capacity to come up with policies that transcend deep cleavages in society. On the other extreme, strongest states are those that can, in Krasner's words, 'remake' society by changing institutions, values and patterns of interaction between private groups. This model

only exists immediately after revolutions as the society becomes so weak that it can be dominated (Krasner 1978, 59-61; Krasner 1977, 160-1). Based on this definition of state capacity, Krasner considered former communist regimes to be closer to the strong end of the state strength continuum, third world states to be closer to the weak end and liberal economies to be in between (Krasner 1977, 162).

Krasner's and Katzenstein's contributions have inspired further writings that integrate state- society interactions into explanations of a state's foreign policy. An example is Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry's realist theory of state action. The three scholars adopted a similar definition for state capacity. For them, hard (strong) states are centralised and autonomous while soft (weak) states are decentralised and constrained (Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry 1989, 467-8).

B. How does state capacity affect foreign policy? The foreign policy of soft states

In Krasner's and Katzenstein's contributions, state capacity influences foreign policy by affecting the ability of the state to mobilise material and human resources. This in turn determines whether the state can design and implement its foreign policy objectives successfully. In their analyses, state capacity is a function of two variables that affect foreign policy formulation and implementation. The first is the level of the concentration of power or the structure of the political system. The division of and dispersion of power between different institutions may render the state weak or less capable of formulating consistent foreign policy. This also allows more space for private interests to infuse into public policy making.

Comparison is made between the weak state of the 'society-centered policy' networks of the American system and the strong state in the 'state-centered' networks of the French system (Krasner 1978, 64-6; Katzenstein 1976).

To the structure of the political system, Krasner adds another variable that affects state power; that is the convergence or divergence between the policy goals of public and private interests. If the structure of the system is weak or defused but there is a convergence between public and private interests, the state can pursue its foreign policy goals successfully. This can be measured by the extent to which private actors support the state's foreign policy objectives and the extent to which the state can build consensus over these objectives (Krasner 1978, 66). In other words, the ability of the state to attract support of societal groups can make up for the dispersion of power and allow the state to carry out its foreign policy goals successfully.

Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry's theory offers other dynamics that demonstrate how state officials use foreign policy to achieve domestic goals and pursue domestic means to achieve foreign policy ends. Their theory culminates in defining policy strategies and choices pursued by the state depending on its structural position in relation to its society and to the international system. Particularly important for our purposes, they argue that soft states rely more on external extraction of resources given the high political cost of domestic mobilisation and extraction. In this type of states, the mobilisation of societal resources has a political cost that depends on the extent to which the rents

previously enjoyed by certain groups in society is reduced. Thus, the state may resort as much as it can to external resources to achieve its domestic and foreign policy goals. Domestically, these resources enhance the state's position in relation to its society as it increases the resources available for both coercion and compensation. Further, they reduce the need of the state to extract resources domestically and thus ease the domestic political pressure (Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry 1989, 467-8).

These arguments agree with the analysis of a number of scholars on the link between domestic threats and foreign policy decisions reviewed in the introduction of this study (David 1991, Karawan 2005, Barnett and Levy 1991). These scholars argue that in the third world a state's foreign policy strategic choices are primarily aimed at ensuring regime survival and international alignments are mainly formed to defuse domestic opposition. In other words, states in the third world depend on international resources, and sometimes on international legitimation, to make up for their declining legitimacy and to face waning political support.

These arguments add an interesting international dimension to the analyses of the relationship between domestic capacity and foreign policy; that is the reliance of soft (weak) states on material or non-material foreign resources to achieve domestic and/or foreign policy goals. This raises the question of what implications this reliance may have on the activity, acceptance, and independence of action of these states.

C. A problematic conception of state capacity

Thus, state-society explanations to foreign policy offer a useful framework that highlights the importance of domestic dynamics in the analysis of the state's choices. However, they generally suffer from two main limitations. Firstly, most of these explanations adopt a conception of state capacity that focuses on state's autonomy, predominance and control. They follow a tradition in comparative politics that defines state capacity in terms of the ability of state leaders to use state agencies to ensure popular compliance and formulate and pursue goals which are not simply reflective of, or may come in opposition to, the demands or interests of powerful social groups (Migdal 1988, xiii; Skocpol 1985, 9-12; Nordlinger 1987). In other words, this tradition is about the relative power of the state and societal actors (Krasner 1984, 224-33), or a state 'power over' society rather than 'power to' achieve its goals effectively (Weiss 1998, 29-30).

One of the problems with this conception is that it clearly confuses autonomy and effectiveness. In other words, it does not distinguish between the ability to design and implement policies independently from particularistic interests and the capacity to do both tasks effectively to achieve policy objectives. A related criticism is that this conception equates power or capacity with resource extraction (Weiss 1998, 29-30; Crone 1988, 256). Further, this conception considers relationships between states and societies to be a zero-sum game in which the augmentation of one party's power comes at the expense of the other's. For these reasons, this definition has been criticised and refined by scholars who introduced

a different measure of capacity based on engagement between state and society. There is, thus, a need to review the concept of state capacity in foreign policy literature to keep pace with these debates on state capacity in political economy and comparative politics literature. This will be introduced in the next section.

Another problem with some of the writings that present a state-society approach to foreign policy is its generalisations about third world countries. In Krasner's analyses, for instance, these countries are seen as generally weak in the international arena. This is not only due to their international vulnerability, but also because of their domestic weakness. States in these countries are regarded as mostly unable to formulate a clear set of public goals. Even where they formulate these goals, they face difficulties in implementation. The reasons of this situation are the lack of autonomous, complex and adaptable institutions and the domination of traditional institutions and groups (Krasner 1977, 163-4). As highlighted earlier, David (1991) argues that third world states are generally artificial and their leaders are illegitimate. These generalisations are highly reductionist, blurring interesting differences between developing countries and missing the nuances of the relationships between state and society in specific cases. Accordingly, although the present study's analytical framework benefits from the main arguments and causal mechanisms drawn in the literature reviewed in this section, it rejects their generalisations on third world countries and their definition of state capacity.

1.1.2. Rethinking State Capacity: From Insulation to Engagement

The last section argued that much foreign policy literature adopted a conception of state capacity that is based on domination and control. In comparative politics and political economy literature, however, the criticisms of this conception paved the way for the development of another approach that defines capacity in terms of the ability to engage with society to achieve common goals. The concern of this approach is not the extent to which the state can claim autonomy and predominance. It rather focuses on how the state can perform its functions effectively and the nature of societal structure and of relationships with society that enable it to do so.

Scholars taking this approach do not discard the importance of state autonomy, but doubt the importance of complete insulation from society. They offered different formulas of social embeddedness through which states connect to social groups. Mann's 'infrastructural power' refers to the ability of the state's bureaucratic and political elite to implement its policies by penetrating civil society and ensuring the backing of social groups for its decisions. This power is based on the extent to which the state can 'co-ordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure' (Mann 1984, 190). In his 'state- in- society approach', Migdal argued that capable states are not fully autonomous but socially embedded. He aimed at introducing a more balanced account of both state's capabilities and societal roles in examining the politics of the developing world (Migdal 2004, 3-26; Kohli and Shue 1994, 305-9).

In the same vein, Evans emphasised the state's need to develop a set of social ties with societal groups that provide institutionalised channels for negotiation and accommodation for goals and policies. He maintained that if autonomy is important for ensuring that the state is not captured by individual interests, linkages with social groups is equally important for the state's implementation capacity (Evans 1995, 3-12). Similarly, Weiss argues for linkages with key groupings to mobilise collaboration in implementing the state's strategy and thus interdependence between state and society under state-defined goals. This 'governed interdependence' between state and society ensures the effective implementation of state goals (Weiss 1998, 38-9).

Importantly, there seems to be no single formula through which the state could promote its engagement with civil society. Scholars noted that states should try to broaden the scope of its links to include different groups and classes. Mann argued that performing multiple functions invites the state to build a functional relationship with different groups and balance its relationships with established and emerging social forces (Mann 1984, 196-8). Evans noted that broadening the state's social relations ensures that the power of societal actors will not gradually work for a dismantling of the state's functions. A joint project that attracts important societal actors and brings them together with the state in its implementation may serve this task (Evans 1995, 227-50). In practice, however, state's linkages with societal forces varied widely and have been dependent on the historical context, the stage of development, and the level of organisation and independence of societal interests (Weiss 1998, 37). Linkages that brought

together state agencies and business corporations in the process of industrial transformation in East Asian countries are different from policy networks that connect the public and private sector or the tripartite state-labour-business institutions in some European or Latin American countries (Huber 1995, 173-4).

Studying the variant forms of states' linkages with society is beyond the scope and interest of this chapter. A question that imposes itself is, however, whether state capacity is enhanced under a certain type of political regime. In other words, if state capacity is measured by the ability of the state to engage with societal forces to design and implement policies, are democratic regimes better positioned to enhance this capacity?

1.1.3. State Capacity and Regime Type: The Demobilising Character of Authoritarian Regimes

A common question in most literature examining state capacity is whether there is a certain regime type that enhances this capacity. The ability to link with social groups to achieve commonly defined goals, which is the measure of capacity adopted in this study, has been more linked to democratic societies. This argument has its historical origins in the development of state-society relationships in capitalist democracies. The state's need to extract resources to perform its functions, and the society's claims and resistance against the increasing power of the state paved the way for a bargaining process between the two actors. It is this process that laid down the bases of citizenship rights and state structures in

western democracies (Tilly 1990, 22-8; Mann 1984, 189-90 and see also Dorman 2007, 32).

Even scholars who focus on predominance and control as indicators for state capacity do not disregard the importance of acquiring popular support. Nordlinger, for instance, differentiated between independent and strong states. While the former achieve high degree of autonomy, but low levels of support, the latter hold high levels in both attributes (Nordlinger 1987, 369-70). For Krasner authoritarian states are more able to direct state resources to achieve state objectives. However, democratic states have more capacity to develop state resources in the long run (Krasner 1977, 163, 178-9).

Scholars differ on why and how democratic regimes are more competent. Some scholars referred to the broad societal base that is often, though not necessarily confined to, democratic regimes as a factor enhancing a state's capacity. Crone, for instance, noted that 'moderately, broad-based regimes provide greater flexibility and political capacity with which the state elite can manage economic and political challenges' (Crone 1988, 254). A variation of this argument was presented by Lamborn who argued that the social groups' access to the political system and to the decision making process increases the legitimacy of policies of allocating resources for foreign policy, and thus allows the state to implement these decisions more successfully (Lamborn 1983, 130).

Other scholars refer to the role of democracy in improving the state's capacity to enhance not only financial, but also human, resources. In developing his analysis

of the developmental state, Evans argued that the 21st century developmental state is a 'capacity-enhancing state' that improves human capabilities. Democracy is central to this model of states for two reasons; it ensures effective participation in policy deliberation, which is a capability in itself that the developmental state should work to foster, and it helps identifying the developmental needs of the citizenry through this deliberation (Evans 2010, 37-58). Similarly, Hall argues that democratic societies based on consent generate people's energies while coercion often leads to resistance to the policies enforced from above. In his words, 'societal energy is likely to be enhanced when social institutions are designed so that the contributions made by many can be synthesised and utilised' (Hall 1994, xi).

Thus, the dynamics of democratic regimes enhance the capabilities of societal groups through boosting their contribution in the implementation of state policies. In contrast, authoritarian regimes tend to depoliticise and demobilise social groups. The absence of 'intensive and extensive political mobilisation' is particularly true for stabilised authoritarian regimes. While authoritarian regimes at their formative stages may mobilise mass participation in their structures, they tend to limit this participation at later stages, otherwise they have to transform into either totalitarian or democratic regimes (Linz 1970, 259-60).

The demobilising character of authoritarian regimes rests on their distinct dynamics. These regimes have no clear ideology, which makes it difficult to mobilise social groups or sectors of the population that are often attracted to utopian ideas rather than seeking immediate interests. They may allow the

emergence of interest groups or social institutions, but their rulers ultimately and exclusively define which groups to exist and under what conditions. Leaders of these interest groups are often co-opted so that they become part of the system. Groups and institutions hostile to the dominant social or political order are often suppressed. In other words, authoritarian regimes follow one or both of these ways to control social forces 1) excluding any opportunity for mobilisation by legal or extra legal means; 2) permitting societal mobilisation but seeking to contain it via different controls on societal groups and institutions (Linz 1970, 255-64, Linz 2000, 159-68; Davis 1983, 425-6). Using Schmitter's terminology (1974, 99-105), when authoritarian regimes connect to groups of interest representation, they often follow a model of 'state corporatism'. In this model, interest groups are noncompetitive, enforced on societies from above, dependent, and controlled by the state. Conversely, in democratic regimes, even if these groups are limited in number, uncompetitive or hierarchically ordered, they evolve from below.

All these features of authoritarian regimes hinder the politicisation and mobilisation of social groups to achieve objectives set through negotiation between the state and these groups. As Linz put it, 'without the utopian element, without the appeal to broader constituencies that would require a participatory pluralism rather than the limited controlled, and co-opted pluralism of elites, the appeals based on a consensual, nonconflictive society, except in moments of upsurge of nationalism or of danger to the regime, tend to reduce politics to administration of the public interest and to the de facto expression of particular interests' (Linz 2000, 168).

To conclude, contributions that integrated state-society relations in the study of foreign policy tended to equate state capacity to control and insulation from societal groups. Although maintaining autonomy in relation to societal groups is important, it does not help the state perform its functions and achieve its objectives. Based on debates in comparative politics and political economy, the study thus redefines state capacity to include the ability of the state to connect to, and negotiate policies with, social forces to ensure the successful design and implementation of its foreign policy goals. This conception of state capacity is more connected to democratic regimes that allow a degree of bargaining and are based on social consent. In contrast, the demobilising character of authoritarian regimes means that they are less able to attract the support of social groups or to direct the energies of these groups to the implementation of the state's policy objectives. Now, I move to defining the study's dependent variable.

1.2. Foreign Policy as a Role: Defining Conception and Performance

Foreign policy can be conceptualised and analysed using different approaches. It can be studied as a decision-making process. In this way, a researcher follows the process of foreign policy making and delineates the actors participating in each phase, the instruments they use and the degree of influence they exert. Alternatively, the study of foreign policy can focus on the implications of a state's decisions and actions, or on the motivations behind pursuing a certain policy.

This study approaches foreign policy as a role. In other words, it is not concerned with foreign policy making or the motivation behind a certain foreign policy

decision. It rather focuses on the role played by states in their regional system. This is consistent with the study's objective, which is the explanation of the difference in the performance of regional powers rather than the investigation of a particular foreign policy decision or the regional implications of the foreign policy of a particular country. Accordingly, the study makes use of the concept of 'role' as employed in foreign policy analysis, especially in role theory literature. It is, however, important to emphasise that writings on role theory are believed to be useful for this study in conceptual and organisational, rather than explanatory, terms. In other words, role theory helps in defining role-related concepts and in measuring these concepts. However, it is not a relevant explanatory framework for this study for two reasons; firstly it is state-centric as it ignores the role of societal forces. Secondly it explains the state's performance by referring solely to the conceptions of its leaders without taking into consideration the state-society complexes that shape these conceptions.

According to role theory, analysing roles involves examining two aspects; role conception and role performance. Although these aspects are defined in role theory literature in a state-centric fashion, they can be applied to both state and societal actors.

1.2.1. Role Conception:

This refers to the 'definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to the state [and societal actors], and of the functions, if any, the state [and societal actors] should perform on a continuing basis in the

international system or in subordinate regional systems' (Holsti 1970, 245-6). More specifically, role conception variables can include perceptions of the state's status (its sphere and level of influence), its motivations (isolation versus internationalism, the change it can introduce to the external environment), and issue areas in which it can play its role (political, military, ideological, economic) (Wish 1980, 536-40).

The methodology used to uncover these perceptions is based on the analysis of statements, official communiqués, and speeches of state agencies and societal actors. Depending on these sources, scholars noted that the state can play a number of roles simultaneously in different regions (or sub-regions), according to different issue areas, and in different situations. Role is thus not a fixed conception that is employed in different situations leading to the same course of actions or reactions (Holsti 1970, 253-4).

Accordingly, there is no fixed set of roles from which the state or societal actors select. Scholars differ in the typologies of state, and possibly societal, roles. An example of the roles identified, and relevant to the analysis of the present study, includes regional leadership, in which a state or societal actor commits itself to different sorts of political, military and economic duties and responsibilities towards other states or social forces in other countries in the region. The state or social actor may also present itself as an example by its domestic management and organisation or, more actively, as a defender of a certain value system. Other roles include that of a mediator by which the state or social forces take the responsibility

of resolving conflicts; a collaborator according to which the state or social forces seek to build cooperation and integration with other states or non-state actors in the region; a developer that hold a special responsibility for contributing to the development of a region. Conversely, the state or social forces may opt for a policy of concentrating on domestic economic development, which may lead them to try to link with donors to fuel internal development or isolate themselves in favor of self-sufficiency (Holsti 1970, 261-71; G. Hermann 1987).

In addition to describing the variety of roles spelled out in state and societal documents, one can evaluate these conceptions according to two criteria; firstly, the extent to which there is a clear and structured role conception. As Holsti noted, the clearer and more structured the role conception appears to be, the more active a state, or a non-state actor, is in its external involvement (Holsti 1970, 280-1). Secondly, an aspect that featured clearly in the state-society explanation to foreign policy, the extent to which the state is able to build consensus or attract the support of domestic, as well as regional, actors to carry out this role. As Stein noted, ideas and conceptions are often 'instrumentalised' by both the state and non-state actors to legitimise policies and positions (Stein 2012, 7). It is thus important to analyse how state and social forces rationalise and market their regional role conceptions, and the extent to which these conception converge or diverge.

1.2.2. Role Performance

This is sometimes referred to as the 'role', and can be broadly defined as the general foreign policy behavior of state and non-state actors. This includes

‘patterns of attitudes, decisions, responses, functions and commitments towards other states’ (Holsti 1970, 245-6).

The methodology of studying regional performance is the collection of data about the political, economic, military and cultural involvement of state and societal actors. According to Holsti, judging this involvement can be based on either a quantitative or qualitative measure. In other words, the state can play more than one role or one role actively. The active or passive nature of a certain role is identified depending on the level of external action or commitment associated with it. The role of defender of a value system, for example, can be assumed to be more active than the role of exemplar or model (Holsti 1970, 283-6). Following the same criteria, one can evaluate the change in a state’s role(s) against the level of activity of the new role(s) to assess the extent of rise or decline in the state’s overall role.

Other scholars identify a number of criteria against which regional performance can be evaluated. Resource commitment and independence of action are suggested as indicators for an active and effective regional performance (Wish 1980, 541-3; Walker 1987, 269-83). The last section of this chapter identifies a number of indicators for evaluating a regional performance based on indicators suggested by literature on regional powers, foreign policy evaluation and role theory.

1.3. State-Society Relations and Regional Role: The Analytical Framework

Given the limitations of exclusively foreign policy or comparative politics literature in explaining the connection between a state's relationships with society

and its foreign policy, the study uses the literature reviewed above from the two sub-fields to construct its analytical framework. The framework is built on a deconstruction of the two variables of the study and the delineation of possible linkages and causal mechanisms that can interpret the study's dependent variable.

The framework is based on the assumption that for foreign policy analysts to examine domestic determinants of foreign policy, they need to keep pace with the debates on the relationships between states and societies in other sub-fields, namely comparative politics and political economy. The last two sections illustrated that this is often missing in foreign policy literature. The state-society approach to foreign policy sticks to the conventional definition of state capacity as the ability to achieve autonomy in relation to societal influences. The role theory adopts a state-oriented definition of role conception and performance. But it has become increasingly clear, as pointed out in the first section, that the state cannot, and does not need to be, fully autonomous from societal forces. Further, the state is not a lone player. Some societal forces have an interest and/or influence in the state's regional policies or even play certain roles in the region in their own right. Accordingly, a model that defines state capacity in terms of complete insulation, or only takes into consideration state officials' conceptions is inadequate.

Following the state-society approach to foreign policy analysis, the framework suggests that the ability of a state to mobilise its resources for its regional role depends partly on its domestic relations. This suggests an explanation of the

difference in the role performance of regional powers, which cannot be adequately explained by reference to only international variables or to the capability theory.

1.3.1. Deconstructing State-Society Relations

In deconstructing state-society relations, I focus on state capacity as a concept that lies at the heart of the definition of the state and characterisation of relationships between states and societies. I define state capacity by the ability of the state to work with and through social forces to achieve its goals (Ayubi 1995, 449-50; Hall and Ikenberry 1989, 95).

It should be noted that one has to distinguish between, while analytically linking, state capacity, regime type and the state's societal base (Huber 1995, 165-6). For the current study, state capacity refers to the ability of the state to work with social forces to achieve a more active and effective regional role. Regime type is defined by the nature of the rules that govern the political process and access to power within the state. The societal base refers to the social classes or groups from which the state derives its support.

1.3.2. Evaluating Regional Role: Activity and Effectiveness

The framework's dependent variable, the regional role, includes two levels; the perception and performance. The former refers to the definition of both the state and social forces of their role in the region. The latter is defined as the actions, decisions and policies undertaken by both sets of actors. By adopting these

definitions, I depart from the conceptualisation of role in role theory which was largely state-oriented.

While the regional role conceptions can be evaluated against two criteria, clarity (specificity) and mobilisation (attracting support and building consensus around this conception among social forces and regional actors), evaluating performance is by no means an easy mission. In foreign policy analysis, evaluation is largely described as a 'neglected task'. Greater emphasis has been placed on the explanation rather than the evaluation of the policy (Raymond 1987, 96). As David Baldwin noted, there is a clear lack of common concepts and analytical frameworks to evaluate foreign policy. There is even no agreement on what can be defined as a successful foreign policy (Baldwin 2000, 167). In addition, available literature on foreign policy evaluation focuses on assessing the relevance of a certain policy instruments by reference to their achievement of policy goals. In this regard, effectiveness of foreign policy is judged according to the achievement of objectives with the best policy option in terms of costs (Mangold 2001; Raymond 1987).

Given that this study deals with regional powers, or states that claim to, or are positioned to, play the role of regional leaders, defining the achievement of objectives by the best available means is neither a clear nor adequate evaluative criteria. Additionally, for comparative analysis of regional powers one needs to define a set of common evaluative criteria to be applied to the selected case studies. For these reasons, I relied on literature on foreign policy evaluation and on

regional powers to identify an inter-subjective set of indicators. Combining elements from these studies leads to delineating two sets of criteria; one is centered around role activeness, the other revolves around its effectiveness.

A. Activity

The activity criterion is defined by the state claiming a regional role and using its resources to act in its region. This is sometimes referred to in regional powers literature as ‘power over resources’ (Nolte 2007, 11). Foreign policy scholars use the term ‘commitment’ or ‘participation’ to refer to a similar connotation (Callahan 1982, 177-204).

Activity is measured by the extent of a state’s linkages with the region, or what is sometimes called ‘regional embeddedness’ (Nolte 2007, 11-6). In this regard, the state can direct its resources to play a variety of roles including those of a political nature (mediator of conflicts, protector of peace), those of an economic disposition (contributor to development, regional integrator), and those of a cultural/soft character (defender of a value system, a cultural center).

In addition to the variety of issue areas in the country's regional involvement, the intensity of this involvement also varies. The country may declare clear verbal support or condemnation of others states’ actions, without directing diplomatic, economic, political or cultural resources to address the regional issues. On the other extreme is a course of action that undertakes significant non verbal behavior by committing resources to other states and causes of the region. These resources may be reversible (loans, investments) or irreversible (grants, military

equipments). Between these two extremes lie other policies like exhibiting insignificant symbolic commitments or stating intentions of commitment (Callahan 1982, 177-205).

B. Effectiveness

In addition to activity, measured by the nature and intensity of linkages and commitments, there are a number of criteria that assess what is called here role effectiveness; these are: influence, independence, and acceptance.

- *Influence*

This is also called ‘power over outcomes’. Influence can be assessed by the impact of a state on decisions and arrangements in different policy areas in the region. It can also be appraised by the role the state plays in the definition of the regional developmental or security agenda and its weight in regional organisations (G. Hermann, F. Hermann and Hutchins 1982, 207-22; Buzan and Waever 2003; Nolte 2007, 17).

- *Independence of Action/initiation*

This refers to the degree of autonomy a state is able to maintain in its foreign policy. An independent role according to that definition is one that is not structured by other states or entities, especially superpowers. Independence of action can be measured by the extent to which the state initiates action rather than reacts to other actors’ initiatives. The initiating state, contrary to the reactive one, does not wait for other states to set the stage (Hermann 1982, 244-5).

- *Acceptance*

The third criterion for evaluating a state's role effective is the extent to which it is able to secure the recognition and acceptance for its leading position both by its peers in the region as well as by powers at the top of the international hierarchy. This acceptance also includes the extent to which the state is regarded as a representative of the region's interests in the international arena. Acceptance is considered by some scholars as a feedback that indicates the role's success or failure. If independence and influence evaluate the output of a state's foreign policy, acceptance assesses the final outcome of this policy (Nolte 2007, 17; Hermann 1982, 259-73; Callahan 1982, 259-73).

1.3.3. State-Society Relations and Regional Role: The Arguments

Based on the preceding discussion, the analytical framework of this research suggests that a state's role in its region, in terms of activity and effectiveness, rests on its relationships with society. The study explores the ways and dynamics in which these relationships impact on the roles of two regional powers, Egypt and South Africa.

Literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that state-society relationships impact on the regional role of state and societal actors by defining the opportunities and challenges shaping the state's choice in designing and implementing its foreign policy. This happens in a number of ways.

Firstly, soft states often focus, as Lake, Ikenberry and Mastanduno argue, on the external mobilisation of resources to avoid the high cost of domestic mobilisation and to increase the resources available for maintaining their coercive and/or rentier policies. As David, Karawan, and Barnett and Levy put it, these states are often more concerned with forming international and regional alliances that reduce their domestic threats. In contrast engagement and negotiation with social forces in competent states with democratic regimes legitimate the state's domestic and foreign policies and help the state mobilising domestic resources for foreign policy, as Crone and Lamborn argue.

Secondly, as pointed out by Kranser, a strong (competent) state is able to build consensus over, and attract the support of private actors to, its foreign policy objectives. For our purposes and consistent with our definition of state capacity, this means that a strong (competent) state, that engages social forces by means of negotiation and bargaining, is more able to build consensus on its regional vision, and co-operate with social forces to implement this vision. In contrast, a less capable state, whose relationship with social forces is based on exclusion and demobilisation, fails to achieve this societal support for its regional policies. This may be because national interest is defined exclusively by the state or reflects the narrow interests of a specific social force that control the state.

Following Evans argument for 'inclusive embeddedness', one may also add that the more inclusive state linkages with social forces, the more capable the state is to build a wider consensus. If the state's regional vision attracts the support of limited

social groups, the resistance of other groups will hinder the implementation of this vision.

Thirdly, as pointed out by Evans and Hall, engaging social forces generates their energies and enhances their contribution to the state's foreign policy objectives. In contrast, demobilising social groups, a distinctive feature of authoritarian regimes in Linz's analysis, weakens their role domestically and regionally. This may deprive the state of tools of activity and effectiveness in the region.

In conclusion, this chapter stressed that the increasing connection between domestic and international politics necessitates fostering further connectedness between comparative politics on the one hand, and foreign policy and international relations on the other. It attempted to engage with relevant literature of both sub-fields. On the basis of this engagement, it concluded with an analytical framework that bridges the sub-fields of politics in order to present a more dynamic and inclusive connection between a state's relationship with society and its role abroad. The next three chapters apply this framework to the cases of Egypt and South Africa to explain the extent of activity and effectiveness of the two countries' regional roles.

2.

Egypt and South Africa:

The Politics of Demobilisation and the Politics of Engagement

The study of relationships between states and societies poses a number of questions. These include: what are the institutions that control the state? To what extent are these institutions linked to societal forces? How does the state legitimate its policies? Is the state's policy towards social forces based on engagement and negotiation or exclusion and domination?

This chapter attempts to address these questions as they relate to Egypt and South Africa. It begins by setting the map of power centres and political institutions within the state. It then moves to an examination of the nature of the state and of the dominant features of its relationships with society. It finally demonstrates how these features are reflected in its relationship with selected social forces.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section addresses the questions above in the case of Egypt. The case of South Africa is examined in the second section. The third section compares the two cases and relates them to the literature on relationships between states and societies.

2.1. Egypt: The Politics of Demobilisation

The nature of the contemporary Egyptian state and the mode of its relationships with different social groups have their bases in the post-Nasserite establishment. Since the 1950s state policies have experienced clear transformations from the socialist populist policies of the 1950s and 1960s to the limited or guided liberalisation of the 1970s, and finally accelerated economic liberalisation with pseudo-democratic reforms since the 1990s. However, some of the features of the

Egyptian state have persisted even with this change in policies. The state has kept up some of its patron model dispositions¹. Additionally, the state's reliance on the security apparatus and the intelligence system to maintain its control over society and achieve political stabilisation has continued. The alliance of the state with the military and business has also persisted since the end of the 1970s.

However, the beginning of the 1990s, and more clearly the last decade of Mubarak regime, witnessed a number of changes that affected the character of state-society relationships. These changes revealed the rising cost and unsustainability of the clientelistic policies of the Egyptian state. In particular, I focus on three related changes that characterised the Egyptian state-society relationships in the last two decades.

Firstly, the introduction of liberal economic policies in the 1990s and the acceleration of economic reform in the 2000s changed the terms of the social contract initiated in the 1950s. The Egyptian state was able to pursue its politics of demobilisation and control and maintain the dependence of social forces on it since the 1950s based on its clientelistic policies. The increasing decline of social and economic rights of lower and middle classes with the introduction of economic structural adjustments in the 1990s and the acceleration of these adjustments since 2004 gave rise to a wave of social protest that resisted the

¹ Egypt is described in a number of studies as a patron state because the 'provision of livelihood of citizens and [of business opportunities] falls in the public domain as a responsibility of government'. See Harik (1997), 5 and also Ezz-Edden (2006).

introduction of these policies and endangered the stability and survival of the regime.

At the same time, the longevity of Mubarak's regime and its attempt to maintain stability put increasing pressures on the state and exposed its limited capacity to legitimate its policies through connections with social groups. In other words, the change in the economic and social policies designed and imposed unilaterally by a long serving regime was the first factor that affected the terms of the relationship between state and society. These changes and their social repercussions will be illustrated in the second part of this section after mapping the centres of power in the Egyptian state.

Secondly, although the close alliance between the state and business started from the mid- 1970s, there has been a significant rise in the political role of the business community and an overt use of state agencies by some members of this community to shape policies since the end of the 1990s. To prevent business from forming an autonomous power vis-à-vis the state, the latter has contained the business community in its own structures. This gave credit to the argument that state policies were designed to serve the narrow interests of a particular social group. The dynamics of this relationship between state and business are detailed in the second part.

Finally, whereas the first decade of Mubarak's rule was characterised by accommodation with social forces, especially moderate Islamist forces, the state turned into a more exclusionary and confrontational mode of relationship and

imposed more restrictions on civil and political rights in the 1990s and 2000s. This is clearly reflected in the state's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhoods. The policies of the state towards the Brotherhoods are detailed in the third part.

2.1.1. The Egyptian State: Political Institutions and Centres of Power

The centres of power in the Egyptian state and the nature of the political institutions that govern the relationships between the state and society have witnessed both continuities and changes in the last sixty years. The aim of this section is not to provide an exhaustive account of the development of these institutions. Rather, it briefly introduces a map of the central institutions and establishments through which the current Egyptian state exercises its authority. It particularly focuses on the presidency of Mubarak and his relationship to the party, the military and the security apparatus.

At the top of state institutions lies the presidency, an institution that has kept its dominant authority since the 1950s. There are different explanations of this dominance. A number of scholars explained the dominance of the president in the Egyptian political system by reference to the country's oriental despotic history. According to this explanation, Egypt, as a hydraulic society, needed centralised authority to carry out the mega projects related to irrigation and water control of the Nile (Wittfogel 1957; El-Mikawy 1999, 2-4; Blaydes 2011, 13-4). The noted Egyptian geographer Gamal Himdan agreed with this analysis demonstrating how the Pharaonic system of production based on agriculture and irrigation resulted in an autocratic rule that depends on an absolute personal authority and monopoly of

power and wealth by a single political leader (Himdan 1967, 67-233). This provided a basis for 'political Pharaonism' that continued to characterise Egyptian politics (Hassan 2010, 319).

In addition to these historical and cultural bases, successive constitutions vested a great deal of authority in the president. According to the 1971 constitution¹, the president is the head of state and controls the executive branch and the armed forces. He controls the making of legislations and defines policy guidelines. By appointing and removing the prime minister and council of ministers he defines government policy. As for his legislative authorities, the president has the power to propose, veto and promulgate legislations. He has the right to issue decrees which have the effect of law. In addition, he appoints a third of the members of the Shura (consultative) Council and ten of the members of the People's Assembly. Finally, the president could end the term of the People's Assembly before its five years expire and call for new elections for the Assembly. By and large, the president has enjoyed a great deal of executive and legislative authorities with almost no formal restraints (Lesch 2005, 592).

¹ It is worth mentioning that this constitution was suspended in the aftermath of the January 25th 2011 revolution. After holding a referendum on a number of constitutional amendments in March 2011, the military council, which ran the country's affairs after the fall of Mubarak's regime, declared a number of constitutional principles to govern the transitional period until holding the parliamentary and presidential elections. These principles reduced the presidential terms to two four- year terms, introduced measures that ensure holding free and fair elections, and made it easier for independents to run as presidential candidates. Importantly also, according to these principles, the elected members of the two houses of parliament have to form a committee for drafting a new constitution within six months of their election. At the time of writing, the committee was still drafting the constitution. See Amer (2011)

Not only did the president enjoy unchecked constitutional authorities, he also exercised these authorities for indefinite terms. The introduction of a constitutional amendment in 1980 to allow the president to run for unlimited terms was meant to secure lifetime presidency for the incumbent.

But apart from historical or constitutional means, what allowed the president to consolidate his authority are the weakness of state institutions and the depoliticisation of societal organisations. A scholar has summarised this fact when he noted that 'Egypt remains dominated by depoliticised institutions in which the executive branch, and particularly the president, dominates the political order. Institutions, such as the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and the security services, remain run by individual with extensive patronage networks that depend largely upon the president's will. None of the institutions save the presidency had a mandate to be politically active, compete with the presidency, or debate with other institutions. The executive has nurtured and created depoliticised institutions that accelerate the consensus-making process' (Stacher 2007, 14).

Thus, although the president's position as the leader of the ruling National Democratic Party is important, the power lay more in the presidency and less in the party. The party enforces the presidential power rather than serving as a competing or autonomous power centre (Stacher 2007, 66). As a specialist in Egyptian politics noted, it meant that 'the party belongs to the president' (Dunne 2007). There was thus no wonder that the party was legally dissolved with the fall of Mubarak regime in the wake of the January 25th revolution.

Other central state institutions, including monitoring and auditing institutions that are supposed to oversee the executive, are also linked to the president. These include the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS), which is the main 'data bank' of Egypt and the Central Auditing Organisation (CAO), which is the supreme agency for monitoring spending in the public sector and state institutions (Ayubi 1991, 90-1).

The loyalty of the military, the second important institution in the Egyptian state, to the president owed a lot to the fact that throughout the last sixty years, the president came from the military establishment. It is thus unsurprising that the president and the military generally shared the same interests and views (Cook 2007, 73). In addition, the president employed different means to maintain this loyalty and convergence of interests. The elimination of prominent and politically active defence ministers and the appointment of loyal, apolitical figures was one. President Mubarak used them in 1989 to face the rise of the popularity of his defence minister, Marshal Abdel-Halim Abu-Ghazala. Military officers also enjoy privileges in services like housing and health care (Lesch 2005, 592). Under President Mubarak, the number of military personnel in the ministerial elite and in top positions has diminished. However, former military officers were still granted positions as governors or heads of public institutions.

More importantly, the military was allowed, especially under President Mubarak, to develop its economic activities. The economic wing of the army has been involved in various economic projects from construction to irrigation and food

production. The military has enjoyed a separate budget that is not subject to parliamentary oversight or to the controls of the Central Auditing Organisation (Hassan 2008, 31-2). Although Egypt has embarked on a programme of liberalisation of the economy and privatisation of public enterprises since the beginning of the 1990s, military economic interests remained untouched (Cook 2007, 19-20). The public expenditure for defence has also remained stable in the last three decades in spite of the fluctuations in state revenues and the initiation of peace with Israel (Richter 2007, 184). This means that even in times of declining state revenues, the military still enjoys access to its share of resources (Droz-Vincent 2007, 199).

In return for the privileges enjoyed by the military, President Mubarak sometimes relied on the armed forces to restore order. The military has proved to be reliable in chronic political and social crises. Crushing the riots of the central security forces in 1986 was a case in point. The army was seen as the 'last resort keeper of order and the ultimate guarantor of the existing political regime' (Ayubi 1991, 242-3). However, it was the military's decision to take a neutral position and not to use force against millions of demonstrators that took to the street from the 25th of January to the 11th of February 2011 that forced Mubarak out. With the momentum that the demonstrations gained and their spread across regions, classes, and sects, the army recognised that restoring political order necessitated the ousting of Mubarak. The military was the dominant force in the transitional period and tried to avoid a radical change in the political regime that may affect its long-standing privileges. However, the victory of Mohamed Morsy as the first civilian president

since 1952 in the presidential elections in June 2012 and his decision to force the retirement of top military leaders, including the minister of defence Mohamed Hussein Tantawy, may suggest that civil-military relationship are being redefined in the wake of the revolution.

A third centre of power on which the Mubarak regime depended was the security apparatus. Similar to the military personnel, top security staff enjoyed social and economic privileges. In the past, there has been competition between the army and the police as to which was more able to maintain security and protect the regime. However, the security apparatus gained more weight with the insurgence of terrorist activities in the 1990s (Owen 2001, 203-4). Eventually, it came to be used by the regime to control the activities of the Islamist and secular opposition.

In addition to relying on the military and the security apparatus, the bureaucracy is another central institution that has often been used as a tool for the state's control over society. Through the bureaucratic apparatus, the state has long provided job security in return for political loyalty. Although there is no longer a guaranteed employment policy, the bureaucratic system in Egypt is still huge, inefficient and highly corrupt. Moreover, the transition to a liberal economy has increased the gap between two levels in the bureaucracy; the top bureaucrats, who have managed to build up symbiotic relationships with the private sector and foreign capital, and the lower levels of the bureaucracy (Lesch 2005, 593-4; Ayubi 1991, 101). This latter group started to speak up, calling for the improvement of their conditions, as will be illustrated in the coming sections.

This political order has largely remained intact for the last six decades. At the top of the state structure, President Mubarak maintained his position for three decades. This was aided by his conservative style of leadership. Mubarak obviously avoided the political ventures of President Nasser and the shock therapies of President Sadat. Some analysts, however, saw President Mubarak as a leader who lacks a clear policy line or, in Springborg's words, 'a leader with no vision and no followers' (Springborg 1989, 20).

The longevity of Mubarak's regime and the speculations about the inheritance of power by his son, Gamal, were important factors in the struggle to legitimate the regime and its policies. The rise of Gamal, together with a liberal-oriented elite, to the centre of power in the ruling party since the 2000s created tensions between the supporters of the past social contract, and the rising economic and political forces (Cook 2007, 70). But this does not necessarily mean that there was a split inside the political elite. Eventually, different factions remained tied to the president as a centre of power (Albrecht 2007, 63).

It is true that President Mubarak proposed constitutional changes to allow for multi-party competition. In 2005, he proposed a constitutional amendment that allowed for the first multi-party presidential elections. However, this was not translated into more limited presidential authorities or open political contestation (Schlumberger 2007, 5). The control of the president over the state's institutions, including the security, the army, the bureaucracy and the media, made it difficult for other political forces to compete. As a scholar put it, the changes introduced by

the Egyptian regime did not aim at reforming the system, but rather at adapting it without altering the basic tenants of governance (Stacher 2007, 11).

The longevity of the ruling party and the president in power made it also difficult to distinguish between the state, the president, the ruling party and the government. This impacted on the state's policies and on its relationships with different societal actors. The following sections illustrate this impact with specific reference to the state's policies and its clientelistic relationship with society, its dealing with the rising economic and political power of business, and its approach to the ascendancy of the Islamist movements.

2.1.2. Limited Effectiveness, Increasing Control: The Rising Cost of the Patron State

Since 1952 the Egyptian state has maintained a mode of clientelistic relationship with society to ensure stability and control. This relationship has its roots in the implicit social contract that President Nasser initiated in the 1950s and 1960s. During that period, different segments of society, especially in the lower and middle classes, gained social and economic benefits in return for political compliance. The state used its rentier revenues, represented in foreign aid, revenues from oil exports, remittances and Suez Canal dividends to provide subsidised goods and services and to absorb a large number of labour in the public sector. This entailed the direct intervention of the state in the economy and its control over economic resources and their redistribution. The lower and middle classes were the main beneficiaries of the state's contract during that period.

However, the state also worked to bring together different classes into the centre, creating a broad-based coalition that provided the legitimacy and ensured the stability of the state (Harik 1997, 14; Richards 1991, 172).

The state's provision of these societal benefits was accompanied by tightening its political control over various social groups. In its relationship with societal institutions, the post-1952 state managed to initiate 'a tightly regulated corporatist structure of interest representation' (Heydmann 2007, 32). The aim of this structure was not to integrate these groups but to demobilise and subordinate them to the party and the state (Heydmann 2007, 31-4; Dorman 2007, 45-6). While established to represent different interests, corporatist organisations closely cooperated with the state and depended on it for their own survival.

The last three decades have witnessed two turning points in this model. The first wave of reform, beginning in the mid 1970s, ushered in a process of gradual change and incremental transformation in the state's social and economic policies. The second wave that started in the 1990s and which intensified since 2004 witnessed more sweeping and radical changes. I claim that while some of the central clientelistic features of the state have persisted, state relationship with society has been transforming with both waves. The state capacity to enforce its policies remained limited. The costs of this limited capacity, however, increased with the fluctuation of state resources and the attempt of the long serving regime to survive.

With the first shift in the state's policy and coalition in the mid-1970s the state moved towards liberalising the economy. Under the 'open door policy', the state enforced laws and adopted strategies that aimed at opening up the Egyptian economy to foreign investments and promoting the role of the private sector. The introduction of liberal policies and the rise of the capitalist class changed the realities of socio-economic inclusion of the socialist era and contributed to growing inequalities (Waterbury 1983, 223). However, the basic features of the patron state persisted. The state declared that the new policy was not a departure from the development goals of the revolutionary era, but a different way to achieve the same goals (Dessouki 1981, 410). It continued to use its rents in subsidy payments and public sector employment. This led a number of scholars to argue that changes introduced under the open door policy were cosmetic and did not really represent an ideological break with the past. It is at least true that the state continued to control a large proportion of economic resources and its role has not been seriously reduced (Harik 1997, 19-21; Ayubi 1988, 53).

At the same time, the state continued to maintain a high degree of autonomy from the different social groups, even after the rise of the private sector. Although the state's policy became increasingly market-friendly, it did not actually work to achieve the interests of a single class or social group (Harik 1997, 14; Fahmy 2002, 242-3; Ayubi 1988, 53-4). The adoption of liberal policies was, thus, a matter of state choice rather than a result of pressures from the business community (Karawan 2005, 327; Waterbury 1988, 123).

The attempt of President Sadat to swiftly change the social contract initiated by his predecessor by reducing subsidies met fierce popular resistance. The mass riots that erupted in January 1977 against the increase in food prices were a clear indicator that any sudden change in the mode of state public spending would lead to an uncontrollable wave of social unrest and endanger state legitimacy (Soliman 2006, 24-44; Adams 2000,9).

This lesson was well taken by Mubarak in the first decade of his rule. Throughout the 1980s there were no signs of changes in the state's patron-client relationship with society. Faced with an increasing fiscal crisis, Egypt signed two loan agreements with the International Monetary Fund in 1987 and 1991 and a structural adjustment agreement with the World Bank in 1991. For almost a decade, the state was reluctant to implement some of the elements of the International Financial Institutions' package, especially the restructuring of subsidies and privatisation of public enterprises, for their high political and social costs (Alissa 2007, 4-5; Adams 2000, 10). However, the adoption of the structural adjustment package since the beginning of 1990s has gradually transformed the state's role. The welfare state of the 1960s had actually provided the poorest 60 percent of the population goods and services that they might otherwise not have been able to afford (Waterbury 1983, 213-23). As the economy did not expand rapidly enough to ensure the sustainability of the same policy, the welfare state service provision had to be gradually abandoned. The state remained the main provider of social services. However, the quality of services, like education and health, has been dramatically deteriorating, forcing the poor to resort to

unaffordable private services. In other words, a process of implicit privatisation of services provision has been taking place, especially since the signing of the second IMF structural package at the beginning of the 1990s (Tadros 2006,241; UNDP and Egypt's Institute of National Planning 2005, 3).

The second turn in the state's policy since 2004 was a clear departure from the state's gradual approach to reform. It was motivated by the decline of the state's rents by the end of the 1990s that led to its diminishing ability to buy political compliance (Soliman 2006, 60, 246). This paved the way for the ascendancy of a new liberal- oriented ministerial elite that took over the state and led a process of unprecedented acceleration of reform. New laws were initiated to ease the process of initiating a new business and attract foreign and Arab investments. Major public sector enterprises were privatised. Privatisation deals raised intensive public debates around their economic and social returns and the transparency of their procedures (Al-Naggar 2007). These deals also included the banking sector, more than half of which had become privately owned by February 2008. Subsidies on some items (fuel and electricity) were reduced, leading to sharp increases in their prices. Egypt also signed the Qualifying Industrial Zones Agreement with the U.S and Israel to secure a preferential treatment for some Egyptian commodities in the American markets (Alissa 2007, 6).

To provide the institutional framework for such reforms, President Mubarak suggested a number of constitutional amendments, which were approved in a referendum in March 2007. Neo-liberal policies had been adopted since the mid-

1970s in spite of the clear statement in the constitution that the state's ideology is a socialist one, based on sufficiency and justice and ensuring fairness in income distribution. It was only after more than three decades since the introduction of a free market economy that the constitution was amended to annul every reference to the socialist system and policies. Instead of holding the main responsibility for managing the economy, distributing its outcomes, allocating resources, and providing the social welfare services, the state's role became largely regulatory. References to social equality and workers' rights were, however, maintained. What the constitutional amendments did was actually an institutionalisation of policies that have been practiced for more than three decades.

These reforms were seen as initiating the dawn of a new social contract between the state, the private sector and society (Alissa 2007,7). They introduced an important new phase in the country's political and economic history (Soliman 2006, 29). But importantly, like the first turn of the 1970s, the second profound shift had been top-down. Neither the policies nor the related constitutional amendments were based on a public debate to reach a national consensus. Rather, it reflected the rise of a narrow business elite and a neo-liberal technocratic elite within the ruling party and the state. The indicators of this rise will be detailed in the next section. But it is important to emphasise here that the role of both business and labour organisations in policy formulation remained limited. The Egyptian state continued to hinder the emergence of autonomous social organisations with which it can negotiate state policies by using a mix of strategies of co-optation and coercion. Constraining laws, intervention in the selection of leaders, dissolution

and coercion were used as means of controlling trade unions, political parties and the rising social movements (Fahmy 2002, 255; Soliman 2006, 181; Dorman 2007, 41). Scholars noted that Egypt remained in need of institutions of social partnerships that bring together the state and society and achieve consensus on policies among different actors. As pointed out in writings that link democratic regimes to state capacity reviewed in the last chapter, the existence of these bargaining institutions could have provided legitimacy and reduced the social resistance to economic reforms (Alissa 2007, 8-9; Dorman 2007, 61).

The acceleration of economic reform coupled with the continuation of the state's demobilisation of social groups proved to be costly socially and politically. The rise in the cost of living as a result of the uncontrolled and monopolistic market forces led to popular dissatisfaction. The price of some basic food commodities had increased by about 50 percent between 2007 and 2008 (CAPMAS 2008). Different reports indicated an increase in poverty in the first half of the 2000s. The percentage of the population living below the poverty line increased to 20 percent in 2005 compared to 17 percent in 2000 (UNDP and Egypt's Institute of National Planning 2008, 15, 32, 51, World Bank 2005, i). The lower classes were the most affected by the changes and transformations in economic policy. The inefficiency of the subsidy system and the deteriorating quality of subsidised services badly

affected the poor.¹ What the middle and, to a greater extent, lower classes receive from the state declined.

The increase of poverty levels and the rising inequality of income distribution associated with the economic reforms led to an unprecedented rise of social upheavals since 2005. In the light of the lack of autonomous social organisations that represent their interests, labour and professional groups started a wave of spontaneous protests, including labour strikes and urban demonstrations that erupted repeatedly, but remained disjointed. In some instances, however, nationwide solidarity strikes among workers of the same sector took place. The repeated co-ordinated strikes of textile workers in 2006-2007 in response to privatising this sector's factories were cases in point. To indicate the significant rise of strikes, it is suffice to mention that while the period from 1987-1994 witnessed 131 labour strikes, 756 strikes took place in the year 2007 alone. This wave was unprecedented not only in its intensity but also in its scope. Reports showed that protests covered many sectors and many parts of the country. The demands of these protests have often included an increase in salaries to cope with inflation, improving work conditions, or the rejection of new laws and policies that could lead to job cuts or to annulling past tax exemptions. (Roman 2008, 1-10; Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2008, 423-32).

¹ A number of studies pointed out the fact that the existing safety nets and subsidy programme in Egypt were not designed to efficiently target the poor. Although spending on both items increased in the first half of the 2000s, a large part of resources were directed to energy rather than food subsidies and to households which are not poor. See World Bank (2005), iv and see also the Egyptian National Competitiveness Council (2009, 120).

After three years of sectoral protests another type of protest was taking shape. The 6th of April movement, a new social movement supporting workers rights, called for a nationwide general strike against the deterioration of living conditions, corruption and police brutality. Although security restrictions led to a limited response to this call, thousands of workers in Al Mahalla, Egypt's biggest textile mill, went into demonstrations that clashed with police forces (*The Economist*, April 10th 2008; Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2008, 431).

The state faced these waves of sectoral and general protests with a mix of carrots and sticks. Police targeted the human rights organisations, parallel trade unions and social movements that supported labour strikes or called for the general strike. This was coupled with limited and partial tactical compromises and changes in policy implementation to defuse opposition. Protests and strikes often ended with a compromise in which the state kept excessive labour, increased salaries, or continued the tax exemptions. In response to the April 6th demonstrations, President Mubarak announced in May 2008 a 30 percent increase of salaries for public sector workers (Roman 2008, 6-7; *The Economist*, 11th September 08; Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2008, 423-32). There was thus, no attempt to rethink state policies, strengthen organisations of social representation, or build institutional channels to negotiate policies between the state and social forces.

The preceding review reveals that the patron-client system that gave the state the upper hand in designing and implementing economic and social policies with

limited input from social organisations came under increasing pressures in the last decade of the Mubarak regime. The soft Egyptian state had limited capacity to implement politically problematic policies or provide legitimacy and popular support for those policies (Waterbury 1985; Amin 2009, 11-6). At the same time, rents declined in a time when the long serving regime needed to increase the allocation of these rents to maintain its survival against the rising social unrest. Mobilising rents has become more difficult since the end of the 1990s. Foreign aid as a percentage of Egypt's GDP dropped from around 5 percent in 1994 to slightly over 1 percent in 2000 and Suez canal dividends declined from around 4 percent to under 2 percent during the same period. At the same time, the state was not able to mobilise other non-rentier resources to make up for the decline in rents. Its capacity to enforce an effective taxation system to increase its tax revenues remained limited (Soliman 2006, 60-2).

In short, the decline of rents and unprecedented rise of social unrest against the long serving regime presented domestic threats that shaped the state's foreign policy environment and defined the challenges facing this policy. The ways in which the state used its foreign policy to reduce these threats are discussed in the next chapter.

2.1.3. State-Business Relations: The Politics of Containment

The attempt of the state to maintain its control while building new alliances to extract new resources was reflected in its relationship with the rising power of business since the end of the 1970s. Faced with repeated economic and financial

crises, the state increasingly depended on an alliance with the business community and relied on the social role of this community to compensate for its shrinking ability to provide services (Soliman 2006, 246). In return, it tended to consult with businessmen in designing its economic policy (Ezz -Eldin 2003, 303). However, it also maintained its control over business associations, such as the Federation of Egyptian Industries and the General Federation of the Chambers of Commerce, using a number of means to prevent the emergence of an autonomous business class. These organisations were established by the state in the first place to maintain its corporatist links with the business community. The state appointed the presidents of these associations and a considerable percentage of their executive members, provided them with funding, and required them to report to the relevant government ministries (Fahmy 2002, 165; Soliman 2008, 8-9). Even associations which were established through an initiative by businessmen and which enjoy more autonomy from the state, like the Egyptian Businessmen's Association and the American Chamber of Commerce, are penetrated by the state. The state cooperated only with top businessmen in these organisations, creating resentment among the neglected groups. In some of these associations, board members were also members of the ruling NDP. (Fahmy 2002; Soliman 2008, 9-11).

However, since the end of the 1990s, the political role of the business community has been on the rise. Top businessmen have managed to hold influential positions in the ruling party, the government and the legislative body. Six businessmen joined the government in the cabinet reshuffle in 2006. They all embraced the neo-liberal agenda and were key figures in the 'New Thought' trend led by Gamal

Mubarak. Within the ruling party's top organisational levels, the number of businessmen increased (Fattah and Hussein 2007, 20; Aidi 2009, 184-6). In parliament the number of businessmen went up from 12 percent of the members in 1995, to 17 percent in 2000 and 22 percent in 2005 (Soliman 2008, 7). In addition, businessmen have taken over the presidency of some crucial committees in the two houses of parliament (the committee on budget and planning and the committee on industry).

There were different accounts for the rise of the political role of business and its impact on the state's relationship with business. For a leftist analyst, the business community hijacked the state and was using it to promote its interests (interview with Al-Naggar 2009). For others the rise of businessmen to centres of power was not a sign of state weakness. Rather, it was the state that was accommodating the increasing influence of this social group by granting it political advantages but within its institutions. In other words, if some business figures in Egypt were politically mobilised, this was only done within the state's incorporation policies and institutions (Rutherford 2008, 220). At the same time, the businessmen found their political roles and connections crucial to securing their capitalist gains. Some of them might not even have desired to have political positions, but were tempted to do so in order to ensure the smooth functioning of their businesses (Ezz-Eldin 2003, 260). Connection with the state benefited the business community but endangered its autonomy and ability to aggregate its interests vis-à-vis the state. According to this viewpoint then, it was the business community that was the captive of the state (Lesch 2005, 616; Soliman 2006, 269-70).

A third viewpoint saw the rise of the political role of the business community as a reflection of a rising alliance and a symbiotic relationship between the state and businessmen. Generous donations of businessmen funded the ruling party's presidential campaigns and helped it modernise its structures. Former ministers and military officers served on the boards of private corporations. In return, businessmen used their political influence to protect their capitalist interests (Soliman 2008, 20-1; Aidi 2009, 172-3).

In the final analysis, all these accounts are partly true. It is undeniable that the political influence of the business community was problematic for the state's relationship with social forces in the Egyptian context. The political role of businessmen was coupled with a weak state unable to ensure that businessmen in positions of political power will not use these positions for private gains. Suffice to mention that no law was passed to prevent the conflict of interests of public officials. Further, some business figures who occupied senior positions in the party and parliament overtly used their political role to promote their personal interests in eliminating competition and engendering monopolistic practices. The role of Ahmed Ezz, the Secretary for Organisational Affairs in the NDP and a close associate of Gamal Mubarak, in designing the law for protecting competition and preventing monopolistic practices in 2008 was a case in point (Al-Khawaga 2008).

Importantly also, the inability of the state to engage with different social forces through institutional means of bargaining meant that the debate on socio-economic policies remained within the narrow circles of the ruling elite and their associates

in the top business and political communities. The lack of consultation, even if this consultation would have minimal impact on the final policy, created a rift between state and societal groups (Alissa, 17-8). In addition, it engendered the impression that the state was captured by a narrow, insulated elite.

It is also true that the state's approach towards businessmen and their associations led to the creation of a system of 'crony capitalism'. This was a system dominated by a narrow clique of politically well-connected businessmen who sought rents from the state, and depended on it for their survival without contributing to productive activities or the overall economic development plan. This clique worked towards the instalment of an economic system of monopoly or oligopoly rather than a competitive free market economy. It maintained strong connections with centres of powers in the Egyptian state; the president, the military, and top state bureaucrats. Scholars distinguished between elite business, that was able through its links with top state bureaucrats to install an uncompetitive system in order to secure its rent-seeking operations, and non-elite business (Sfakianakis 2004, 79). They referred to a number of examples where these connections led to non-productive wealth accumulation. To mention a few examples, companies like Coca-Cola and Al-Dikhela (a steel company) were sold to well-connected businessmen with little competition, and thus at low prices. The new owner of the former company resold it after three years at triple the purchase price. The privatisation of the latter company enabled the buyer, who was an influential businessman in the ruling party, to secure a 70 percent share of the steel market. Lands in new cities were also reserved for state-favoured businessmen (Fahmy

2002, 174-5; Fattah and Husseiny 2007, 20; Alissa 2007, 8-9). The state was thus a major source of rents for business.

At the same time, the business community did not represent a unified class pressuring for common interests and thus the state was largely autonomous of this social group. Even businessmen in parliament did not actually represent a single group that acted according to a common agenda owing to the difference in their activities, objectives and interests (Ezz- Eldin 2003, 174-5; Arafat 2009, 69). However, the unprecedented political role of a narrow business circle increasingly endangered the state's relationship with other social forces. In the light of the absence of democratic institutions of social bargaining, the direct involvement of this circle in the making of legislations and policies governing business activities undermined the legitimacy of the state policies (Abu-Amoud 2003, 181). As one analyst put it, the unaccountable role of a narrow oligopolistic business elite did not only passively affect the dynamics of the neo-liberal economy, but also endangered the position of the state as a representative of the national interest (Abdel -Alim 2008).

Finally, what appeared to be an alliance between the state and the business community was actually an uneasy relationship. There were instances where the president admonished the business community for its social irresponsibility and warned it against criticising the state's policies in the media (Alterman 2001, 112-3). The bases of such tensions were the desire of the state to contain the rise of business and the inability of the business community to secure its profits

independently of the state. In a nutshell, the symbiotic relationship between the state and the business community did not mean that the two parties were in full alliance.

2.1.4. The Politics of Exclusion: The State's Relationship with Islamist Movements

While the state gave up part of its economic dominance in favour of the private sector, its political domination continued. Further, scholars have noted that compared to the first decade of Mubarak regime, the state put more restrictions on civil and political rights and showed less tolerance to competing political forces since the beginning of the 1990s (Kienle 2000; Goodson 1997; Perry 2004). In Kienle's words, the growth of the economic market did not entail any restrictions to state power or 'the emergence of a political market' (Kienle 2000, 189).

One clear example of the change in state policy from accommodation to confrontation and exclusion is the state's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhoods (MBs). In the first decade of his rule, President Mubarak tried to ease the tensions created by his predecessor, establish his legitimacy and form a coalition against Islamic extremists. Accordingly, he tolerated the MBs among other moderate political forces. This gave space to the MBs to consolidate their legitimacy (Al-Awadi 2005, 1-2). In the light of the weakness of the societal organisations of interest representation, and the decline of the welfare role of the state discussed in the first section, the MBs have appeared to be the most influential opposition force. They have acted as 'a political and a social

organisation, an opposition movement, and a community welfare agency' (Sullivan and Jones 2008, 59).

Politically, the MBs were outlawed in the Nasserite era and were denied the right of forming a political party under Presidents Sadat and Mubarak. However, they resumed their political activities in the mid-1970s and made use of the state's accommodationist policy toward them in the 1980s. In the first decade of Mubarak regime, they were allowed to run in elections in alliance with other political parties or as independents. The influence of the MBs was extended to professional syndicates where they held executive positions (Al-Sayyid 2003, 9; El-Ghobashy 2005, 377-81).

Socially, the state allowed the MBs' Islamic charities to play a prominent role in providing services at a time when the state welfarist role has been in retreat. For maintaining political stability with the deteriorating economic conditions, the state allowed social networks and benevolent and voluntary associations to act where it was absent (Denoeux 1988, 371-2). Some of these associations and networks were apparently affiliated to the MBs. In this way the demise of the social contract of the 1950s and 1960s and the emergence of a system that neither provides safety nets nor political participation has led to the increase in the mobilisation capacity of the MBs (Ibrahim 1999, 42 and see also Lesch 2005, 584, Tessler 1997, 93-126). The MBs have been particularly active in the areas of health and education, running tutoring centres which offer inexpensive or free classes, hospitals, Qur'anic instruction classes and other activities. The movement has also proved to

be more efficient and swift in service delivery in times of crisis compared to the state. This is one of the reasons why the movement has been able to recruit supporters from impoverished areas (Sullivan and Jones 2008, 59).

By the beginning of the 1990s, the state's concern about the rise of the MBs at various levels started to increase. When the state recognised that the MBs' role in service delivery has enabled the movement to gain political ground and popular support, it started using its legal and security apparatus to put constraints on the role and resources of the movement (El-Ghobashy 2005, 381-2; Utvik 2006, 63-4). In other words the truce between the state and the movement that characterised the first decade of President Mubarak's rule came to an end. The mass imprisonment of the movement's leaders and members on charges of joining an illegal organisation, their prosecution before military courts, and harassment against their supporters in the parliamentary or professional syndicates' elections were repeatedly used to limit the movement's political power throughout the 1990s (Campagna 1996, 278-304; Sullivan and Kotob 1999, 121-2).

An important milestone in the development of the relationship between the state and the MBs was the parliamentary elections in 2005 in which 88 members of the MBs were elected, thus holding almost 20 percent of the assembly's seats. In the light of this ascendancy the state waged a harsher wave of crackdown on the movement to eliminate its power bases. In this wave, the state resorted to new means to root out the MBs. Firstly, it targeted the movement's business leaders charging them with money laundering and funding the activities of an illegal

organisation. By freezing their assets, the state directly limited the financial capacity of the movement (Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2008, 401). Secondly, the constitutional amendments approved in 2007 designed a new electoral system that restricted the ability of the MBs to run in elections as independents and blocked any possibility for the movement to form a political party (Hamzawy and Bishara 2007).

This state strategy was coupled with a media campaign to defame the movement domestically and internationally accusing it of threatening national security and linking it to radical Islamist movements (Mubarak 2007d). In so doing, the state used the increasing phobia in western circles towards Islamist movements to undermine its most powerful domestic opposition force. At the same time, its use of security measures and legal instruments under emergency law has not declined. Prior to the municipal elections in April 2008, the state used its usual policy of detaining tens of MBs members (Arab Reform Bulletin, March 2008).

The state's policy towards the MBs has reflected the exclusionary approach of an authoritarian regime that demobilise social forces and eliminates any social force that could change the political order. In other words, it was an exclusion of a force that proved its ability to mobilise broad-based support and threaten the regime's declining legitimacy. The opening of the space for the political participation of the Islamist movements thus proved to be conditional and limited. As Cook noted, the state's political and military elite accepted their participation 'as long as they do not arrive in numbers significant enough to alter the prevailing institutional setting,

or as long as they suppress aspects of their political agenda in order to maintain their legal status' (Cook 2007, 3).

It was thus little wonder that security spending increased since the end of the 1990s to protect the state against its competing social forces (Soliman 2006, 72-3). The security apparatus proved a remarkable success in performing this function. However, according to the present study's definition of state capacity, the increasing frequency with which the state resorted to this apparatus was a sign of state weakness, not strength.

Importantly also, this policy of exclusion increased the challenges faced by the state. As Al-Awadi noted, although this policy increases the state control, it forces the state to bear more responsibility. If the state eliminates non-state actors' service provision, it should be able to assume their role. The inability of the state to assume this role in the light of economic reform and decreasing resources has created more pressures on the state and threatened its legitimacy (Al-Awadi 2005, 18-9).

2.1.5. Summary

To sum up, the Egyptian state, with its political and military elite, used various tools of containment and exclusion to demobilise social forces and maintain its control over society. Different incentives and means of patronage were used towards different important social groups to maintain stability. The military was granted an economic role and social privileges in return for their role as the

ultimate guardian of the system. The politically-connected business community was granted business and trade opportunities that maintained the monopolistic structure of the economy in return for their financial and political support for the state, and more specifically, the ruling party. Other social forces were excluded and demonised when they proved to be real contestants to the regime. The 1990s, and more clearly the last decade of Mubarak regime, brought changes that revealed the unsustainability of this model. The regime struggled to keep its patronage system intact in spite of the decline in rents. But the acceleration of economic reform led to an unprecedented wave of social protest. The rising political role of some business figures and their use of state institutions to serve their narrow interests increasingly endangered the social contract introduced in the 1950s. This made it also more difficult to maintain the exclusion of politically active social forces.

The foreign policy implications of these state policies of control, containment and exclusion are discussed in the next two chapters. Now I turn to examine the dominant features of the state and its relationships with societal groups in the case of South Africa.

2.2. South Africa: The Politics of Engagement

By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the apartheid regime was coming under increasing domestic and international pressures. International isolation of the apartheid regime, the end of the cold war and its rivalries, rising social unrest and political violence, and economic stagnation shaped the new

international and domestic enabling environment for transition. As Friedman noted, these factors led to a situation where a minority was strong enough to remain in physical control, but the majority was able to prevent the minority from governing effectively (Friedman 1993, 56-7). These factors paved the way for a negotiated transition that allowed the mainstream forces within the liberation movement and the apartheid system to reach a consensus on the rules of the new regime. Thus, in contrast to the revolutionary change that established state control in Egypt after 1952, the change in South Africa was based on a 'negotiated revolution' (Lawson 2005, 21).

The analysis of the post-apartheid state-society complex has thus to be seen through the lens of negotiated transitions. According to Huntington, negotiated transitions happen when 'the dominant groups in both government and opposition recognise that they are incapable of unilaterally determining the nature of the future political system in their society'. While the opposition may not be strong enough to overthrow the government, it increases the cost of non-negotiation by its resistance to the government policies. The increased repression towards the opposition start to intensify division within the ruling elite, increase the possibility of a 'hard-liner takeover of the government', and reduce the government's international legitimacy. This leads the government and the opposition to the negotiation table (Huntington 1993, 152).

These transitions are often negotiated by elites with limited intervention from radical groups or masses that could block the achievement of compromises

(McFaul 2002, 217-8, Bermeo 1992, 276). They are designed by 'democratic moderates' that are willing to offer compromises and strong enough to sidestep those who reject negotiations (Huntington 1993, 158). And because they are negotiated, these transitions are not likely to produce drastic and radical changes. Rather, they produce compromises that distribute benefits and reduce uncertainties about the future regime (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 37-8). Rights enjoyed by established groups, especially property rights of business classes, are not completely demolished. Leftist forces are often 'deradicalised' through the process of negotiation. As Schmitter (2010, 23) noted, pacted transitions 'lock in existing privileges and make redistributive reforms harder' at least in the short to medium run. In return, the 'democratic bargain' results in the inclusion of previously excluded groups as legitimate participants in the political process and even as a ruling force (Huntington 1993, 169-71).

This section examines the model of state-society relations that resulted from this pacted transition in the case of South Africa. It particularly focuses on three features of this model. Firstly, although the ANC has emerged as a dominant political force, the party has largely represented different interests and social groups, whose weight and influence varied over time. Since the end of the 1990s there has been a tendency towards the consolidation of power in the presidency and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few politically well-connected black business figures under the rubric of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). However, the power of the ANC and the de facto accountability of the president to

the party allowed for the change of leadership in protest against this consolidation of power and the alleged decline of policy negotiation.

Secondly, compared to the Egyptian state, the state in South Africa has shown more capacity to implement economic reforms in the face of political pressures. It has managed to hold back government spending, liberalise trade and foreign exchange and privatise state and parastatal institutions. However, it has largely failed to formulate a common project that brings different social forces together. This has impacted on the state's capacity to achieve its policy objectives. This is discussed briefly in the second section.

Thirdly, the post-apartheid state has been successful in linking up with different social forces using formal and informal channels. The ANC started to engage with business organisations in the transition period to rest their fears about the economic policies of the emerging state. At the same time, the ANC's alliance with COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP) has enabled these leftist partners to engage in transition negotiations. In post-apartheid South Africa, different institutions, like the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), have been established to engage organised business and labour, especially in the design and implementation of micro-economic policies. Social organisations have made use of the democratic post-apartheid dispensation to increase their capacities and contribution to policy making. This is discussed in details in the third section.

2.2.1. The Post-apartheid Dispensation: Political Institutions and Centres of Power

A number of power centres have emerged within the post- apartheid state. This section will particularly focus on the ANC, as the dominant party, and the presidency, that was consolidated in Mbeki's era.

Based on its historical role in the struggle against apartheid and its landslide victory in the general elections since 1994, the ANC has secured a dominant political position. These bases have given the ANC a more central role in the country's political and economic system compared to that of the NDP in Egypt. They also indicate that in spite of being praised for its peaceful model of democratic transition, South Africa's post-apartheid political system exhibits continuities from the National Party (NP) rule. Like the NP, the ANC has manipulated political institutions to secure its dominance (Southall 1994, 629-55). This has been done through several ways. Firstly, the Government of National Unity (GNU) model introduced by the transitional government was eliminated giving way to a majoritarian system in the 1996 constitution. Secondly, the cadre deployment policy allows the ANC's organs to deploy its loyalists for important positions within the state's institutions, including parastatals, public service and private sector. The objective of cadre deployment is ensuring the commitment to implementing the party's programmes and the ultimate realisation of the party's principles (ANC 1997a). This system makes the highest levels of the state, party and government 'one employment matrix' (Southall 1998, 451) and 'party-

politicised' the top levels of the bureaucracy (Venter and Theunissen 2006, 83). Thirdly, the constitution allows the party to fill the vacancies of the National Assembly, the Provincial Assembly or the National Council of Provinces with members from the party lists without reference to the electorate (See articles 6, 11 of Schedule 6 of the 1996 Constitution). This has given senior party members, who may hold executive posts, an authority over members of parliaments who are supposed to hold the government to account. Fourthly, the heavy hand of party discipline in parliament has contributed to the dominance of the party (Southall 1998, 454 and see also Seekings 2009, 135-6; Giliomee 1998, 131). Coupled with the weakness of the opposition, this discipline has also affected the vibrancy of parliament deliberations, especially since the end of the 1990s. Finally, as a former ANC's MP noted, the proportional representation system, that demands the candidate's loyalty to the party to get nominated and is often used to dispense patronage, has ensured the dominance of the party, and undermined the role of parliament (Feinstein 2009, 80-1).

In addition to the dominant role of the ANC, the role of the state president is central. According to the constitution, the president is elected by and is accountable to parliament. In contrast to the case in Egypt, there are a number of checks on the power of the executive. However, in practice the dominance of the ANC and the heavy hand of party discipline in parliament concentrated more power in the executive as is the case in the Egyptian model (Seekings 2009, 135-6). More importantly, although accountable to parliament, the president is more

concerned about his relationship and connection with the party (Venter and Mtimkulu 2006, 54).

It is, however, worth noting that the lack of a real challenger to the ANC so far does not necessarily mean the erosion of democracy. Unlike the case in Egypt, the ANC maintains power by winning free and fair elections. Opposition parties are, to use the words of Sartori (1976, 195), 'independent antagonists' that compete with the ANC, especially in local elections, unlike the case in Egypt where the rise of autonomous parties challenging the NDP at any level was unlikely. Thus, whereas Egypt provides an example of one-party authoritarianism, South Africa fits into the dominant, but relatively competitive, party system (Sartori 1976, 222-9, 196-200). This competitiveness is based not only on the presence of opposition parties that openly compete with the dominant party, but also on allowing the emergence of autonomous social groups. Importantly also, as discussed later, the two alliance partners, the SACP and COSATU, present a critical voice from within. Additionally, the constitution has established a number of democracy-promoting institutions, such as the Human Rights Commission, that check the party's policies (Southall and Daniel 2005, 35). It is also worth noting that the success of the instalment of democracy in South Africa has to be seen in the light of transforming the apartheid state. The latter was highly centralised and regulated everything, including people's private life (Arnold 2000, 32). Reversing this history, the post-apartheid political institutions, the foundation of which is the 1996 constitution, ushered in a new democratic dispensation with constitutionally protected rights.

More importantly, it is argued that in dominant party systems the degree of democracy depends on internal party politics, especially the degree of inclusiveness within the party (Boogards 2005, 170). The ANC likes to present itself as a 'broad church' or an 'umbrella movement' that represents a coalition of different interests held together by the symbolism of nation-building and the history of the liberation struggle (Southall 1998, 451; Venter and Mtimkulu 2006, 55-6). Lodge claims that the party represents 'organised labour, black entrepreneurs, an emergent managerial class, rural poor, and a multiracial intelligentsia informed by competing humanitarian and radical traditions', with no single group dominating the party (Lodge 2003, 31). On the contrary, Mhone argues that there is a shift of influence in favour of 'an emerging middle and upper class elite of professionals, entrepreneurs and middleclass workers' (Mhone 2003, 65).

Seekings and Nattrass (2005) presented a more nuanced, evidence-based analysis of the interests that the ANC policies have served since 1994. They generally agree with Mhone that upper and middle classes of professionals and workers have benefited most. The upper class (including managers, professionals as well as households with significant earnings from wealth or entrepreneurial activities) has been better off and deracialised. Semi-professional class as well as Intermediate class of skilled workers and core working class of semi-skilled and unskilled workers have been shrinking in size, but gained more benefits. The class that is increasingly growing and losing is the marginal working class of farm and domestic workers and the unemployed (which the two authors call the underclass).

So evidently the unorganised, unemployed and rural poor are the groups that are left out. Social policies, especially the government's social grants programme, secure the electoral support of millions of poor South Africans to the ANC. But the poor are not sufficiently rewarded for their support for the party (Venter 2006, 8-9). This is because their bargaining powers are obviously incomparable to those of organised business and labour. But at the same time, as demonstrated later, one can argue that the party remains representative of different interests, but these interests are not equal within the movement and their weight and influence are not constant.

One of the tools that exacerbated the difference in the benefits of different groups is the state's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy that was consolidated under Mbeki's leadership. Although the ANC rhetorically defends the transformation to a non-racial society, it has always presented its pro-poor policies as a 'racial redress', thus using the race card for gaining electoral support. The party's BEE policy assumed that race is the main dividing line within the South African society (Seekings and Nattrass 2005, 371). This rested on Mbeki's argument in his speech to parliament on national reconciliation in 1998 that the country 'is divided into two nations. One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal. It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure.... The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the worst affected being women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general and the disabled. This nation lives under conditions of a grossly

underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure' (Mbeki 1998b). In another speech at a conference on nation building Mbeki clearly rejected the view that class, and not racial, inequalities are becoming the defining feature of South African society (Mbeki 2000c).

In theory, BEE policies were aimed at intervening in the economy to counter-balance the highly concentrated ownership of conglomerates by whites and ensure equality and competitiveness (Lodge 2003, 19-20; Hirsch 2005, 196).¹ In implementation, however, BEE policies have benefited only a narrow band of politically-connected figures (Le Pere and Alden 2009, 163-4; Terreblanche 2009, 108; Southall and Tangri 2008, 699-716; M.Mbeki 2009, 66-80; APR Secretariat 2007, 139). A number of ANC senior figures, namely Cyril Ramaphosa, Tokyo Sexwale, Max Sisulu, Jay Naidoo, Wendy Luhabe, Saki Macozoma, Vusi Khanyile, Mzi Khumalo, Patrice Motsepe and Marcel Golding have become major figures in the emerging black business community (Johnson 2010, 381-444). There is thus little wonder that BEE was described as a tool for offering 'state-subsidised enrichment' to emerging black capital (Seeking and Natrass 2005, 345).

And while Mbeki continued to criticise those who were able to accumulate enormous wealth, he defended the way BEE policies were applied. Mbeki accused critics of the BEE as racists who 'stereotype blacks as "inherently amoral and

¹ It is worth noting that by the end of the 1980s eighty percent of the shares in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange was owned by the six big white companies (Liberty Life, Sanlam, Old Mutual, Anglovaal, Anglo-American and the Rembrandt group). See Beinart (2011, 309-13).

corrupt". Apart from what this tells about Mbeki's BEE policy, it also indicated, as Feinstein noted, Mbeki's tendency to use the race card against his critics whenever it suited him (Feinstein 2009, 218).

But this does mean that business was the only beneficiary of the ANC's policies or the dominant social force in its structures. The tripartite alliance that brought the ANC together with the SACP and COSATU provided an institutional channel for the leftist partners to participate in ANC structures and in its consecutive governments. As noted earlier, the two partners provide a critical voice from within that makes up for the lack of effective opposition. They have acted, as COSATU's spokesperson, Patrick Craven claims, as a monitor for the commitment of the ANC to its electoral programme and allied with members of the ANC who agrees with their agenda (interview with Craven 2010).

Theoretically, the alliance, which was formed in 1990, converges on the overarching principles of the 'National Democratic Revolution' (NDR) in spite of differences among the partners on the interpretations of these principles and the ways to achieve them.¹ But the extent to which the two leftist partners, especially COSATU, have been able to benefit from their alliance with the ANC and to influence policy making and implementation is debatable. On its part, COSATU admits that its alliance with the ANC has created the impression that the federation

¹ The National Democratic Revolution is aimed at 'the liberation of blacks in general, and Africans in particular, from national oppression and the promotion of a democratic non-racial, non-sexist society'. The forces that lead this revolution, its basic orientation and its final objectives seem to have been issues of contention between the alliance partners and within each partner. See for instance Nzimande (2006); Southall and Tandri (2006, 118-9).

is a spokesperson for the government. But, it also maintains that its membership in the alliance has enabled it to influence policies in favour of its constituencies (interview with Craven 2010). This was particularly true in drafting new labour legislation and blocking the implementation of unfavourable labour reforms. The position of the SACP is different. Its lack of an electoral support ties it more to the alliance (Southall 1994, 645). Importantly, even if the two partners felt sidelined from deciding on economic and social policies, they believe that breaking with the ANC means allowing the right to dominate the liberation movement (Habib 2004, 99; Southall and Tangri 2006, 117). The high level of overlapping membership between the three organisations makes their split a real challenge to them (Habib 2004, 99). All these factors contributed to the endurance of the alliance despite all tensions.

It is, however, argued that the engagement of leftist partners in the alliance has decreased their chances of advancing alternative policies (Marais 2001, 266; McKinley 2008, 68-89). Instead of COSATU and SACP drawing the ANC to redistributive policies, the ANC has drawn the two partners to neo-liberal macro-economic programmes (Webster and Buhlungu 2004, 236). While trying to influence the ANC's policy directions, the SACP in particular provided most of the key technocrats who managed the neo-liberal policies. The next two sections will discuss in detail COSATU's linkages with the state and the change of its influence over time.

Under Mbeki, the power of the presidency was further consolidated by increasing its budget, staff and policy units. A staff of 341 functioned as a central secretariat of what was called 'an integrated presidency' and aimed at effectively managing governmental affairs together with the deputy president and the cabinet (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk 2006, 289). A Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS) unit was established in the presidency to 'promote better co-ordination and implementation of policy' (Seekings 2009, 137). The PCAS communicates with the cabinet that was clustered into six sectoral committees (social sector, economic sector, investment and employment, international relations and security, justice and crime prevention, and governance and administration). Additionally, a Forum for South African Director Generals (FOSAD) was established to communicate with director generals of different departments who were also grouped into clusters (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk 2006, 289-90).

It is doubtful that this system really contributed to a better co-ordination of policies. What is clear is that by installing this system, President Mbeki increased his control over individual departments and reduced the party's influence in decision-making (Gumede 2007a, 163-4). It is argued that the ANC's Policy Unit had more influence over policy in the first five-year term of ANC's rule compared to Mbeki's era (Booyesen 2006, 178).

This raises a question about Mbeki's style of leadership and its impact on the state's relationships with social actors during his presidency. A number of studies pointed out Mbeki's intolerance of opposition, insulation from advice, and

personalisation of power. Some of these studies attribute this attitude to Mbeki's long experience in the ANC in exile. Exile traditions prioritised secrecy and consultation within narrow circles rather than broad discussions (Guemede 2007, 68; Lodge 2003, 247; Seekings 2009, 138; Feinstein 2009, 110). Others refer to an 'intellectual superiority complex' that led Mbeki to think that he knows what is right for South Africa and accept no public pressure to change his position (Johnson 2010, 243).

In making appointments to senior positions, scholars and observers noted that Mbeki selected like-minded colleagues for positions in different state institution to ensure the implementation of his policies. Those who resisted were isolated (Gumede 2007a, 176). The former ANC's MP, Andrew Feinstein explains how Mbeki was able to maintain his power in the party and the government by noting that 'he used South Africa's restrictive proportional representation system, through which the party leadership determines who is elected to legislatures, and the patronage of jobs and business opportunities available to a head of state to ensure loyalty. Anyone who stepped out of line by contradicting Mbeki's views or challenging his political authority was given short shrift. Dissenters faced either the full force of state power through the fabrication and discovery of 'plots', as happened in the case of Mbeki's closest political competitors, or removal from office' (Feinstein 2009, 250).

Mbeki's style of leadership impacted on the ANC's relationship with organised labour and business as will be illustrated later. But Mbeki paid a high price for

trying to divert power away from the ANC and its partners. The changes that happened in the party and state's presidency in 2007-08 highlight the power of the party in this regard. The ANC's conference in Polokwane at the end of 2007 elected Jacob Zuma as the party's president. For the first time in South Africa's post-apartheid history, and in one of the rare instances in African politics in general, two different figures were at the top of the ruling party and the presidency (Seekings 2009, 149-50). In September 2008, Mbeki was recalled by the ANC's National Executive Committee to resign before his term in office expired. The declared reason for the decision was Mbeki's intervention in a legal case of corruption against Zuma to undermine his competitor. This decision was only made possible by the dominance of Zuma's allies in the NEC after Polokwane conference and their tense relationship with Mbeki for his attempt to concentrate power in his hands.

2.2.2. The Politics of Designing the State's Policies: What Capacity?

Compared to the state in Egypt, the post-apartheid South African state has shown more capacity to enforce neo-liberal policies. At the same time, it tried to accommodate the demands of different social partners. Since the end of the 1980s, the ANC started to soften its economic discourse. Departing from its commitment to nationalisation, it proposed the idea of a mixed economy and growth through redistribution maintaining a high degree of state intervention. This was generally welcomed by big business (Lawson 2005, 132-3; Meierhenrich 1998, 72-3; Hirsch 2005, 31). Eventually, a consensus was reached between business leaders, trade

unionists and ANC officials that an active private sector should coexist with a degree of state intervention (Schneidman 1994, 183).

After ascending to power, The ANC government has had the capacity to impose a neo-liberal macroeconomic policy in the face of increasing societal criticism and resistance. Its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which represented the party's economic programme in the 1994 elections, focused on alleviating poverty, providing services, redistributing resources and promoting people-centered development. However, it included no reference to nationalisation and highlighted the importance of a conservative fiscal policy and of trade liberalisation. Its central concept was, as vaguely put, 'the interdependence between growth, reconstruction and development' (RDP White Paper). Consultations towards the design of the RDP included the two alliance partners and civil society organisations, but also built on inputs from big business and International Financial Institutions (Gumede 2007a, 95-6). Thus, whereas RDP, at least its base document, was not classified by many observers and by the leftist alliance partners as a neo-liberal framework, it allowed the government to implement some neo-liberal economic measures, especially in terms of fiscal and monetary policy (Gelb 2006, 2-3; Marais 2001, 238-9).

In 1996, the government has formally declared the adoption of the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Strategy (Meierhenrich 1998,75-6; Arnold 2000,31). GEAR was described as 'a structural adjustment and stabilisation programme of South Africa's own making' (Mhone 2003, 22). It

emphasised the need for accelerating growth as a vehicle for increasing employment and achieving redistribution. It maintained the emphasis on reducing government expenditure to eliminate budget deficit and the promotion of trade liberalisation. Unlike the RDP, GEAR macroeconomic framework was not open to consultation and was harshly criticised by the ANC's alliance partners. The adoption of a neo-liberal policy thus came in spite of the pressures of the leftist partners and the burden of past injustices.

The adoption of GEAR can be explained in the light of the state's attempt to overcome the economic crisis inherited from the apartheid regime. The economy in the last years of the apartheid was characterised by stagnant growth, inflation, a weak currency, low saving ratios, and declining levels of foreign investments (Gelb 1991,1). These domestic economic conditions, combined with the decline of communism internationally, pushed the ANC government to be decisive in defending its neo-liberal policies in the face of criticism and resistance. The official position was that in order to deal with the state of economic instability, the state was willing to 'take charge and would not allow itself to be buffeted from side to side by the country's most powerful social forces; organised business and labour' (Hirsch 2005, 97). Both Mandela and Mbeki defended the implementation of neo-liberal policies against the ANC's leftist partners (Handley 2005, 228). Mandela clearly spelled out that the ANC would not give up GEAR as a result of leftist pressures. He even asked the leftist partners to split from their alliance with the ANC if they were not committed to the government's macro-economic policy

framework. The state has also worked to insulate technocrats from political pressures to enable them to implement the neo-liberal policies (Hirsch 2005, 167).

Thus, the state's evaluation of the domestic economic situation and its attempt to show its capacity to run the economy and to avoid the pitfalls of other countries that followed expansionary fiscal policies have contributed to the gradual shift towards neo-liberal policies (Hirsch 2005, 5-6). There is also no doubt that consultations with business and international financial institutions have influenced the making of policies. But this does not necessarily mean that business determined policy (Seekings 2009, 141).

At the same time, despite the claim that the state has increasingly moved towards a neo-liberal economy, the state's economic policies have remained mixed. Fiscal conservatism, cost recovery on basic services and trade liberalisation have been accompanied with progressive labour laws and welfare system. Additionally, although the state followed a conservative fiscal policy, spending on education, health, and social security and welfare increased in the first post-apartheid years, with the three sectors absorbing 22 percent, 11 percent and 9 percent respectively of the government's total spending by 1999 (Beinart 2001, 317). By 2009, the state's social transfers had benefited around 13 million poor South Africans (the Presidency 2009, 24).

It remains true, however, that the lack of consultation in the design of GEAR led to inconsistencies in the programme's implementation. Although the leftist alliance partners had no say in designing GEAR, they had a decisive role in blocking its

implementation. The fiscal conservatism and trade liberalisation aspects of the policy were enforced, but reforms to the labour markets were minimal. Trade unions were thus able to obstruct the aspects of GEAR most related to their direct interests. This led to inconsistencies in government policies and contributed to its failure (Nattrass 2001, 5; Seekings and Nattrass 2005, 350). This indicates that building a pro-reform coalition and achieving a consensus among the ruling alliance are important for the successful implementation of economic policies (Edigheji 2007, 19; Gelb 2006, 4). It may also suggest that the influence of COSATU on policy making has shifted from the direct participation in policy design, as was the case with drafting labour laws from 1995-1998, to blocking the implementation of unfavourable policies.

These political blockages from powerful groups, have hindered the successful implementation of reform measures. Neo-liberal policies have not led to their expected outcomes in terms of job creation, redistribution of wealth, and poverty alleviation. Rather they resulted in jobless growth and their distributional effects have been depicted as unsatisfactory (APR Secretariat 2007, 123). The country remains amongst the most unequal in the world. According to statistics from South Africa's Income and Expenditure Survey 2005/06, the poorest 40 percent of households received only 2 percent of income while the richest 10 percent obtained over half (DBSA 2008, 11). The unemployment rate is still very high mounting to 25 percent in 2009 according to official sources (Statistics SA, 2009). The country still suffers from a sharp economic dualism. The developed industrial economy coincides with an underdeveloped informal economy. Bringing the

private sector to engage in efforts of poverty elimination remains a challenge (APRM Secretariat 2007, 123, 159; Venter 2006, 4). After a decade of transition, popular dissatisfaction with the lack of delivery has mounted, giving rise to a number of protests in townships. This has meant that the legitimacy of the ruling party, which has always rested on its historical role as a liberation movement, can no longer be taken for granted (Booyesen 2006, 175).

It was against these criticisms and results of the state's neo-liberal policies that the ANC, especially with the beginning of Mbeki's second term, revived the debate about constructing a 'developmental state'. The idea has gained consensus among the alliance partners. It was originally supported by the SACP in various documents since the 1980s (Edigheji 2007, 3; Saloojee 2009, 41). However, there seem to be different understandings of what a developmental state is and what it takes to be one. While most of the discussions have concentrated on the interventionist aspect of the developmental state, few politicians and scholars examine whether or not the South African state has the institutional capacity to be developmental (Turok 2007; Edigheji 2007, 2-3). So, while there is a consensus on the need to work towards achieving a developmental state in South Africa, the extent to which the capacity of the state's institutions allows for the achievement of this objective is highly doubtful (Southall 2007, 6-9; Terreblanche 2009, 117). This may support the argument that the South African government discourse may raise leftist slogans to satisfy some constituencies within the ANC, without applying much of these slogans in practice (Gumede 2007a, 152; Bond 2006, 18-1).

2.2.3. Business and Labour: Capacity and Relationship to the State

With the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the emerging ANC state tried to ensure its legitimacy by linking up with different forces, including those that it had previously fought. Witnessing the negative impact of apartheid on its profitability, the white business community showed its consent towards transforming the apartheid system. Furthermore, businesses established institutions to ensure their engagement in the making of the new regime. In 1988, for instance, a group of about fifty white business executives formed the Consultative Business Movement (CBM) with the aim of promoting a fair and just society and a successful economy on a democratic, non-racial basis. Big business executives also established the Brenthurst Group to foster dialogue on the economic challenges facing post-apartheid South Africa. But the business community had fears regarding the socialist inclinations of the ANC. To rest these fears and get the political support of the business community, formal and informal interactions between delegations of big businesses and the ANC members took place since the end of the 1980s (Gumede 2007a, 80-1; Taylor 2007, 161-5).

At the same time, the role of the trade unions and the Communist Party within the liberation movement was paramount. The tripartite alliance between the ANC, SACP and COSATU provided a framework for consultation, although not necessarily for reaching full agreement. The ANC's relationships with forces of the left and the right had their impact on its policies even before it took power (Taylor 2007, 165).

Following its installation to power in 1994, the ANC government established formal and informal institutional arrangements that link it to organised business and labour. In 1995, NEDLAC was established to reach consensus on matters related to social and economic policy and to consider all changes to this policy before they are introduced in parliament (NEDLAC Act 1994). NEDLAC is made up of delegations from government, organised business and labour, and community organisations. When NEDLAC was seen to be insufficient, President Mbeki established working groups to bring him together with the representatives of big business, black business, trade unions and commercial agriculture. One of the reasons that working groups with direct communication with the president were established is the state's admission that there is a degree of mistrust between the state and some social actors. The state admitted that there is a lack of trust between the political and economic elite given the racial differentiation between the two groups. On a number of occasions, President Mbeki expressed his disappointment with the economic elite's position on the transformation project and their suspicions towards the state. The working groups were thus established to develop trust and engage economic stakeholders to meet developmental challenges (Hirsch 2005, 169).

Admittedly, these corporatist institutions have been subject to several criticism. Some critics point out that the discussions in these institutions have little impact on policies and that the actors' influence has always depended on power relationships between the social partners. This was admitted by NEDLAC itself. A NEDLAC report point out that there is a propensity to sideline its role on key

matters, and that some legislations and issues are not sent to the council or are sent late (NEDLAC 2009). A representative of the council made the point that the council has been increasingly under-utilised and sometimes not used by the partners as the first resort for discussing policies (interview with Tskosana 2010). It is also argued that the impact of these institutions on policies has especially declined under Mbeki's presidency (Booyesen 2006, 180). Other critics point out that the deliberations in these institutions slow down decision making and government delivery (Gostner and Joffe 2000, 87; Edigheji 2007, 38).

However, NEDLAC and the other consultative mechanisms do provide the opportunity for wide-ranging interventions on the state's policies and a channel through which different actors have their voice heard (Adler 2000, 14; Gostner and Joffe 2000, 78). NEDLAC, in particular is different from corporatist institutions in other countries as it includes representatives of civil society and discusses a wide variety of issues including social policies (Edigheji 2003, 78). Importantly also, these corporatist institutions do not only relate the state to social forces, but also bring these forces together. This stands in contrast to the Egyptian model in which the state opted for dealing with each social force separately and avoided establishing institutional frameworks that bring social groups together in order to maintain its control .

For the parties involved, these institutions remain one of the important platforms for engaging with the state. In assessing the role of NEDLAC after ten years of its initiation, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), one of the leading business

organisations, noted that although NEDLAC has had both its successes and failures, it served the aims of 'promoting successful negotiation and positive outcomes on pressing socio-economic issues.. and increasing stability in South Africa' (BUSA 2005,2). For COSATU, NEDLAC gives workers a voice on major issues that affect them and guarantees that policies are not determined by a single social force, although it sometimes does not perform its function as a platform for bargaining and negotiation (Cherry 2006, 148).

It is also worth noting that consultations with leftist partners in these frameworks have more input with regard to micro and sectoral policies as compared to general macroeconomic plans (Edigheji 2007, 29; Beinart 2001, 298). The example of the negotiation of new labour laws between 1995- 1998 is a case in point. The Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) of 1997, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 and the Skills Development Act of 1998 were described as 'progressive pieces of legislation that represent a major victory for workers and the trade unions' (Edigheji 2003, 80). These laws were tabled by the government for negotiation with labour and business in NEDLAC. In negotiating the LRA, for instance, the initial labour demands included compulsory, centralised bargaining at the national level, the establishment of union-based workplace forums, the prohibition of lockouts, and the allowance of solidarity strikes over individual dismissals. All these demands were resisted by business that argued that the enforcement of these rights would lead to inflexible labour markets and limit job creation. To influence the outcome of negotiations in the Council labour used mass protests and the tripartite alliance.

Although labour did not achieve all its demands, it secured major benefits. The LRA gave leverage to workers in negotiating wages, put restrictions on dismissing workers, protected workers' rights to solidarity strikes, and provided forums for consultations between employers and workers (Seekings 2009, 144; Edigheji 2003, 81). As noted earlier, trade unions were able to block the implementation of radical changes to these labour laws since 1996.

The impact of trade unions on the design of these laws supports the argument that their influence within consultative mechanisms has been issue-dependent and varied over time. It was significant because it related to issues most related to labour interests and came in the first few years of the democratic transition. It also confirms that these mechanisms are only one of the channels of influence and participation. Enhancing negotiating power in NEDLAC depends on the level of pressure COSATU could exert outside the Council, through mass actions or the tripartite alliance.

But apart from the role of these consultative mechanisms, how does the state manage its relationships with the two influential forces; organised business and labour?

A number of analysts argue that the state and business community agree on the basics of the economic policy that South Africa needs, even if each party has different ideas in terms of details. A prominent business leader spelled out this view in 2001 when he declared that 'in terms of sharing a common vision of South Africa's economic future, the relationship between business and government is

unquestionably at its best since 1948' (Taylor 2007, 151). Even the rationale of the implementation of black economic empowerment, which appears to be a reason for disagreement, may not be actually a major dividing issue. As Macdonald argues, both the state and the white business community share the goal of de-racialising capital to legitimise capitalism. In other words, white business got the point that for the liberal economy to be sustainable, it should be inclusive (Macdonald 2006, 154-6; Handley 2008, 71).

Through formal and informal channels, business has exerted an undeniable influence on the state's policies. The Competition Act of 1998 is just one example. Business was able to change the original draft to limit state intervention in issues like merger decisions. In addition, an independent, rather than state, commission was established to monitor the implementation of the act (Edigheji 2003, 90-1).

At the same time, in contrast to the case in Egypt, the business community enjoys a high degree of organisation and autonomy from the state. This owes a lot to the institutional strength of its organisations as well as its long-established history and contribution to the South African economy. It is argued that except for the politically well-connected BEE elite, business in South Africa depends on the market rather than the state for its profitability. Furthermore, business organisations have provided the business community with the means and channels for influencing the state's policies and participating in economic policy making. In this regard, South Africa is considered a successful example of state-business dialogue and coalition functioning to initiate and implement reform compared to

other African countries. Pertinent also is the fact that business organisations have proven an ability to design and present their own policy agendas by which they challenge the visions of other social forces. The introduction of the Growth for All (GFA) document by the South Africa Foundation in 1996 is a case in point. In short, both the state and business community engage in a contestation and dialogue over policy so that the state neither dominates policy making, nor gets absorbed and dominated by business interests (Handley 2005, 234; Taylor 2007, 155; Handley 2008,2).

Some analysts go even further, arguing that the racial differentiation between the emerging political elite and the dominant economic elite is a positive, rather than a negative, force for economic policy-making outcomes. This differentiation, they claim, has led the business community to continue sustaining itself outside the state and rely more on market, and less on the patronage links with the political elite for profit making (Handley 2008, 243).

Hence, state- business relationship has been based on co-operation with each party maintaining a degree of autonomy. But this is not to deny the fact that racial differentiation remains a source of sensitivities and an uneasy relationship between the black political elite and the white-dominated capital. Business policies have sometimes frustrated the state. The relocation of a number of South African big business corporations' headquarters to Europe and North America is an example (Edigheji 2003, 103-4). On the other hand, business organisations are largely organised along racial lines. This has diffused their representation and stance on

corporatist platforms. White and black businesses have sometimes adopted different stances towards issues like the labour laws reform and black economic empowerment (Edigheji 2003, 83).

To sum up, although the state and business share a common vision for economic transformation, their relationship remains problematic. The racial differentiation contributes to the lack of trust. Although it is not the only dividing factor, race divides the business community and thus makes negotiations with business more complicated.

As for COSATU, the largest trade union federation, its relationship with the state is based on a partnership in which the federation allies with the ANC but pressurises the government to implement policies that benefit the federation's constituencies. In fact one of the main reasons of COSATU's strength, compared to trade unions in Egypt, is its 'multifaceted strategy' that combines alliance with the ANC, participation in corporatist institutions, mass action through the mobilisation of workers, and advocacy by co-ordinating with new social movements (Cherry 2006, 144-5).

For some scholars by being incorporated in the state, COSATU and SACP have found themselves forced to compromise their policy preferences without exerting much influence on the state's policies. In other words, members of the two organisations were incorporated in the government to gain the rewards of power in return for their commitment to government policies (Beinart 2001, 299; Webster and Buhlungu 2004, 236). Once the alliance leading members took positions in

national and provincial governments, they tended to tone down the intensity of their advocacy for policy alternatives (Booyesen 2006, 180).

However, it can generally be noted that the influence of COSATU in the tripartite alliance has changed over time. The federation exerted much influence in drafting labour laws and prevented any changes to these laws. Under Mbeki, COSATU, together with the SACP, increasingly expressed their disappointment with the slow pace of change and the tilt towards the right (Lawson 2005, 150). They repeatedly pointed out that the ANC traditions of debate and dialogue had come under attack. Policies were seen as top-down with little input from the partners (Lodge 2003, 253-66). There was thus little wonder that the two leftist partners threw their weight behind President Zuma in the ANC succession battle since 2005 (Seekings 2009, 146).

To sum up, social partners, business and labour, have largely combined the capacity to influence the state's policies with their autonomy vis-à-vis the state. Using corporatist frameworks, like NEDLAC, formal alliances and informal means, they have engaged with the state in negotiating policies. Their impact, however, has varied over time and may have been more tangible in micro-economic policies. But in the final analysis, organised business and labour have largely presented the interests of their constituencies effectively. Large section of the population, the poor and unemployed, has remained underrepresented and far less influential.

2.2.4. Summary

South Africa has witnessed a wave of transformation since the beginning of the 1990s. Although the ANC emerged as a dominant political force, it represented different interests whose power inside the party has changed over time. The South African state has also sought to link with different social forces. Corporatist institutions and informal channels have brought the state and these forces together to negotiate policies. A tendency towards concentrating power and wealth in the hands of a few under Mbeki led leftist partners to join forces to oust him. At the same time, the state has exhibited a capacity to impose unpopular macro-economic policies. But it has been less successful in mobilising the powerful forces around a vision of transformation.

The fact that South Africa's economic transition has been accompanied with democratic transformation has, however, opened avenues for these social forces and other organisations to engage with the state in a dialogue on social and economic policies. The impacts of these challenges and opportunities of the state's relationship with these forces on South Africa's vision of its regional role are discussed in the next chapter.

2.3. Comparative State-society Relations: Egypt and South Africa

How does the model of relationships between the state and society in Egypt differ from that of South Africa? How can the state in Egypt and South Africa be classified in terms of the level of capacity? And to what extent does the literature help in understanding these relationships?

The state in Egypt and South Africa shares a number of commonalities and exhibits some differences. Needless to say, the study of the state structure and its relationships with social forces in the two countries cannot ignore the historical milieu in which these structures and relationships emerged. Major differences between the two countries can only be understood in reference to the nature of the historical transformation. While the change that installed the post-Nasserite Egyptian state was revolutionary, the transformation in South Africa in the beginning of the 1990s was negotiated.

This difference has clearly impacted on defining the centres of power and authority within the state and how these centres connect to social forces. In both Egypt (until the January 25th 2011 revolution) and South Africa there has been a concentration of power in the hands of the president. In the case of Egypt, however, no other centre of power within or without the state was allowed to challenge presidential authority. Even the ruling party was weakened in favour of the president. This stands in contrast with the position of the ANC in South Africa which cannot be bypassed by the president. President Mbeki was able to consolidate the presidency during his two terms in office. However, his attempts to sideline the party and marginalise its role in policy making were increasingly resisted and led him to lose his position as the head of the party and then as president before his second term ended. In short, whereas the party belongs to the president in the case of Egypt, the president has to satisfy the party in the case of South Africa.

This also means that although both Egypt and South Africa have had dominant party systems, the connections that link the dominant party to social interests and the means of dealing with influential social forces are different in the two cases. In both cases the dominance of the ruling parties has made it difficult to distinguish between the party, the government and the state. But the state in Egypt has followed Linz's model of authoritarianism that depends on demobilising social forces to maintain its control. It fitted into the one-party authoritarian model that allows legal competition but with no competitiveness. The state's grip over society may have loosened in the last two decades compared to the 1950s and 1960s. However, the state remained inclined towards co-opting or excluding influential social forces. Coercion and exclusion from the political sphere have been used to control the Islamist opposition. Co-opting rising social forces to prevent them from constituting an autonomous centre of power was another means. This has been clearly used with the business community. At the same time, the business community has used state structures to achieve its narrow interests and influence state policies, something that increased with the rise of the political role of business in the last decade of Mubarak regime.

In the case of South Africa, the ANC has emerged as the dominant party, but managed to represent and maintain links with influential social forces of the right and the left. At the same time, these forces continue to enjoy relative autonomy from the state. The ANC has sustained an alliance with the labour movement in spite of disagreement over macroeconomic policies. In addition, it has developed its relationship with the well-established business community. Both organised

business and labour have influenced the state's policies although their relative influence has varied over time. Although facing different criticisms, corporatist institutions have continued to perform their role in connecting the state to the two groups as well as to other civil society organisations. Patronage and co-optation is used to limit labour movement's opposition to the state's policies. However, organised labour continues to represent a critical voice within the ruling alliance, something that is clearly missing in the Egyptian case. Furthermore, unlike the emerging business class in Egypt which has depended on its symbiotic links with the state to secure its interests, long established business in South Africa maintains a high degree of autonomy from the state.

Thus, according to this study's definition of capacity based on linking up with social forces to legitimate the state's policies, Egypt can be described as a weak or soft state. This weakness led the state to delay the implementation of necessary economic reform. In contrast, the state in South Africa has shown more capacity to enforce economic reform. While it took Egypt more than two decades to accelerate the implementation of the IFIs- imposed neo-liberal policies, it took South Africa only two years after the 1994 elections to move into its domestically designed structural adjustment package. This difference owes a lot to the desire of the non-democratic regime in Egypt to ensure its survival and maintain political stability by sustaining its patron-client model with society. And although the weakness of the Egyptian state has been evident since the 1950s, the costs of this limited capacity have been on the rise especially in the last decade of Mubarak regime. The decline of rents and the acceleration of top-down reform policies resulted in

the rise of social upheavals. These upheavals were led by groups that recognised that there were no independent social organisations to represent their interests and contribute to policy making on their behalf.

In this sense, the authoritarian nature of the regime and the ineffectiveness of the Egyptian state are not unrelated. The attempt of the Egyptian state to demobilise social forces and control interest groups has meant that it has been practically governing through patronage links tied to the state, especially to the president, rather than through consent and bargaining. This ensured regime survival and state control for decades, but proved to be unsustainable. This confirms Krasner's argument that while authoritarian states succeed in insulating from society and mobilising resources on the short run, democratic states show more capacity on the long run.

In contrast, negotiations and bargaining through different channels characterise the relationship with social interests in South Africa. COSATU has used its alliance with the ANC, consultative forums like NEDLAC and mass action to influence the state's policies or block the implementation of unfavourable policies. This has been particularly evident with regard to sectoral policies directly linked to labour interests. Similarly, business is linked to the state through NEDLAC and the presidential working groups. Its organisational capacity has also allowed it to engage in policy making and propose reform agendas.

But neither Egypt nor South Africa has succeeded in mobilising social forces around a common vision for transformation. South Africa has moved at the

rhetorical level to formulate this project by adopting the objective of constructing a developmental state. After the ruptures in the tripartite alliance, this project has gained consensus. It is also a project that has emerged to stay even with the change of political leadership. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that the commitment of the ANC to the developmental state is real rather than rhetorical.

These different modes of relationships between the state and society pose a number of questions as far as the regional policies of the two countries are concerned. These are: how does this difference in the state's relationships with social forces affect the role of these forces regionally? Given the mode of relationships with social forces at home, how do the state and societal forces in Egypt and South Africa co-ordinate their regional policies? Given the challenges in articulating a project of social transformation that gains consensus at home, have the two states been able to articulate and mobilise support for a regional project? The next two chapters examine these questions by linking the state-society complexes illustrated above to the role conception and performance of state and social forces in the two countries.

3.

Egypt:

Deploying a Regional Role for Maintaining Domestic Control

The last chapter illustrated that the state-society model in Egypt has been based on co-optation and exclusion of social forces and the attempt to maintain the state's clientelistic policies. I argued that although this model helped the state maintaining stability and allowed the Mubarak regime to survive for three decades, it increasingly came under pressure with the decline of rents, the acceleration of economic reform, and the increasing demands for political reform. This chapter examines how the state's struggle to maintain this model under these pressures constrained the regional role of the state and social forces at the levels of conceptions and performance.

The first section examines how the state and social forces present and rationalise their roles in the region and use this rationalisation to sustain their legitimacy. It evaluates state and societal regional role conceptions against the two criteria set by the analytical framework of this study, namely: the extent to which the Egyptian state and social forces were able to present a clear conception of their regional roles and the extent to which the state was able to attract the support of social forces at home to a certain regional project or conception. The second section analyses the performance of the state and the selected social forces in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It explains the activeness and effectiveness of the roles played by the Egyptian state and non-state actors in the mediation between Israel and the Palestinians, the reconciliation between the Palestinian factions, and the economic co-operation with Israel by reference to the state-society complexes illustrated in the last chapter. It explores whether or not these actors could have

performed more actively and/or effectively under different state-society complexes.

Through analysing the conception and performance of the state and societal actors I note that; firstly, the domestic constraints related to the rising cost of the patron model and the democratic deficit led the Egyptian state to be more concerned with using regional resources to increase domestic control than with directing domestic resources to regional activism. This has taken a number of forms and has manifested itself at the levels of the state's regional role conception and performance. State discourse has moved from a clear emphasis on Egypt's Arab identity and commitments in the first decade of Mubarak's regime to an emphasis on the slogan of 'Egypt first', which prioritises national interests. This was rationalised by reference to the rising domestic challenges and the need to focus on domestic development. The official discourse also resisted international pressures for democratic reform at home using the pretext of the lack of stability in the region. Intellectuals associated with the ruling party justified these state rationales instead of developing a new regional project.

At the level of performance, Mubarak's regime used its role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to maintain its domestic control and ensure its survival. It marketed peace as the 'strategic choice' and negotiations as the only means to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, even when this means proved to be inadequate. This was meant to maintain Egypt's alliance with the U.S and thus sustain the flow of American aid and, more importantly, support for the Mubarak regime and its

central institutions, especially the military. At the same time, Egypt portrayed itself as an indispensable mediator between Israel and the Palestinians and between the Palestinian factions, showing sensitivity towards the involvement of any other mediator in the two issues. This served the purpose of showing the value of Mubarak's regime in achieving American interests in the region, and also satisfied Mubarak's lust for regional and international prestige. Additionally, President Mubarak ruled out any possibility of military confrontation with Israel on the basis that it would affect the state's resources. He also continued to emphasise that the Palestinian issue was the basic sources of instability in the region and not the lack of democratic governance. He used the western fear of the rise of Islamists, especially after Hamas' rise to power in 2006, to confront the western calls for democratic reform in the Middle East and to increase his control over the Islamist forces at home. By all these means Mubarak used the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to ensure the domestic survival of his regime.

Secondly, the failure to develop a regional blueprint or a conception for a new regional role created a dilemma in Egypt's regional role conception. On the one hand, the official discourse raised the slogan of 'Egypt first', highlighting the cost attached to involvement in regional crises - a cost that Egypt may be unable, or unwilling, to pay. On the other hand, it claimed that Egypt still pursued a leading regional role. State intellectuals admitted that Egypt could have provided a model of political and economic reform without directing so many resources to the region. This indicates that the state's hesitant economic reform and poor democratic record hindered the elaboration of a new regional role conception.

This failure to develop a regional conception was also reflected in the state's policy in the Palestinian issue. Egypt had no strategic vision on how to resolve the conflict, on what the roles of different regional actors in this resolution should be, or on what alternative routes ought to be pursued if negotiation alone failed to achieve its goals. Rather, the policy of the Mubarak regime towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was determined by two contradictory commitments. On the one hand, the regime's commitment towards the U.S and Israel led it to rule out any military confrontation with the latter, show intolerance towards resistance movements in Palestine, and co-ordinate with the U.S and Israel to contain the rise of these movements. On the other hand, its domestic commitment, and more specifically its desire not to be outbid by the Islamists at home, led it to invest much time and effort in the Palestinian question and claim to be the defender of the Palestinian rights. The two commitments were important in ensuring the survival of the regime in the face of the increasing domestic challenges illustrated in the last chapter. But pursuing them simultaneously proved to be a daunting task, especially at the time of regional crises. This contributed to the gradual erosion of Egypt's role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and of its regional and international credibility.

Thirdly, the weakening of social forces by state control hindered the development of a parallel or alternative regional conception and/or project promoted by these forces. Initiatives by business remained confined to supporting the state's regional policies without addressing the obstacles of regional integration. In the case of relationships with Israel, business followed the state's policy, keeping limited

relations with Israeli businesses in the 1980s and 1990s, and developing these relations in the 2000s. This development came, however, to achieve narrow business interests protected by the state, rather than to set a model for economic co-operation that could positively feed into the peace process.

The regional role conception of the Muslim Brotherhoods remained confused, reflecting its duality as both an ideological movement and a political actor. As far as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was concerned, the movement rejected peace negotiations, the recognition of Israel, and the establishment of Palestine on the pre-1967 borders as the bases for resolving the conflict. The movement's political figures and the draft of its party platform indicated, however, that the MBs party would deal with Israel as a fact on the ground and respect Egypt's agreement with Israel. Based on the argument regarding the capability enhancing potential of democratic regimes and the inclusion-moderation thesis, this confusion is partly attributable to the state's exclusion policies towards the movement.

Additionally, the state's relationship with the Brotherhoods at home was a constraint rather than an opportunity for its involvement in the Palestinian issue, especially in the reconciliation between Fateh and Hamas. The state's confrontational approach towards the MBs affected the credibility and acceptance of the Egyptian mediation between Fateh and Hamas in the reconciliation rounds. It also meant that Egypt missed the opportunity of using the MBs-Hamas link to increase its tools of influence in the mediation between the Palestinian factions.

3.1. Regional Role Conception: State Vision and Societal Interests

As noted in chapter 1, the term 'regional role conception' refers to definitions of the commitments, actions, and functions to be undertaken by the state and societal actors in the region. This section analyses how state and societal institutions marketed and rationalised their regional role conceptions by reference to domestic opportunities and constraints. It evaluates the state and societal regional role conceptions against two criteria: clarity and the ability of the state to generate consensus around a certain regional project. It also examines how the conceptions of social forces were affected by their clientelistic relationship with the state, as in the case of business, or by their struggle with the state, as in the case of the Muslim Brotherhoods.

Admittedly, neither the state nor societal groups speak with one voice. Various interests and discourses can be observed within the same group. However, there are general tendencies and orientations within each group as they share some principles. In the next section I delineate the central institutions in the Egyptian state whose orientations were important as far as the state's regional role was concerned. I then move on to examine how these institutions defined Egypt's role in the region. This is followed by an examination of the visions and interests of the two selected social forces, the business community and the MBs.

3.1.1. The Institutional Framework: who conceptualises Egypt's regional role?

In examining the state's foreign policy vision, the conceptions of certain central institutions are worth underlining. This section particularly focuses on the centrality of the role of the president, the interests of the military, and the rising weight of the intelligence institution.

Given the power enjoyed by the president, as illustrated in the last chapter, analysing the discourse of the political leadership becomes crucial to an understanding of Egypt's regional role conception. It is in the light of this power that the president's choices were portrayed as Egypt's national interest and any opposition to these choices was seen as an attack on Egypt itself (Ayubi 1991, 312-3). Foreign policy was the *domaine privée* of the president and his close associates. The making of foreign policy decisions was based on an 'authoritative decision maker' who sometimes consults with a group of advisors. Those advisors are selected and dismissed by the president and have no independent power base (Dessouki 2008, 182).

As far as Mubarak's style in pursuing the country's foreign policy is concerned, it is worth highlighting that although he was conservative and lacked a clear policy line, he liked to be thought of as a wise leader whose advice was carefully listened to by other regional and international powers. The former American Ambassador to Cairo, Margaret Scobey, has neatly captured this orientation in her confidential cables to the Obama administration. In a cable sent to the White House prior to

Mubarak's visit to Washington in 2009 Scobey portrayed Mubarak as 'a tried and true realist, innately cautious and conservative, [having] little time for idealistic goals' (U.S embassy cables, May 19, 2009). In a previous cable, Scobey highlighted how the Egyptian leadership liked to feel appreciation from the American administration, hated to be ignored, and often behaved as a 'stubborn and recalcitrant ally' to stress Egypt's role as 'the indispensable Arab state' (U.S embassy Cables, February 09, 2009).

Mubarak hardly trusted foreign policy bureaucrats, even his close advisors. Scobey also rightly noted that 'Mubarak has no single confidante or advisor who can truly speak for him' (U.S embassy cables, May 19, 2009). The same assessment was made by Mubarak's political advisor, Osama El-Baz, and documented in Heikal's recent biography of Mubarak (Heikal 2012). A senior Egyptian diplomat remarked that there was little, if any, communication between the president and foreign policy bureaucrats. Under this condition, these bureaucrats had to 'guess' from the confidential circulated memos what the president thought and how he wanted them to act (interview with Shokry 2012).

Accordingly, the state's vision on issues of national security and Egypt's regional policies remained elitist, if not personalistic. General foreign policy guidelines or crucial foreign policy decisions were not publicly discussed, and sometimes not even explained (Korany 2006b, 33). This led some intellectuals, even those associated with the ruling party, to criticise the Egyptian state for not initiating a

serious and open dialogue on policies of national security (Said 2006 and see also Lesch 1995, 226).

Although their role in foreign policy may be significant, an exploration of the visions of institutions like the military and the intelligence services is difficult given the closed nature of these institutions. However, the broad external interests and engagements of these institutions are worth underlining. In this regard, it can be argued that the military generally followed the policy preferences of the political leadership. It is not, thus, surprising that the army which fought four wars against Israel to defend Egyptian and Arab lands did not oppose the signing of a bilateral peace treaty with Israel, to the exclusion of other Arab countries at the end of the 1970s. The military defines its role as defending the country's lands from external invasion and maintaining peace by participating in peacekeeping operations in some countries like Sudan. However, it also emphasises that the Egyptian military is one that is committed to nationalist goals and loyal to the political leadership. In dealing with regional crises, the military confirms that it does not involve itself in risky regional ventures into which some countries and movements in the Arab world would drag it (Ayubi 1991, 319).

Importantly, given that the majority of the annual American aid to Egypt is directed to the military, the institution has a clear interest in sustaining its strategic relationship with the U.S (Cook 2007, 23). The provision of American military equipment and joint training programmes to the Egyptian military has consolidated this interest (Springborg 1987, 8). Since the beginning of the 1980s, the Egyptian

military has taken part in, and hosted, the biennial Bright Star exercise, designed to increase the security and defensive capabilities of the Egyptian army and enhance military co-operation between the U.S and its regional and international allies. In this sense the military in Egypt has become, as the former American Ambassador to Egypt, Francis Ricciardone, put it, part of the 'post-Camp David military paradigm' that served its interests for the last three decades. During his visits to Washington and meetings with American officials in Cairo, Egypt's former Defence Minister, Field Marshal Tantawi sought assurance that the American administration would not condition or reduce military assistance to Egypt in the future, emphasised Egypt's value to U.S interests in the region, and pressed for the resumption and elevation of joint military training exercises (U.S embassy cables, March 16, 2008 and December 21, 2008).

Maintaining a strategic relationship with the U.S thus united the political and the military elites and, further, helped the former to respond to the latter's demands. As Droz-Vincent puts it, referring to the Egyptian army, 'a military with an interest in new technology and modernisation also has vested interest in maintaining close foreign relations, especially with the U.S, and thereby contributes to political stability. Rentierism and foreign military aid greatly help the regimes respond to their armies' desires and thus enhance legitimacy' (Droz-Vincent 2007, 201).

The intelligence apparatus and its former head, Minister Omar Soliman, played a rising role in designing and implementing Egypt's regional policies, especially in

the last decade of Mubarak's regime. This role was not confined to issues of a security nature, such as borders' security, but extended to other political and strategic issues. It was a role that made Soliman a possible successor for Mubarak. General Soliman was especially involved in managing the intelligence co-operation with the U.S and Israel and in Palestinian reconciliation process.

A senior diplomat indicated that the rise in the role of the intelligence establishment sometimes came at the expense of the Foreign Ministry (interview with Al-Ashaal 2009). This is in spite of the fact that Egypt has a long-established foreign policy apparatus (Ayubi 1991, 315). The weight of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in policy making has changed over time depending on the personal impact of its head and on its relationship with other state institutions. In the mid-1990s, for instance, the Foreign Ministry, under Minister Amr Moussa, regarded itself as an institution whose role was not only to implement decisions, but also to participate actively in the making of these decisions (Abdel-Nasser 2004, 121). However, this decision making role was to decline in favour of the intelligence apparatus. Also, with the increasing weight of the economic aspects of foreign relations, the ministry of trade and industry took on its responsibility for developing Egypt's trade and investments links.

In addition, the rising liberal elite in the ruling party with its 'New Thought' brought about some foreign policy trends that were reflected in the party's policy documents. This elite included a number of intellectuals who joined the party, especially after the establishment of the party's policies secretariat headed by

Gamal Mubarak in 2002. Evidently, those intellectuals did not present a new conception of Egypt's regional role based on its domestic strength or a regional blueprint that promoted Egypt's national interest. Rather, they presented a rationalisation of the state's domestic and foreign policies (Stacher 2007, 139-42). As far as foreign policy was concerned, they emphasised certain principles and objectives such as the prioritisation of economic interests and the importance of increasing the country's integration into the world economy.

Against this backdrop, the next section analyses the state's discourse as presented in the speeches of the political leadership, the statements of state institutions responsible for foreign affairs, especially the Foreign Ministry, and some documents of the ruling party. Interviews with diplomats and leading members of the ruling party complement these sources and reveal some of the dilemmas of the state's regional role perception.

3.1.2. The Development of Egypt's Regional Role Conception under Mubarak: Revising Egypt's Foreign Policy

Analysis of the state's official discourse in the three decades of Mubarak's regime reveals a change in the degree of emphasis on Egypt's Arab commitment and in the nature and aims of its regional activeness. Detailed analysis of the state's discourse and performance in the 1980s is beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, worth underlining the bases of Egypt's regional policies and of its role conception during that decade to highlight the changes in this conception during the three decades of Mubarak leadership. President Mubarak summarised these bases in

a speech to the Egyptian parliament in 1987, stating that Egypt defines its role in the Arab world as based on its 'effective contribution in preserving the national security of the Arab world, protecting the region's strategic interests and promoting co-operation and solidarity among its nations'. This role, according to Mubarak, was to be achieved through 1) developing a common strategic framework that would define regional security and the ways of preserving it; 2) maintaining the independence of the Arab collective decision; 3) respecting regional agreements and charters including the Arab League charter and the Arab Common Defence Pact; 4) defining the bases of relationship between the Arab world and neighbouring countries of the Middle East to block regional expansionist projects and the attempts of domination and control by these countries; 5) achieving solidarity among Arab nations and resolving Arab disputes peacefully and 6) nurturing Arab economic resources and promoting development and economic co-operation between Arab countries (Mubarak 1987a).

This conception reflected Egypt's attempt to improve its Arab relations after years of isolation following Sadat's peace agreement with Israel and thus to establish the legitimacy of the new regime and president. In returning to the Arab regional system, Egypt proposed itself as a 'stabiliser', seeking to keep good relations with all countries in the region and mediate conflicts between Arab states (Al-Shafei 1990, 150-1). Although the official discourse stressed that Egypt's Arab relations serve its national interests, it indicated Egypt's readiness to contribute to regional security in co-operation with other Arab countries. It also highlighted that the country's commitment towards the Arab world preceded, and did not contradict, its

commitment to peace with Israel (Ibrahim 1989, 79). This was a clear departure from Sadat's policy at the end of the 1970s, which had raised the slogan of 'Egypt first', prioritising Egypt's relationship with the U.S and Israel over its Arab relations, waging media campaigns against Arab regimes, and even raising scepticism about Egypt's Arab identity (Ibrahim 1989, 71-3; Said 1989, 109-125; Abu-Taleb 1989, 56-62).

But importantly, Mubarak was largely committed to Sadat's foreign policy orientation, especially in relationship with the U.S and Israel. In fact, this commitment was one of the reasons that Sadat had appointed Mubarak as vice-president in 1975.¹ And while calling for the development of a strategic framework to preserve Arab security and define Arab relations with non-Arab countries in the Middle East, Egypt did not elaborate this framework or define its role in its development. Its role remained vaguely defined as one of contributing to regional peace and Arab solidarity (Ibrahim 1989, 82-3). In practice, this was translated into the Egyptian military support for Iraq in its war against Iran from 1980-1988. In spite of Egypt's economic hardship, the Egyptian government accepted deferred payments in its arms deals with Iraq (Abu-Taleb 1989, 66).

This decade of regional activism faced a challenge with the economic crisis at the end of the 1980s. Dessouki explains how Egypt had to adapt its foreign policy to face this crisis, noting that 'the decline in oil prices affected Egypt adversely and forced it to follow inward-looking policies and resort to heavy borrowing. Foreign

¹ This was revealed by Sadat himself in a discussion with the leading Egyptian journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal. See Heikal (2012).

policy decisions came to the rescue of the economy. Mubarak's decision to participate in the international coalition to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation resulted in a financial bonus for Egypt. The U.S took the lead in relieving Egypt of half of its debts, followed by European and Arab states. Overnight, Egypt's external debt decreased from some \$44 billion to almost half this sum' (Dessouki 2008, 173).

In addition to debt forgiveness, Arab Gulf countries resumed their aid to Egypt as a sign of appreciation to the latter's role in the two Gulf wars (Ezz-Eldin 2006, 56). More importantly, the Egyptian government made use of its role in the war to reduce IFIs' pressures for economic reform, and thus to maintain the clientelistic policies illustrated in the last chapter. Evidence shows that Egypt convinced the U.S that economic reform would affect its stability and, thus, its ability to contribute to regional security. The U.S, in its turn, used its influence in the IMF to soften the economic conditionalities associated with loan agreements with Egypt. IMF officials admitted that the U.S Executive Director at the fund put pressure on the funds' officials to accept a lenient agreement with Egypt in 1987 and 1991 to preserve the fragile Egyptian regime. This culminated in the resignation of the Policy Development and Review Department (PDR) in the IMF in protestation of the American political intervention in Egypt's agreements (Momani 2004, 889-94). Thus, the Egyptian state used its regional role to serve domestic ends because it was reluctant to 'risk political stability for economic reform' (Dessouki 2008, 173).

The state's tendency to use its regional role to sustain its domestic policies has increased in the last two decades in the face of subsequent regional developments.¹ Both official and associated intellectual discourse tended to rationalise and justify the state's regional role conception by reference to domestic constraints, focusing on mobilising external, including regional, resources to maintain domestic control, and instrumentalising foreign policy to increase the regime's legitimacy. As a noted scholar puts it, Egypt has revised, without necessarily re-orienting, its foreign policy in the last two decades in response to domestic challenges (Dessouki 2008, 192). Mindful of the costs of a more active regional role and the need to divert more resources to domestic development, Egypt's political elite seems less ready to bear the responsibilities of such a role. In this sense, Egypt's continued reluctance to implement political and economic reforms and the increasing social upheavals and economic demands at home have served to justify the call for a focus on domestic development. This is illustrated in the following sub-sections.

A. Domestic pressures and regional conception: the return to 'Egypt first'?

As established in chapter 1, soft states tend to depend on external extraction of resources to avoid costly domestic extraction. Given their limited capacity to legitimately extract resources from society and their dependence on diffusing rents

¹ Developments include the start of the Arab-Israeli peace process in the beginning of the 1990s and its deterioration since the end of that decade, the second oil boom in the end of the 1990s, the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S in 2001, the western plans for democratic reform in the Middle East, the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the two Israeli wars in Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza 2008/09.

to make up for the lack of representative institutions, these states focus on how to use external resources to increase domestic control. This trend was becoming increasingly clear in the Egyptian state's discourse by the end of the 1990s and the 2000s. Leadership speeches and foreign policy statements claimed that Egypt was the hub of the Arab world and a regional leader. The state's discourse also repeatedly dismissed claims that Egypt's regional role was in decline as fake and illusive (Mubarak 2008a; Mubarak 2006b; NDP 2005; NDP 2008a; Abul-Gheit 2008e). However, the official discourse made it clear that Egypt's external relations and regional role were not ends in themselves, but means to achieve national interests. It sometimes defended the slogan of 'Egypt first', that was raised by Sadat in the end of the 1970s, to indicate that Egypt's national interest should always take precedence (Mubarak 2008b).

In defining national interest and security, economic security has gained increasing attention in the official discourse. President Mubarak emphasised that Egypt's foreign policy is shaped in the light of a domestic environment characterised by an imbalance between its limited resources and increasing demands. Its regional policies must thus be pursued in a way that secures and increases these resources (Mubarak 1999, 2010b). He further referred to the tension between Egypt's domestic and regional aspirations on the one hand and its limited resources and developmental challenges on the other hand. To ease domestic economic pressures, Egypt must, according to the official discourse, improve its economic relationships with the world and integrate into the world economy to secure the flow of its basic imports of food, energy and technology, increase its exports and

attract foreign investments (Mubarak 2008c, 2008d, 2004b; NDP 2008b, 1). Moreover, it must avoid any confrontation with its development partners (Said 2007). In its relations with the Arab world, Egypt, according to official discourse, must give priority to making use of the financial surpluses created by the oil boom in the Gulf countries by attracting Arab investments. It must also facilitate the movement of goods and workers across borders and the transfer of remittances of workers in Arab countries (NDP 2008b).¹

To market this conception, the discourse of the ruling elite and its intelligentsia claimed that Egypt's regional policies had become pragmatic and no longer ideological. It emphasised the domestic achievements gained by Egypt through its foreign policy. These achievements include halving its foreign debts and setting up a developed infrastructure (Mubarak 2008c, 2005). This discourse also highlighted the fact that active engagement in the region means mobilising domestic resources for foreign policy instead of directing them towards domestic development (interview with Al-Feki 2009; Dessouki 2008, Olwy 2008). It stressed that Egypt would not be dragged into regional conflicts at the expense of its management of domestic challenges (Mubarak 1999, 2000). Mubarak made it clear that 'no regional actor could distract Egypt from its domestic concerns' (Mubarak 2010a).

¹ Figures for trade and investment shed light on the level of Egypt's interests with western countries compared to the Arab world. In terms of trade, Egypt's top trade partners are the U.S and the European Union. Together, they absorb around 65 percent of Egypt's exports and provide around 55 percent of its imports. Arab countries come in fourth place, preceded by Asian countries, in terms of trade flow with Egypt. Arab investments in Egypt have dramatically increased since 2004. Yet the Arab share of foreign investments in Egypt has fluctuated, at 25 percent in 2006/07 and 17 percent in 2007/08. See Central Bank of Egypt (2009).

Moreover, a number of intellectuals associated with the ruling party brought the debate about Egypt's identity back to the forefront of the foreign policy discourse, especially at times of regional crises. They indicated that there was no societal agreement on which identity should take precedence; the national/Egyptian, the Arab or the Islamic and thus no consensus on the nature of the role that Egypt should play. In light of this disagreement, they claimed that policy makers were responsible for defining what promotes the national interest according to their determination of what identity should take precedence in a specific situation (Dessouki 2008; Al-Feky 2003, 28-9).

Linking foreign policy to national interests and defining these interests in economic terms may not be peculiar to the Egyptian case. However, this stressing of Egypt's contested identity, distancing of Egypt's foreign policy from the country's historical ideological orientation of Arab nationalism, and emphasis on the heavy cost of an active regional role contradicted Egypt's claim of regional leadership. This dilemma will be discussed in some detail below.

B. Rejecting International initiatives for Arab democratic reform: State or Regime Survival?

One of the basic features of the state's discourse was the rejection of external initiatives for democratic reform in the Arab World. This was especially the case after the Bush administration proposed its Greater Middle East Initiative at the G8 summit at Sea Island in 2004. The initiative put democracy and good governance at the top of its priorities and called for supporting the establishment of democratic

institutions (Sharp 2005). In response to this initiative and to the Bush administration's repeated reference to the urgent need for democratic reform in the region in the wake of the September 11th attacks, the Egyptian state's discourse considered conditionality and the initiatives to impose reform on the Arab countries to be a central challenge to national security (NDP 2004). National interest was defined as maintaining an 'independent national will' in the face of pressures and conditionalities (Mubarak 2007b; 2006a). As noted earlier, Egypt's military resisted any attempt from the American administration to condition military aid on political reform. Leadership and foreign ministry statements often argued that foreign intervention to impose democracy had led to infighting, devastation and bloodshed, in reference to the case of the American intervention in Iraq in 2003. Accordingly, this discourse declared the rejection of any American or European attempts to interfere in Egypt's political reform process. Furthermore, it rejected any guardianship concerning human rights questions, and maintained that democracy in Egypt should be 'home-grown', and should take into consideration Egyptian society's 'conditions and idiosyncrasies' (Mubarak 2008b, 2008d, 2004b; Abul- Gheit 2008d; Zaki 2008, 2007).

Interestingly also, in confidential correspondences with the American administration, President Mubarak expressed his view that democracy does not fit the countries of the region, especially the multi-ethnic states. He advised the Bush administration to forget about democracy and install a 'fair dictator' in Iraq after its invasion (U.S embassy cables, May 27, 2008).

Admittedly, rejecting foreign intervention to enforce democracy is not peculiar to Mubarak's Egypt. What is worth examining here is the elevation of the pressures for democratic reform in the Egyptian discourse to the status of a top challenge to national security. One member of the ruling party and the foreign policy establishment explained this position by reference to the Egyptian state's historic sensitivity towards interference in its internal affairs. This sensitivity is based on a perception that Egypt is often targeted by western powers which try to find means to pressure its positions (interview with Al-Feki 2009). It can also be argued that this preoccupation with non-interference in Egypt's domestic affairs reflected the nature of the Egyptian state, highlighted in the last chapter; the Egyptian state, basing its relationship with social forces on domination and control, was expected to fiercely resist any external pressures that threatened this control.

C. Regional instability: a pretext for domestic control

In line with its increasing emphasis on economic security, the state's discourse saw peace in the Middle East as a driving force for development at home. But more important for our analysis, the state's discourse made the progress towards reform, especially in its political aspects, dependent on achieving regional peace and stability. This was one of the means by which the state used the regional environment to maintain its domestic control. The NDP's document on national security states that 'the success of reform efforts is inseparable from establishing a regional enabling environment to sustain these efforts. This entails increasing the regional and international efforts to resolve the acute regional conflicts...The continuation of some of these conflicts and the deterioration of others create

tensions, violence and instability, which represent a real challenge to implementing the reform plans and programmes' (NDP 2004, 11-3; and see also Mubarak 2008d, 2006c, 2003). The message was that it was not the issue of reform that should take precedence in the agenda of western powers towards the region, but the injustices of the region, at the top of which comes the Palestinian issue.

This message was also directed to the domestic constituency to indicate that Mubarak's regime was able to maintain stability amid regional tensions and that any reform must be gradual so as not to endanger this stability. President Mubarak consistently, especially with the increasing domestic pressures for political reform, made the point that reforms must be installed 'bit by bit', otherwise they would lead to instability and the frequent change of governments (Mubarak 2004a; Mubarak 2004c).

To sum up, the state's leadership and the ruling NDP used regional instability as a pretext for its slow progress in political reform. In addressing both international and domestic constituencies, the official discourse claimed that stability, rather than democracy, should come first and that the region, including Egypt, was not ready for democracy.

D. Egypt's Regional Role Dilemmas

The above conception of Egypt's regional role as reflected in the state's official discourse raises a number of dilemmas. The first is the contradiction in the state's

perception of its regional role. The political leadership, senior diplomats and ruling party leaders pronounced Egypt as the hub of the Arab world and the region's leader. Yet they raised the slogan of 'Egypt first', maintained that a leading regional role was not an end in itself, and argued that Egypt had voluntarily opted to focus on its domestic challenges. They claimed that Egypt exerted significant influence in the region. At the same time, they admitted that Egypt's domestic constraints and the change in the regional setting after the Gulf oil booms did not permit it to play the same role that it had played in the 1950s and 1960s.

A renowned academic considers this contradiction in the official discourse a reflection of the intellectual stagnation or laziness of the ruling elite in Egypt. For him, the political elite and its intellectuals were not able to develop a new role conception able to cope with domestic and regional transformations. In his analysis, this was the main reason behind the decline of Egypt's regional role (interview with Korany 2009). A noted Egyptian diplomat expressed partial agreement with this account, considering Egypt to be still in search of a new regional role (interview with Ghali 2009).

However, my discussions with senior diplomats and intellectuals of the ruling party reveal that the problem lies elsewhere. Members of the ruling party and its intelligentsia admitted that Egypt needed to find new bases for its regional role. For them, Egypt could have presented a new model to the region by building a modern and democratic society and embracing a project of economic and political reform (interview with Al-Feki 2009 and with Said 2009). This model obviously

does not entail committing many resources to the region. The question then becomes whether the state's features and its relationship with society allowed for designing and embracing a project of political and economic reform that could present a successful model to the region. In other words, the problem was not in the lack of intellectual or material resources to design and perform a new regional role. Rather, it was in the state's lack of the capacity and willingness needed to embrace a model of domestic transformation. In a nutshell, the state's reluctance to implement political and economic reform at home hindered the transformation of its regional role.

The focus on the use of the regional variables to maintain the state-society complex may also explain the lack of a blueprint or grand strategy presenting Egypt's vision for the region, demarcating the map of interests and the sources of threats to Egypt's regional role, and determining the possible alliances that Egypt should build to support that role. The aspects of the state's discourse illustrated above were disjointed views and stances, mostly presented by the president, top officials and ruling party members and its intelligentsia. According to this discourse, as Egypt prioritised its national interests, it adopted an issue-based approach. This meant that it dealt with regional issues as they arose and aligned with other states in the region according to the issue at hand. It sometimes even bypassed other central players in the Arab world and coordinated with other Middle Eastern and international players, where this would enable it to deal with the regional challenges and achieve its national interests (interview with Abdel-Halim 2009; Auda 2008).

At the same time, focusing on Egypt's domestic challenges by raising the slogan of 'Egypt first' could not stand as a sufficient determinant of foreign policy because it failed to respond to a number of questions. These include: are Egypt's interests detached from Arab interests, or are they inseparable from those interests as the official discourse in the 1980s claimed? What region are we speaking about? Is it the Arab world, which is not united around a common interest but divided into sub-systems (the North African states, the Gulf, and the frontline states which are the countries with common borders with Israel)? Or is it the Middle East in which other countries compete with Egypt in various aspects (Israel with its military superiority and scientific power bases, Turkey with its military power and modern model of democracy, and Iran with its military and nuclear aspirations)? And if it is the Arab world, what should be the mode of relationships between the region and its three central neighbouring countries (Israel, Iran and Turkey)? These are the questions that an Egyptian regional blueprint should answer.

3.1.3. The Business Community: A Limited Regional Conception

In the last chapter I demonstrated that the state has faced the rising power of the business community by co-opting its top leaders into the state's structures. This section claims that the state co-optation of business impacted on the latter's foreign policy orientation. Similar to the case of domestic politics, the state allowed international and regional business connections to develop as long as they did not challenge the dominant order. Accordingly, business has tried to make use of the favourable international environment and its foreign relations to push partial economic reforms at home without changing the basic tenets of state-business

relations. Importantly also, business has not developed a conception of the role that Egypt could play in the region and its contribution to this role.

There are few sources from which one can uncover business links to the region or the stances of business towards regional issues. Business organisations reports and mission statements and interviews with businessmen are used here to shed light on business' role conception. Examination of these sources shows that the Egyptian business elite generally shared the state's view that Egypt should prioritise integration into the world economy and the promotion of Egypt's relationship with western powers.¹ The business community has seen its external engagements as an indispensable asset in achieving these priorities (interview with Abdel-Nour 2009). New institutions, like Egypt's International Economic Forum, have been established with the aim of promoting Egypt's integration in the world economy on favourable terms. This relates to the fact that economic liberalisation has increasingly linked the interests of the Egyptian private sector to the western liberal countries, especially the U.S. The private sector has benefited from the financial and technical support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has directed part of its annual aid to the development of this sector (Ezz- Eldin 2006, 63-5; Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2007, 298).

¹ See for example the objectives of the international co-operation Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt http://www.amcham.org.eg/events_activities/committees/Committe_Details/Inter_Cooperation/?Y=10 and the mission statement of the Egyptian Businessmen's Association, <http://www.eba.org.eg/Main/Default.aspx>

For its part, the state's conception of the external role of business was confined to using the business community to improve Egypt's image as a reformer and a centre for attracting investments. The state's dependence on the business community in its foreign policy has significantly increased since the mid 1990s. The state has been keen on having businessmen in its delegation during official visits to donor countries (Ezz- Eldin 2006, 82). But this does not mean that business was allowed to shape or challenge the state's foreign and economic policies. President Mubarak warned businessmen about publicly commenting on government economic policies during their visits to donor countries. During the 1990s business organisations declined from using their communications with the IFIs to put pressure on the Egyptian government to accelerate its economic reform. Rather, their position was supportive of the government's economic policies against IFIs prescriptions (Ezz-Eldeen 2006, 70-7; Arafat 2009, 69).

As for their relationship with the region,¹ business organisations have not developed a blueprint for regional integration independently or in co-operation with the state. A few, short-lived regional initiatives have been proposed by Egyptian business organisation in the last decade. But two remarks can be made about these initiatives. Firstly, they came in response to changes in the policies of

¹ It is worth noting that a small percentage of Egyptian investments are directed to the Arab world. The official sources indicate that outflows amounted to \$4,565 billion in 2007/08. The Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation estimates Egypt's outward investment flows in the Arab countries in 2007 to be \$434.8 million. There are a number of joint Egyptian-Arab projects in various areas especially real estate, banking and financial services. The giant Egyptian telecommunications and construction group, Orascom, for instance, has operations in Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia and some Gulf countries. See: Central Bank of Egypt (2009) and AIGC (2007, 188); Orascom Telecom (2008), and Orascom Construction Industries (2008).

donor countries, especially those of the U.S, and aimed at developing Arab economic relations with the U.S and at integration into the global economy rather than at promoting inter-Arab economic relations as such. The establishment of the Arab Business Council (ABC), affiliated with the World Economic Forum, in 2003, and its economic reform initiative in 2004, for example, came after, and was actually seen as part of, the Bush administration's Greater Middle East plans. The initiative tried to link up with American endeavours to push economic liberalisation, privatisation and free trade in Arab countries. Similarly, the Arab Global Forum Initiative proposed by Egypt's International Economic Forum was established following President Barack Obama's visit to Cairo in June 2009 with the aim of making use of the change in the American leadership to foster Arab relationships with the U.S. The conceptual framework of the initiative is based on linking the promotion of the role of the private sector in the Arab world with creating business partnerships with the U.S and western corporations.¹

Thus the Egyptian state and private sector have had a stake in fostering co-operation with the Arab world. However, Egypt's business links with the Arab world remain within the framework of integrating Egypt and the region into the global economy rather than fostering an independent project for regional integration.

¹ See the Economic Reform Priorities in the Arab World: A Private Sector Perspective, <http://2005-2009-bmena.state.gov/rls/55664.htm> and the conceptual framework of the Arab Global Forum Initiative, www.arabglobalforum.com.

Secondly, and more importantly for the purposes of this study, these initiatives do not address the basic dilemmas of the Egyptian domestic and foreign policy. Although they touch upon questions of governance including transparency and fighting corruption, they avoid discussion of state control of societal actors, including business. This is in spite of the fact that the state control has, as argued by scholars of the Middle East, contributed to hindering Arab regional integration projects. This control has rendered organisations of Arab integration state-centric and made the development of business and economic relations dependent on the fluctuations of political relations among Arab leaders (Fawcett 2009, 196; Ibrahim 2003, 103).

To sum up, the foreign policy interests and conceptions of the state and private sector in Egypt have converged. However, the influence of the conception of the Egyptian business community in the state's foreign policy under Mubarak should not be exaggerated. It remained confined to supporting, rather than determining or changing, the state's policies. In this sense, the Egyptian state's control and containment of the rise of business limited the impact of business on foreign policy and the independence of business' foreign engagements.

3.1.4. The Muslim Brotherhoods' Regional Role Conception: The Repercussions of Exclusion

The last chapter argued that the state's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhoods moved from accommodation in the 1980s to confrontation and exclusion in the last two decades. This section demonstrates how the MBs rationalised their foreign

policy discourse. It argues that the MBs had a confused conception that reflected its duality as an ideological transnational movement and a national political actor. It demonstrates this confusion by reviewing the writings of successive Supreme Guides and the movement's electoral platforms. This is complemented by interviews with two senior members of the movement. The contradictory position of the MBs is explained by reference to arguments on the capability enhancing potentials of democratic regimes and the moderating impact of the inclusion of ideological movements in the political process.

For its part, the state's discourse portrays the movement's external links, and even its very existence, as a threat to national security. In an interview in 2007, President Mubarak put it bluntly 'the outlawed Muslim Brotherhoods are a danger to Egypt's security because they want to enforce a theocratic state. If this Islamist movement came to power in Egypt as happened in neighbouring countries [in reference to the case of Hamas in Palestine], Egypt would be isolated, businessmen would flee the country, foreign investments would stop and unemployment would increase. Egypt would be totally isolated from the world' (Mubarak 2007c). This quote indicates how the Egyptian state used the international and regional environment to serve its exclusionist policies towards the Islamists at home. It used the threat of international isolation to raise the fears of domestic constituencies towards the rise of Islamist forces, and used the argument of the theocratic state to raise the suspicions of western powers towards these forces.

This state discourse reflected the state's attempt to demonise and isolate the Islamist opposition. However, it is also true that the dual character of the MBs has created a dilemma for the movement in many issues including its foreign policy orientation. Ideologically and organisationally, the Brotherhoods' movement in Egypt is the mother organisation of a transnational Islamist missionary movement. The movement was established in Egypt in 1928 and has since then gained support and set up branches inside and outside the Arab world. The international organisation for the MBs was formally established in 1982 to represent an overarching framework that gathers together the MBs' national organisations. The objectives of the international organisation include spreading the word of Islam through missionary activities in all Muslim and non-Muslim countries, liberating the Islamic countries from any foreign occupation or control, and establishing an Islamic state that applies the rules of Islam domestically and spreads its principles externally (The Charter of the MBs' International Organisation 1982).

At the same time, the movement is an active national political actor. Although they have organisational links with different branches outside their countries, MBs organisations have their own national agendas and adopt different stances on the same issues (Abdel-Meguid 2009, 231-2). In Egypt the movement had made itself part of the political landscape since the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s by running in elections. This has driven the movement to be more pragmatic and focused on developing a national agenda. However, the duality of the movement between national activism and transnational identity has remained in its visions and policies.

The transnational ideological nature of the movement is especially reflected in the writings of the movement's ideologues and its successive Supreme Guides. These sources stress a number of issues as far as Egypt's role in the Arab and Islamic world is concerned. Firstly, according to the movement, there is a western conspiracy against the Islamic Umma and the Arab world. The founder of the movement, Hassan Al-Banna, argued that 'western powers do not miss any opportunity to stab [Arab and Islamic countries] in their backs or slap them in their faces. They focus their efforts on fighting the Arab countries, supporting the falsehood, fight the truth, opposing justice and sustaining oppression' (Al-Banna 1948). More recently, the seventh Supreme Guide, Mahdi Akef, spoke about a 'neo-colonial project' targeting the identity, moral principles, and the material resources of the Muslim Umma. This project manifested itself in the American invasion of Iraq, the western support to the Zionist project in Palestine, and the enmity towards resistance movements in the region (Akef 2007).

The way to confront this western conspiracy is, according to the MBs, consolidating Muslim and Arab integration and solidarity. The prominent MBs ideologue Sayyid Qutb defined the main mission of the Islamic Umma as the termination of different forms of colonialism to achieve the objective of establishing an Islamic state based on social justice. Writing during the cold war, he warned the Islamic countries against allying with the communist east or the liberal west, encouraging these countries to form a third independent bloc (Qutb 1952).

Secondly, an interesting aspect of this western conspiracy against the Arab and Islamic countries, according to the MBs viewpoint, is allying with the dictatorial ruling elites in these countries to achieve western interests in the region (Akef 2007; El-Hodaiby 1997, 21). For the MBs, antagonism towards the idea of the Islamic state brings western governments and Arab regimes together. This antagonism also forces western governments to turn a blind eye towards the Arab regimes' violations of human rights which mostly target the Islamists. These violations in turn hinder the enforcement of justice and the advancement of Muslim countries (Akef 2009 and see also Mousa'd and Ahmed 2000, 172-3). The movement thus holds the west responsible for the persistence of authoritarianism in Egypt and other Arab countries and considers the lack of democracy and of respect of civil liberties as obstacles towards the progress and integration of Arab and Islamic countries.

Thirdly, based on the above, the movement sees the role of Egypt as the hub of the Arab and Islamic world that has always led the march of independence, renaissance and resistance against western threats. Thus, Egypt has a responsibility to unite the Islamic world and consolidate its organisations. The movement calls for the consolidation of Egypt's domestic power to enable it to play an effective regional and international role. This role is defined as one that coincides with its Islamic identity, responds to international challenges and protects Egypt's national interests. These interests are inseparable from those of the Arab and Islamic nations (Akef 2004; MB 2007, 24 and see also Mousa'd and Ahmed 2000, 147-

73). There is, however, no reference to how Egypt can strike a balance between its national interests and its commitments to the Arab and Islamic world.

At the same time, the movement's discourse reflects the vision of a political actor that tries to keep channels of communications open with all regional and international powers. This is particularly evident in the movement's electoral platforms. The movement's electoral platforms and the first draft of the MBs' party platform issued in 2007 called for the establishment of good relations with all the countries of the world based on mutual respect and interest. They declared the movement's respect for the basic rules of international law and for all treaties signed by Egypt. On regional politics, they gave priority to the Palestinian issue and the western military presence in the region. However, they also called for the consolidation of the role of regional organisations, including the Arab League and the African Union, and for the enhancement of relations with the Arab and African neighbouring countries (MBs' electoral platform 2005; MB 2007, 28-9).

Furthermore, some of the leading political figures of the movement have proposed initiatives for dialogue with the western powers. To mention one example, Saad Al-Katatny, the former head of the MBs' parliamentary bloc, proposed a vision based on reforms from the two sides. For their part, according to Al-Katatny, the Islamists need to revisit their views which see the west as anti-Islamic, present a clear vision about how the western presence in the region would change if the Islamists were to come to power, and reach out to the west to explain their views on issues of its concern. In return, the west must respect the choice of the people in

free elections regardless of the outcome, realise and respect the cultural differences between the Islamic world and the west, and present a clear vision on what it expects from the Islamists (Al-Katatny 2006).

Thus, there is an uncomfortable duality between the movement's identity as a transnational Islamic organisation and its role as a national political power. The former invites the movement to raise ideological slogans that stress Egypt's commitment to the causes of the Islamic Umma. The latter leads the political figures of the movement to propose pragmatic initiatives and defend Egypt's national interests. How can this duality be explained in light of the state's confrontational approach towards the MBs? Would the movement have been able to elaborate a more comprehensive and practical vision for Egypt's regional role if it had been included in the political process?

According to a number of Middle East scholars, Islamists who are integrated within institutionalised politics and organised as political parties seeking electoral gains tend to moderate and develop their rhetoric to appeal to a broader constituency. According to these scholars, political openings and opportunities provided by the state trigger political learning on the part of Islamist movements (Tezcur 2010; Schwedler 2011; Yadav 2010; Wickman 2004). Amr Al-Shobaky, an expert on the Islamist movements in the Middle East has reached a similar conclusion on the basis of a comparison between the MBs in Egypt with other Islamist movements in the region, especially those in Turkey (interview with Al-Shobaky 2009). He demonstrates how the development of Islamist parties in

Turkey since the 1970s has gradually secured increasing popularity for the reformist wing that has adopted practical and pragmatic views. In foreign policy, this reformist wing transcended the conspiracy discourse that stressed the clash between the west and Muslim countries to develop a conception based on 'critical engagement' with the west. By contrast, it is noted that the demobilisation of both secular and Islamist forces in Egypt hindered the healthy democratic competition that triggers the development of these forces' ideologies (Al-Shobaky 2006, 129-62).

This relates back to Evans' and Hall's arguments about the contribution of democracy to the enhancement of the capabilities and generation of the intellectual energies of social forces, in contrast with the demobilising character of authoritarian states illustrated by Linz. As far as the MBs are concerned, scholars note that at times when the middle generation Brotherhoods started articulating a moderate political agenda, the state cracked down on the movement. In 1995, the state imprisoned figures of the movement including Issam Al-Irian, Mukhtar Nuh and Abdel-Moneim Abul-Futuh, who had been developing a moderate agenda since the beginning of that decade. It is therefore unsurprising that Al-Irian lays down the blame for the confusion in the movement's foreign policy at the state's doorstep (interview with Al-Irian 2009). When a group of middle generation members of the MBs broke away from the movement, forming Al-Wasat (the centrist) Party in 1996, the state refused to legally recognise it. Thus, the state's approach not only hindered the development of the movement's political platform,

but also weakened the moderate voices inside the movement (Rutherford 2008, 163-4; Wickham 2004, 222-3).

This is not to negate the responsibility of the MBs for developing a grand strategy that deals with the challenges facing Egypt's role in the region and goes beyond regarding all the region's problems as the result of a western conspiracy. Scholars who emphasise the importance of political opportunities for moderating the Islamists' rhetoric also highlight the impact of the ideological flexibility and intellectual resources of the movement on that moderation (Tezcur 2010; Schwedler 2011). As one scholar pinpoints, the problem may not be in the contradiction between the MBs' political and missionary roles; at the end of the day, the movement defines its role as comprehensive, encompassing both aspects. The problem lies in the inability of the movement to combine these aspects, while ensuring that they are organisationally separate (Habib 2009, 15-22). It is thus the responsibility of the movement, especially after forming a political party in the wake of the January 25th revolution, to develop a general political discourse that is not based on specific religious terms and to use its party to present this discourse to society.

To sum up, it became increasingly clear from the beginning of the 1990s that Egypt needs to redefine its regional role. Changes in the distribution of power in the international and regional systems and new variables at both levels have deprived Egypt of some of its past privileges. Different voices from inside and outside the ruling elite have called for the redefinition of Egypt's role to be based

on building a model for economic and political reform. However, the state's reluctance to implement serious economic reforms and its poor record in political reform hindered the implementation of this vision. Moreover, the state has increasingly focused on using its regional role to increase its domestic control. Extracting external economic resources has featured high in the state's discourse. Rejecting international initiatives for democratic reform on the bases of regional instability and the disastrous repercussions of changing regimes by force was another means of using the regional environment to maintain domestic control. In this sense, Egypt presented a model of the soft state illustrated by Lake, Ikenberry and Mastanduno, focusing on external extraction to avoid costly domestic extraction.

Additionally, the state's demobilisation of social forces affected the rhetoric and approach of both the state and these forces. The business community was used as a tool for implementing the state's foreign policy, especially with international donors. However, they were not allowed to use foreign links to put pressure on the state to change its policies at home. This is one of the reasons why regional initiatives by business remained limited and fell short of addressing the basic obstacle of regional integration.

Both the state and the MBs used a foreign policy rhetoric that served their domestic political ends. The state's discourse aimed at augmenting the western phobia towards Islamist forces and the domestic fears of international isolation should the Islamists come to power. For their part, the Brotherhoods claimed that

the lack of democracy and justice at home hindered the advancement of Egypt's regional role and of Arab and Muslim unity. At the same time, the exclusion of the movement from the political process partly hindered the development and further moderation of its foreign policy discourse.

Now I turn to examine how state control and demobilisation affected the performance of state and societal actors in the central regional conflict, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

3.2. Egypt and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The Palestinian issue has been at the top of the Egyptian foreign policy agenda for the last six decades. This is attributable not only to the historical affinities between the Palestinian and Egyptian nations, but also to the impact of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the security of Egypt's vulnerable eastern borders. Importantly also, Egypt's role in the Arab world and its alliance with superpowers was shaped and affected by its role in the central regional issue, which is the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially on the Palestinian front (Nafaa 2003, p. 31-2; Abu-Taleb 2003, 295).

Based on these interests, Egypt has long been a key player in the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular, and later a pioneer and broker in the peace process. In 1964, it was Egypt that proposed to the Arab summit the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a representative of the Palestinian people. Egypt's efforts also contributed to

international recognition of the organisation and its head, Yasser Arafat (Heikal 2001, 15-25). The Palestinian issue was also part of Sadat's peace initiative which formally aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of all Arab lands. The framework signed by the two countries in 1978 proposed a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel, but also between Israel and its other Arab neighbours. The Arabs and the PLO, however, considered Egypt's peace treaty with Israel a breach of the Arab consensus that rejected peace and negotiations with Israel, and a reason for expelling Egypt from the Arab League until 1989 (Nafaa 1986, 68-9).

As noted earlier, the 1980s brought some changes to Egypt's regional policies in a bid to restore its leading role in the Arab world in general, and the Palestinian issue in particular, and remedy the impact of its peace deal with Israel on its Arab relations. Egypt tried to distance itself from the Israeli practices in the occupied territories, and also from the U.S, Israel's key ally. Throughout the 1980s, President Mubarak tried to show a degree of independence from the U.S and to diversify Egypt's international relations. He called on the U.S to play a more neutral role in the peace process and to rethink its bias towards Israel. In 1985 and 1988, he discussed with the U.S the possibility of holding an international peace conference, but the American administration did not welcome the idea (Dessouki 2008, 180-1). Although committed to peace, Egypt's official discourse repeatedly announced that the normalisation of relations with Israel was conditional on the latter's commitment to peace with other Arab countries and the end of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands (Stein 1997). As noted earlier, Mubarak repeatedly highlighted that Egypt's peace treaty with Israel did not affect its Arab

commitments (Dessouki 2008, 190). In 1982, Egypt recalled its ambassador to Israel in protest against the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. Israel's tense relations with other Arab countries and the continuation of its occupation of Arab territories led Egypt's peace with Israel to be a 'dissociative' or 'cold' peace. Although the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty ended the military confrontations between the two countries, economic relations and other interactions at the popular level remained very limited (Badran 1995, 295-309). By being involved in the Palestinian issue and avoiding a full normalisation of its relationships with Israel, the Egyptian state attended to the public resentment and to Arab reservations about developing relations with Israel. In other words, Egypt's cold peace with Israel was a basis for domestic and regional legitimacy (Ajami 1998, 285-6; Shalim 2010, 138-9).

The start of the Middle East peace process at the beginning of the 1990s, the stalling of this process since the end of that decade, the deterioration of the security situation at Egypt's eastern border with Gaza, and the increasing division among Palestinian factions invited Egypt to play different roles in the last two decades. The first role was that of a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians in various rounds of negotiation, a role that Egypt played effectively until 1996 and with a lesser degree of success until the end of that decade. Since 2000 Egypt has gradually moved to play a security role that took a clear shape with the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2004 and the increase in intelligence co-operation with Israel and the U.S in the Strip. This period also witnessed the delinking of Egypt's economic co-operation with Israel from progress in the peace process, with Egypt signing two important economic deals with Israel. The rise of Hamas to

power in 2006 caused Egypt to revive its role in mediating between the Palestinian factions and between Hamas and Israel.

Throughout these phases, the Egyptian state attempted to meet two major commitments and considerations that would feed into the survival of the regime and the maintenance of its domination over society. The first of these considerations was the maintenance of Egypt's strategic alliance with the U.S, an alliance necessary for Mubarak's regime to secure American economic subsidisation and military aid and, more importantly, American support for his regime. To meet this commitment, Egypt has actively marketed peace as a 'strategic choice'. As revealed by the then Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, Egypt worked behind the scenes to convince other Arab countries of the viability of negotiations (Peres 1993, 9-13). In the words of Ahmed Qurei, a leading member in the Palestinian negotiating team after Oslo, Egypt 'exhorted everybody in the region, including [the Palestinians], to back peace' (Qurei 2008, 46). Rhetorically, Egypt stressed that it could not negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians or force a certain vision or opinion upon them, and that its role was, rather, to help bring Israel and the Palestinians to the negotiating table. Qurei's memoirs, however, reveal that in some instances, President Mubarak put pressure on Arafat to renegotiate agreements and resume negotiations in spite of Israeli breaches of previous agreements (Qurei 2008, 150). This Egyptian role coincided with the Israeli conception of Egypt as the marketing force for peace and the gate to the Arab world (Ben-Ami 2006, 66-7).

At the same time, Egypt portrayed itself as an 'indispensable facilitator' of peace negotiations (Hinnebusch 2002, 108-9). Throughout the last two decades Mubarak highlighted his personal role in securing U.S interests in maintaining peace and fighting 'terrorist movements' in the region (Mubarak 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2002a, the White House 2004). This served the aim of showing Egypt's value to American interests in the region, but also satisfied Mubarak's lust for international prestige. Mubarak and his aides tried to make sure that no final settlement was reached without Egyptian involvement. Egypt's position in the Camp David II negotiations illustrated below is a case in point.

Key to maintaining its strategic alliance with the U.S is Egypt's commitment towards peace with Israel. The Egyptian state marketed peace as a force that brought stability and wellbeing to the Egyptian population. This was meant to rule out any possibility of Egyptian military involvement to defend an Arab country against Israel, as this would affect the state's rentier resources. At times of Israeli attacks on Palestinian or Arab territories, Mubarak counted the domestic losses that Egypt could face if it intervened militarily or if the whole region moved into war. In the wake of the reoccupation of the West bank territories and the siege on Arafat during the second Palestinian Intifada, Mubarak highlighted that Egypt could only help by political and diplomatic means. He explained this with reference to the fact that 'the interruption of the traffic in the Suez Canal costs 2-3 billion dollars a year, and to that another billion or so for weapons and supplies had to be added, in addition to several billions in losses due to the disruption of tourism, and a few billion due to a decline in exports.' Mubarak put it bluntly:

'whoever wants to fight may fight' and stated that Egypt 'had no occupied land to fight for' (Mubarak 2002b). This discourse, which was repeated at times of regional crises, was used to stress Egypt's intention not to be dragged into confrontation in defence of any regional actor.

The other consideration, which sometimes contradicted the first, was the desire to use the Palestinian cause to harness the state's legitimacy, especially in the face of the challenge from the Islamist opposition. Given the symbolic value and popular appeal of the Palestinian cause, the Mubarak regime sought to avoid deligitimisation by the Islamist opposition at home on the bases of its policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Miller 1986, 9-10). This is why Egypt stressed its role as a supporter of the Palestinian people rather than as a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians. The official discourse repeatedly referred to Egypt's historical commitment towards the Palestinians and its role in convincing international players and organisations that the Palestinian issue was that of a nation with a right to an independent state rather than a problem of refugees (Abu-Taleb and Abdel-Wahab 1997, 24-5). In fact, the struggle for legitimacy with the Islamists may explain, as the former Egyptian Foreign Minister and Secretary-General of the U.N Boutros Ghali notes, the focus on the Palestinian question at the expense of other issues in Egypt's foreign policy. This focus, Ghali argues, made Egypt's regional role conditional on the progress on the peace process, something that negatively affected this role (interview with Ghali, 2009).

In this sense the dilemma of Egypt's regional role conception was reflected in its performance in the Palestinian issue. On the one hand, the Egyptian state presented itself as the defender of Palestinian rights. On the other hand, it ruled out any confrontation with the U.S and Israel and continued to serve the two countries' interests in marketing peace as the sole strategy for resolving the conflict. This was determined by the two considerations above that were all meant to serve the objective of regime survival and the maintenance of the state's control over society.

The rest of this chapter illustrates how the two considerations above were reflected in the Egyptian state's role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the last two decades and how it was able to achieve the domestic objectives of its involvement in this conflict. It evaluates this role against the criteria set out at the beginning of this study, namely: the activeness of this role, its influence on the parties of the conflict, the acceptance of these parties of the Egyptian role, and the degree of independence of Egyptian intervention. It examines whether the state was able to make use of the role of non-state actors to increase its activity and effectiveness in resolving the conflict. Further, it briefly analyses whether Egypt's role could have been more active and/or effective under a different state-society complex. It is divided into three sections. The first section traces Egypt's mediation between Israel and the Palestinians since the beginning of the 1990s. The second section focuses on Egypt's role in the Palestinian reconciliation. The third section discusses Egypt's economic co-operation with Israel as it relates to the peace process.

3.2.1. Egypt as a Mediator: Marketing Peace as a 'Strategic Choice'

With the start of the peace process at the beginning of the 1990s, Egypt defined its role as that of a strategic ally for the U.S in brokering peace. It presented the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as a 'model for peace relations that should prevail in the Middle East'. President Mubarak highlighted that it was Egypt's peace initiative and agreement with Israel at the end of the 1970s that had paved the way for negotiating peace agreements with other Arab countries more than a decade later (Mubarak 1995). Egypt's involvement in the mediation between Israel and the Palestinians developed through a number of phases detailed below.

A. Egypt as a trusted mediator: 1993-1996

The Egyptian mediation role started with the secret talks preceding the signing of the Oslo accords. This role is documented in the memoirs and biographies of various Israeli and Palestinian leaders involved in the negotiations. As Shimon Peres, the then Israeli Foreign Minister, noted, Egypt was 'the only country to which the Palestinians, Israel and U.S could turn for assistance at critical junctures...It was the only friendly face in the Arab world, not only for Israel but for the Palestinians as well' (Peres 1993, 9). The Egyptian intervention was crucial in convincing Israel to include part of the West Bank in the interim self-rule agreement. The Israeli initial vision was in favour of reaching agreement on Gaza first. Peres described the Egyptian involvement in the period from November 1992-July 1993 as follows, 'we held long, honest discussions in which I described to the Egyptian statesmen the Israeli limitations and the Palestinian possibilities.

Foreign Minister Moussa maintained contact with both sides, and every time we reached a dead end, I would call him and he would take action. Osama El-Baz [Mubarak's advisor for political affairs], sharp as a razor, did not for one minute lose faith that we would reach a settlement. Finally the offer was framed and consolidated, with Gaza and Jericho first in accordance with demands by the PLO' (Peres 1993, 22).

Mahmoud Abbas, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, also highlighted the role of the Egyptian mediation in this period in his memoir *'Through Secret Channels: the Road to Oslo'*. He demonstrated that through 'the Egyptian channel' of secret negotiations, the then Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa conveyed messages between the two sides and helped them reach compromises on issues like the reference to the UN Security Council resolutions on the conflict and the nature of the Interim Palestinian elected body (Abbas 1999, 67-71).

Egypt's mediation thus facilitated the signing of the Oslo accords that represented a historic compromise that promised not only to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict but also to normalise Israel's relationships with the Arab countries (Shlaim 1994, 24-7; Khalidi 1995, 6-7). The Oslo Declaration of Principles (DOP), signed in September 1993, secured mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and paved the way for the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to govern part of the occupied territories in Gaza and Jericho for an interim five-year period. In May 1994, Cairo hosted the Palestinian and Israeli delegations in negotiating the implementation of Oslo's DOP. The meeting ended in the signing of the Gaza-

Jericho Agreement, which outlined the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from Jericho and the Gaza Strip. The agreement was later incorporated in the Oslo interim agreement signed in September 1995, which detailed the Israeli redeployment from the two areas, the election procedures of the Palestinian self-government authority, and the authority's structures and responsibilities. Egypt's mediation also helped in reaching compromises on issues hindering the implementation of these agreements. In 1995, Egypt's mediation helped in eliminating some of the security and administrative obstacles facing the organisation of the first Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 1996 (Abu-Taleb and Abdel-Wahab 1997, 41).

In addition to its mediating role, Egypt continued to provide technical assistance to the Palestinian negotiating delegations during and after Oslo. Egyptian diplomats and international law experts who participated in Egypt's negotiations with Israel at the end of the 1970s helped the Palestinians in examining different documents during the negotiations preceding the Gaza-Jericho Accord signed in Cairo in 1994 and the permanent status negotiations held in the Egyptian city of Taba on the 5th of May 1996 (Abbas 1999, 133-4, Abu-Taleb and Abdel-Wahab 1997, 40-1).

Thus, Egypt's position as the first country to hold peace negotiations with Israel gave it the necessary experience and acceptance by the concerned parties to be actively involved in the negotiations over, and the implementation of, the Oslo Accords.

B. Failed Egyptian mediation: 1996- 2000

After the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in November 1995 and the election of a new Israeli government in late May 1996, Egypt's mediating role was rendered ineffective by the Israeli position on the negotiations. Consecutive Israeli governments rejected deals signed by previous governments and called for the renegotiation of agreements. This led to delays in implementing the Oslo accords and in the negotiations over permanent status issues (including refugees, Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements on occupied territories, security arrangements, border relations, and co-operation with other neighbouring countries). Based on the Oslo declaration of principles, these negotiations should have started three years after the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza and Jericho and the start of the interim period.

Rhetorically, Egypt responded to this Israeli approach by reminding Israel of its obligations with regard to these agreements and called upon it to cooperate with other parties to achieve a just and comprehensive peace (Mubarak 1996a). Mubarak and his aides remained involved in peace efforts and continued to host peace talks with little outcome. In this sense, Egypt remained involved in negotiations that did nothing more than allow time for Israel to change the facts on the grounds by building new settlements and occupying more lands. This started with the Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, which came to power in 1996. Netanyahu criticised the Oslo accords as a 'national suicide' and thus showed no initial commitment to their implementation. When President Clinton started his

efforts to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table, he often sought Egyptian help to convince the Palestinian side to reach an agreement. In his memoirs, Clinton revealed that President Mubarak, along with King Hussein of Jordan, intervened in the last day of the negotiations over implementing the redeployment of Israeli military forces in Hebron in accordance with the Oslo Accords to help reach an agreement (Clinton 2004, 689). Egypt welcomed the Wye River Memorandum signed in October 1998. The memorandum included redeployment of the Israeli troops in the West Bank in accordance with the Oslo interim agreement of 1995. It also included security arrangements, especially Palestinian measures to eliminate 'terrorist' activities and the resumption of permanent status negotiations. However, within a few weeks, the Israeli cabinet decided to postpone the implementation of the memorandum (Carter 2006, 192).

Like his predecessor, the next Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, who came to power in May 1999, was not ready to fully implement the Oslo accords and the Wye River memorandum. He wanted to avoid carrying out the scheduled redeployments on the pretext of proceeding to final status negotiations, or at least to combine the implementation of Wye River and the final status negotiations. Interventions from the U.S and Egypt helped convince both parties to agree on a new memorandum for the implementation of the Israeli withdrawals (Qurei 2008, 86). Mubarak's advisor, Osama El-Baz, was personally involved in the mediation efforts. In September 1999, Egypt hosted the Sharm El-Sheikh summit in which the parties signed a memorandum on the implementation of outstanding commitments and the resumption of permanent status negotiations. Since the memorandum was meant to

put into force the stalled commitments of Wye River, which were in turn implementing the Oslo accords, the memorandum was mocked as 'an agreement to implement an agreement to implement an agreement' (Swisher 2004, 51-5). The memorandum phased out the Israeli withdrawal from the designated areas of the West Bank agreed upon in the Wye memorandum and included the establishment of a safe passage for the movement of persons and goods between the West Bank and Gaza. It committed the two parties to resume negotiations on final status issues within a month of signing the memorandum.

The various rounds of the final status negotiations that brought Israel and the Palestinians together since September 1999 have failed to produce an agreement. The Israeli negotiating team refused the return to the pre-1967 borders, the sharing of Jerusalem, the dismantling of settlement and the return of the Palestinian refugees. While engaging in the negotiations, the Israeli government built thousands of new settlement housing units on the occupied territories, even more than those constructed under Netanyahu (Qurei 85-90). In this sense, Egypt convinced the Palestinians to engage in negotiations that did nothing more than allow time for Israel to change facts on the grounds and, in doing so, legitimised a process that failed to deliver the objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state.

At the same time, Egypt continued to show its eagerness to be part of any negotiations. Egypt's position towards the Camp David II final status negotiations convened by President Clinton in July 2000 is a case in point. Egypt and other

Arab countries were not invited to participate in the negotiations (Tamir 2005, 223). During the negotiations, Clinton appealed to Mubarak to convince Arafat to sign an agreement that included a compromise on Jerusalem, but did not want to disclose the details of the agreement. Mubarak's response was to reject Clinton's call to lean on Arafat (Swisher 2004, 307). Mubarak's political advisor, Osama El-Baz, sent a letter to the negotiators in Camp David in which he hinted that Arafat had no authority to make concessions regarding Jerusalem (Ginat and Noema 2011, 35-6). A few weeks later, Foreign Minister Amr Moussa declared that Egypt's participation in the peace process 'did not need an Israeli invitation', saying that 'without Egypt there will be no peace process' (Moussa 2000). Moussa's statement indicates that Egypt was more interested in being part of any settlement than in reaching a settlement regardless of the parties involved.

C. The Intifada and Egypt's increasing challenges: 2000-2004

The eruption of the second Palestinian intifada in the wake of a visit by the then Likud party leader, Ariel Sharon, to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000 represented a new challenge for the Egyptian role in the conflict. Mindful that the intifada would exacerbate the tension between its domestic and international commitments, Egypt tried to contain the escalation of the conflict and worked for resuming peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Three weeks after the eruption of the Intifada Egypt hosted an international summit in Sharm El-Sheikh where President Clinton, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the EU representative Javier Solana and President Mubarak tried to convince Arafat to stop the intifada and resume negotiations (Ginat and Noema 2011, 41-2). In his

memoirs, Bill Clinton admitted that without President Mubarak's pressure he could not have convinced Arafat to offer the compromises that he did during the summit. These compromises included accepting an investigative committee appointed by the U.S, Israel and Palestinians in consultation with the U.N rather than a U.N committee, and avoiding reference to a specific date for the resumption of the negotiations (Clinton 2004, 846-7).

At the same time, Egypt condemned the Israeli violence used in crushing the intifada and called for an Arab summit in response to the Israeli aggression. When the ceasefire agreed upon in Sharm El-Sheikh collapsed, Egypt recalled its ambassador to Israel in November 2000 in protest at the Israeli violence against the Palestinian protestors. In their comments on the so-called Palestinian suicide bombings, Mubarak and Egypt's two subsequent Foreign Ministers, Amr Moussa and Ahmed Maher, expressed their understanding of the motivations behind these bombings. Mubarak referred to the frustration of the Palestinians. Moussa put it more bluntly, saying that the Israeli violence was the reason for the Palestinian violence. Similarly, Ahmed Maher blamed the policies of the Israeli government for successive bombings in May-June 2001. Additionally, state media were allowed to harshly criticise Israel, labelling it a terrorist state (Ginat and Noema 2011, 62-7; Barari 2003, 95).

This did not mean that Egypt gave up its role in marketing negotiations as the only means to achieve peace. Mubarak criticised Arab leaders who called for a declaration of war, including the leaders of Libya, Yemen and Iraq, considering

their statements to be 'empty words merely meant for local consumption' (Mubarak in Ginat and Noema 2011, 38-9). Foreign Minister Amr Moussa argued that 'Egypt will continue to support peace efforts and this policy will not change because Egypt looks at the Middle East as a region that should move from confrontation to peace' (Moussa 2000). In January 2001, Egypt hosted the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams in Taba in a meeting that ended in despair. The then Israeli Prime Minister Barak was quoted as saying that 'there was no chance of reaching a settlement at Taba...the only thing that took place at Taba were non-binding contacts between senior Israelis and senior Palestinians' (Carter 2006, 199).

The return of the Likud party and its hawkish leader Ariel Sharon to power in February 2001 further complicated Egypt's mission to restore stability to the region. The Egyptian leadership was convinced that Sharon's rise to power was all but the end of the peace process. In an interview in July 2001, Mubarak declared that Sharon knew nothing but war and killing and raised doubts over the ability of Sharon's government to advance peace (Mubarak 2001). Commenting on news reports claiming that Sharon had held talks with members of the American Congress and the administration during his visit to Washington in March 2001 to terminate the military aid to Egypt, Mubarak described Sharon's position as hostile (Ginat and Noema 2011, 65). This did not prevent Egypt from proposing a joint initiative with Jordan calling for the cessation of violence, the resumption of negotiations and the implementation of previous agreement. The initiative failed to prevent the further deterioration of the peace process.

The September 11 attacks on the U.S played well into the hands of the new Israeli government. Sharon tried to make use of these attacks by portraying Israel's fight with the Palestinians as part of the global war on terrorism. He argued that defending Israel's national security against terrorist attacks forced it to maintain occupation of Palestinian territories. Further, he maintained that it was the lack of democracy, not the occupation of Palestinian territories that was the main source of the conflict. For him, the PA needed to be democratised and capacitated to eliminate 'terrorist groups' before Israel would negotiate a peace deal with the Palestinians. Based on these arguments, Sharon started his Operation Defensive Shield in March 2002 in which he reoccupied territories that were under direct Palestinian control. At the height of this operation was the siege of the Arafat compound, putting him under house arrest. This was part of an Israeli plan to physically and diplomatically isolate Arafat on the grounds that he supported terrorist activists, and thus could not be a partner in the peace process (Abu- Sharif 2009, 244-5).

In response, Egypt announced the freezing of all communications with Israel except those that served the Palestinian issue. At the same time, it sought to convince the U.S of the importance of supporting the PA and its leader and to agree on a ceasefire. It hosted the Palestinian factions in reaching an agreement on halting intifada operations. Further, it supported the process of building the capacity of the security and political institutions of the PA to enhance the authority's legitimacy. It sent security missions from the intelligence apparatus, state security and the army to evaluate the situation of the Palestinian security

forces and identify requirements needed for their reform. Egypt also started training Palestinian security officers in Cairo. On the political front, Egypt convinced Arafat to appoint a prime minister to reduce the concentration of power in the President's hands. It also helped in bridging the differences between Arafat and the designated Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas, over the division of power between them (Abu-Taleb 2003, 312; Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2004, 480-1; Sullivan and Jones 2008, 115). This was aimed not only at responding to American and Israeli pressures, but also at avoiding the rise of rival Palestinian forces, especially Hamas (Ginat and Noema 2011, 75).

Importantly, the Operation Defensive Shield started one day after an Arab summit approved the Arab peace initiative proposed by the Saudi Prince Abdullah. The initiative, supported by the Egyptian leadership, called for Israel to return to pre-1967 borders in return for a full normalisation of Arab relations with Israel. Egypt also supported the efforts that led to the elaboration of the Road Map proposed by the Quartet (U.S, EU, Russia and the UN) in 2003. The plan proposed a two-state solution, but called on Israel and the Palestinians to 'meet certain benchmarks of good will and development at which point the next phase of the plan would begin' (Mahler and Mahler 2010, 25-9). The Israeli government, however, expressed several reservations listing 14 comments including several conditions to be met before it would accept the plan. These conditions included the dismantling of all existing PLO security organs and the establishment of new organisations to 'combat terror', the dismantling of all 'terrorist organisations' including Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front, and the destruction of their weaponry, the end of

'terror, violence and incitement', the establishment of a provisional, fully demilitarised Palestinian state, the recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and the abandonment of any right of return for the Palestinian refugees to the state of Israel, the removal of any reference to the Arab peace initiative or any resolutions other than 242 and 338, the reform of the PA , and the condemnation of all 'terrorist activities' by Arab states (Middle East Web, May 25, 2003). Thus, again, Israel used peace plans as mere tools to buy time. As the former American President Jimmy Carter put it, Israel used the Road Map as a 'delaying tactic with an endless series of preconditions that can never be met, while proceeding with plans to implement its unilateral goals' (Carter 2006, 210).

D. From political mediation to Security engagement: 2004-

The re-election of Ariel Sharon in 2003 forced Egypt to re-open lines of communications with Israel. But with the continuation of the Intifada and the withering away of any chance to resume negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Egypt started to search for a new role to play in the conflict. The rise of Mahmoud Abbas to power after the death of Arafat and the resumption of direct communication between him and Israel also made Egypt's mediatory role less relevant. Accordingly, the Egyptian state's security role, which had featured since 2001, was gradually consolidated in the framework of Sharon's unilateral disengagement from Gaza.

The implementation of Sharon's disengagement plan from Gaza in 2005 transformed the Egyptian role from that of a mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli

conflict to that of a party with security responsibilities towards a Palestinian territory. This new role gave the intelligence and security institutions the upper hand in the Egyptian involvement in the Palestinian question.¹ The declared objective of the plan was to end Israel's responsibility as an occupying power of the Strip. Scholars, however, noted that the real aim of this withdrawal was to isolate Gaza from the West Bank, thus obstructing the establishment of a Palestinian state (Milton- Edwards 2009, 186; Roy 2005, 68-9; Shlaim 2010, 308-9). From the outset, there was a stark contradiction between the Israeli and Egyptian visions of the disengagement plan and of Egypt's role in its implementation. Egypt's initial reaction was to reject the plan on the basis that it contradicted the Road Map, which encouraged a settlement of the conflict through negotiations rather than through unilateral measures. In a proposal submitted to the Israeli government in June 2004, Egypt made it clear that it could only co-operate with Israel if the disengagement plan was one of a number of steps leading to the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories (Egypt State Information Service 2010). Mubarak tried to convince the Bush administration on this viewpoint. After his visit to the U.S in April 2004, the two parties announced that Sharon's plan would be a significant step forward if 'it is within the context of the implementation of the Roadmap and President Bush's vision [of a negotiated settlement leading to a two state solution] (The White House, April 12, 2004).

¹ See the deliberations of the meeting between the Egyptian Intelligence Chief, Omar Soliman, and a Palestinian delegation led by Arafat in Ramallah in May 2005 (the Palestine papers, May 24, 2005). See also the deliberations of the meeting between Palestinian and American security delegations to discuss managing Egypt-Gaza border (the Palestine papers, February 08, 2006).

But before Mubarak left the U.S, President Bush announced his support for Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza after a meeting with Sharon in Washington. Further, he stressed that any future settlement should respect facts on the grounds, in reference to the existing Israeli settlements on the occupied territories (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, April 14, 2004). The announcement, which was documented in an official letter to Sharon, was considered by the Palestinians as a 'new Balfour promise'. The letter reflected the strengthening of the intimate alliance between the American administration and Israel under Sharon. The fact that it came only one day after Mubarak's visit indicated the American administration's neglect of the Egyptian position and Egypt's limited influence on the American administration. This left Egypt with little choice but to cooperate with the Israeli plan in Gaza. In December 2004, Mubarak noted in an interview with the German Newspaper *Der Spiegel*, in contradiction with his earlier position, that 'it is only with Sharon that we run a chance of having peace' (Mubarak 2004a). Responding to public criticisms, the foreign policy establishment started to highlight the positive aspects of Sharon's plan, including the dismantling of the Israeli settlement in Gaza and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Strip (Ginat and Noema 2011, 85).

According to the Israeli vision, Egypt's security role was supposed to be two-fold; enforcing security measures at the borders with Gaza to stop the alleged smuggling of arms into the occupied territories, and sending security units to Gaza to make sure the security institutions of the PA performed their role in 'combating terrorism'. In other words, Israel intended to make Egypt responsible for security

inside the Strip while it continued to control the Strip's land and sea borders and air space. This followed the Israeli policy of maintaining minimum responsibility and maximum control (Li 2006, 38-9). Egypt's response was to accept the responsibility for securing its borders as a normal sovereign responsibility, while refusing any direct security presence inside Gaza. Instead, Egypt showed its readiness to participate in building the capacity of the PA's security institutions (Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2004, 487-8). With American financial support, Egypt engaged in training Palestinian security forces, especially the Palestinian Guard (The Palestine Papers, February 11, 2008).

Egypt's role in implementing the Israeli disengagement plan may have proved Egypt's value to Israel's security. Egypt may also have been successful in frustrating the Israeli plans to lay on Egypt the responsibility for the Gaza Strip. However, the arrangements for Israeli disengagement from Gaza posed numerous challenges for Egypt's role on the Palestinian front and exposed its borders to serious infiltrations. A number of militant Palestinian factions broke through the borders and carried out attacks against Israeli and foreign tourists in Sinai in 2004/05. As will be illustrated later, the management of the Rafah crossing with Gaza became a point of tension between Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians.

Egypt's role in building the capacity of security institutions in Gaza was also not accepted by some Palestinian factions that considered this role an intervention in Palestinian affairs under Israeli dictation. For the factions, which included Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, this Egyptian role and co-operation with Israel in Gaza

reduced the Palestinian issue to a security problem and gave credence to the Israeli argument that the Palestinian side was to be blamed for threatening Israeli security (Alarabiya, June 22, 2004). They explained Mubarak's co-operation with the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gaza as an attempt to ease the American pressures for democratic reform on his regime (Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2004, 479-80). Even if there is little evidence to support these claims, they indicate that Egypt's domestic politics, and its relationship with the U.S, which was shaped by the nature of this politics, affected how the Egyptian role was seen by other regional actors. The views expressed by the Palestinian factions raise doubts about the Palestinian factions' acceptance of the Egyptian role, which is one of the indicators for evaluating role effectiveness in this study.

In addition to co-operating with Israel in implementing its disengagement plan in Gaza, Egypt developed its economic and political relations with Israel during this period. In 2004, Egypt returned its ambassador to Tel Aviv after four years of absence, released the Israeli spy Azam Azam and signed two important economic deals with Israel; the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement and the gas export deal. Egypt's unconditional support for peace negotiations also continued. This was confirmed by its participation in the Annapolis conference in November 2007. Prior to the conference, Mubarak and his foreign minister, Abul-Gheit, expressed the importance of setting a clear agenda with a timetable and frame of reference, something that was not satisfied, owing to deep differences between Israel and the Palestinians. Despite the failure to reach a joint document to serve as a basis for negotiations, Egypt led other Arab countries in participating in the

conference. The conference ended with a brief joint statement in which the parties committed themselves to the implementation of the Road Map and to the beginning of final status negotiations. Israel's commitment to the freezing of settlements, one of the Palestinian conditions for starting the negotiations, proved to be short lived. On the Palestinian side, the rift between Fateh and Hamas and the latter's unilateral control over the Gaza Strip ushered in a new phase of the conflict (Milton-Edwards 2009, 133-4).

- *Egypt's mediation efforts: towards an explanation*

The preceding review indicates that Egypt remained committed to marketing peace as the sole and strategic choice for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It participated in implementing Israeli unilateral plans and led other Arab countries in participating in peace conferences even when the initial conditions it set for participation in these plans and conferences were not met. It did not work unilaterally or collectively to design an alternative to its conflict resolution strategy even when this strategy proved to be ineffective for almost two decades. How can this policy be explained? And which objectives did Egypt achieve by this policy?

Obviously, Egypt's effort to mediate between the parties of the conflict paid little in terms of reaching an agreement on the permanent status issues, but it did allow Egypt to sustain the international alliances that helped it maintain its domestic control. Successive American administrations continued to value the Egyptian role in working for peace and fighting extremism in the region, thus providing external legitimacy to Mubarak regime and to his regional role.

Although the relationship between the U.S and Egypt witnessed unprecedented tensions during the George W. Bush administration, this did not affect the strategic interests between the two countries. Mubarak blamed the U.S for ignoring his advice on Iraq and creating a vacuum that encouraged Iranian infiltration into the region after the fall of Saddam Hussein. More importantly, the Bush administration's policy of pushing democratic reform in the Middle East provoked Mubarak's fury.¹ President Bush publicly lectured Mubarak on political reform, urging Egypt to lead the region towards democracy (Bush 2005), something that was highly resented by stubborn Mubarak. In the second term of the Bush administration, Mubarak did not pay a single visit to Washington, breaking a twenty year tradition of annual visits to the White House.

In spite of these tensions, the Mubarak regime continued to accommodate American interests in the region, and thus continued its efforts to bring peace and contain violence on the Palestinian front. This indicates that although personal factors and relations were important, they are not sufficient in explaining Egypt's politics towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Egypt's own commitments, emanating from its domestic politics, shaped this policy. Condemning Israeli policies and taking diplomatic steps, like recalling the Egyptian Ambassador to Tel Aviv in 2000 or freezing communications with the Israeli government in 2002,

¹ September 11 attacks gave a new momentum to American democratic reform plans in the Middle East since it was believed that the lack of democracy and the restrictions on civil liberties had bred terrorism. Democracy promotion became central to the U.S national security objectives. In its 2002 National Security Strategy the U.S indicated its willingness to use force to maintain 'a balance of power that favours freedom', a principle that was arguably applied in the case of Iraq. Senior national security strategists in the Bush administration believed that leading regional powers should embrace democracy to serve as role models. See The White House (2002, 29); Pressman (2009, 154).

responded to public resentments and criticisms from the opposition, especially the Islamists. The Egyptian state's reluctance to encourage normalisation of relations with Israel at the popular level and its tolerance towards demonstrations against Israel and towards the demonisation of Israel in the media can be also seen in light of this consideration. But given Sharon's success in maintaining an intimate alliance with President Bush, Mubarak recognised that improving relationship with Israel and co-operating with its plans in Gaza were keys to American support for his long-serving regime. As the Israeli scholar and politician Shlomo Ben-ami put it 'not peace but the continuity of his regime [was] Mubarak's priority, and this required that he adapt his policies to the changing conditions' (Ben-ami 2006, 321).

In return, the American administration continued to emphasise Mubarak's role in advancing peace and stability in the region (Bush 2002, 2003, 2008). The Bush administration, like its predecessors, called on Congress to keep the American annual aid to Egypt intact. In a congressional hearing in May 2006, David Welch, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, defended this policy by referring to the strategic partnership between the two countries and their shared vision of a 'Middle East that is at peace and free of terror'. Furthermore, he referred to Egypt's support for U.S objectives in the peace process, its role in guarding the Egypt-Gaza borders, and its efforts at pressuring Hamas to recognise Israel and renounce violence (Kelly 2006; Mekay 2006).

Evidently also, the Egyptian role and co-operation with the Israeli unilateral plans helped tame American pressures for democratic reform. As Carothers notes, the American administration's pressure on the Mubarak regime remained 'toothless' because it needed Egypt's co-operation in other issues, at the top of which were fighting terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The rise of Islamist forces in the parliamentary elections in Egypt in 2005 and the Palestinian territories in 2006 further contributed to watering down the American pressures for democratic reform in the region. It opened a debate in American academic and policy circles on the benefits that Islamists could gain from American pressures for democratic reform and the subsequent impact of the rise of Islamists on American interests in the region. As will be discussed below the rise of Hamas increased the importance of co-ordination between Egypt, the U.S and Israel in the Palestinian issue. It is, then, unsurprising that since 2006 democracy promotion was trumped in the American discourse by other foreign policy issues (Carothers 2007; 6-7; Snider and Faris 2012; Sharp 2006).

To sum up, Egypt played an active mediating role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process from the beginning of the 1990s. This role served the Egyptian interest of sustaining its strategic relationships with the U.S and maintaining the American economic and political support for the Mubarak regime. In this sense, Egypt's policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the last two decades reflected the priorities of a soft state as illustrated by Lake, Ikenberry and Mastanduno. Its foreign policy has focused on mobilising external resources and support to make up for its declining ability to mobilise domestic financial and political support.

Further, in accordance with the arguments of David, Barnett and Levy, the Mubarak regime shaped its regional and international alliances to ensure its survival while delaying the implementation of necessary economic and political reforms. Unsurprisingly, Egypt's mediation did little in terms of resolving the conflict. Further, it played well into the hands of Israel, which was more interested in a peace process than in peace. But with the escalation of Israeli violence, attending to the public resentment surrounding Mubarak's policy towards the Palestinian question became more daunting. An Egyptian scholar captures this situation as follows, 'as long as Mubarak was in power, Israel could continue to say that it was pursuing a course of peace, since it had the legitimacy of Egypt's participation behind it. And Egypt could say that it was doing its part to bring about peace to the region. As a piece of not-so-amateur theatrics, it worked well. However, as the peace process steadily lost credibility, the Egyptian government proceeded to look worse in the eye of its citizens' (Mabrouk 2011, 2).

- *Egypt's mediation efforts: Could they have been more effective?*

In light of the analysis above, could Egypt have behaved differently had its domestic politics been different? Could Egypt have exerted more influence on Israel to bring it to show more commitment to the peace agreements? What tools of influence were at Egypt's disposal to achieve this aim? Could Egypt's role in the Palestinian issue have been more acceptable regionally and internationally? And could it have been more independent from American foreign policy in the Middle East?

In this section I argue that although a more efficient state with a democratic regime in Egypt may not have been able to force Israel to show more commitment to its agreements, it could have deprived Israel of some of its diplomatic strength vis-à-vis Arab countries including Egypt. It could have also enjoyed more acceptance from the Palestinian factions, especially resistance movements, and showed more independence from the Israeli and American policies towards the conflict. This is illustrated in the following arguments.

Firstly, in searching for an alternative to the Egyptian policy towards the Palestinian question, it is worth highlighting that Israel was forced into peace negotiations and territorial concessions only after military confrontations or costly resistance operations. The Camp David agreements were only negotiated after the 1973 war. It was only after the first Palestinian intifada that the peace process started. Israeli withdrawals from Southern Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005 were partly attributed to the role of resistance movements in the two countries. As Ben-ami argued, Israeli leaders made peace only when they recognised that 'the price of immobilism was higher than the sacrifices required for peace' (Ben-Ami 2006, 107-8). This does not necessarily mean that military confrontation was the only way out of the stalemate in the peace process, but does suggest that other means could have been used in combination with peace negotiations to pressure the Israeli positions.

However, the soft Egyptian state, focusing on maintaining its international alliances to serve domestic aims, did little to suggest strategies that could be

followed to force Israel into showing more flexibility in its negotiations with the Palestinians or to create an alternative route to settle the conflict in case peace efforts did not produce the desired end. A more effective state in Egypt could have been more independent from the external alliances that contributed to shaping its foreign policy choices. Additionally, as will be illustrated in the next section, given the Egyptian state's confrontation with the Islamist movements at home, it has generally been less tolerant towards Islamist resistance movement in the region. A state tolerant towards independent social groups, including Islamists, could have been less hostile towards and more acceptable to resistance movements whose approach has been gaining increasing popularity and credibility within the last decade.

Secondly, at the diplomatic level, a more democratic Egypt could have discredited the Israeli claim that the first threat facing the region was the lack of legitimate, democratic governments rather than the lack of peace and justice. This claim was successfully used by a number of Israeli scholars and politicians in their diplomatic struggle against Arab states in general, and against Palestine in particular (Eldar 2003; Tessler and Grobshmidt 1995, 146). In his book *The New Middle East*, Shimon Peres considers democracy 'the best guarantee for a durable peace' and regrets that the Middle East is run by autocratic rulers (Peres 1993, 62-4). Benjamin Netanyahu echoed the same view in his book *A Place among the Nations: Israel and the World* (Netanyahu 1993, 97-8.) This claim is in spite of the fact that Israel was able to make peace only with Arab dictators (Arens 2011).

As far as Egypt is concerned, Israeli politicians and scholars have long argued that Egypt's peace with Israel is jeopardised by the fact that it is one between a democratic state and an authoritarian regime. Netanyahu argued that the fact that Egypt is not a democracy explains why Israel was keen on enforcing a large buffer space between Israel and Egypt. As he bluntly put it 'the demilitarized Sinai is sufficiently vast that if Egypt were to violate peace with Israel, Israel would have time to mobilise its defences and counterattack' (Netanyahu 1993, 253-4).

Israel has diplomatically benefited from the lack of democracy in the region in a number of ways. Firstly, it claimed that Palestine was not the central problem in the Middle East, but rather, the lack of democracy and legitimacy. Secondly, and more importantly, the lack of democracy gave credit to the Israeli argument that the only kind of peace that Israel could achieve with its neighbours would be the 'peace of deterrence' in which Israel should keep its military superiority to defend itself against non-democratic states. According to this Israeli argument, democratic peace would not prevail in the region because of the spread of dictatorship, which is by definition inclined to use force to end disputes domestically and externally. For Israel to guarantee that Arab dictators with whom it strikes peace deals would not attack Israel again, it must deter Arab dictators by increasing its military strength, establishing 'peace through strength' or 'peace of deterrence' not the peace of democracies (Netanyahu 1993, 238-44). Thirdly, Israel claimed that western pressures on the Arab world to democratise would positively feed into achieving peace in the region. But since there was a possibility for 'radicals' to

come to power, security arrangements must be a central pillar of peace (Netanyahu 1993, 339-42).

Successive Israeli governments have successfully used the discourse above to enjoy western backing for Israel's military superiority in the region. This has meant that Israel has used the lack of democracy in Egypt and other Arab countries to its own advantage; continually portraying itself as an oasis of democracy in a sea of dictatorship, an ally to the west in an anti-western Arab region, and a state whose security and military strength must be prioritised in order to deter its dictatorial neighbours.

This is not necessarily to say that Israel's approach to resolving its conflict with the Palestinians or its relationship with Egypt would have been different if Egypt and the Arab countries were run by democratic regimes. However, my argument is that a democratic Egypt could have discredited the Israeli claims, and thus deprived Israel of one of the bases of its diplomatic strength compared to the Arab countries.

Thirdly, scholars agree that the first step in influencing Israeli policies is the achievement of Palestinian reconciliation and unity (Bishara 2009, 23; Al-Sherif 2007, 17). The next section discusses Egypt's role in Palestinian reconciliation and whether a more effective and democratic Egypt could have performed more effectively in this issue.

3.2.2. Egypt's Role in Palestinian Reconciliation

The dialogue between different Palestinian factions has been on the Egyptian agenda since the beginning of the 1990s (Essila 2005). The declared aim of Egypt's effort in this regard, as noted by its head of intelligence services Omar Soliman, was to help 'put the Palestinian house in order, unite its factions, secure their participation in political decisions and their support for a legitimate Palestinian leadership' (Soliman 2005 in Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 12). These aims were seen as serving the objective of having a reliable Palestinian partner and a unified position in the peace process. Accordingly, Egypt hosted various rounds of negotiations between these factions, some of which ended with an agreement on general principles to govern the relationships between these factions and their relationship with Israel. In 1995, Cairo hosted Fateh and Hamas¹, but failed to convince the latter to participate in the first Palestinian parliamentary elections. As noted earlier, Egypt hosted the two factions in 2002 in discussing the possibility of temporarily halting resistance

¹ The movement, which declares its allegiance to the MBs, was formally established in 1987. In its founding charter the movement considers all of the historical territories of Palestine to be Muslim lands that should be liberated through Jihad or militant resistance. International resolutions and peace conferences are, according to the charter, 'vain endeavours' whose aim is to perpetuate the occupation of Muslim lands. The movement's influence has mounted, especially during the escalation of the conflict at the end of the 1980s and the 1990s. This is partly attributed to Hamas' role in the resistance and in its provision of services to the Palestinians in the occupied territories through its well-run charities. Recognising that its military power does not match that of Israel, the movement's strategy has been focused on establishing a 'balance of insecurity' by waging rocket attacks targeting Israeli military installations, and sometimes civilians. This has in turn led to furious Israeli attacks against Hamas leaders and power bases that have left tens, sometimes hundreds, of deaths and injuries in addition to causing physical destruction. Equally important, the ideological difference between Fateh and Hamas and their competition in mobilising supporters have led to clashes that have sometimes brought the two factions to the verge of a civil war. See Abu-Amr (1993, 7-8); Shachar (2010, 5); Roy (2007, 220-1).

operations during the Israeli elections to be held the following year (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 9-10).

Egyptian co-operation in implementing the Israeli disengagement plan in Gaza since 2005 had to be supported by efforts to bring the Palestinian factions to agree to a ceasefire. In March 2005, the Egyptian effort was crowned with the signing of the Cairo declaration that committed the Palestinian factions to a truce with Israel until the end of 2005. The declaration included agreement on the right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation and to work for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The factions also agreed to the reform of the PLO and the establishment of democratic institutions. There was, however, little agreement between these factions on a united approach towards managing the conflict with Israel (Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies 2004, 484-5; Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 10-1).

Egypt's reconciliation efforts were generally praised by different Palestinian factions including Hamas. Hamas, however, expected Egypt to play a role in pushing the process of reforming and democratising the PLO. As the head of Hamas' political Bureau, Khaled Mashaal noted in the wake of the signing of the Cairo agreement, if the Egyptian role in the 1960s is to organise the Palestinian resistance in the framework of the PLO, its role now is to help the organisation adapt to new variables and incorporate the new Palestinian forces (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 12).

Hamas' victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections opened a new chapter in Palestinian politics, in the movement's relationship with Egypt and in Egypt's role in Palestinian reconciliation. The Palestinian rift after the failure of the short-lived unity government, accompanied by the bloodshed between Fateh and Hamas during 2007, made the question of Palestinian reconciliation a priority on the Egyptian agenda. The question then became to what extent Egypt was an influential and acceptable mediator between Fateh and Hamas and how these factions, especially Hamas, received Egyptian mediation.

A. The Rise of Hamas to Power: Egypt, the U.S and Israel against 'Radicalism'

Examining the relationship between Egypt and Hamas after the latter's ascent to power reveals that there were extensive communications between the two sides. Unlike the U.S position that rejected communications with Hamas, Egypt recognised Hamas as an important Palestinian force that could not be ignored. Shortly after the Hamas victory, Mubarak declared in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth that Hamas' ascendance to power was not a threat to the peace process. However, he stressed that the movement must recognise Israel, denounce violence, and respect all agreements signed by the PA (Mubarak 2006d). Recognising the importance of the Egyptian role, Hamas' first official visit after winning the elections was to Egypt where it discussed the formation of the new Palestinian government and the movement's position on Israel with Omar Soliman and Osama El-Baz (Al-Ahram, February 6, 2006).

Egypt also continued to play an active role in Palestinian reconciliation. It declared its support for the government of national unity agreement signed by Fateh and Hamas in Mecca in February 2007. In the wake of the agreement, Mubarak called for an end to the economic sanctions imposed by Israel and the quartet on the Palestinian authority since the parliamentary elections. The sanctions included withholding tax revenues collected in the Palestinian territories by Israel and cutting off international aid to the PA from the quartet countries. Egypt also continued to play the principal role in the prisoners' exchange negotiations between Hamas and Israel in the wake of the former's capture of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in June 2006. It failed, however, to bring the two parties to strike a deal (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 21-30).

For strategic and geographical reasons, then, both Hamas and Egypt recognised the importance of maintaining a workable relationship with one another. However, evidence shows that the Egyptian state did not welcome the rise of Hamas to power. A confidential cable of the American Embassy in Cairo has indicated that 'Mubarak warned the U.S against Palestinian elections in 2006 that brought Hamas to his doorstep' (U.S embassy cables, May 19, 2009). The same information was highlighted by the Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif in an interview with Newsweek in February 2007. Other statements from the two sides revealed the continuation of this antagonistic relationship, especially after Hamas' seizure of power in Gaza in June 2007. Egypt regarded the seizure as a military coup by an illegitimate force (Abul-Gheit, 2008b). It withdrew its security delegation in Gaza and supported the new government formed by Mahmoud Abbas and led by Salam Fayyad. President

Mubarak was quoted as saying that Egypt did not accept Hamas in power and that Hamas would never sign a peace agreement with Israel (Mubarak, 2007c). Furthermore, Egypt suggested deploying Arab troops in the Gaza Strip to stop the fighting between the Palestinian factions (Abul-Gheit 2008c). The Egyptian proposal was rejected and harshly criticised by Hamas (Al-Zahar 2008).

Evidence also shows that the Egyptian state tried to use the ascent of Hamas to market its role as a partner to the U.S in fighting fundamentalism in the Middle East and to feed the western fears surrounding the rise of Islamist forces in the region. Mubarak reminded the Bush administration that American pressures for democratic reform in Palestine had brought an extremist force into power (U.S embassy cables, May 19, 2009). This was a defensive strategy against American pressures for democratic reform in the Middle East, including in Egypt. In his confidential communications with the U.S, the Egyptian head of the intelligence services, Omar Soliman, portrayed the MBs, Hamas and other militant movements in the region as part of a network of radical organisations that the U.S and Egypt should eliminate in co-operation with one another. During a meeting with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, Soliman stressed that Egypt's overarching regional goal was to combat radicalism in the region. In reference to Gaza he argued that Egypt would confront Iran's attempts to smuggle arms to the Strip noting that 'Gaza in the hands of radicals will never be calm' (U.S embassy cables, April 30, 2009). In this way, Egypt tried to emphasise the importance of its role for Israel's security and, thus, for American interests in the region. In another meeting with an American delegation led by Senator George

Voinovich, Soliman stressed Egypt's eagerness to help the American efforts to isolate Hamas and force it to 'choose between remaining a resistance movement or joining the political process' (U.S embassy Cables, January 2, 2008).

The rise of Hamas to power gave a boost to security and intelligence co-operation between Egypt, the U.S and Israel against Hamas. The Egyptian intelligence apparatus continued to play a principal role in the mediation between Fateh and Hamas in the reconciliation rounds, and between Hamas and Israel in the truce deals. However, leaked confidential reports and American embassy cables revealed that Egypt was part of an American plan to support security forces within Fateh in ousting the democratically elected Hamas-led government. The plan was approved by President Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the deputy national security advisor, Elliot Abrams, and implemented by U.S Security co-ordinator Keith Dayton. It assigned to Egypt the role of training a special Fateh force led by Mohammed Dahlan, the former head of the preventive security forces in Gaza. The leakage of the plan contributed to the bloodshed between the two factions and the subsequent Hamas unilateral seizure of power in Gaza in June 2007 (Rose 2008 and U.S embassy cables, January 2, 2008).

In response to the Egyptian position and policies, Hamas kept its communication channels with Cairo open, but dealt with the Egyptian role with scepticism. This affected the effectiveness of Egypt's reconciliation efforts. Hamas' position on the Egyptian reconciliation paper was a case in point. The paper, drafted as part of the dialogue round that was supposed to start in November 2008, aimed at resolving

the disagreements between Fateh and other Palestinian factions. During the preparations for this round, the deputy head of Hamas' political bureau Moussa Abu-Marzouk declared that Hamas would participate only 'if Egypt stood at the same distance from all the participating factions and had a clear agenda for reconciliation' (Abu-Marzouk 2008b). When Egypt presented the first draft of the paper to the Palestinian factions as a basis for dialogue, Hamas raised its reservations on a number of details that may be interpreted as contradicting the right of resistance. These included the reference to denouncing violence, and to enforcing a truce, and the statement that the security institutions of the PLO have the sole responsibility for protecting the Palestinian people and territory. Besides, Hamas criticised the lack of any specific timetable for reforming the PLO. In addition, the movement, as noted by Abu-Marzouk, believed that Egypt could influence Fateh to release Hamas prisoners in the West Bank, and thus provide a better environment for the success of the dialogue. By and large, Hamas thought that this dialogue would only be used to legitimise the extension of President Abbas in office until the holding of the parliamentary and presidential elections simultaneously in spite of the end of his term (Al-Jazeera, November 11, 2008; Abu-Marzouk 2008a). The position of the Egyptian government was that the Egyptian paper contained nothing but what had been agreed upon by all Palestinian factions in previous rounds and that no amendments would be introduced into the paper prior to that dialogue round. The result was a last minute decision by Hamas not to participate in that round, which led Egypt to put off

holding the negotiations (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations 2009, 59).

The mutual recrimination that followed the failure to hold this dialogue confirmed the tension between Hamas and Egypt. Hamas stressed its reservations on the Egyptian paper, claiming that Egypt was biased towards Fateh. For its part, Egypt claimed that there had been no political will on the part of Hamas to participate in this reconciliation round (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation 2009, 60). During the meeting of foreign ministers of Arab countries in November 2008, Egypt's foreign minister, Abul-Gheit, blamed Hamas for putting off this round and stressed that the government formed by President Abbas was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (Abul-Gheit, 2008a).

B. Egypt and the Siege on Gaza: the deterioration of Egypt's international image

In the wake of Hamas' seizure of power in Gaza in June 2007, Israel declared Gaza a 'hostile entity', blocking it by closing its land and sea borders. In response, Egypt called on Israel to lift its blockade on Gaza and expressed its rejection of what it called the collective punishment imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people in Gaza. It considered the blockade a violation of Israeli's obligations as an occupation force (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation 2009, 40-1). It refused to use force against the tens of thousands of Palestinians who illegally surged across the Egyptian borders in January 2008 to buy their supplies. Its Foreign Minister, Abul-Gheit, distanced Egypt from a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Israel and the U.S to combat the smuggling of arms

through Egypt's borders. Egypt, however, refused to open Rafah crossing on the basis that the management of the borders between Egypt and Gaza is governed by the crossings agreements signed in the wake of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Strip. The agreement signed by the Palestinian Authority, Israel and the E.U. authorised the management of borders between Egypt and Gaza by representatives from the PA and the E.U., as a third monitor, with the remote oversight of Israeli officers. After Hamas' seizure of power in Gaza, the PA and E.U. representatives were expelled. Accordingly, Egypt refused the full opening of the Rafah crossing with Gaza in the absence of these representatives. Instead, it partly opened the crossing for limited periods to allow the passage of Palestinian travellers and basic needs. Furthermore, it blamed Hamas for the problems in managing Egypt's borders with Gaza on the basis that Hamas has control of the borders from the Palestinian side (Bassiouny 2009).

At the same time, Egypt, as noted by a senior aid official working in Gaza, showed flexibility towards the Hamas-run tunnel economy through which the Strip has been able to sustain some of its basic needs and ammunition (Ging 2010). Sometimes it allowed Hamas' officials, carrying millions of dollars donated by Arab countries or Iran, to cross the Egyptian borders to Gaza (the Centre for Arab Unity Studies 2007, 98). This may be attributed to Egypt's attempt to avoid repeated floods of Gazans into Sinai, which could represent a threat to its national security and a pressure on its economy (Dunne 2009, 2). Egypt's major fear was that Israel would lay on Egypt responsibility for the Gaza Strip. But Egypt's flexibility towards the tunnel economy can also be seen in the light of Egypt's

attempt to keep Israel under pressure and signal to the American administration and the Israeli government the importance of Egypt's role for Israel's security. In this sense, Egypt tried to play the game both ways, co-operating with Israel against Hamas, but also showing Israel its ability to affect its security (interview with Sayigh 2011).

However, managing the borders with Gaza caused increasing contention between Egypt and Israel. Israel continued to accuse Egypt of failing to halt the smuggling of weapons to the occupied territories through tunnels along the Egyptian borders with Gaza. The Israeli government called on its close ally, the U.S, to exert pressure on Egypt to stop this smuggling. Israeli officials held talks with members of the American Congress to demand that it cut America's annual aid to Egypt, a tactic frequently used to pressurise Egyptian policies. Effectively, by closing its border with the Strip, Israel had 'thrown the [Gaza] ball into the Egyptian court', as noted by Ahmed Qurei (the Palestine papers, February 4, 2008).

Even the PA, Egypt's traditional ally, indicated in confidential communications that it was losing trust in Cairo as a result of the latter's management of the borders with Gaza. In the wake of Mahmoud Abbas' visit to Cairo in 2008, his Chief of Staff, Rafiq Al-Hussaini indicated in a secret message to Saeb Erekat, the PLO's chief negotiator, that although the Egyptians assured Abbas of their control of the Rafah crossing to Gaza, he 'did not trust every single word that the Egyptians are saying, especially when it comes to relations with Hamas' (the Palestine papers, February 3, 2008). Another PA memo went even further, describing Egypt as

'opportunistic' and as having 'long ago lost official interest in Palestinian independence'. Further, the memo noted that for the PA, Israel is the 'the known devil whereas the imperatives underlying Egyptian interest are unclear' (the Palestine papers, November 30, 2001). It is unsurprising, then, that it was not only Israel, but also the PA, that refused to include Egypt as part of the crossings agreement in 2005 (the Palestine papers, February 17, 2007).

As a result of Israeli and American pressure the Egyptian government tried to increase its control over the borders with American financial and technical assistance. The Egyptian military, with its intensive links with the Pentagon, got involved in these efforts. After strong resistance, Egypt's military agreed on a \$23 million American Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme to detect and destroy tunnels along the Rafah border. The programme also included extensive American training for the border control units. During his visit to the U.S in 2008, the Egyptian former defence minister Field Marshall Tantawi argued that Egypt was doing its best to stop the smuggling and tried to make sure that Israeli pressures on the Congress would not affect the military assistance to Egypt. At the same time, he urged the U.S to put pressure on Israel to ease the humanitarian conditions in Gaza in order to prevent incursions into Egypt (U.S embassy cables, March 16, 2008, February 9, 2009 and December 12, 2008).

Additionally, Egypt continued to co-operate with Israel by sharing intelligence information to prevent militants from Hamas and other factions from crossing the borders to Gaza. Israel and the U.S considered intelligence co-operation with

Omar Soliman the 'most successful element in the [trilateral] relationship' (U.S embassy cables, May 16, 2006). Although Egypt publicly criticised the MOU signed by the U.S and Israel to stop the smuggling of arms through the borders with Egypt (Abul-Gheit 2009b), it secretly consulted with the two countries on the content of the memorandum (U.S embassy cables, June 2, 2009). It waged a number of operations to destroy the tunnels used to smuggle arms and to provide the main supplies to the blocked Strip (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation 2009, 46-7).

The blockade of the Strip by the Egyptian government increased the tensions between Egypt and Hamas. Khaled Mashaal called Egypt to shoulder its responsibilities and open the Rafah crossing to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Hamas appealed to the Arab League to issue a resolution committing Egypt to opening the crossing to allow the Palestinians to get their basic needs. Additionally, Hamas accepted an Egyptian mediation for a truce between the Palestinian factions and Israel from June-December 2008 on the condition that Egypt alleviate the siege on Gaza by opening the Rafah crossing (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation 2009, 42-54; Jacob 2011).

The management of the Rafah crossing became not only an issue of contention between Egypt and Hamas, but also a reason for regional and international condemnation of Egypt. Egypt had been accused by a number of Arab and Middle Eastern governments and publics, as well as by international activists, of collaborating with Israel by closing the Rafah crossing (Avnery 2010; Shaoul

2010; Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East 2009). This accusation reached its apex during the Israeli attack on Gaza in December 2008, an attack that started one day after an official visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister to Cairo. Egypt's diplomatic stance towards the attack fed into the conviction that Egypt was collaborating with Israel against Hamas and the Palestinians in Gaza. Although its Foreign Minister claimed that Egypt expected, but did not have prior knowledge of, the attacks, a leaked cable from the American embassy in Tel Aviv revealed that the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had consulted with Egypt and Fateh prior to the operation and enquired whether they were willing to take control of the Strip after Israel's defeat of Hamas (U.S embassy cables, June 2, 2009). The spokesperson of the Israeli embassy in Cairo claimed that there had been full coordination between Egypt and Israel before the attacks (interview with Cooper-Zubida 2009). Mubarak's statements denounced the attacks, but also blamed the Palestinian factions for refusing to extend the truce with Israel and engage in Egypt's reconciliation efforts. Mubarak refused the full opening of the Rafah crossing during the attacks, allowing only the passage of medical supplies and injured civilians (Mubarak 2008a). In spite of the ferocity of the attacks, Egypt did not recall its ambassador to Tel Aviv as it had in 1982 and 2000, despite domestic calls to take this diplomatic step (Shachar 2010, 183).

Also significant, Egypt turned down a call from Qatar to hold an extraordinary Arab summit to discuss the Israeli attacks on Gaza in mid-January 2009. It proposed instead that the issue be discussed in the Arab economic summit to be held in Kuwait at the end of the same month (Abul-Gheit 2009c). Qatar failed to

secure the quorum of 15 needed for an official Arab summit, but decided to organise a consultative meeting to which it invited non-Arab countries, including Iran. The Egyptian position, backed by Saudi Arabia and other conservative countries, engendered a division between Arab countries. It was criticised even by senior figures in the foreign policy establishment (interview with Maher 2009). Antagonistic statements by Egyptian officials indicated that Egypt was sensitive to the intervention of other regional players in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In an interview with a private Egyptian channel, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Abul-Gheit, admitted that Egypt had succeeded in frustrating the Qatari attempt to hold an Arab summit because it did not accept criticisms by any country of its role in defending Palestinian rights (Abul-Gheit, 2009a). From Egypt's perspective, Qatar's effort had intended to compete with the Egyptian cease-fire initiative proposed on the 6th of January and the Egyptian efforts to hold an international summit to discuss the attacks on Gaza.

Egypt's position on the Israeli attacks on Gaza came at a price. Egypt's diplomatic efforts finally helped end the attacks after three weeks. However, the Egyptian role was harshly condemned regionally and internationally. For the first time in decades, demonstrations erupted in a number of Arab capitals accusing Egypt of collusion with Israel against Hamas. Egyptian embassies in some of these capitals were attacked by protestors. Media outlets, especially al-jazeera, waged a media war on Egypt in what appeared to be a flashback to the end of the 1970s when Egypt was isolated from the Arab world after signing a separate peace deal with Israel. Unlike its approach towards previous Palestine solidarity demonstrations,

the Egyptian government suppressed activism on Gaza and showed no tolerance for criticisms of its Gaza policy in the independent media. Pro-Gaza activists were arrested and foreign activists deported (El-Amrani 2010; Lindsey 2010). The argument that Egypt could not open its borders with Gaza for fear of violating the crossings agreement did not stand in the light of the humanitarian catastrophe in the Strip. Israel had successfully diverted international and regional criticisms of the plight of Gaza towards the Egyptian government, at the very least sharing the blame for that plight with Egypt. This indicates that Egyptian diplomacy had failed to explain, let alone mobilise support for, Egyptian positions. In short, then, the international and regional acceptance of Egypt's role in the Palestinian issue, which is one of the main indicators for evaluation of a regional power's role, was seriously called into question following the Israeli siege and war on Gaza.

- *Egypt's policy towards Hamas: towards an explanation*

A number of observers have explained the Egyptian approach towards Hamas and the tension between Egypt and the movement in light of Egypt's uneasiness with Iran's rise in the Middle East and the latter's funding of Hamas activities (Shachar 2010, 182-5; Sowelam 2007, 139-46). It is true that Iran's support to resistance movements in the region was at odds with Egypt's aim for regional stability. In his communications with the American administration, President Mubarak denounced Iran and its attempts to destabilise Egypt and the region in co-operation with Syria and Qatar (U.S embassy cables, February 9, 2009). But this does not stand as sufficient explanation for Egypt's policy towards Hamas. Iran has also financially and diplomatically supported other resistance movements in the region. Although

Egypt has been intolerant of these movements, it has not co-operated so closely with regional and international powers to isolate them. Egypt's policy must thus also be understood with reference to the domestic confrontation between the state and the Islamist forces, especially the MBs.

With the escalation of the state's confrontation with the MBs, the rise of Hamas was an event with far-reaching implications not only regionally but also domestically. Its rise, coupled with the ability of the MBs in Egypt to win 20 percent of the People's Assembly seats in the parliamentary elections in 2005, gave the impression that Islamists in the Middle East could trouble incumbent regimes in the region. Based on communications with Mubarak, the former American ambassador to Egypt, Margaret Scobey, summarised Mubarak's position on Hamas in a confidential cable to the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton noting that 'Mubarak hates Hamas and considers them the same as Egypt's own Muslim Brotherhoods, which he sees as his own most dangerous political threat' (U.S embassy cables, February 09, 2009). Mustapha Al-Feki, the member of the ruling NDP and head of the foreign relations committee at the People's Assembly declared that Egypt would not accept the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Gaza (Al-masry alyoum, January 20, 2009). This indicates that Egypt was unwelcoming of Hamas' rise to power not only because it is an opposition movement, but also because of the movement's Islamist political project that could tie in with the rise of Islamists in Egypt. The Egyptian state shared Fateh's view that both the MBs in Egypt and Hamas in Palestine are part of a transnational

ideological movement whose prioritisation of the state's interests, be that state Egypt or Palestine, is doubtful (Interview with Alfara 2009).

These fears increased with the beginning of the MBs' communications with western governments and academic institutions in the wake of the 2005 parliamentary elections in Egypt. Following the elections, the American Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, Scott Carpenter, indicated that although the American administration could not communicate with the MBs because it was an illegal organisation, it could initiate dialogue with the movement's members of parliament (Sharp 2006, 21). On this basis, a number of American officials and senators met members of the MBs' parliamentary bloc. In May 2007, a U.S congressional delegation met a group of Egyptian MPs that included Saad Al-Katatny, the head of the MBs parliamentary bloc (Ikwaweb May 18, 2007).

Unsurprisingly, these communications were not welcomed by the Egyptian government. In June 2006, for instance, the Egyptian government accused the International Republican Institute of interfering in its internal affairs and called on it to stop its activities in Egypt (Sharp 2006, 21-2). In the wake of the congressional delegation meeting with Al-Katatny, the spokesperson of the Egyptian presidency noted that the Egyptian government was surprised that while refusing to deal with Hamas' elected government in Gaza, the American administration had approached the MBs in Egypt on the basis that they were represented in the Egyptian parliament. He stressed that 'the American

administration is free to take any course of action, but Egypt would also take necessary steps to protect its national interest and maintain the separation between religion and politics' (Palestine's Dialogue Forum, May 28, 2007). As noted above, in its confidential communications with the American administration, the Egyptian state tried to stress the radical ideology of the MBs and Hamas and the connections between the two movements. In his meeting with the FBI director Robert Mueller in February 2006, Mubarak highlighted the historical link between the MBs and Hamas, describing the former as a dangerous movement. He highlighted Egypt's efforts to press Hamas to adopt more pragmatic positions. For his part, Mueller highlighted that the FBI was keeping an eye on the MBs' fundraising and organisational activities in the U.S and would provide Egypt with the relevant intelligence information (U.S embassy cables, February 15, 2006).

Thus, for the Egyptian state, Hamas' ascendancy was more than just the rise of a force with a militant ideology in a neighbouring country. It was a turning point that consolidated the credibility of Islamists as a legitimate alternative to existing regimes in the region and invited rethinking regarding the future of political Islam in the Middle East (Milton-Edwards 2008, 1586). This explains why Egypt's position towards Hamas was even harsher than the E.U. position. The latter's position, as summed up by the E.U's special representative to the Middle East, Marc Otte, was to encourage Hamas to change its policies. Egypt's aim, as illustrated by its intelligence co-operation with the U.S and Israel, was to see Hamas fail (the Palestine Papers, March 21, 2006). This also explains why Egypt

showed willingness to train and equip the PA security institutions, even at its own expense (the Palestine papers, May 10, 2006).

Importantly also, the Egyptian state, having long excluded the Islamists from the political process, could not have been expected to offer a successful model to the Palestinians for accommodating Islamist forces. It was thus unsurprising that Egypt joined forces with the U.S and Israel in efforts to exclude Hamas from the Palestinian political process. More generally, if one of the challenges facing the Palestinians was to democratise the PA, one could not have expected the Egyptian state to help the Palestinians, given its own poor record in this regard. In fact, it was the Egyptian model of centralised authority that inspired Arafat when he established the structures of the PLO (Sayigh 1997, 19-20). This is not to blame Egypt for the Palestinian divide or lack of democratic governance, but to suggest that Egypt was not qualified to act as a model for democracy and political inclusiveness for the Palestinians.

- *Could the Egyptian role have been more effective? The MBs actual and potential roles*

If the relationship between the Egyptian state and Islamists affected the former's role in the Palestinian reconciliation, could the Egyptian role have been different under a different state-Islamists complex? Could the MBs have influenced Hamas positions had they been better tolerated by the Egyptian state or included in the political process?

The Palestinian cause has always been central to the MBs' agenda. The MBs see the Palestinian plight as being a result of a western conspiracy against the Muslim world and as an attempt to control Muslim lands. According to the movement's founder, Hassan Al-Banna, the Palestinian issue is not the issue of a single country or even of the Arab world, but of the Muslim world as a whole. By establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, Al-Banna believed, the west had founded a base from which to attack Arab and Islamic countries one after the other (Al-Banna 1931; Abdel-Rahman 2009). The writings of the movement's successive Supreme Guides considered Jihad as the only way to liberate all the historical lands of Palestine. They praised the resistance of the Palestinian people, criticised the peace endeavours as vain and called on the Arab regimes to support the Palestinian resistance financially and logistically. They refused to consider negotiations, peace, recognising Israel, and the establishment of the independent state of Palestine on the pre-1967 borders as the bases for resolving the conflict (Mashhour 2001, 2002, Al-Hodaiby 2004, Badie 2010).

Based on this conception, the movement has supported and funded the Islamist resistance movements in Palestine (Milton-Edwards 2009, 176). It considered Hamas' rise in the parliamentary elections a victory for the Islamist project and for the resistance option. It declared its commitment to increasing its financial assistance to Hamas to help it overcome the international siege (Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation 2009, 20-1). Furthermore, the movement's leaders criticised the Egyptian state's antagonistic policies towards Hamas. Issam Al-Irian considered these policies a reflection of the confrontational and

exclusionist approach towards the MBs at home and accused the Egyptian regime of following the American and Zionist dictates in order to secure American approval of the inheritance of power by Mubarak's son (Al-Irian 2008). This was one of the ways in which the MBs used Mubarak's policy towards Palestine to delegitimise his regime and sustain their own legitimacy.

It is against this background that Al-Irian, among other MBs intellectuals, considered that the way to liberate Palestine was the establishment of democratic systems in Egypt and the Arab world. For him, this would not result in the more democratic Arab regimes automatically waging a war against Israel. However, establishing democracy and responsive governments, protecting freedoms, and empowering citizens would be translated into real development, powerful material power and more support to the Palestinians. As he put it, if Arab regimes failed the Palestinian cause, Arab masses empowered by democracy would restore Palestinian rights (Al-Irian 2009). Thus, although the Brotherhoods did not explicitly call for the removal of the regime as a way to liberate Palestine, they considered the transformation to a more democratic system to be a push to the Palestinian cause.

On the other hand, however, the movement's political figures have shown more pragmatism towards Israel. When the movement was drafting a political platform for its potential political party, Al-Irian declared that if the MBs were to rise to power, they would deal with Israel as a fact on the ground. He argued that there should be a differentiation between the position of the party and that of the

movement with regard to relations with Israel. He referred to the statement in the draft of the party's programme on respecting all the treaties signed by previous Egyptian governments to indicate that the MBs would respect the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. He did, however, stress that this agreement could be reviewed and amended (Al-Irian 2007). The movement's Supreme Guide at that time, Mahdy Akef, rebuked Al-Irian's statements, confirming that the movement would not recognise Israel and that 'Israel is not in the Muslim Brotherhoods' dictionary' (Akef 2007). The confusion in the movement's foreign policy positions, which can be partly attributed to its exclusion from the political process, has thus been reflected in its stance on Israel and the Palestinian question.

Apart from the movement's conception of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the tense relationship between the state and the MBs at home has deprived Egypt of a potential tool of influence in the Palestinian reconciliation process. The repeated failure of Cairo-sponsored reconciliation rounds raised a question as to whether Egypt could have used the Hamas-MBs link as an asset in its relationship with Hamas. It is true that Hamas is independent of the MBs in Egypt in terms of its decisions and strategies. However, as the leading figure of the MBs, Issam Al-Irian revealed, Fateh had previously appealed to the MBs in Egypt to help mitigate the tensions between the two factions. Since the escalation of the state's crackdown against the MBs in the wake of the parliamentary elections in 2005, Fateh leaders have been reluctant to call on the MBs to intervene (Interview with Al-Irian 2009). The former Palestinian Ambassador to Egypt Mohamed Subeih also confirmed that until the time of Mamoun Al-Hudaiby, the Supreme Guide of the MBs from

2002-2004, President Arafat used to meet the MBs Supreme Guides and members of the movement during his visits to Cairo to discuss issues related to Palestinian reconciliation. According to Subeih, this ceased to be the case although the Palestinian leadership continued to contact members of the MBs in Qatar (Subeih 2006, 46).

Although there is no detailed information about the impact of these meetings in easing the tensions between Fateh and Hamas, they hint to the possible role that the MBs in Egypt could have played in Palestinian reconciliation and in Hamas-Israel relations had it not been for the state's exclusionist approach towards the movement, especially since 2005. The role of the MBs in the prisoners exchange deal between Hamas and Israel after the fall of the Mubarak regime provides evidence for this argument. Media reports linked the signing of the deal in mid-October 2011, after five years of unsuccessful negotiations, to the meeting of Prem Kumar, the U.S National Security Council director for Israel and Palestinian Affairs, with MBs members a week before. This is not to claim that the role of the MBs was decisive in securing this deal, but it may have contributed to sealing it (Middle East Monitor, October 6, 2011; Middle East online, October 18, 2011).

To sum up, this section has argued that the State-Islamists relationship in Egypt impacted on Egypt's dealing with the new realities of Palestine after the rise of Hamas. Evaluation of Egypt's role in Palestinian reconciliation in terms of Hamas' acceptance of this role and Egypt's influence on Hamas needs to take the State-Islamists relationship in Egypt into account. It can also be claimed that Egypt's

exclusion of the MBs not only contributed to the confusion of the movement's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but also deprived Egypt of a tool of influence in the Palestinian issue.

3.2.3. The Peace Process and Egypt's Economic Co-operation with Israel

If the Egyptian state was not able to influence the Israeli positions in the peace process by political and diplomatic means, would it have been able to influence these positions by linking with Israeli economic interests? Evidence shows that the Egyptian state's policy has shifted from linking improvements in economic relations with Israel to improvements in the peace process to delinking the two issues since 2004. Since then, Egypt has shown little willingness to use its economic relations with Israel to serve its role as a mediator in peace negotiations. At the same time, the relationship between Egyptian and Israeli businesses reflected the lack of autonomy of the business community in Egypt. This relationship has followed the state's policy which hindered the development of business relations with Israel in the 1990s, but promoted and protected these relationships during the last decade.

A. The New Middle East: was Egypt ready for peace?

For two decades after signing the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, economic relations between the two countries remained limited and affected by the political developments in the region. The two countries cooperated in a number of agricultural projects. In accordance with their peace treaty, Egypt exported oil to Israel. Egypt has also received hundreds of thousands of Israeli tourists every year

since the beginning of the 1980s, especially since the liberation of Taba in 1989 (Al-Naggar and Al-Gibaly 1997, 167-8; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003; Al-Sayed 2004, 136-7). Trade between the two countries remained limited. Only 0.3 percent of Israeli exports were directed to Egypt, which came 38th as a destination for Israeli exports.¹ The two countries have, since the signing of the peace treaty, negotiated the exporting of Egypt's natural gas to Israel, but Egypt was reluctant to sign an agreement for political reasons. In the 1980s and 1990s several Israeli officials expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of economic relationships with Egypt, noting that it was not what Israel had hoped for (Lesch 1989, 82; Qurei 2008, 48).

At the same time, when the peace process started at the beginning of the 1990s, Egypt held that implementing a regional economic integration project between Israel and the Arab countries should be conditional on the progress of the peace process. Egypt participated in the Middle East and North Africa economic summits that brought Israel together with a number of Arab countries in Casablanca in 1994, and Amman in 1995, and itself hosted this summit in 1996. However, owing to the stalling of the peace process it decided not to participate in the last summit in Doha in 1997. Egypt saw economic co-operation between the Arabs and Israel as part of the peace process, if not as a step that should come after the political settlement of the conflict. This stood against the Israeli conception,

¹There is no reliable data on trade between Egypt and Israel. According to Israeli sources, between 1994 and 2000, the total level of Israeli exports to Egypt was valued at \$181 million while Egypt exports to Israel reached \$1.606 billion. These figures dropped slightly after 2000 in reaction to the Palestinian Intifada. See Yadav (2007).

which tends to separate the economic and the political aspects of conflict resolution, and calls for progress on the former first. The Egyptian leadership also held that Arab economic co-operation with Israel should not affect Arab relations or endanger Arab security. It is for this reason that Egypt linked this co-operation with progress in implementing its initiative for a Middle East free from weapons of mass destruction. In short, Egypt considered economic co-operation, security and political settlement to be inseparable. It was only through linking these issues that a settlement that serves Egyptian and Arab interest could be reached (Abu-Taleb and Abdel-Wahab 1997, 26-9; Al-Naggar and Al-Gibaly 1997, 146-7).

The objective of Egypt's position was partly to pressurise Israel to agree to a just political settlement of the Palestinian issue before aspiring for economic co-operation with Arab countries. It was also a way to block Israeli aspirations for regional leadership. The Middle East economic summits were based on the Israeli project for establishing a 'New Middle East'. The project was based on a Middle Eastern regional order to replace the Arab regional system and ensure Israel's regional pre-eminence (Amin 1998, 90-1). In proposing this project, which featured clearly in Shimon Peres' vision and his statement at the economic summit in Casablanca in 1994, Israel seemed to be saying to the Arabs that Egypt's leadership led them to nothing and that Israel would lead the region to economic prosperity (Gerges 1995, 69-70). But while Egypt accepted Israel as a neighbour with which it could establish peaceful political and economic relations, it was less tolerant of Israel as a regional hegemonic power (Al-Naggar 1997, 187; Meital 2002, 148-9).

It was thus unsurprising that Egypt refused the Israeli vision of Middle Eastern economic co-operation, but without proposing an alternative Arab economic project or even a national project to develop Egypt's regional competitiveness (Badran 1995, 316-7; Thabet 1995, 193-5). This led some analysts to argue that Egypt refused the Israeli vision for peace because it was not ready for the post-peace period, in which economic factors would play a decisive role in defining regional leadership (Abu-Taleb and Abdel-Wahab 1997, 28-9). An Egyptian scholar went even further, arguing that Egypt wanted to engage in managing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict without necessarily resolving it in order to have time to 'rebuild from within' and be ready for the post-conflict era (Abdel-Gawad in Barari 2003, 89). Statements made by Osama El-Baz, Mubarak's political advisor, highlighted Egypt's fears that a full normalisation of relations with Israel would allow the latter to dictate the regional agenda through economic means (Ben-ami 2006, 229). This indicated that Egypt's approach towards Middle Eastern economic co-operation was not only based on its position towards the peace process, but also on its recognition of Israel's relative economic advantage. In this sense, Egypt's hesitant approach towards reform and thus, its inability to establish a successful model of economic transformation at home, led it to adopt a conservative reactive approach towards economic integration in the region.

B. Delinking Economic co-operation and the peace process

The last decade has witnessed developments that have raised questions about Egypt's position towards economic co-operation with Israel. In December 2004 Egypt signed the QIZ agreement with Israel and the U.S. The agreement allows

some Egyptian commodities to enter American markets free of customs and duties provided that they include 11.7 percent (later reduced to 10.5 percent) of Israeli input. It established a number of free trade industrial zones, whose joint Israeli-Egyptian manufactured products are exempted from American imports duties. A few months after signing the QIZ agreement, Egypt signed a 15-20 year agreement to export Egyptian natural gas to Israel. Nimrod Novik, the vice president of the Merhav group, the Israeli company involved in the deal, described the gas price as 'the best in the world'. Further, he admitted that the quantities the Israeli company had the right to purchase 'far exceed current domestic Israeli requirements' (U.S embassy cables, November 23, 2005). The two agreements were considered by Israel to be a positive turn in the relationship between the two countries, and were expected to open a new era in economic relations between Egypt and Israel (Peres Centre for Peace, 2005).

These improvements in Egypt-Israeli economic relationships cannot be considered a complete normalisation of relations between the two countries. According to Esmat Abdel Maguid and Boutros Ghali, two noted Egyptian diplomats who participated in the Egypt-Israeli peace negotiations three decades ago, these improvements did not reflect a 'warming' of the cold relations between the two countries. They rather reflected a limited move to meet specific Egyptian national interests (Interviews with Ghali and Abdel- Meguid 2009). But at the same time, the two agreements signified that Egypt was ready to change its policies and isolate its bilateral economic relations with Israel from the developments in the peace process. As a former Egyptian ambassador to Israel indicated, Egypt's

commitment to the rights of the Palestinians did not mean ignoring its national interest in achieving development and security. For him, protecting Egypt's national interest entailed fostering relations with Israel to reduce any possibility of future confrontation (Interview with Bassiouny 2009). It was thus unsurprising that Egypt signed the two agreements in spite of protest from leftist and Islamist political forces.

Another senior diplomat and a former foreign minister argues that fostering relations with Israel was meant to serve the Egyptian and Arab cause in the Palestinian issue by increasing the tools for influencing the positions of the Israeli government (Interview with Maher 2009). However, there is no evidence that Egypt was able to use its economic relationships with Israel to influence Israeli positions and decisions on the Palestinian issue.

Importantly also, this partial improvement in economic relations with Israel did not come in the context of an Egyptian blueprint for economic co-operation in the Middle East. Rather, it came as a limited step to save national industries and achieve economic gains. Egypt signed the QIZ agreement, in particular, only one month before the end of the U.S textile quota system. The ending of the quota meant that Egyptian exports to the U.S would be subject to high tariffs, something which was expected to expose them to strong competition with the exports of other countries. Egypt seems, therefore, to have signed the QIZ to escape competition with other countries' textile exports and to prevent the expected job losses and negative impacts on this important industry. In addition, Egypt saw the signing of

the QIZ as an important step towards, or a temporary alternative to, a free trade agreement with the U.S (Yadav 2007, Al-Naggar 2005). Negotiating the protocol came shortly after the U.S announced that Egypt had a long way to go before it is granted a free trade agreement with the U.S (Schemm 2005, 52). Yet Egypt hoped to imitate the Jordanian experience in which the signing of the QIZ agreement with Israel in 1998 paved the way for the signing of a free trade agreement with the U.S three years later (Kamal 2005). Thus, Egypt signed the QIZ to achieve a particular economic interest by protecting a national industry and expanding its access to the American market. There was no evidence that Egypt changed its opposition towards the Israeli vision of economic co-operation in the region. But there was also no evidence of an alternative Egyptian vision to promote an Arab regional economic co-operation project as an alternative to the Middle Eastern project.

- *Egypt's economic relations with Israel: towards an explanation*

While there is no evidence that Egypt used the partial improvement of economic relations with Israel to push the peace process, it was clear that through signing the two economic agreements with Israel, Egypt was keen on signalling to the U.S its continued commitment to peace in the region and on improving its economic relations with the U.S. During the signing ceremony the Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry, Rachid Mohamed Rachid, one of the business figures in the Nazif government, explained the importance of the QIZ by reference to Egypt's strategic relationship with the U.S. He expressed his hope that this agreement would help with the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the U.S. He highlighted that signing the agreement would contribute to a just and

comprehensive peace, and would reflect Egypt's eagerness to further the progress of peace in the region (Rachid 2004). There was, however, no explanation of how Egypt would use this agreement to advance peace, especially at the Palestinian front.

For its part, the U.S, as noted by its trade representative Robert Zoellick, argued that by supporting the agreement it was helping peace and backing the new reformers in the Middle East, in reference to the business-oriented, neo-liberal ministerial elite in Egypt (Zoellick 2004).

As for Israel, it considered the QIZ agreement as an important step towards normalisation of relations with Egypt in particular, and the Arab world in general, without giving any concessions in its peace negotiations with the Palestinians. In the signing ceremony, the then Israeli Minister of Industry, Ehud Olmert, noted that 'it is very important for the Egyptian people to understand that when there is peace with Israel, and there are good relations with Israel, there can also be business benefits and trade benefits to the Egyptian economy'. Further, Olmert stressed that given Egypt's position in the Arab world, signing economic co-operation with Israel would encourage other countries to follow suit (Olmert 2004).

In short, while Egypt used its relationship with Israel mainly to solve economic problems, ease economic constraints, and to improve relations with the U.S, Israel's aim in improving these relations was full normalisation, not only with Egypt, but also with other Arab countries (Dessouki 2008, 191; Yadav 2007).

The partial improvement in economic relations between Egypt and Israel also reflected the character of state-business relations in Egypt and the rise of the political role of business illustrated in the last chapter. Some scholars and observers consider the signing of the QIZ and the gas deal to be a reflection of the dominance of the interests of the business community, which had become part of the political elite and an influential actor in shaping the state's domestic and foreign policies since the 1990s (Interview with Nafaa 2008 and with Al-Naggar, February 2009). Referring to the QIZ agreement, a senior economic analyst pointed out that for the first time, an economic agreement was negotiated by businessmen who defined the relations between the two countries on behalf of the state (interview with Al-Naggar 2009).

Although the role of the business community in pushing forward economic relations with Israel was central, it was not independent of the state. This is evident in the development of business relations with Israel in the last two decades. During the 1990s business acted at the state's behest and followed its steps. With the start of the peace process, the Egyptian Businessmen's Association held meetings with Israeli business associations and announced its support for the Middle East economic summits. However, it also announced that its participation in these summits and development of economic relationships with Israel would be conditional on the progress of the peace process. More generally, observers noted the convergence between the positions of business and state delegations in the Middle East economic summits. Even when there was business participation in the 1997 summit in Doha despite the absence of an official Egyptian delegation, this

was with the state's approval. Some observers have claimed that this participation was meant to make up for the absence of the Egyptian government after American pressures on Egypt to attend the summit (Ezz-Eldin 2003, 78-9).

Since 2004, the state supported the development of economic relations between Egypt and Israel. In the case of the QIZ agreement, both the Israeli and the Egyptian parties admitted that the private sector played an important role in the initiation and negotiation of the agreement. In a personal interview with the former Counsellor of Economic and Political Affairs in the embassy of Israel in Cairo, she noted that the development of Egyptian-Israeli economic relations was only made possible by the rising role of the business community in Egypt. This community, compared to other social groups, is less sensitive about, and more open towards, the normalisation of relations with Israel (Interview with Baram 2009). It is also no coincidence that the QIZ agreement was signed after the formation of a new Egyptian government that included a number of businessmen in 2004. However, interviews with Israeli and Egyptian officials highlighted that the negotiations between the private sectors in the two countries only came after the granting of a green light by the state. The two governments set the framework of the protocol and continued to review its implementation (Interviews with El-Bous and Baram 2009). Since signing the agreement, business interests, as noted by a businessman who benefits from the QIZ, backed the isolation of the implementation of the agreement from political developments (Interview with Kassem 2009). The state in both Egypt and Israel showed a commitment to the implementation of the

agreement owing to what they regarded as their ‘responsibility towards business interests’ (Interview with El-Bous and Baram 2009).

In the case of the gas deal, the state, through the Ministry of Petroleum, allowed a private Egyptian-Israeli company partially owned by Hussein Salem, a close friend of President Mubarak, to export Egyptian gas to Israel. When a judicial verdict was issued to stop gas exports based on the low price accepted by the Egyptian side, the government appealed against the ruling and protected the agreement. Additionally, the Egyptian government, as indicated in the judicial verdict, kept the details of the agreement secret and did not present it to the Egyptian parliament, something which raised questions about the interests behind the deal (Nafaa 2008).

In short, business interests were crucial in the signing of the two economic agreements, but had to be supported and protected by the state. This indicates that the symbiotic relationship between the state and business has been reflected in the way Egyptian business has related to Israel. These relations were designed to promote relations with the U.S, serve narrow interests or rescue certain industries rather than linking the interests of the two countries to foster peaceful bilateral and regional relations.

- *Could Egypt's economic co-operation with Israel have been more effective?*

The last section has argued that since 2004, Egypt delinked its economic relations with Israel from the progress of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

According to the former head of the Israel department of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, the economic agreements with Israel were kept away from the Foreign Ministry. For him, this prevented the use of economic relations to influence the political positions of Israel in the peace process (Interview with Gohar 2009).

There may be little evidence that Egypt could have influenced the Israeli position in peace negotiations using economic means. The economic benefits that Egypt expected to gain from the QIZ agreement with Israel may have exceeded those of Israel. Although the level of trade between Egypt and Israel increased following the signing of the QIZ, Israel's trade with Egypt constituted less than one percent of its total trade. However, Israel has politically and diplomatically benefited from the agreement. As an Israeli scholar noted, the signing of the agreement helped Israel to remove the 'Arab taboo of doing business with Israel in the open' (Yadav 2007). The situation was different with the gas deal from which Israel achieved economic gains by securing gas at low prices, in addition to its diplomatic and political gains.

Could a more effective state in Egypt have taken a different approach towards economic co-operation with Israel? Evidently, the signing of the QIZ agreement partly resulted from Egypt's inability to restructure one of its important national industries. As economic experts point out, resorting to the QIZ agreement reflects the trend in Egyptian economic policies to delay the implementation of structural reforms. Instead of developing its national industries to make it more competitive,

the Egyptian state avoided competition in American markets by signing the QIZ (Yadav 2007; Al-Naggar 2005, 351).

As far as the gas deal is concerned, a more democratic Egypt, where public and parliamentary discussions have an impact on foreign policy decisions, would have been, at least, less likely to sign a deal with such conditions, especially in terms of duration and price. It was unsurprising that the Egyptian government announced that it would reconsider its gas export contracts with Israel after the fall of Mubarak.¹

In short, a more effective state in Egypt may not have been better able to influence the Israeli position in the peace process through economic means. However, it could have at least deprived Israel of the political and/or economic benefits it gained from the signing of economic agreements with Egypt since 2004.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the character of the soft authoritarian state in Egypt has affected its foreign policy in the region. It has explained how the Egyptian state's inability to change its patron model and impose structural economic reforms, its prioritisation of stability and regime survival, and its attempt to contain rising social upheavals led it to be more concerned with using external material and non-material resources to sustain the model of its relationship with

¹ In April 2012, Egypt's national gas company terminated the gas export agreement with Israel citing a payment dispute as the reason.

society than with mobilising domestic resources for regional activism. The state's co-optation and exclusion of social forces have demobilised these forces instead of using their regional links as assets for a more active and effective regional role. These factors have also prevented the emergence of consensus on a regional project that both state and social forces work to achieve.

These consequences of state-society relations on Egypt's regional policies have been reflected in its policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Egypt's international and regional alliances, shaped by its domestic politics, made it difficult for Egypt to select a course of action other than the promotion of peace negotiations, the containment of resistance, and the promotion of economic relations with Israel. The marketing of peace as a 'strategic option' without proposing alternative routes or new tactics that could be used to influence the Israeli positions have contributed to the stalemate in the peace process and allowed Israel to buy time while it has changed facts on the ground. Egypt's role in Palestinian reconciliation, which is a necessary step towards agreeing on a unified Palestinian strategy towards Israel, was hindered by the state's relationship with Islamists at home. Making use of Hamas rise to power in 2006, Egypt's political leadership and intelligence institutions marketed the Mubarak regime as a partner for the U.S and Israel in combating 'radical' movements in the region, including in Egypt. This position affected the acceptability and credibility of Egypt's role in the reconciliation process.

At the same time, to avoid being outbidden by the Islamists, the Egyptian state resorted to public condemnation of Israeli policies, occasional severing of diplomatic relations and tolerance of demonstrations against Israel. This allowed the Egyptian state, especially in the 1990s, to portray itself to the west as the indispensable Arab ally and to its public as the Arab leader and defender of the Palestinian rights. However, the rise of violence and the consequent deterioration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the last decade of the Mubarak regime revealed the vulnerability of the state, which became unable to deliver to the region or to its public.

4.

South Africa

The Domestic Challenges of a Regional Project

In chapter 2, I argued that South Africa's negotiated transition at the beginning of the 1990s produced a model of state-society relations based on engagement and compromise. The post-apartheid state has established institutional links with organised business and labour. At the same time, the state has been able to impose its macro-economic reform programme in spite of the opposition of the leftist partners in the tripartite alliance. For their part, social groups have used these links to influence the state's policies while maintaining a degree of independence vis-à-vis the state. However, I underlined the tendency towards the concentration of power in the presidency and its attempt to insulate itself from social, especially leftist, forces in the Mbeki era. I also noted that the state has not been able to build a societal consensus over a project for transformation.

In this chapter, I examine how this state-society model affected South Africa's regional policies in the Mbeki era. The examination of the South African case extends the arguments suggested by the Egyptian case and adds interesting considerations to the analysis of the impact of state-society relationships on the regional role of state and non-state actors. I introduce three main arguments. Firstly, compared to the Egyptian state, the South African state has shown more capacity in designing a conception for its regional role. President Mbeki marketed the idea of an 'African Renaissance' and invested in implementing its principles through the African Renaissance Fund. He translated this idea into a programme of action; the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which provided a framework for South Africa's foreign policy during his presidency. This has allowed South Africa to play an active role in debating the continent's

developmental agenda and in representing Africa in international forums. This has also provided South African businesses with new opportunities in the African continent after years of isolation.

However, the South African case indicates that the elaboration by leadership of a regional conception is not enough. This conception has to resonate at the popular level and attract the support of other state and non-state actors in the region, two tasks which Mbeki was not able to completely accomplish. Mbeki did not engage social forces in the design of NEPAD; and except for business, the initiative did not attract the support of South African social forces. This supports the argument that South Africa's African agenda was defined by a convergence of interests between the political leadership, top bureaucrats of the foreign policy-related ministries, and business. Regionally, civil society groups, and even political elites, expressed several reservations on the NEPAD framework. Importantly also, while South Africa proposed through NEPAD a reformist agenda based on the principles of democracy, it was not able to induce other countries to abide by this agenda or to form a coalition to defend it. Its racial politics and liberation movement psyche have affected its definition and handling of regional crises. Thus, developing a regional conception did allow South Africa to play an active regional role. However, this conception did not provide a basis for an acceptable and influential regional role.

These challenges to South Africa's regional agenda have been clearly reflected in South African diplomacy towards the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000. They have

limited the effectiveness of Mbeki's active mediation between the Zimbabwean government and western governments and international organisations on the land issue. They have also impacted on the South African mediation between the ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in resolving the political and economic crisis. South Africa's approach of reducing the Zimbabwe crisis to the land issue and defining the land question as predominantly a racial issue prevented an early South African intervention to fix economic and political governance in Zimbabwe. The impact of race on the South African position on Zimbabwe supports the argument that South Africa's unfinished nation-building project at home impacts on its conception and performance in regional crises. Solidarity with a sister liberation movement and independence from western powers were given precedence over NEPAD's principles of democracy and respect for human rights. In this sense, Mbeki missed an opportunity to form a regional coalition that could promote his reformist regional agenda and put pressure on Mugabe to comply with the principles of this agenda.

Secondly, compared to Egypt, South Africa has had less external constraints on its foreign policy. This has given the state more leeway in directing its domestic resources to foreign policy endeavours. The state rationalised the direction of resources to the African continent by reference to its commitment towards, and its cultural, historical and strategic links to, the continent. This, however, has opened the door for controversy about the relevance of South Africa's foreign policy to its national interests and about the ways to address the gap between domestic and foreign policies.

This gap between national interests and foreign policy was one of the central controversies around South Africa's policy in Zimbabwe. The failure of South Africa's mediation to produce a result for almost eight years, and the increasingly negative impacts of the crisis on the South African economy intensified domestic criticism of Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy'. Although South African diplomacy may have contributed to the Zimbabwean economic recovery and protected some South African business interests, ruling out alternatives to soft diplomacy has proved to be costly in the short run.

Thirdly, benefiting from the enabling environment of the democratic post-apartheid dispensation, South African social forces have played various active and independent regional roles. These roles have sometimes complemented, sometimes checked and occasionally balanced the role of the state. They have helped in exporting different aspects of South African state-society relations to other countries on the continent. They have held the state accountable to the principles of its foreign policy and to its democratic rules and institutions. The active regional role of social forces invites the state and social forces to co-ordinate their course of action to prevent disconnection between their regional policies.

The involvement of South African business and labour in the Zimbabwean crisis is a clear example of the engagement of social forces in the region. In co-ordination with civil society organisations in Southern Africa, COSATU supported Zimbabwean civil society and proposed an alternative to the South African state's policy. Further, they checked the state's policy by holding it accountable to its

declared principles of democracy and respect for human rights. Thanks to their adaptive capacity and political links, South African businesses were able to survive the Zimbabwean crisis with some expanding their activities and increasing their profits. The state's co-ordination with business and civil society to serve the objectives of its policy of economic recovery and political reconciliation in Zimbabwe was, however, less than successful.

The remainder of this chapter details these arguments. It is divided into two major sections. The first section examines the impact of South Africa's state-society complex on the regional role conception of state and non-state actors. The second section illustrates the manifestations of this impact on the South African policy towards the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000.

4.1. Regional Role Conception: State Vision and Societal Interests

By the end of the 1990s, the state in South Africa had started consolidating its foreign policy in general and its African agenda in particular. South Africa's leadership articulated the concept of the 'African Renaissance' to guide South Africa's African agenda. Intellectuals and Think Tanks propagated the idea. In co-ordination with other regional powers in Africa, South Africa has translated the idea into a developmental blueprint. This section describes the state's regional role conception as reflected in the notion of the 'African Renaissance' and the NEPAD initiative. It examines the extent to which state leadership has been able to build a consensus around this conception domestically and regionally. It first outlines the central institutions in the state's foreign policy machinery. It then presents the

aspects of the state's regional role conception as reflected in the discourse and documents of these institutions. This is followed by an examination of the interests and visions of organised business and labour.

4.1.1. The Institutional Framework: Who conceptualises South Africa's regional role?

As is the case in Egypt, the vision of South Africa's leadership is quite significant as far as the state's conception of its regional role is concerned. This was especially true under Mbeki, who gave priority to foreign policy, especially to the African agenda. This owes a lot to his past position as head of publicity and information in the ANC in exile, and later as head of the ANC's international affairs department (Gumede 2007a, 43; Hughes 2004, 79-80). Scholars and observers note that it was the presidency that controlled foreign policy making and set its agenda in Mbeki's era (Johnson 2010, 166-7; van Nieuwkerk 1999, 42; interview with Solomon 2009). Others attributed his appointment of Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as a foreign minister in spite of her limited experience in this area to his desire to dominate foreign policy making (Feinstein 2009, 78). In the words of Geldenhuys (2010, 154), Mbeki 'acted as a "super" foreign minister....he was the principal foreign policy maker and also South Africa's chief diplomat who gave high priority to personal diplomacy.' He got 'first pick' of foreign policy issues and defined priorities in consultation with senior officials of the relevant state departments (Hughes 2004, 46). Even before coming to power, Mbeki took charge of foreign policy in his office as deputy president. After 1999, Mbeki

restructured the presidency to make it the locus of foreign policy decision-making (le Pere and van Nieuwkerk, 2006, 289).

In terms of foreign policy orientation, Mbeki can best be described as belonging to what Habib calls 'second generation nationalists'. This generation combines pragmatism and principle. It adopts an anti-imperialist posture but co-operates with international powers. It works according to the rules of the dominant world order while trying to gradually reform it in co-ordination with emerging powers in the South (Habib 2008, 3-5). Johnson considers this combination to be a reflection of the schizophrenia of ANC exiles who were trained on the principles of socialism and anti-imperialism but had, at the same time, to appeal to western liberals (Johnson 2010, 235).

The role of the presidency in general, and of Mbeki in particular, invited harsh criticisms. Critics saw South Africa's foreign policy in Mbeki's years as guided by his 'grand vision of the world' (Leon 2003, 123). Foreign policy making was described as an 'elite-driven, bureaucratic process in which decisions are concentrated in the hands of a strong president and an inner loop of senior ministers, [notably the ministers of foreign affairs, trade and industry, finance and defence]' (Venter 2001, 164). The decision making process was criticised for not being open enough to civil society participation. In the words of one South African scholar, President Mbeki believed that consultation with civil society 'muddles the decision making process'. Consultations from outside the narrow circle of the

presidency and top foreign policy bureaucrats were thus limited and selective (interview with le Pere 2009).

In addition to the presidency, various state institutions have had a role in foreign policy formulation and/or implementation. The role and weight of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) (now the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO)) has changed over time. As noted earlier, the domination of the presidency under Mbeki overshadowed the department's role. The mission of the department has also shifted. In 1999, wealth creation and security were the overarching principles that guided South Africa's foreign policy. Within one year, this had been changed to reflect a focus on achieving South Africa's interests and values with a special emphasis on achieving the African Renaissance.

With the prioritisation of attracting foreign investments and promoting economic co-operation with Africa and the world, the role of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has been crucial. Reference is made, however, to the tension and lack of co-ordination between the DFA and the DTI (van Nieuwkerk 2006, 97; Venter 2001, 168; Huges 2004, 39; Johnson 2010, 138). A representative of the DFA admits that even with the initiation of the cluster system, the dynamic aspect of co-ordination is lacking owing to the long procedural process of tabling issues in the cabinet (interview with Edries 2010).

The role of the Department of Defence (DOD) has become increasingly important in areas of peace and security. With the democratic transformation in the beginning of the 1990s, the role of the South African National Defence Forces

(SANDF) was reformulated towards a more defensive posture. In addition, one of the main objectives of South Africa's defence policy in the post-apartheid era is to break with the apartheid past through participation in peacekeeping efforts.

The ruling party is not far from foreign policy debates. Through its sub-committee for international relations, the ANC has engaged in foreign policy decision-making. This role also owes a lot to the fact that the same persons occupy senior decision making positions in the party and in the government. The sub-committee includes representatives of the presidency, the ministers of foreign affairs and trade and industry, the chairman of the portfolio committee of parliament, and representatives of the tripartite alliance and other stakeholders. The growing distance between the party and the government in the Mbeki administration and even before may have affected the party's role in foreign policy formulation. But as will be illustrated later, discussions in the party have sometimes paved the way for new foreign policy initiatives. It is also through the party's meetings that the ANC alliance partners get their voice heard on foreign policy issues.

4.1.2. The State's Regional Role Conception: Issues and Dilemmas

As South Africa started its democratic transition, it reformulated the principles of its foreign policy in Africa and beyond. It was not surprising that the new principles of foreign policy reflected the historical experience of the state, and more specifically of the ANC (le Pere and van Nieuwkerk 2006, 284). As early as 1993, President Mandela defined the new pillars of South Africa's foreign policy to be the promotion of democracy and human rights, the respect of justice and

international law, the employment of peaceful mechanisms of conflict resolution, and the promotion of economic cooperation (Mandela 1993, 87). The consolidation of the African agenda has remained the first and foremost priority of the state's foreign policy. Early policy statements and documents highlighted that South Africa's foreign policy choices should be guided by the interests of the continent (Mandela 1993, ANC 1994). These have remained, in essence, the declared principles of South Africa's foreign policy ever since (ANC 1994, Department of Foreign Affairs 1996, ANC 1997b, Department of Foreign Affairs 2008, 8).

Since the end of the 1990s, the idea of the African Renaissance has provided a cornerstone for South Africa's foreign policy in the African continent. This section defines the African Renaissance as promoted by President Mbeki and describes South Africa's role in its achievement. This is followed by a commentary on the concept.

A. Mbeki's African Renaissance:

President Mbeki established himself as 'the key political and intellectual force' behind the African Renaissance (Geldenhuys 2010, 157). His vision of the Renaissance was based on the aspiration that Africans should 'catch up with the rest of humanity in terms of social, economic, technological and scientific development' (Mbeki 2002a), and even claim the 21st century (Mbeki 2005a). According to Mbeki, the liberation of all African countries, the end of the cold war, and the acceleration of globalisation enhanced the chances for the

Renaissance and promised to transform the idea 'from a dream dreamt by visionaries to a practical programme of action for revolutionaries' (Mbeki 1999).

Mbeki based the achievement of the Renaissance on liberating African souls and minds from the influence of centuries of colonial enslavement, recalling the history of African advanced cultural, educational and civilisational centres, and restoring Africans' self-esteem and creativity. He tried to draw affinities with Sheik Anta Diop's ideas of rediscovering and reinforcing African cultural identity. Mbeki's Renaissance was also based on the moral regeneration of African societies in the fight against the lust for accumulation of wealth and power by the few (Mbeki 1998a, 1998c). In this sense, the Renaissance, in Mbeki's words, is a 'rebel against the tyrants and dictators, those who seek to corrupt [African] societies and steal the wealth that belongs to the people' (Mbeki 1998a).

Mbeki stressed the African ownership of the Renaissance. He placed the responsibility of African renewal in the hands of all the social groups in African countries; the 'politicians and business people, youth and women activists, trade unionists, religious leaders, artists and professionals' all over the continent (Mbeki 1998a). These groups would, according to Mbeki's vision, form the 'Popular Movement for the African Renaissance' (Mbeki 1999). At the same time, he highlighted the responsibility of the international community to contribute to this Renaissance through debt forgiveness, increased investments and development assistance, and generous trade policies (Mbeki 1998c). However, he expressed his

recognition that some developed countries pursue only their narrow interests and 'have lost all sense of the noble idea of human solidarity' (Mbeki 1999).

Translating these bases into practical spheres of action, Mbeki defined a number of elements for the Renaissance. These included the promotion of good governance through free elections, transparency and accountability, and the introduction of new economic policies that would encourage the growth of the private sector, attract domestic and foreign investments, and increase Africa's share of world economic activity. At the same time, Mbeki spoke of fostering people-centered development, promoting the independence of African countries in their relations with major powers, reforming the global governance institutions, and enhancing Africa's position in these institutions (Mbeki 1997, 1998, 1999, ANC 1997a).

The idea of the 'African Renaissance' was adopted by the ANC party and government as a cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy (ANC 1997a). However, the ANC's reading of the African Renaissance was more progressive than Mbeki's. While Mbeki saw globalisation as an enabling force for the Renaissance, the ANC considered the Renaissance as a vision that challenges globalisation to develop 'a just and equitable world order'. From the ANC's perspective, 'globalisation contradicts the very agenda of the Renaissance'. Additionally, the ANC identified the alliance of progressive forces that would lead the Renaissance as comprising 'the working class, the peasants, the poor, the middle classes and progressive sectors of an emerging African bourgeoisie' (ANC 1997a).

The South African presidency tried to market the idea of the 'African Renaissance' in South Africa and beyond. With the support of the President's office, an 'African Renaissance' conference was convened in September 1998. In 1999, the African Renaissance Institute was established in Gaborone, Botswana. This was followed by the launching of the South African Chapter of the African Renaissance, which was supposed to lead a continent-wide social movement to support the idea of the Renaissance (Maloka 2001, 1). Another institute for African Renaissance Studies affiliated with the University of South Africa was established in 2003. Additionally, state-connected research centres, such as the Africa Institute of South Africa, debated the idea.¹

A number of scholars praised the idea of the African Renaissance as one that inaugurated a new phase in South Africa foreign policy thinking (Evans 1999, 626) and 'generated enthusiasm and hope among the people' (Maloka 2001, 1-6). The 'African Renaissance' was also described as an anti-imperialist conception (Ajulu 2001, 37), one that 'takes the African region seriously, calls for the revitalisation of Africa's cultural ideas, and promotes a new political culture' (Bongmba 2004, 291). Other South African scholars, however, saw the 'African Renaissance' as an 'empty vessel' rather than a policy framework, a concept that was 'high on sentiments, low on substance' (Vale and Maseko 1998, 277), or, at best, a 'collective vessel' that accommodated all the continent's concerns with little operationalisation of how those concerns would be dealt with (Bischoff 1999, 35

¹ See for example the collection of studies in Makgoba (1999) and in Maloka and Le Roux (2000).

and see also Venter 2001, 170-1). For Vale and Maseko, the African Renaissance proposed a 'globalist' rather than an 'Africanist' approach to African renewal. According to them, it was based on exporting ideologies of the global North, integrating into the world economy, and establishing partnership with developed countries, rather than applying the African mind to the development of ideas for the advancement of Africa in the 21st century (Vale and Maseko 1998, 281-7). The Russian scholar Vladimir Shubin went even further, arguing that the notion had become 'a label which some people use to give themselves credibility- from South African navy activities to Eskom enterprises' penetration into Africa' (Shubin 2000, 70). This agrees with the view of some leftist forces, such as the pan-Africanist student movement, which considered the notion a 'dilution of the pan-African struggle' and an advancement of 'capitalism with an African face' (Landsberg and Kornegay 1998b, 22).

Moreover, a number of scholars considered the 'African Renaissance' a promotion of exclusivist black nationalism (Feinstein 2009, 78; Van Kessel 2001, 44-5). Mbeki's early writings, in his position as head of the ANC's international affairs department, and later as deputy president, tried to introduce an inclusive definition of 'Africanness' sticking to the party's non-racial ideology. In a speech delivered in 1978, Mbeki echoed the spirit of the Freedom Charter that connected equality and peaceful co-existence among national groups at home to the maintenance of world peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes internationally. In his famous 'I'm an African' speech in 1996, he reiterated his rejection of defining 'Africanness' in terms of race, colour, gender, or historical origin (Mbeki 1978; 1996). However,

Mbeki's conception of the 'two nations' was highly race-oriented. His division of the South African society into a 'white and relatively prosperous' nation and a 'black and poor' one (Mbeki 1998b) clearly departs from Mandela's 'rainbow nation' and helps explain South Africa's positions on a number of foreign policy issues (Johnson 2010, 329-30). Mbeki's policy towards the Zimbabwe crisis, which is detailed in the second section of this chapter, is a case in point.

The African Renaissance provided a holistic notion or theme that guided South Africa's foreign policy since the end of the 1990s. However, Mbeki's conception of the African Renaissance evidently included a number of contradictions that left some central questions about African renewal unanswered. Scholars rightly wondered how the revival of African culture and African integration could be combined with neo-liberalism and integration into the world economy (Nabudere 2001, 20-1; Shubin 2000, 69, 73-4). It was not clear how an African solution to African problems and a tendency towards southernism could go hand in hand with the call for increasing western aid, investment and debt relief (Botha 2000, 37). Furthermore, while Mbeki made the achievement of the African Renaissance the responsibility of African social forces, and the re-energisation of African people the locus of the Renaissance, he did not say how the impoverished urban population, small businesses and non-unionised, temporary workers could lead the Renaissance (Nabudere 2001, 20-1). It is therefore unsurprising that the 'African Renaissance' was used in different ways by contradictory ideological groups (Botha 2000, 36). While South Africa's business elite used it as a cover to extend their operations in the continent, critics of market fundamentalism used it as an

instrument to advocate the reform of the international political economy. And whereas some scholars saw it an anti-imperialist idea that distances the continent from western developmental ideologies, others saw it as a reflection of these ideologies.

B. From the African Renaissance to NEPAD

Mbeki's conception of an 'African Renaissance' became even more problematic when it was translated, in collaboration with other regional powers in Africa, into a programme of action, NEPAD. The formulation of a new plan for African recovery started in July 1999 when the OAU summit in Algiers mandated Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Mbeki to prepare an African development plan (Pahad 2002, 2). The three leaders' efforts culminated in the formulation of the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme (MAP) which was unveiled by Mbeki at the World Economic Forum at Davos in January 2001. MAP largely reflected Mbeki's African Renaissance notion. It called for the placing of African countries, individually and collectively 'on a path of sustainable growth and development', and enhancing Africa's participation in the world economy and politics. This was to be achieved through partnerships between the state and the domestic and international capital. The four priority areas of the programme were: a) promoting peace, security, good governance and investment in African people, b) diversifying Africa's exports, c) investing in ICT and basic infrastructure and d) developing financing mechanisms. Each of these four priorities was detailed in long lists of sub-priorities (MAP draft 3a, 2001).

At around the same time, the Senegalese President, Abdoulaye Wade, came up with his OMEGA plan which he proposed to the Francophone Summit in Cameroon in January 2001. The plan attempted to propose a 'comprehensive and realistic programme' with clear priorities and resources to be mobilised for the sustainable growth of the continent. It specifically focused on developing the continent's human and physical capital. OMEGA was supposed to be implemented through the development of sub-regional plans by the regional economic communities under the general supervision of the OAU (OMEGA 2001).

Wade's plan threatened to divert the support of French-speaking African countries away from Mbeki's plan. With the help of Obasanjo, President Mbeki struggled to convince President Wade to merge his plan with Mbeki's MAP to form NEPAD instead of presenting the two plans to donors as rival blueprints. Wade reluctantly agreed but remained critical of NEPAD's vision (Gumede 2007a, 260-1). The responses of Wade and other African leaders towards NEPAD will be discussed later.

NEPAD adopted the general objectives and long list of priorities of MAP, taking from OMEGA the goal of reaching a 7 percent annual growth rate. The initiative's base document clearly embraces a neo-liberal agenda. It highlights that national development plans should be prepared through 'participatory processes involving the people' and claims to be an 'African-owned' and 'African-led' development programme. However, it considers the rise in the number of countries committed to market-oriented economies in Africa to be a sign of hope and progress. The

promotion of the private sector is one of the basic pillars on which the implementation of the initiative is based. One of NEPAD's stated means of achieving this objective is the encouragement of dialogue between the state and the private sector to 'develop a shared vision of economic development strategy and remove constraints on private sector development'. In its economic governance initiative, NEPAD describes the role of the private sector as being the actual engine of economic growth, while the role of the state is to create the enabling regulatory and policy frameworks for development, and implement poverty reduction programmes. The capacity of the state has to be developed to create these frameworks (NEPAD base document 2001).

NEPAD established a partnership between Africa and the developed north for the implementation of the initiative. According to the initiative, the impoverishment of the African continent can be partly attributed to colonialism and the dynamics of the international economic system. The unfavourable terms of trade and resource outflows led to the increasing marginalisation of African countries in the world economy. Accordingly, NEPAD aims at developing 'a new framework of interaction with the world, including the industrialised countries and multilateral organisations'. For their part, African leaders commit themselves to resolving African conflicts, promoting democracy, restoring and maintaining macro-economic stability, and establishing transparent frameworks for financial markets and public and private corporations. To achieve this end, NEPAD introduced a self-monitoring mechanism, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), to review African countries' performance in political and economic governance and

to share best practices. In return, developed countries are expected to support African development through debt relief, increased ODA and private capital flows, and by enhancing the opportunities for African exports' access to international markets (NEPAD base document 2001).

C. South Africa's role in the African Renaissance and NEPAD

When Mbeki proposed the idea of the 'African Renaissance', he was quite careful in delineating the role that South Africa could play in the Renaissance process. He stressed that Africans should be confident that 'none of the countries of the continent, regardless of the extent of its contribution to the Renaissance, seeks to impose itself on the rest as a new imperialist power' (Mbeki 1999). This reflected South Africa's tendency to avoid defining its role as a regional leader or hegemon. Leadership discourse and the content of the ANC's documents since the first years of transformation have emphasised that South Africa would not act chauvinistically and unilaterally in regional affairs. They have recognised that South Africa has the military, economic and political characteristics of a 'middle power', something that puts it in a comparative advantage vis-à-vis other African countries. However, they stress that South Africa's approach toward the African continent in implementing its vision of African Renaissance is one of working with other states through established institutions to achieve its progressive principles (Mandela 1993, ANC 2002; ANC 1994).

This approach explains the tendency of South Africa to seek partnerships with other African countries from different sub-regions to support the implementation

of its agenda. In putting its African Renaissance into action through NEPAD, for instance, South Africa sought the partnership of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and Egypt.

More generally, South Africa defines its role as the voice for a better Africa in a better and more equitable world (Department of foreign Affairs 2005, 18; Mbeki 2005b). It commits itself to peace, democracy and development at home and in the continent (Landsberg and Kondlo 2007, 2). Additionally, Mbeki claimed that South Africa will seek to lead the African Renaissance and the process of African renewal by setting an example through the way in which it conducts its affairs. In this regard it presents itself to Africa and the world as a model of the peaceful resolution of political conflicts (Mbeki 2003c). South Africa proposes applying its domestic experience of a Government of National Unity (GNU) to the resolution of conflicts in other parts of the continent. Thus, in pursuing its role in conflict resolution in Africa, South Africa has been influenced by its experience of negotiated, pacted transition (Landsberg and Kondlo 2007, 8).

Mbeki and the foreign policy establishment have marketed and rationalised this conception of South Africa's role in the continent by reference to historical, cultural and strategic considerations. Reference has always been made to the material and moral support provided by African governments and peoples in South Africa's struggle against apartheid and to the common identity that strongly links South Africa to the rest of the continent (Mbeki 2002d; Mbeki 2004). The official discourse has also stressed that South Africa's national interest is intertwined with

the continent's interests. The idea that South Africa cannot be an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty is a driving principle for South Africa's policy in Africa in general, and in the Southern African region in particular (interview with Asmal 2009). Hence the conclusion drawn by Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the former Foreign Minister and newly elected Chairperson of the AU Commission, who commented that South African involvement in world affairs in the first decade after transformation 'has been premised on the view that the strength of our nation depends on the strength of the entire continent' (Dlamini-Zuma 2004).

D. Dilemmas of South Africa's Regional Role Conception

From the above analysis, it is clear that South Africa's African agenda and its African Renaissance have served multiple purposes. By holding the banners of the African Renaissance, and later articulating NEPAD as a programme of action, South Africa has actively engaged in debates about African development initiatives and represented the continent in international development forums (Landsberg and Kondlo 2007, 1). South Africa's regional conception has also helped it to portray a benevolent, committed posture towards the African causes of democracy and development, while using a language that appeals to partners in the developed north. And although the African Renaissance and NEPAD were championed by Mbeki, their basic tenets were, and still are, reflected in the state's policy documents, even if they carry different labels.

But were the notion of the African Renaissance and the principles of NEPAD accepted regionally and domestically? To what extent were these principles

influential in the African continent? And was South Africa well positioned to lead a regional consensus on the African Renaissance?

- *Can South Africa lead an African Renaissance? National Renaissance first*

The South African state has been able to mobilise domestic resources to achieve its foreign policy objectives and satisfy its regional ambitions. It has invested in promoting the principles of the African Renaissance. In 2000, the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund was established with the objectives of enhancing co-operation between South Africa and other African countries, and promoting democracy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts on the African continent (ARF 2006). According to its annual reports, the fund spent around R800 million from 2005-08 in providing humanitarian assistance, and supporting the building of democratic institutions and of post-conflict reconstruction and development projects in countries like Liberia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Lesotho, the DRC, Guinea and the Western Sahara (ARF 2006, 2007, 2008). Interestingly, according to a diplomat in the NEPAD directorate of the DIRCO, South Africa is the only country among the initiative's founding members that has consistently paid its annual contribution to the NEPAD secretariat (anonymous Interview 2010). Additionally, South Africa is one of the largest providers of personnel to peace keeping missions in Africa, with 4860 of its troops serving in Burundi, the DRC, Sudan and Ethiopia/Eritrea in 2008 (South African Presidency 2009, 61)

But was this direction of domestic resources to serve the country's regional ambitions and the leadership's regional blueprint affordable for South Africa? The government's fifteen year review report admitted that South Africa played a role beyond its capacity and resources (South African Presidency 2009, 56). The political elite and foreign policy establishment increasingly recognised that South Africa should link its foreign policy to its domestic challenges including job creation, poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, economic growth and security. Members of Parliament started to question the interests that South Africa would achieve from spending on some of its foreign policy endeavours (Ebrahim 2009). There was also the impression that Mbeki's focus on foreign policy and the fact that he spent significant amounts of time outside South Africa led him to become isolated from the daily realities of most South Africans (Feinstein 2009, 78).

This led a number of scholars to argue that South Africa needed to orient its foreign policy to achieve domestic economic needs. Without resolving the problems of growth and development at home, they have argued, South Africa would not be able to establish its hegemony in the continent (le Pere and Alden 2009, 166; le Pere and van Nieuwkerk 2006, 292; Venter 2001, 171, Hughes 2004, 2; Mills 2000, 350-1). One South African scholar has gone even further, claiming that South Africa's leadership in the African continent is already waning as a result of its slow economic growth and reluctance to defend democratic principles (Draper 2011, 207-13).

This assessment echoes arguments made more than a decade ago that South Africa's ability to lead an African Renaissance depends on its success in mobilising its social forces and grassroots towards a strategy that tackles development challenges at home. As Landsberg and Kornegay put it, only through starting 'Renaissance in one country' that would interact with a Renaissance in Southern Africa, and then expand continentally could the implementation of the African Renaissance be possible (Landsberg and Kornegay 1998b, 6, 17). Bischoff presented a similar argument, noting that South Africa's advocacy of the 'African Renaissance' should start with a 'national renaissance including the nation-building project centred on a redefined African self and the transformation of the society to achieve a more equitable redistribution of power and wealth' (Bischoff 1999, 34).

It was thus unsurprising that the ANC Polokwane conference in 2007, which witnessed the defeat of Mbeki in favour of Zuma for the party's presidency, admitted that South Africa's foreign policy needed to be redefined. The conference policy document on international affairs highlighted that there is a contention between a view that prefers active engagement with the region and the world and another view that favours concentration on domestic challenges. Accordingly, it called for a dialogue to reach a national consensus on how to define South Africa's national interests in a way that benefits its own people (ANC 2007, 5). Shortly after the installation of the Zuma administration, a process of consultation with civil society started, with the aim of closing the gap between domestic and foreign policies (DIRCO, 2009).

- *Who buys into the African Renaissance and NEPAD? The domestic response*

Mbeki succeeded in making the African Renaissance and NEPAD the cornerstones of the ANC's party and government foreign policy since the mid-1990s. But did the leadership discourse and its regional project resonate at the popular level? Surveying the foreign policy attitudes of South African citizens is beyond the scope of this study. One can, however, make a number of remarks on these attitudes. Firstly, Mbeki's emphasis on African solidarity and the common history and destiny that unite South Africa with the rest of the continent contradicts the hostile attitude of some South African communities towards African migrants. This attitude has materialised in the form of a number of xenophobic attacks conducted by South Africans, specifically targeting Africans. Analysis of the reasons for the attacks is still underway, but there is not much disagreement about their significance. These attacks suggest that the commitment of the state and its leadership towards the African continent has not fully resonated at the mass level (interview with le Pere 2009). They have been described as 'the smouldering ashes of [Mbeki's] African Renaissance project' (Adebajo 2008).

Importantly also, Mbeki's response to this phenomenon invited harsh domestic criticism. When a fierce wave of xenophobic attacks erupted in May 2008, he waited over a week before calling the army and provided inadequate support to those fleeing the attacks. Amidst the crisis, Mbeki left the country for Japan to take part in a conference on development in Africa (Feinstein 2009, 233).

Enduring poverty and inequality may have contributed to this phenomenon. As one scholar puts it, South Africans have 'turned black foreigners into a convenient target for their frustrations' (Marais 1998, 252). But it is important to note that xenophobic, especially Afrophobic, attitudes are not confined to South African townships inhabitants. Some of these attitudes are evident among other groups in South African society and in state institutions. Migrants, especially illegal migrants, are treated in media circles and security apparatus as a source of crime and instability (Marais 2001, 252; Adebajo 2008)¹. Moreover, a number of African scholars have noted the negative images of the African continent, which is sometimes seen as the 'backward other' among intellectuals in South Africa (Mamdani 1999, Adebajo 2008). These popular attitudes support the argument that although South Africa has performed a very active foreign policy on the African continent, it has been less successful in mobilising a domestic constituency around this policy (Sidiropoulos 2009, 6).

Secondly, the vagueness of the notion of the 'African Renaissance' and the neo-liberal bias of NEPAD initiative hindered the emergence of a national consensus on the state's regional project. In addition to the criticisms of the African Renaissance highlighted above, NEPAD's neo-liberal agenda has been harshly criticised by civil society activists in many African countries including South Africa. The South African civil society *Indaba* in Johannesburg stated in May

¹ A number of surveys indicate a hostile attitude towards African immigrants in South Africa. For example, a survey conducted in 2001 suggested that 60-65 percent of the South Africans surveyed thought that undocumented migrants should be denied police protection or access to social services. The South African Human Rights Commission and International human rights organization have reported numerous cases of police brutality against illegal migrants. See Adebajo (2008)

2002 that it considered NEPAD a way of extending South Africa's GEAR into the African continent.¹ For a number of South African scholars, South Africa is appropriating the image of Africa for its own purposes and the African economies to the processes of globalisation while expecting the continent to follow suit (Vale and Maseko 1998, 284; Gumede 2007a, 254; Bond 2006, 103-24). They raise doubts about the benefits that ordinary Africans can gain from this South African initiative. These critical perspectives on NEPAD stand against the viewpoint of other scholars and commentators, who see the initiative as an opportunity to spread liberal economies and improve economic growth through the improvement of governance on the continent. These scholars and commentators praise the ability of NEPAD to put African development on international forums and donor countries' agendas. They commend the bargain NEPAD offers to the international community, namely committing African countries to good governance in return for better access to trade and aid opportunities (Gelb 2002, 28-9; Mills and Oppenheimer 2002, 91).

Thirdly, although NEPAD claimed to be 'based on the agenda set by African peoples', popular support for, and even the very awareness of, NEPAD among South Africans were limited. In a survey conducted six months after the initiation of the initiative among 3,500 South Africans, only 14 percent of the respondents interviewed were aware of NEPAD (Kotze and Steyn 2003, 43).

¹ See the original resolution of the *Indaba* in *Fanon's Warning: A civil Society Reader on NEPAD* (2005, 32-3).

- *Who buys into the African Renaissance and NEPAD? The regional response*

In its Summit in Lusaka, Zambia in 2001, the African Union endorsed NEPAD as its economic development programme. But to what extent have African leaders and civil society groups supported NEPAD?

Evidence shows that NEPAD has faced resistance and scepticism from a number of states and non-state actors on the continent. After six years of its initiation, one of the founders of the initiative, Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade, described it as a waste of money that did not 'drive things forward' (IOL, June 14, 2007). Unsurprisingly, African dictators harshly criticised the initiative. The Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, and the former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, criticised NEPAD as a colonial project (Gumede 2007a, 267). The Gambian President, Yahya Jammeh, joined Gaddafi's camp, noting that 'Nepad will never work' because 'it was conceived to be dependent on begging'. He added that Africans could only solve their problems by uniting against the unfair world trade system which he blamed for the development predicament of the continent (New African, September 2002). These quotes indicate that African political elites were in little agreement over the reasons for the continent's development malaise, and on what NEPAD was about.

Interestingly, reservations on NEPAD and its APRM did not come only from conservative countries with poor democratic records, but also from the reformist bloc, which scores highly on political and economic governance. Botswana did not join the APRM, believing it to be a mechanism that would add a significant

financial burden with little value added for Botswana (*The Reporter*, November 6, 2002). The Namibian Foreign Minister, Marco Hausiku, declared a similar position noting that 'as a government, we are proud to state that we already have mechanisms in place to see to it that we meet the standards and practice envisaged by the APRM'. He added that Namibia is against powerful countries dictating the process and linking it with development programmes and donor funding. As he put it, Namibia would not join the bandwagon just for financial exchange, but would get into ventures that were for the good of the country (*The Namibian*, March 13, 2006).¹

At the level of the African elite in government, the private sector and civil society, a survey conducted in 2002 in seven African countries suggested that politicians and civil servants display greater confidence in NEPAD than members of civil society. The same study also suggested that among different societal groups, the business sector and academia were playing the most prominent roles in advocating the initiative (Kotze and Steyn 2003, 51, 92).

A number of continental civil society organisations and academic writings have met NEPAD with various degrees of rejection. To mention a few examples, the African Social Forum meeting in Mali in January 2002 rejected the IFIs- inspired strategies of NEPAD, while the Third World Forum in Dakar considered the initiative 'a new instrument in the hands of the financial institutions and the

¹ By January 2011, 30 African countries had joined the APRM, including countries with poor economic and political governance records, such as Sudan, Gabon, Cameroon, and Togo.

multinationals to perpetuate their control over the African economies'. In a conference organised by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Third World Network in Accra in April 2002, a number of scholars concluded that NEPAD 'will not contribute to addressing [Africa's] developmental problems'. They criticised the way in which the plan under-emphasised the role of external factors in Africa's development crisis and reduced democracy to a mere prerequisite for a functional market.¹ A similar conclusion was reached by the African Scholars Forum meeting in Nairobi in April 2002, which noted that NEPAD was a continuation of the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the IFIs.²

Admittedly, NEPAD is an attempt to present a reformist plan that sets partnerships for African development at the national, continental and international levels. But there are a number of factors that made South Africa's regional blueprint less than acceptable domestically and regionally. Firstly, the elite-driven formulation of NEPAD and its marketing to the international community before presentation to African civil society clearly undermined the African Renaissance notion of African ownership of development plans. Since democratic participation helps in legitimising policies, the formulation of NEPAD without participation from civil society groups contributed to the sceptical position of these groups towards the

¹ See the original statements of these and other organisations in *Fanon's Warning: A civil Society Reader on NEPAD* (2005, 35-54).

² See the full contributions of the African scholars at African Forum for Envisioning Africa: Focus on NEPAD, <http://www.worldsummit2002.org/index.htm?http://www.worldsummit2002.org/activities/nepadforum.htm>

initiative. The meetings held with these groups to market NEPAD after its official announcement did not seem to be enough to change this position.

Secondly, the human and cultural element of the African Renaissance largely slipped out of focus in the NEPAD document. While the document referred to the importance of protecting and nurturing indigenous knowledge, no projects were identified to achieve this objective.

Thirdly, the mixed discourse of Mbeki's African Renaissance speeches gave way to a more liberal-oriented development plan that contradicted Mbeki's rhetoric about a developmental state with a clear interventionist role at home. Reforming global governance institutions, criticising the colonial and post-colonial policies of developed countries, and promoting South-South cooperation were clearly watered down in the NEPAD document. This also meant that while it did provide a mechanism for improving governance, and thus addressed the domestic factors affecting African development, the initiative was less ambitious in addressing the external factors affecting this development.

- *How influential was South Africa's regional project: NEPAD principles in practice*

The African Renaissance and NEPAD highlighted the promotion of democracy and human rights as one of South Africa's foreign policy principles. But the leadership, ruling party and foreign policy establishment have highlighted the difficulty of applying these principles (ANC 1997b; DFA, 1996). Deputy Foreign

Minister, Aziz Pahad, a close advisor to Mbeki, emphasised the difficulty of encouraging other countries to show commitment to human rights, questioning 'how do we get human rights enforced and implemented in the international environment? There must be interaction between theory and practice' (Gumede 2007a, 246).

Although the regional and international environments matter, it was the state's reluctance to promote its regional agenda in co-operation with other willing African countries that hindered the implementation of South Africa's reformist agenda. The South African policy towards Zimbabwe, which will be detailed in the next section of this chapter, is a case in point. This reluctance has meant that while carrying the flag of African Renaissance, South Africa lacks the capacity to induce other countries to behave according to its principles (Venter 2001, 177, Mills 2000, 361). This is attributable to several factors. The desire not to be seen as stepping into the apartheid shoes in acting unilaterally in the continent may explain this South African approach. As established earlier, this has led multilateralism to be a feature of South Africa's foreign policy (Daniel, Naidoo and Naidu 2003, 389). Equally important is the fact that while defending democracy and human rights, South Africa does not want to be seen as a Trojan horse for western powers in the continent (Southall 2006, 2). Thus, the official discourse states that South Africa's commitment towards democracy and human rights promotion emanates from its constitutional principles. But it also confirms that this does not mean acting upon the request of western governments to isolate or punish an African government, especially considering that these western

governments apply double standards when dealing with issues of democracy and human rights (Ebrahim 2009).

It may also be that the ANC is still grappling with the logic of the liberation movement versus that of the government. On the one hand, the liberation movement logic motivates it to hold the banner of anti-imperialism and solidarity with other liberation movements in the region. This is important given the role these movements played in supporting the struggle of the ANC against apartheid. This led one South African scholar to underline that the most influential player in Southern Africa is not a single state, but rather a constellation of liberation movements. These include the ANC in South Africa, SWAPO in Namibia, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and the MPLA in Mozambique (interview with Landsberg 2009). On the other hand, the logic of a democratic government urges South Africa to support the principles of democracy and human rights. The ANC's position on the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe since 2000 is a clear example of this tension.

This is not to ignore the fact that NEPAD and the APRM exercise have offered the opportunity for a national and continental dialogue on governance issues. They have also provided a new avenue for civil society participation in evaluating political and economic governance in African countries, and for state-society discussion on challenges facing these countries. But it remains true that it is the political will to implement the mechanisms' recommendations, rather than just the

political decision to join, that makes a difference in governance in the participating countries.¹

To sum up, the South African state elaborated a vision for the region and its role within it that would promote its regional pre-eminence, secure its position as a representative of the continent in international forums, and achieve its national interests as defined by the state. NEPAD has been endorsed as the economic programme for the African Union. Although not aiming at transforming the bases of the regional system, South Africa's regional blueprint attempts to gradually reform the system of governance on the continent. South Africa established institutions like the African Renaissance Fund to promote this reform. However, the state has been less than successful in creating a consensus among African governments on its reformist agenda and in inducing these governments to abide by the principles of this agenda. South African civil society has remained resistant to, or at least cynical about, NEPAD's agenda. Principles of African solidarity and renaissance seem to mean very little to some South Africans who compete with African migrants for jobs and services. This indicates that a number of different domestic constituencies do not buy into the state's African agenda for various reasons.

If this is the case, which are the social forces whose interests coincide with the vision of the state? The next two sections examine the positions and interests of

¹ For a full appraisal of the implementation of the mechanism see Herbert and Grudz (2008); Hansungule (2008).

organised business and labour to answer this question. They also analyse the extent to which the state co-ordinates its course of action with these forces.

4.1.3. State-business Relations and the Role of South African Business in Africa: converged interests, little co-ordination

Democratic transformations have opened huge opportunities for South African business in Africa. In less than a decade, South Africa has become one of the top ten investors in the continent (Games 2004, 1). A large number of private companies in South Africa have developed their African outreach. Out of the top 100 companies listed in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, only six do not have African investments.¹ In this section I demonstrate that a convergence emerged between the vision of the South African state and the interests of the private sector on the African continent. Business has instrumentalised the state's notions of 'African Renaissance' and NEPAD to promote, market and legitimise its expansion in Africa. It has been a bearer of the African Renaissance. It has pushed for reform in other African countries exporting some rules governing the South African state-

¹ Economic relations make the South African economy deeply connected to the economies of the African continent in general, and the Southern African region in particular. It is estimated that a one percentage point slowdown in the South African growth rate would lead to a half to three-quarter point slowdown in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. According to the DTI's statistics for 2009, African countries come third as a destination for South Africa's exports and fourth as a source of South African imports. They absorb from 13- 20 percent of South African exports. However, they remain the only major trade partner with a trade deficit with South Africa. This also applies to SADC which ranks eighth as a source of South African imports but first in terms of its trade balance in favour of South Africa (DTI 2009). This is an important fact to be highlighted and a source of criticism of South Africa's regional engagement. See Grobbelaar (2009, 2) and Landsberg (2000, 115).

business and business-labour relations to other countries of the continent. The convergence of interests between the state and business does not, however, mean that there has been full co-ordination between the two actors to achieve common interests. Institutional links between the state and business have been seen by business as insufficient and/or inefficient. Racial sensitivities and the lack of trust may have also impacted on the level of coordination between the state and business. The impact of the negative perception of South African business on the country's regional image is evidence of the disconnect between the state's policy and business' engagement in Africa.

Importantly, it cannot be claimed that investments by giant South African Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are made according to a state-inspired framework. As one expert put it, 'there is an impression that South Africa's private sector is a proxy for the state, or that it acts at the behest of the state. But this is not accurate as it ignores that the South African private sector is, unlike in most African countries, developed and highly autonomous from the state'. The investment decisions of South African companies in the continent are thus entirely driven by business opportunities (interview with Grobbelaar 2009).

At the same time, experts note that compared to the cases of other regional powers like China or Brazil, the role of the state in supporting business expansion has not been direct in most cases (interview with Grobbelaar 2009). This can be attributed to the lack of financial resources to provide business with the necessary guarantees to invest in the continent (interview with Edries 2010). It may also be attributable

to the state's desire to depart from the apartheid state, which followed aggressive expansionist political and economic policies in the continent (interview with Fowler 2010). However, the state's regional conception has helped in creating a business-friendly environment on the continent in a number of direct and indirect ways. The state's consolidation of the African agenda and flagging of the ideas of African Renaissance have opened new opportunities for South African multinationals on the continent. This has provided a political-ideological and economic framework that enables these multinationals to internationalise their activities in pursuit of higher returns than what the national economy seems to offer. The opportunities of the state's African agenda in general, and initiatives like NEPAD in particular, are important to business for a number of reasons. Firstly, for some business corporations, the African Renaissance gave businesses an understanding of the investment opportunities and environment in Africa after years of isolation (interview with Fowler 2010).

Secondly, NEPAD's thrust is about promoting the role of the private sector by creating a partnership between this sector and the state for Africa's development. It thus markets the ideas of free market economy and attraction of foreign investments, providing an enabling environment for South African and other business on the continent. It is for this reason that South African corporations have been celebrating their Africanness and claiming their interest in being part of the process of African growth and renewal (Kramer 2010, Standard Bank 2008). In essence, then, South African corporations are 'the economic bearers of the African Renaissance' (Miller 2004, 21 and see also Marais 2001, 234). At least

rhetorically, South Africa's multinationals have claimed that the expansion of their activities is part of this Renaissance (Miller 2008, 41).

Thirdly, in practice, NEPAD has given leverage to the private sector because it gives a significant role to this sector in the implementation of its programmes (Hughes 2004, 41). From the perspective of the Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF), the initiative and its business forum has enhanced the member corporations' bargaining power vis-à-vis African governments. The establishment of the NBF was initially encouraged by President Mbeki, who called upon big business to establish a foundation to deliver and support the initiative (interview with Chen 2010). One can thus safely claim that NEPAD is the project of the state and the private sector. This does not mean that NEPAD and the African Renaissance are the products of the South African private sector's 'expansionist ambition' as a number of scholars argue (Ezeohe and Uche 2005, 7; Bond 2004). The lack of business input in the formulation of NEPAD is evidence that business was a beneficiary of the initiative but not its designer.

Thus, the state has come up with a regional project that promotes its economic interests, including the interests of its MNCs, and at the same time gives it a leading position in the African continent. And while the South African corporations have expanded their activities in Africa without direct assistance from the government in most cases, the state's policies have provided an enabling environment for their expansion.

For its part, in expanding its activities on the continent, South African business has been a bearer of the South African model to the continent. This is an interesting aspect as far as the impact of South Africa's state-society relations on its regional role is concerned. Big corporations have been able to negotiate with host African countries to replicate the South African regulatory frameworks in these countries. As the manager of a telecommunications company rather arrogantly put it, South African corporations 'educate' African governments on how to provide an enabling environment for business (Davids 2004,75-6). Evidently also, South African investments have clear impacts on business-labour relationships in the host countries. Labour in South Africa's multinationals has been active in calling for higher wages and better working conditions. In some instances, workers have developed their bargaining powers vis-à-vis these multinationals. These developments are significant given the weakness of both the private sector and labour in most African countries (interview with Grobbelaar 2009). This means that South African business has exported the rules governing state-business and business-labour relations as well as the mechanisms for negotiating these rules to some African countries.

But the convergence of state vision and business interests in relation to Africa does not mean that there has been full co-ordination between the state and business in crafting and pursuing a certain regional role. Interviewees from both the state and business concede this point. According to the former executive director of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Mbeki and his foreign policy team often complained that the state had an active role in negotiating peace agreements in

some parts of the continent, but that business did not pick up on the opportunities and reap the fruit of the state's efforts. The DRC is a case in point (interview with Grant 2009). A scholar and former senior official in the DTI claims that there is a disconnect between the strategy of business and the policy of the state as far as economic relations with the continent and the world are concerned (interview with Qobo 2010).

This lack of co-ordination can be partly attributed to the nature and capacity of the institutions that link business to state departments. There is no formal channel for business to communicate with the state's departments on foreign policy issues. This has led organised business input in the foreign policy process to be ad hoc and issue-specific (Hughes 2004, 43). Businesses interviewed concurred that the current institutions, including NEDLAC and other business-initiated frameworks, are either insufficient and/or ineffective. They revealed that personal connections, rather than institutional mechanisms, are used to communicate with the state on challenges facing their businesses abroad, with results being less than satisfactory in most cases. It is against this background that the ANC conference in Polokwane in 2007 proposed a new initiative for strengthening South Africa's economic diplomacy through establishing a structured relationship between the state, represented in DIRCO, and business (ANC 2007, 3).

The impacts of the racial sensitivities that characterise the relationship between the state and business on co-ordination between the two actors cannot be ignored. One of these impacts relates to the implications of the state's policy of BEE on its

foreign policy. For business corporations, BEE at home has not contributed to improving the image of South African business on the continent. As one senior manager of a big mining company put it, having a politically connected black business figure on a corporation's board may work against the corporation's regional activities. This may support the impression about South Africa's imperialist tendencies towards the continent (interview with Dowsley 2010). The story from the state officials' side is quite different. A senior official at the DTI agreed with the argument that the negative perceptions about South African business on the continent can be partly attributed to the fact that business is still white-dominated. He accused some white business managers of arrogance and of disrespecting local norms. Although this view is supported by the findings of some studies (Miller 2003, 18-9, interview with Pillay 2010), one cannot claim that problematic behaviour is confined to white business. Scholars who have long criticised the role of white South African capital found the behaviour of black capital on the continent very similar (interview with Landsberg 2009).

The negative perceptions about South African business constitute a challenge to South Africa's role in Africa and indicate the disconnect between the state's policy and business behaviour on the continent. South African corporations are often blamed for dominating local economies, competing with local businesses rather than establishing links with them, and depending on inputs from South Africa rather than from local suppliers. Workers in some South African multinationals complain of poor working conditions and workplace discrimination. Some critics, including South African academics and voices within the ANC, have argued that

in the post-1994 period, white South African capital has set out to conquer and dominate the rest of the continent. They accuse the South African companies of acting as a sub-imperialist force that pursues business and aims at making profit at any cost (Nxesi 2009; Landsberg 2000, 116). For them, while the South African state opts for a non-hegemonic policy, South African business follows a hegemonic, monopolistic approach (Daniel, Naidu and Naidoo 2004, 387).

Since the country's role and image are affected by perceptions about its companies in the region, the state has tried to manage this impact with limited tools. The ANC conference in Polokwane in 2007 proposed the formulation of a code of good practice for South African businesses in Africa (ANC 2007, 3). Business is, however, sceptical towards the code. A representative of a private corporation made the point that speaking about a code of conduct is a party debate rather than state policy (interview with Fowler 2010). Others concurred that there cannot be a legislative code that regulate the behaviour of South Africa's corporate citizens outside its borders, besides the fact that most of its big corporations are American or European listed companies. It remains unclear how the state would bring business to abide by this code should it be formulated.

Finally, it is noteworthy that although most South African investments in Africa come from the private sector, there is also a role for South African parastatals. These parastatals claim that they are solely motivated by business considerations (interview with Sims and Bredenkamp-Boshoff 2010). However, their investments are perceived as politically driven and are instrumental in the implementation of

South African economic visions for the continent, including that of NEPAD (Grobbelaar 2004; 7-10). As the former minister of public enterprises put it, 'the state owned enterprises integrate commercial viability and returns on investment with the need to encourage sustainable development towards the upliftment of communities and national/regional economies' (Radebe 2004, 11). Eskom, for example, is a key player in implementing the NEPAD energy inter-connector project. The state's efforts at conflict resolution in the DRC converged with, if they were not motivated by, Eskom's aim in constructing the Inga dam project. The project, which faces problems of implementation at the time of writing, was expected to alleviate the electricity shortfall in South Africa and enable Eskom, and other utilities involved, to produce power for other parts of the continent (Alden and Soko 2005, 382; Daniel and Lutchman 2006, 499-500).

Sometimes the parastatals lead public-private partnership projects in other countries. The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) partnership with BHP Billiton in the Mozal aluminium project, and with SASOL in the natural gas project in Mozambique, are examples of this approach. These examples are often cited as a model of politically-driven projects for which a successful public-private partnership was initiated (Alden and Soko 2005, 375). The role of parastatals in these partnerships sometimes gives the impression that the state supports the dominance of its large corporations in Africa (Castel-Branco 2004, 41-8). In fact, the state uses its parastatals in levering and catalysing private sector investment for achieving the aim of regional development under NEPAD (Madikizela 2004, 73).

This does not negate the fact that the business case remains an important determinant for the operations of South African parastatals on the continent.

To sum up, the developed organisational capacity of business and its independence of the state have allowed it play an active role in championing the state's regional project and exporting the South African model in regulating business to other countries of the continent. However, co-ordination between the state and business remains limited. Impediments that relate to the nature of the relationship between state and business, as well as organisational factors on both sides hinder this co-ordination. This leads the state and business on the continent to remain disconnected although both actors may agree on the overarching objectives.

If business has instrumentalised the state's conception for its own interests, what are the positions of other social forces towards this conception? And have these forces been able to propose alternative conceptions? The next section deals with the position and role of South Africa's organised labour, specifically COSATU.

4.1.4. Trade Unions: the Regional Role Conception of COSATU

This section argues that as a partner in the tripartite alliance and part of South Africa's civil society, COSATU has engaged in the discussions on the ANC's international agenda. It has raised scepticism about NEPAD's economic framework, but has not rejected it altogether. At the same time, similar to its multiple strategies at home, COSATU has defined a number of roles to play on the African continent through which it could check, balance, or compliment the role of

other state and non-state actors and export its experience to its counterparts on the continent. Thus, although the influence of COSATU on foreign policy in Mbeki's era was limited, the democratic post-apartheid dispensation has allowed it to engage in foreign policy debates and play an active and effective regional role.

Although trade unions' primary regional interests may be related to commercial issues, COSATU has played various roles as far as its engagement in the region is concerned. The federation defines itself as 'a militant and transformative trade union movement and an influential political force both at home and internationally' (COSATU 2009, 152). COSATU's international programme gives special attention to the African continent. It defines building the African trade union movement as a matter of absolute priority (COSATU 2007a). In its focus on the African continent, COSATU criticises the spread of the neo-liberal model with its tendency towards jobless growth. It emphasises the principles of equality, justice and social emancipation and calls for a progressive foreign policy that shows solidarity with the poor peoples of the world and the continent. It denounces 'commoditising' foreign policy by defining its objectives in terms of maximising power and wealth only (Masuku 2009).

It is thus unsurprising that the federation showed concerns about NEPAD's market-centred model and about its having been designed without consultation with civil society. It argued that the initiative 'does not constitute an adequate development strategy, mostly because it relies too heavily on foreign funding and free markets' (COSATU 2003b, 35). According to its spokesperson, the value of

NEPAD and its African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in making a difference to peoples' lives on the continent is highly doubtful (interview with Craven 2010). Instead, COSATU calls for a developmental state on the continent, and campaigns for NEDLAC-type social dialogue institutions throughout Africa (COSATU 2009, 175).

At the same time, the federation announced that it would engage with the government through the presidential working groups and other means, and with trade union movements in the continent to introduce pro-poor policies into NEPAD (COSATU 2002a). This was based on COSATU's recognition that the African continent needs an initiative that has the capacity to mobilise resources for economic and human development (COSATU, 2002b).

Although COSATU's alliance with the ANC may have led to negative perceptions of its role, the federation has asserted its position as an autonomous organisation with independent foreign policy positions (interview with Craven 2010).¹ Evidently, COSATU has conceptualised a number of roles for it to play on the African continent to check, balance, and compliment the role of the state and business and to export its experience in negotiating policies with the two actors to

¹ Miller noted that the COSATU-ANC relationship led to a perception among trade unions in the region that 'the South African labour movement is a conduit for propagating the hegemonic regional interests of the South African government'. For Bezuidenhout the alliance with the ANC has led COSATU to identify less with social movements and civil society organisations, something that affects its engagement in transnational social movement activism. See Miller (2005, 121); Bezuidenhout (2000, 26-8). But according to the Secretary-General of Southern African Trade Unions Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), although COSATU has close relationship with the ruling party, it enjoys relative autonomy from the state and is able to elaborate independent stances on regional issues (interview with Muneku 2010).

its counterparts on the continent. One of these roles is that of a defender of NEPAD's principles of democracy and human rights in Africa. In this regard, the federation shows solidarity and support for victims of human rights violations in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Sudan and other countries. Furthermore, it takes the responsibility for raising awareness about these cases in international forums. COSATU also supports civil society participation in the regional integration frameworks. As an affiliate of the Southern African Trade Unions Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), COSATU calls for a democratic, developmental and participatory model of regional integration through the inclusion of civil society in SADC structures. It also calls for the democratisation of the state in the region and the creation of a space for civil society to influence public policy (SATUCC 2008).

Another role conceived by COSATU for itself was the monitoring of the activities of South African multinational corporations in Africa. COSATU supported the design of an enforceable code of good conduct for South Africa's MNCs and suggested that this be monitored by COSATU's affiliates (COSATU 2009, 151). Its research arm, the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), ran a social observatory project that examined the practices of MNCs in general and of South African MNCs in particular, in host African countries. One of the objectives of the project was to empower trade unions on the continent to influence both government and the way in which MNCs operate by building networks and linkages (Pillay 2004, 77). And although monitoring the activities of the South African MNCs is one of the potential areas of co-operation between

COSATU and the government, no co-ordination has taken place. The former co-ordinator of the social observatory project pointed out that the department of labour, unlike the DFA, showed interest in cooperating with NALEDI and COSATU in this area. However, no agreement was reached on a common position and strategy (interview with Pillay 2010).

Similar to the role of business, COSATU helps in exporting union experience in negotiating with business to other African countries. There are close links and interactions between the trade unions in South Africa and their counterparts, especially in the SADC region. These interactions provide a platform and source of information for workers in South African multinationals in the region about the level of wages and working conditions of their counterpart workers in these same companies in South Africa. Trade unions in the region use this information as bases for claims against these corporations (Miller 2005, 118). Additionally, owing to its privileged position in terms of capacity and resources, COSATU engages in capacity building programmes for other trade unions in the continent.

The regional role and position of COSATU should not, however, be romanticised. The solidarity discourse of COSATU and its support for its counterparts in the continent contradict its nationalist tendencies as far as commercial issues are concerned. This is particularly clear at the level of sectoral industrial unions. Using forums like NEDLAC, trade unions have had the capacity to engage with the state and other actors to influence their positions on trade relations. But these unions' protectionist tendencies have negatively affected the development of similar

industries in other countries, especially in the SADC region. To mention one example, in 2003, the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU) reached an agreement with retailers through NEDLAC to encourage these retailers to source their apparel products locally. As part of the 'proudly South African' campaign, this 'buy local' agreement is meant to save jobs. However, it also aims at limiting competition with other SADC countries, especially Lesotho and Mozambique (Endresen and Bergene 2006, 92). This indicates that the capacity of trade unions to engage in policy making and their use of the available institutional mechanisms have enabled them to enforce their interests.

To sum up, COSATU's position as a trade union federation and a partner in the ruling alliance and its participation in forums like NEDLAC, has provided it with a framework for engagement in foreign policy debates. At the same time, the democratic nature of South African politics has provided opportunities for COSATU to play a variety of active and relatively autonomous roles.

Now I turn to analysing how the opportunities and challenges of the state and societal regional role conceptions have materialised in the case of Zimbabwe.

4.2. South Africa's Policy towards Zimbabwe's Crisis

Since 1994, South Africa has played an active role in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development in a number of African countries. The results of this role have, however, been mixed. In some cases South Africa's intervention has contributed to relative stability, the holding of elections and the

capacitating of the institutions of the new states. Examples include the role of South Africa in Burundi and in the DRC since 2002. In other instances, South Africa's intervention was less successful or even problematic. The intervention in Lesotho in 1998 is a case in point.

But no case has sparked as much controversy as did South Africa's role in Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis since 2000. The crisis, which occurred in one of the leading countries in Southern Africa, has been at the top of the regional agenda during the past decade for various reasons. Choosing between solidarity with ZANU-PF as a liberation movement and support for its land redistributive policies on the one hand, and condemnation of human rights abuses by the Mugabe regime on the other was a challenge for African countries in general, and Southern African countries in particular. The crisis in Zimbabwe has also been a source of disagreement between western powers, which opted for the imposition of sanctions to isolate Mugabe's regime, and African countries, which preferred engaging with the ruling ZANU-PF to push gradual reform (Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010, 7).

Dealing with the crisis in Zimbabwe was important to South Africa for various historical, economic, and political reasons. Historically, Zimbabwe shares with South Africa the struggle against white minority rule. Economically, until 2000, Zimbabwe was South Africa's largest trading partner and it remained one of its top partners even after the crisis. The deteriorating economic conditions led millions of Zimbabweans to cross the borders to South Africa, presenting a challenge to the

South African government. Politically, the Zimbabwean crisis was regarded as a litmus test for South Africa's regional project for promoting an African Renaissance through progress towards democracy, stability and development (Hughes 2004, 112-3).

This section examines South Africa's policy towards the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000. It notes that South Africa under Mbeki has shown commitment to resolving the economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. Mbeki was also keen to show his country's independence from the west in dealing with the Zimbabwean issue. However, South Africa's influence on Mugabe's regime was limited. This is in spite of the fact that South Africa has various tools with which to influence the Zimbabwean regime. South Africa is a main exporter of electricity and fuel to Zimbabwe. As a land locked country, Zimbabwe also depends on South Africa for transportation links and external trade (Alden and Schoeman 2003, 10). It is the knowledge of this influence that led Johnson to exaggeratedly argue that there would be no Zimbabwean crisis without South African support (Johnson 2001). The question then is why was the influence of Mbeki's government on Mugabe's regime limited? Could the South African role have been more effective? What roles did South African business and labour play in resolving Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis? And to what extent did they serve the objectives of the state's intervention in the crisis?

4.2.1. South Africa's Zimbabwe policy: Explaining 'quiet diplomacy'

In their intervention to resolve Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis, Mbeki and his foreign policy team declared that their policy was based on a number of objectives and principles. First of all, South Africa's efforts were aimed at restoring stability and improving the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. This was presented as being consistent with South Africa's foreign policy objective of 'securing better lives for all' (Mbeki 2000d). Secondly, for this objective to be achieved, a dialogue must be initiated between Zimbabwean leaders. Neither hard intervention, nor 'megaphone diplomacy' could bring about the desired outcome (Mbeki 2003a). Thirdly, while helping the Zimbabwean parties to reach a middle ground, South Africa could not impose a solution on a sovereign neighbouring country (Mbeki 2002c). Mbeki made it clear that his country would intervene 'without arrogance, without seeking to impose [itself] on anybody and without the intoxication of the delusion of the exercise of power [it] neither has nor desires' (Mbeki 2000d). He reminded his critics that Zimbabwe is not a province of South Africa (Mbeki 2001c). According to the leadership's perception, then, South Africa had to move multilaterally and not overestimate its influence on the Zimbabwean parties.

In the light of these objectives, South Africa's policy moved actively on multiple tracks with a variety of strategies and tools. In the next sections I illustrate the South African performance in these tracks; namely: its mediation between the Zimbabwean government and western governments concerning the land issue, its

mediation between the Zimbabwean parties for political reconciliation, and its role in Zimbabwean economic recovery. I evaluate these roles in terms of their commitment, influence, initiation and acceptance. I finally present the different explanations for South Africa's policy on these issues and explore whether it could have been more effective.

It is, however, worth noting that the three issues at hand; the land issue, dialogue between Zimbabwean political forces, and the economic crisis, are highly interconnected. Since the end of the 1990s, the issue of historical inequalities in land distribution has been politically manipulated by the ruling ZANU-PF to mobilise supporters and contain the rise of the opposition. At the same time, the rise of the political role of the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), and its support for the establishment of a new opposition party, the MDC, in 1999 owes a lot to the economic implications of the structural adjustment programmes adopted by the Zimbabwean government since the beginning of the 1990s (Raftopoulos 2009, 212-3; Muzondidya 2009, 188-94; Zeilig 2008, 5).

Importantly also, the economic crisis in Zimbabwe did not start with the implementation of the land reform programme in 2000. Rather, it has its basis in the country's post-independence economic governance. The social and economic gains that the Zimbabwean government achieved in the first decade of independence by implementing programmes to address historical inequalities proved to be limited and unsustainable. In the 1990s, the decline in agricultural productivity as a result of drought and the contraction of the economy forced the Zimbabwean government to adopt a structural adjustment programme. The

adoption of the programme led to job losses, decline in social spending, removal of subsidies on basic goods, and the ending of government extension and agricultural input services. This exacerbated social tensions of racial inequalities and land ownership that had not been resolved since independence (Muzondidya 2009, 167-89; Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010, 2-3). By the end of the 1990s, demonstrations by war veterans, who had traditionally been loyal to Mugabe, forced Mugabe to increase their pensions and grant them confiscated lands. To respond to the demands of its loyalists and pay its internal and external debts, the Zimbabwean government printed more money. These policies fed into the general economic predicament leading to an extreme level of hyperinflation, sharp decline in living conditions, and displacements. To mention a few indicators, 80 percent of the population lived below the poverty line in 2008 with per capita income approximately the same as that of 1953 and an unemployment rate reaching 90 percent (Zeilig 2008, 10; Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010, 3). Foreign exchange earnings also dropped massively as a result of the decrease in export earnings, lines of credit and development aid (Bloch 2007, 82). The interconnection between the land issue, the struggle between political forces and the economic crisis has complicated the role of any mediator engaged in resolving the Zimbabwean crisis.

A. South Africa's mediation in the land issue: Reproducing the race rhetoric

Since independence land redistribution has become an issue of contention between Zimbabwe on the one hand, and international organisations and donor countries, especially Britain as the former colonial power, on the other. According to the

Lancaster House Agreement of 1979, land confiscations were only allowed for under-utilised lands in emergency cases, a provision that was effectively unamendable until 1990. This meant that in the first decade after independence land transfers were only made legal on a 'willing buyer willing seller' basis. No provision to establish a special fund for land resettlement was included in the agreement. However, Britain agreed during the negotiations to contribute to, and mobilise the support of the international community for, the land reform programme in Zimbabwe. The British government provided a grant of £47 million for land reform during the 1980s. Based on an assessment of the land resettlement programme at the end of the 1980s, the British government stopped funding the scheme. It claimed that the implementation of the programme was mired in corruption and proposed measures for a more effective management (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2008; Taylor and Williams 2002, 550). For its part, the Zimbabwean government claimed that the aid promised at Lancaster was not forthcoming in sufficient amounts to implement the necessary land redistributions.¹

Against this background, South Africa mediated between the Zimbabwean government and the western governments and international organisations to set a co-operative framework to address the land issue. South Africa's mediation, among other factors, led to the convening of an international conference on the land question in Zimbabwe in September 1998. The conference agreed on a two

¹ See the land policy fact sheet at the Zimbabwe government portal, <http://www.gta.gov.zw/Land%20Issues/factsheet.htm>

year programme of land reform involving 118 white farms (Geldenhuys 2004, 110; Hughes 2004, 118-9). The conference resolutions were, however, not implemented, for disputable reasons. The Zimbabwean and South African governments claimed that Britain failed to provide sufficient funds for the implementation of the agreed resettlements (Mbeki 2003a). In contrast, Britain claimed that the conditions set by the conference for funding the programme were not met. These conditions revolved around transparency, respect for the rule of law, poverty reduction, affordability and consistency with Zimbabwe's wider economic interests. Instead of funding the government resettlement plans, the British government decided to fund private sector and civil society-led initiatives by establishing a Land Resettlement Challenge Fund. The fund was, the British government claimed, blocked by the government of Zimbabwe (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2008).

Owing to developments in the Mugabe regime land policy since 2000, South Africa's intervention moved into a new phase. In February 2000, the Zimbabwean electorate voted down the new draft constitution proposed by the Mugabe government, which included a clause providing for land acquisition without compensation unless paid for by the British government. This provoked a response from war veterans who started occupying white farms. For its part, the Zimbabwean government launched a fast track land reform programme in June 2000 to acquire white owned commercial farms (Taylor and Williams 2002, 550, Raftopoulos 2009, 212). Responding to these developments, South Africa has moved, in co-ordination with other African countries, to end the violent

acquisitions of farms and convince donor countries to co-operate with the Zimbabwean government to resolve the land question. President Mbeki participated in a summit attended by Mugabe, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia, and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique in Victoria Falls in April 2000, and made a visit to Zimbabwe, together with President Obasanjo, seven months later to discuss the land reform programme. South Africa also participated in the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Committee meeting on Zimbabwe in Abuja in September 2001. During these meetings, Zimbabwe declared its commitment to end the occupations of lands and restore the rule of law in return for discussions with international donors and organisations to fund the land reform programme (Independent online, April 22, 2000; BBC, April 23, 2000; FCO, September 6, 2001).

Mbeki's communications with donor countries secured financial commitments to purchase over 100 farms to resettle people who had illegally occupied white farms. Britain insisted on its position, saying that it would be willing to contribute to funding the land reform programme only if this programme was implemented within the rule of law and in a way that would reduce poverty among Zimbabwe's rural poor (Taylor and Williams 2002, 554; Johnson 2001).

By and large, there was little evidence that the Victoria Falls summit and Abuja agreement reduced the violence of Mugabe's regime towards farm workers. But the South African state officials avoided criticising the Zimbabwean government's land policy publicly or, to use Mbeki's terms, making 'the noise of empty drums'

(Mbeki 2000d). Instead, they blamed the western governments for their unwillingness to help in resolving a problem they created. For Mbeki, the lack of cooperation of western governments in addressing the colonial inequalities associated with land made a forcible process of land redistribution 'inevitable' (Mbeki 2003a). Furthermore, the land reform policy and the associated economic crisis did not, according to Mbeki, 'originate from the desperate actions of a reckless political leadership, or from corruption. It arose from a genuine concern to meet the needs of the black poor, without taking into account the harsh economic reality that, in the end, we must pay for what we consume' (Mbeki 2003b). More generally, Mbeki always stressed that the land question was central to the crisis in Zimbabwe and inseparable from issues of elections, democracy and economic recovery (Mbeki 2003a; Mbeki 2002c). This contrasted with the view of western countries, especially the non-African members of the Commonwealth, which considered the crisis in Zimbabwe as one caused by the lack of democracy and the abuse of human rights (Mushimbo 2005, 109; Hughes 2004, 124).

However, Mbeki and his foreign policy team rejected the violence associated with land reacquisition. Mbeki was quoted as saying that land distribution 'had to be done within the context of the law, without violence, respecting the fact that people do have property rights'. Responding to claims of spill-over effects in South Africa, Mbeki added 'we cannot allow a situation in this country where people occupy the land of others illegally - this cannot be allowed. It won't happen here' (Mbeki 2000a). Similar messages were publicly delivered by Mbeki's foreign

policy team. These messages were also directly communicated to the Zimbabwean government (Mbeki 2001a).

- *South Africa's policy towards the land resettlement in Zimbabwe: towards an explanation*

Given the sensitivity of the land issue in South Africa, the ANC government would have been expected to take a less supportive stance towards land acquisitions in Zimbabwe. Similar to the Zimbabwean government's approach until the end of the 1990s, the South African government had also been slow in implementing its land reform program, especially the land redistribution aspect. It is estimated that only 3 percent of white commercial farms had been transferred to black farmers by 2004. It is therefore unsurprising that several commentators raised concerns about the increasing militancy of land reform groups in South Africa after the land occupations in Zimbabwe in 2000 (Goebel 2005, 346-50; Lahiff and Cousins 2001, 652-4). Additionally, forceful land acquisitions and violence against farm workers contradicted the principles of human rights and the rule of law promoted by the 'African Renaissance' and NEPAD. What then explains Mbeki's and the ANC's position on Mugabe's land policy?

According to R.W. Johnson, Mbeki's desire to mobilise the support of a considerable black constituency within and without the ANC explains his position on land policy in Zimbabwe. Evidently, Mbeki's position was supported by the ANC and other black nationalist forces. In the wake of a visit by a ZANU-PF delegation, the then ANC Secretary-General, Kgalema Motlanthe, announced

that the two parties had reached common ground on resolving the land issue. He was quoted as saying that the ANC does not accept any conditions put on funds for land reform (South Africa Press Association, May 27, 2000). Populist voices within the ANC especially defended the Zimbabwean land resettlement programme and hinted at its relevance in resolving the land issue in South Africa (Hughes 2004, 130-1). This agreed with the approach of the Ministry of Land and Agriculture, which sent a delegation to Zimbabwe to find out how the land reform programme was implemented and what lessons could be learned (Lahiff and Cousins 2001, 658; Johnson 2001). Outside the ANC, the African nationalist parties, including the Pan-Africanist Congress, supported the ANC's position on Zimbabwe.

Mbeki's definition of the land issue as basically a racial issue supports Johnson's analysis. From Mbeki's perspective, solidarity among whites explains the western governments' view of the Zimbabwean crisis and their support for white farmers (Mbeki 2003a). In an editorial in the *ANC Today* Mbeki blamed the 'white stereotypes of black people' for the negative discourse on Zimbabwe in South Africa. From his point of view, white South Africans feared that the black African government in South Africa would follow its Zimbabwean counterpart and show no respect for property rights and the rule of law (Mbeki 2001c). In a more explicit statement, Mbeki stressed that 'race continues to describe the disparities in our country in terms of the distribution of wealth, income, opportunity and skills... if we do not address these disparities, which, like the land question in Zimbabwe, were central to the struggle for liberation in this country, at some point in the

future we will experience an enormous and angry explosion by those who remain disadvantaged' (Mbeki 2000c). This reiterates Mbeki's racial-oriented analysis of economic and political relations in Southern Africa and his willingness to use the race card against his critics. It stands against his rhetoric about inclusive 'Africanness' and the promotion of a non-racial society illustrated earlier.

- *Could the South African policy have been more effective?*

It is uncertain whether a more pronounced criticism of Mugabe's land policies would have urged Mugabe to behave differently. Even critics of 'quiet diplomacy' have admitted that 'megaphone diplomacy' played into Mugabe's hands, allowing him to portray himself as a hero standing against the capitalist imperialism led by Britain (Taylor and Williams 2002, 554). However, as far as the land issue was concerned, Mbeki's positions and his use of the arguments of racial prejudices and white supremacy to mute Mugabe's critics meant that he was not only unwilling to criticise Mugabe but also ready to provide diplomatic and political cover for Mugabe's policies.

Importantly also, Mbeki's focus on the land issue as the core of Zimbabwe's ills ignored the fact that it is part of a wider political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. In other words, the land question cannot be reduced to a racial issue; and the Zimbabwean crisis since the end of the 1990s can not be reduced to the land question. Although there was a real need to address the historical inequalities of land distribution, the land issue was politically manipulated by both ZANU-PF and the MDC to win domestic and external support. The conflict between the

Zimbabwean and British governments over land compensations is also linked to Zimbabwe's need of foreign exchange as a result of the drop in its export earnings and the deterioration in its economic performance. Accordingly, any attempt to resolve the land question needed to be based on interventions in the wider predicaments of economic and political governance in Zimbabwe. The next two sections examine the South African approach in handling these two aspects of the crisis.

B. South Africa's mediation between Zimbabwe's political parties

Since the end of the 1990s the implementation of the land policy in Zimbabwe has been accompanied by a rise of authoritarianism. For Raftopoulos, these two aspects of the Zimbabwean crisis can not be separated. The state's acquisition of land was tied up with the propagation of racialised notions of citizenship by the ruling party. The party's discourse confirmed the centrality of the land question, focused on the role of the ZANU-PF in the liberation struggle, and portrayed other political players as enemies of the nation and representatives of white interests. This was used as a basis for a wave of intimidation against political opposition, especially trade unions, which took the lead in the struggle for democracy and economic reform from the 1990s. The state's tendency towards the use of violence against the opposition and the manipulation of race and nationalism to demonise dissidents especially increased after the formation of the MDC in 1999. With its trade union origins and support base among civic movements, the MDC emerged as the most effective post-independence opposition party. While the MDC gained more ground in urban areas, ZANU-PF depended on its alliance with war veterans

and chiefs to dominate the rural areas (Raftopoulos 2009, 212; Feltoe 2004, 193-223; Zeilig 2008, 4).

To contain the rise of the MDC and limit the political space available for opposition forces, the state targeted the independent media, the judiciary, and the local government officials who supported the opposition, and passed repressive acts (the Public Order and Security Act and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act) in order to restrict its activities. In spite of intimidation and violence against its supporters, the MDC won 47 percent of the elected seats in the 2000 parliamentary elections and its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, won 42 percent of the votes in the 2002 presidential elections (Raftopoulos 2009, 213-5). The results of the two elections were contested by the MDC and by international observer missions from the EU, the Commonwealth and the observer teams of a number of international NGOs. However, observer missions from the South African parliament, SADC and the AU endorsed the elections as free and fair, or at least legitimate (Geldenhuys 2004, 112-3).

The contestation over the Zimbabwean election results and the abuses committed against the opposition invited South African intervention to mediate between Zimbabwean political forces. South Africa's approach was based on initiating a dialogue between the Zimbabwean political parties and on applying secret peer pressure to encourage a change in ZANU-PF's policies and a gradual reform in the party's structures rather than enforcing a radical regime change. However, given Mugabe's unwillingness to respect his commitments made in public or in secret,

South Africa's policy played well into Mugabe's hands. It allowed Mugabe to buy time and use the South African policy as a diplomatic cover for his policies.

Beginning in 2000, South Africa, in co-operation with other African countries, sought to bring the Zimbabwean political parties together to help create an enabling environment for democratic elections and negotiate a solution to the Zimbabwean crisis (Mbeki 2002c). It was reported that at the Victoria Falls Summit in April 2000, Mugabe promised the participating African leaders that he was going to hold free and fair parliamentary elections in the same year, a promise that was not completely met (BBC, April 23, 2000). The Commonwealth meeting attended by the South African Foreign Minister in Abuja in September 2001 committed Mugabe to 'take firm action against violence and intimidation' (FCO, September 6, 2001). After the controversy around the 2002 presidential elections, South Africa increased its pressure on Mugabe's regime. Although South Africa considered the elections to be legitimate and reflective of the will of the Zimbabwean people (DFA March 14, 2002), it was part of the Commonwealth troika that decided to suspend Zimbabwe from the councils of the organisation for one year. This decision was based on the report of the organisation's elections observer group, which noted that the elections was conducted amid a high level of politically motivated violence and that conditions did not allow for the free expression of the electorates' will (Commonwealth Marlborough House statement, March 19, 2002).

Given Mbeki's support for Mugabe, his position on the Commonwealth suspension in 2002 begs for an explanation. Media reports suggested that Mbeki's decision to support the suspension came only after pressure from Britain and Canada, which was hosting the next G8 summit, accompanied with a 'veiled warning' that their support to NEPAD was at stake. These reports also claimed that Mugabe had turned down a suggestion made by Mbeki and Obasanjo during their summit one day before the Commonwealth meeting to form a government of national unity to include the MDC. This refusal, the reports claimed, contributed to Mbeki and Obasanjo's support for the suspension proposal put forward by Australian Prime Minister, John Howard (Blair 2002; La Guardia 2002 and see also Johnson 2010, 347-9). Convincing Mugabe to accept the formation of a government of national unity was also claimed to be the main issue of the official visit to Zimbabwe of the then deputy-president, Jacob Zuma, a few days after the elections. The first South African-brokered talks between ZANU-PF and the MDC, facilitated by the then ANC Secretary-General Kgalema Motlanthe in May 2002 were also said to have this issue as their main focus (Hughes 2004, 127-8; Myburgh 2008, 16; Gumede 2007a, 235).

The secrecy surrounding most of South Africa's bilateral and multilateral meetings with Mugabe and his party members opened the door to speculations concerning the agreements reached in these meetings. In January 2003, a report by *Africa Confidential* suggested that there was a new South Africa initiative on Zimbabwe that included convincing Mugabe to retire within a year in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions, and the payment of compensation to white farmers and

financial support for agricultural development by Britain. There were speculations that Emmerson Mnangagwa, the then speaker of the Zimbabwean parliament and Mugabe's preferred successor, was in line to succeed Mugabe. The warm welcome given to Mnangagwa during the ANC's national conference in December 2002 may have fed these speculations (African Confidential 2003, 4 and see also Chan 2007, 48-9; Alden and Schoeman 2003, 9; Gumede 2007a, 237).

There is evidence to suggest that South Africa discussed with ZANU-PF members the possibility of Mugabe's retirement and the reform of the party as a way of resolving the crisis. As early as 2001, Mbeki hinted in an interview with ITN that South Africa's efforts at political reconciliation included discussing with Mugabe and his party members the issues surrounding leadership succession and the reform of ZANU-PF (Mbeki 2001b). Mbeki's aides revealed in closed meetings that they believed that part of the problem in Zimbabwe lay in the weakness of its political parties. In some of these meetings, the Deputy-Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, pointed out the decay of ZANU-PF's structures and the MDC's wrong tactical choices and its lack of a coherent policy (van Nieuwkerk 2006, 189,193).¹ There is also evidence that the MDC's leader was ready to negotiate immunities in return for Mugabe's departure (Tsvangirai 2007, 52). Tsvangirai revealed in January 2003 that he was involved in secret talks on a power sharing agreement with two senior figures in ZANU-PF. The ZANU-PF members offered the resignation of Mugabe and the granting of immunity from persecution to him as part of the deal (the

¹ This point, the lack of strategic thinking and policy alternatives, and concerning the divisions between the MDC formations, has also been made by a number of scholars; see Raftopoulos (2007, 56) and Nyathi (2007, 58-60).

Telegraph, January 13, 2003). Moreover, a leaked American diplomatic cable indicated that even before the presidential elections in 2002, the U.S, and most probably the U.K, had agreed with South Africa in favouring a deal that would allow for a safe exit for Mugabe and a GNU that would include ZANU-PF and the MDC (U.S embassy cables, September 27, 2000).

Different explanations have been presented for the failure of South African mediation to form a GNU in Zimbabwe. These include the unwillingness of Mugabe to step down, supported by ZANU-PF's hardliners; the insistence of the MDC on legally contesting the results of the presidential elections; and the MDC's reservations on the very idea of a GNU (Myburgh 2008, 25-7; Gumede 2007a, 235; Hughes 2004, 127-8; *Daily News*, May 14, 2002). These were also reported as the reasons behind the failure of the official visit made by Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi to Harare in May 2003 to bring the two parties to the negotiating table (*The Telegraph*, May 6, 2003).

In spite of the lack of progress in the talks between the two Zimbabwean parties, South Africa, together with other African countries, rejected the extension of the Commonwealth sanctions against Zimbabwe. After the decision of the Commonwealth to extend Zimbabwe's suspension, Mbeki paid another official visit to Zimbabwe that failed to convince the two Zimbabwean parties to resume their talks (*IOL News*, December 18, 2003). Mbeki also expressed his rejection of American and European sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, claiming that they were counter-productive (Mbeki 2003a).

At the same time, and in keeping with its discourse on land resettlement, South Africa avoided criticising the Zimbabwean government for its violence against the opposition. The statement made by Minister Dlamini-Zuma in March 2003 that South Africa would never condemn the Zimbabwean government as long as it remained in power is often cited as evidence of South Africa's 'quiet diplomacy'. Moreover, South Africa shielded Mugabe's regime from international criticism. In December 2001, South Africa blocked the discussion of a report on human rights abuses in Zimbabwe in the AU's commission on Human and People's Rights (Johnson 2010, 361-2). In April 2003, South Africa, together with other African countries, obstructed a proposed EU resolution on Zimbabwe at the UN Commission on Human Rights. The resolution urged Harare to invite UN human rights experts to visit the country. The South African representative in the commission said that the resolution was biased and politically motivated, did not sufficiently balance civil and political rights with economic, social and cultural rights, ignored the historical context of the situation in Zimbabwe, and was not result oriented (UNHRC, April 16, 2003). Furthermore, South African insistence that Mugabe should attend the EU-Africa summit scheduled for April 2003 led to the postponement of the summit for four years. Ultimately, Portugal, the host of the summit, was forced to invite Mugabe despite the EU travel ban against him (*The Guardian*, July 2, 2007).

The positions taken by the South African government endangered its position as an acceptable neutral mediator between the Zimbabwean parties, something that impacted on the effectiveness of South Africa's role. South Africa's policy invited

criticism from opposition figures in Zimbabwe, and sometimes even from ZANU-PF. Former Zimbabwean Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, Mugabe's propagandist, criticised South Africa as unfit to lead an African Renaissance (*The Herald*, January 18, 2003). While generally in favour of South Africa's approach, the Zimbabwean state-owned media referred a few times to a South African plot against ZANU-PF in collaboration with Britain (Sachikonye 2005, 584). Leading figures and parliamentarians of the MDC accused Mbeki of supporting Mugabe, protecting him from international sanctions, and thus collaborating with him in the crimes against Zimbabwean people. In November 2002, MDC's leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, sent a letter to Mbeki complaining that South Africa was only engaging the ZANU-PF in its mediation efforts, something that was compromising its 'image as an impartial broker' (*The Insider*, March 25, 2012).

Two months later, after the failure of the talks about forming a GNU, MDC Secretary-General Welshman Ncube and its spokesman Paul Themba-Nyathi accused the ANC of openly supporting ZANU-PF, and of trying to co-opt the MDC by including it in a government of national unity (*Business Day*, January 17, 2003; *Sunday Times*, January 19, 2003). More generally, the MDC recognised that South Africa preferred a reformed ZANU-PF with or without opposition parties as junior partners. This was seen by some political figures in the MDC as a flawed solution to Zimbabwe's crisis (Mutambara 2007, 57).

By the end of 2004, it was clear that the declaration by Mbeki at the Africa summit of the World Economic Forum in June 2003 that a political agreement on

Zimbabwe would be signed within a year was overly optimistic. With the time of the parliamentary elections of 2005 approaching, Mbeki received the MDC leader in October 2004 to discuss preparations for the elections. Tsvangirai softened his criticism of South African policy indicating that recent intense communications between the South African presidency and the MDC had helped the latter understand the South African position. Tsvangirai's attempt to get Mbeki to convince Mugabe to delay the parliamentary elections in 2005, however, failed (*City Press*, October 24, 2004). Another controversial parliamentary election was conducted in March 2005 under limited and selective international observation and ended with contested results. This was followed by a government campaign of demolition and eviction against illegal informal housing in Harare and other urban centres. The campaign, known as operation *Murambatsvina* (drive out trash), contributed to the humanitarian crisis caused by the economic deterioration in the country. While the Zimbabwean government claimed that the operation aimed at restoring order, the MDC argued that it targeted the opposition support base (Andrews and Morgan 2005).

Following operation *Murambatsvina*, South Africa tried to engage the UN and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in the efforts to bring about political reconciliation and contribute to economic recovery in Zimbabwe. Mbeki declared that he had spoken with Annan and would wait for the report of the UN special envoy on Zimbabwe on the eviction operation (Andrews and Morgan 2005, 43). Mugabe, however, signalled his rejection of UN intervention, declaring that Zimbabwe was not a UN issue and that Annan was invited to Harare only to assess the impact of

operation *Murambatsvina* and not to pursue political mediation (*The Herald*, May 25, 2006).

Avoiding public criticism of the Zimbabwean government remained a consistent South African policy even at times of increasing violence against the opposition. In March 2007, supporters and senior members of the MDC, including its leader Morgan Tsvangirai, were arrested and brutally assaulted during an opposition demonstration. While showing its concern about the level of violence, South Africa did not hold the Zimbabwean government responsible and continued to see the violence as a result of the economic and political challenges facing Zimbabwe (Department of Foreign Affairs 2007).

In response to the rise of violence against the opposition, the SADC mandated Mbeki to mediate between the Zimbabwean political parties to put in place enabling conditions for the holding of free and fair elections in 2008.¹ Although Mbeki reported to the SADC that his mediation efforts were progressing, the MDC announced that negotiations between the two parties had failed owing to Mugabe's refusal to agree on a new constitution and a number of legislative reforms before the elections were held (SAPA, February 22, 2008). But to Mbeki's credit, the negotiations led to amendments to a number of laws including the electoral law and the Public Order Act. Although the amendments did not totally open up the democratic space, they contributed to fairer elections (IDASA 2008). The

¹ A meeting of the ZANU-PF central committee in March 2007 decided to bring general elections forward by two years to coincide with the presidential elections. See *The Namibian*, May 4, 2007.

amendment to the electoral law required all votes to be counted and announced at the polling stations where they were cast. This made it easier to detect vote rigging. Changes to the Public Order Act made it easier for the MDC to hold meetings with its local activists (Johnson 2010, 366; Southall 2008). The general election was won by the MDC whose two formations claimed 109 out of the 210 seats of the National Assembly. The presidential election results were more contested. After a month's delay in announcing the election results, the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission announced that the MDC's leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, had won 47.9 percent to Mugabe's 43.2 percent, thus forcing a run-off. A week before the run-off, Tsvangirai decided to withdraw, citing violence against his supporters as the reason. Mugabe's victory in the uncontested run-off did not end the political crisis (Zeilig 2008, 13; Raftopoulos 2009, 229).

In spite of the international condemnation and regional suspicion expressed regarding the presidential elections, Mbeki insisted that there was no crisis in Zimbabwe. This led Tsvangirai to announce in April 2008 that 'Mbeki needs to be relieved from his duty [as a mediator]. We have asked President Mwanawasa [of Zambia] to lead a new initiative' (*The Times*, April 18, 2008). South Africa continued to shield Zimbabwe in international forums. It voted against a draft UN Security Council resolution to impose sanctions including an arms embargo and a travel ban on President Robert Mugabe and 13 of his key allies in response to post-election violence (BBC, July 12, 2008).

Responding to the post-election crisis, the ANC made its strongest statement yet on the Zimbabwean crisis. Since 2000, the party's statements had been generally supportive of the South African government's policy towards Zimbabwe and its mediation efforts between the Zimbabwean parties. Statements from that period reflected Mbeki's explanation of the crisis in Zimbabwe as one that relates to historical inequalities and a lack of commitment on the part of the ex-colonial power to address these inequalities (ANC 2000, 2002, 2008b). Before the second round of the 2008 presidential elections, however, the party issued a statement noting that it was 'deeply dismayed by the actions of the government of Zimbabwe, which is riding roughshod over the hard won democratic rights of the people of that country' (ANC 2008b). It indicated that the party 'cannot be indifferent to the flagrant violation of every principle of democratic governance' and that evidence of violence against opposition meant that the political environment was not conducive to a free and fair run-off. Some observers related the rise in the ANC's critical tone to the change in the party's leadership. Yet the party's statements maintained that dialogue was the only way out of the political crisis, thus endorsing the South African government's approach (ANC, 2008a; 2008b).

Backed by the AU and SADC mandate, Mbeki continued his mediation, hoping to end his term in office with a deal that would mitigate criticism against his policy on Zimbabwe. After several rounds of negotiations a Global Political Agreement (GPA) between the two parties was signed in September 2008 allowing for the formation of an inclusive government. The agreement left Mugabe in control of

the security apparatus, but gave the MDC a share of political positions. According to the agreement, Tsvangirai was appointed as Prime Minister and ministerial posts were split between ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations. The agreement has been subject to a number of criticisms and its implementation is facing numerous challenges.¹ Following the signing of the GPA, the two parties invited Mbeki to intervene at times of deadlock over its implementation. The agreement has, however, paved the way for economic recovery, at least in the short run.

- *South Africa's role in political reconciliation: towards an explanation*

For the South African diplomats, the signing of the GPA and the start of economic recovery in Zimbabwe vindicate the long criticised South African diplomacy. While admitting the challenges facing the implementation of the agreement, they argue that SADC and South Africa have proved that crises can be solved by negotiation, not war. They further contend that South Africa's diplomacy has served the country's national interests. These interests did not only include avoiding the impact on South Africa of a total collapse of Zimbabwe, but also the maintenance of South Africa's leading role in Zimbabwe. For them, a vocal criticism of Mugabe would have blocked South Africa's role and isolated it (Interview with Makaya 2010; Pahad in van Nieuwkerk 2006, 188-9). Related to this argument is the official claim that South Africa's diplomacy aimed at maintaining the cohesion of SADC, since most of its countries, and indeed most African countries, avoided criticising Mugabe. Central to the South African policy

¹ For more information on these criticisms and challenges see for example International Crisis Group (2011).

was also the objective of preventing western powers from intervening in African affairs in general, and in SADC affairs in particular, and proving that SADC was able to solve its own problems. This follows the principle of promoting African solutions to African problems, a cornerstone of the African Renaissance. South African diplomats cite the example of the American intervention in Iraq to show that military intervention aimed at imposing democracy leads to chaos (Interviews with Asmaal 2009 and with Makaya 2010).

It is obvious, however, that Mbeki's policy compromised South Africa's position as an honest neutral broker and failed to produce a result for eight years. More importantly, it was at odds with the reformist regional project advocated by the South African leadership since the end of the 1990s. As pointed out earlier, Zimbabwe's crisis was not just about the political and economic future of an African country. It was also about whether South Africa, as a regional leader, could induce other countries to abide by the principles of democracy and good governance. In other words, Zimbabwe was a test case for NEPAD's credibility (Taylor 2002; Venter 2004). Why then did Mbeki risk his regional project by following soft diplomacy in Zimbabwe? Was this diplomacy supported by social forces and the leftist alliance partners? And if not how did Mbeki manage to enforce this diplomacy in spite of domestic opposition?

This section argues that the explanation lies in the dilemmas of South Africa's regional role conception discussed in section 4.1. In this sense, South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe is not exceptional (Adelman 2004; Prys 2008). Rather,

it is typical of its broader conceptions and traditions of foreign policy, with all their tensions and contradictions. Firstly, South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe reflects its eagerness to show its independence from western powers in pursuing its African policy. In handling the crisis, South Africa emphasised the abuse of principles of democracy and human rights by western governments to achieve their own political agenda in Zimbabwe. It supported an 'elite-reformist' solution that engages political elites and works for reform rather than regime change (Alden and Schoeman 2003, 4). This focus on gradual reform may also be seen, as some scholars have noted, as a reflection of South Africa's tendency to export its model of national reconciliation to other countries in the continent (Hughes 2004, 133; Geldenhuys 2004, 129).

Secondly, the psyche of liberation movements cannot be ignored as far as explaining South Africa's policy in Zimbabwe is concerned. This is clear from Mbeki's writings. In December 2003, he wrote defending the position of the liberation movement in Zimbabwe and criticising what he called attempts to reverse reality: 'those who fought for a democratic Zimbabwe, with thousands paying the supreme price during the struggle, and forgave their oppressors and torturers in a spirit of national reconciliation, have been turned into repugnant enemies of democracy' (Mbeki 2003a). Additionally, African governments, including that of South Africa, seemed to buy Mugabe's argument that Zimbabwe's crisis was a conspiracy by the west to overthrow liberation movements in Southern Africa and to install new governments friendly to the west (Mutasah 2007, 110-2; Sachikonye 2005, 573-5; Ngubentombi 2004, 155;

Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004, 385-400). It was thus no coincidence that the first meeting between liberation movements in Southern African (the ANC, ZANU-PF, Frelimo, Swapo and the MPLA) was initiated after Mugabe's failure to mobilise voters' support to his constitutional amendments in the 2000 referendum (Johnson 2010, 233). Another evidence of how Mbeki bought into Mugabe's argument was his speech at the SADC extraordinary summit on Zimbabwe in 2007. Mbeki was quoted as saying 'the fight against Zimbabwe is a fight against us all. Today it is Zimbabwe, tomorrow it will be South Africa, it will be Mozambique, it will be Angola.... Any government that is perceived to be strong and to be resistant to imperialists, would be made a target. So, let us not allow any point of weakness' (Johnson 2010, 364).

Thirdly, Mbeki's tense relationship with COSATU and the ANC's fears of the rise of a trade union-based competing party may well have contributed to the ANC's uneasiness towards the MDC. This will be discussed in some detail in the section dealing with COSATU's role in the Zimbabwe crisis.

Fourthly, South Africa's Zimbabwe policy could well be attributable to personal factors related to Mbeki's domination over the decision making process, Mugabe's status as a revolutionary icon and his manipulation of Mbeki, or the latter's negative view of the MDC as a representative of white interests (Hughes 2004, 111; Chan 2008). A South African scholar close to policy circles has noted that the personal relationship between Morgan Tsvangirai and Mbeki was very tense. Further, he has noted that although Mbeki consulted some representatives of

business and civil society, he followed a policy at odds with their advices (interview with Le Pere 2009). Another scholar has noted that although Zimbabwe was on the agenda of the president's meetings with business in the Big Business Working Group, these meetings were more of a briefing on the government's position rather than a dialogue about this position (Hughes 2004, 137).

Mbeki's insulation from advice and pressure from social forces led to sharp divisions within and without the ANC on the government's policy on Zimbabwe. Although the ANC remained generally supportive of Mbeki's policy, the South African leader failed to achieve consensus not only within South African society but even among the tripartite alliance partners. The positions of COSATU and the business community will be discussed in details below. However, based on my interviews, I would also suggest that it was the divergence between the views of different social forces in dealing with the crisis in Zimbabwe that gave Mbeki and his inner loop of advisors the leeway to shape South African policy according to their definition of the crisis. A scholar connected to policy circles revealed that a closed meeting that brought senior state officials from the presidency, foreign ministry, intelligence and military together with representatives of business, labour and Think Tanks ended in disagreement. Not only were the participants divided on how to deal with the Zimbabwe crisis, but there was also no agreement on whether there was a crisis in the first place. While some supported exerting more pressure and applying sanctions, business was generally more interested in preserving its interests regardless of the policy taken (Interview with van Nieuwkerk 2009).

To sum up, South Africa's policy towards the political crisis in Zimbabwe can hardly be explained by reference to a single factor. A number of intervening variables hindered the implementation of the state's regional project in the case of Zimbabwe. South Africa's racial politics, the ANC's liberation movement psyche and its anti-imperialist posture, the leader's domination over decision-making and his insulation from social forces, and the very division of these forces over the Zimbabwe crisis all contributed to the nature of South Africa's diplomacy towards Zimbabwe.

- *South Africa's role in Zimbabwean political reconciliation: could it have been more effective?*

South Africa's approach towards Zimbabwe was criticised as a 'non-policy'. For at least eight years this policy had no time frame, no deliverables and included no alternatives to soft engagement (Graham 2006, 116; Hughes and Mills 2003). This approach allowed Mugabe to buy time and stay in power through a mix of violence, controversial elections, and the co-optation of opposition figures into political positions without delegating much power to them. Three years after the signing of the GPA, little, if any, progress has been made in reforming the security institutions and the land audit. The process of constitution making has been very slow. MDC political activists are still targeted and Prime Minister Tsvangirai has repeatedly complained against Mugabe's unilateral appointments of key positions in contradiction with the terms of the GPA.

In the first years of the crisis, Mbeki and his aides admitted that their policy was ineffective. In an interview with the BBC in 2001, Mbeki indicated that Mugabe had not listened to his advice (Mbeki 2001a). A statement from the presidency commenting on the interview clarified that Mbeki's view was that 'the approach so far adopted has not provided spectacular results but that it is the only approach available to [South Africa]' (SA Presidency, 2001b). Statements by Aziz Pahad echoed the same meaning (Pahad 2003 in van Nieuwkerk 2006, 180). While recognising the ineffectiveness of its diplomacy, South Africa rejected any proposed alternative to this diplomacy and presented a false dichotomy that claimed that the only alternative to its policy in Zimbabwe was military intervention.

Given ZANU-PF's control of the state and the security and intelligence institutions, it would have been difficult to unilaterally or collectively challenge Mugabe from within his own party, or to mobilise popular opposition against him (Moyo 2007, 46; Spence 2006, 196-7). This is why both South Africa's attempt to cut a succession deal and to reform ZANU-PF and the western support for the opposition and its economic sanctions against the Zimbabwean government proved ineffective. What, then, were the other available options? Could they have been more effective?

One of the keys to a more effective South African position towards the Zimbabwean crisis could have been to avoid confusing the different issues at stake (i.e: land reform, economic management, and democratic and electoral politics).

Evidently, the South African position confused these issues in a way that did not allow for the adoption of a separate position for each issue. Avoiding the definition of the land problem as a predominantly racial issue, and separating it from the problems of the violations of human rights and the intimidation of opposition may have allowed the South African state to take a harder line in its dealings with Zimbabwe. It would, at least, have prevented South Africa from finding excuses for Mugabe's policies.

Another key to a more effective policy towards the Zimbabwean crisis could have been found in moving collectively with other countries to put more diplomatic pressure on the Zimbabwean government in specific situations. Countries like Botswana would have preferred South Africa to take a tougher stance against Mugabe. Its president Festus Mogae blamed the Zimbabwean crisis on 'drought of leadership' (Kagwanja 2007, 120). In a leaked diplomatic cable, a senior diplomat of Botswana revealed that Tanzania, Mauritius and sometimes Malawi supported Botswana's tendency to take a harder line on Zimbabwe (US Embassy cable, October 27, 2009). In the Commonwealth meeting in Abuja in 2003, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Malawi joined Botswana in voting to maintain Zimbabwe's suspension from the organisation, a position opposed by South Africa (Johnson 2010, 357). In 2008, Zambia joined Botswana in its criticism of ZANU-PF's violence prior to the second round of the presidential election, and thus cast doubts on the election's legitimacy (Cawthra 2010, 25-6). This may be one of the reasons that the MDC's leader suggested Zambia's President, Mwanawasa, as an alternative mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis in April 2008. Additionally, Nigeria

under Obasanjo had already moved in the direction of the diplomatic isolation of Zimbabwe when it had insisted on not inviting Mugabe to the Commonwealth summit in Abuja in December 2003, a position which was not supported by South Africa (Myburgh 2008, 37).

Apart from its economic options, which will be discussed in the next section, several diplomatic measures would have been available to this potential African bloc. This could have included toughening up the tone of their statements and identifying the party responsible for violence and abuses or for the obstruction of the implementation of signed agreements. It could also have included increasing engagement in monitoring the GPA implementation, setting a timeframe with clear measures to be taken in case of non-compliance with the GPA roadmap, and publicising reports and deliberations related to the mediation process. These measures could have put pressure on Mugabe to show more flexibility in his negotiations with the MDC. Evidently, collective diplomatic stances have sometimes forced Mugabe to change his position. To mention one example, after the 2008 presidential election, Mugabe's spokesperson announced that Zimbabwe would not form a grand coalition like that set up in Kenya to resolve its post-election crisis (BBC, July 2, 2008). It was only after the AU and SADC united in endorsing a GNU that Mugabe was forced to accept this option. This means that earlier collective South African-led pressure could have produced a result in the negotiations between the Zimbabwean political parties.

The resolutions endorsed by the SADC organ troika on Politics, Security and Defence at their summit in March 2011 provide another example of the impact of collective pressure on Mugabe's regime. The summit expressed its impatience at the delay in the implementation of the GPA and decided to appoint a team to work with the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) (SADC 2011). This could have represented a move towards identifying the party responsible for hindering the implementation of the GPA. More importantly, it could have moved a step towards challenging the traditional notion of state sovereignty, as it involved regional monitoring of the Zimbabwean government's political commitment. However, the failure to set clear timetables with specific measures to be taken if these timetables were not followed, and to publicise the results of mediations and closed meetings limited the effectiveness of SADC resolutions and contributed to the slow implementation of the GPA.

Thus, a South African state less reluctant to defend the principles of its reformist agenda in co-operation with other African countries could have played a more effective role in the Zimbabwean crisis.

C. South Africa's Role in Zimbabwe's Economic Recovery

The Zimbabwean government blamed the country's economic crisis on international sanctions, claiming that it had miraculously survived with no support to its balance of payment since 1998 (Gono 2007,84). Scholars and experts have suggested that the foreign exchange shortage, resulting from the sanctions, led to the further reduction of agro-industrial inputs and thus to the decline in agricultural

productivity. But they also admit that the mismanagement of the land reform programme, the ill-conceived investment policies, and human rights abuses that invited international sanctions contributed to the crisis (Moyo 2007, 77; Bloch 2007, 82-3; Games 2006, 36-46).

For its part, South Africa provided support to prevent Zimbabwe's collapse and help the process of economic recovery. South African parastatals supplied Zimbabwe with fuel and oil on credit (Johnson 2001). In 2000, South Africa offered a US\$ 133 million rescue package, part of which went to South African parastatals, to allow Zimbabwe to keep up its electricity and oil supply (Adelman 2004, 259; Alden and Schoeman 2003, 11).

Importantly, South Africa has sometimes linked its economic assistance to Zimbabwe to political conditions. In 2005, South Africa offered an aid package to help Zimbabwe pay back its IMF debt on the condition that it introduces constitutional reforms and new measures to ensure that elections would be free and fair (Kagwanja 2007, 120; Pyrs 2008, 132). However, the Zimbabwean government rejected the package. Instead, Mugabe turned to China to secure a loan with softer, non-political conditions (Gumede 2007a, 226). After signing the GPA, South Africa offered a grant of R300m for agricultural development, an offer which was taken back in November 2008 until a unity government was formed (African Renaissance Fund 2009, 3; the South African Presidency 2008).

South Africa also worked through SADC to discuss reforming economic policies in Zimbabwe and the ways in which the regional organisation could help in

Zimbabwe's economic recovery. Since 2001, South Africa has been a member of a SADC task force, including Botswana and Mozambique, appointed to work with the government of Zimbabwe on the country's economic challenges (SADC 2001). There is no evidence that this task force has induced Mugabe to change his economic policies. SADC extraordinary summit held in Dar-es-salaam in March 2007 mandated the organisation's Executive Secretary to undertake a study of the economic situation in Zimbabwe and propose measures on how SADC could assist Zimbabwe (SADC 2007). In their ordinary summit in Lusaka in August 2007, SADC leaders invited the Zimbabwean government to implement robust policies to reduce the overvaluation of the exchange rates, the budget deficit and price distortions, and to avoid the changes in policies that would cause uncertainties. For their part, SADC leaders denounced economic sanctions, noting their negative impact on the Zimbabweans and on the whole region, and agreed to do all that they could to lift economic sanctions (SADC 2003, 2006, 2007). SADC countries also provided around US\$1 billion, most of which came from South Africa and Botswana, to support industrial development in Zimbabwe (Makochekanwa and Tekere 2010, 26).

As noted earlier, the formation of the inclusive government in February 2009 has paved the way for economic recovery in Zimbabwe. After less than a year of forming the government, and with the implementation of new macroeconomic policies, the inflation rate started to fall rapidly and the economy grew at a rate of 4.7 percent in 2009 (African Development Bank 2010, 3). In February 2010, the IMF restored Zimbabwe's voting rights after seven years of suspension, but made

access to IMF funding sources conditional on the payment of Zimbabwe's debts to the fund (IMF 2010).

- *South Africa and economic recovery in Zimbabwe: towards an explanation*

Given its domestic developmental challenges of unemployment, high levels of inequality, and shortage of service delivery, why did South Africa invest in the resolution of the Zimbabwean economic crisis?

One can suggest two reasons for South Africa's economic support to Zimbabwe. South African political and economic investment in resolving the Zimbabwean crisis was meant to stabilise the whole region and contain the negative regional implications of the Zimbabwean crisis. Evidently, the crisis impacted on the South African economy given the extensive links between the two countries. There is no reliable data on the effect of the crisis on the South African economy. However, South African politicians and economists did not fail to notice this impact. In 2001, Tito Mboweni, the South African Reserve Bank Governor, noted that Zimbabwe's economic collapse had badly affected the value of the South African Rand (Sachikonye 2005, 581-2). Observers attribute this decline to the lack of a decisive South African stance on the land invasions in Zimbabwe, which in turn impacted on investors' confidence in the South African economy. Although the volume of South African exports to Zimbabwe did not decline, Zimbabwe became the second, and sometimes third, trading partner to South Africa after Mozambique and Zambia, having previously been its first trading partner (Johnson 2010, 360-1). More importantly, the ability of the Zimbabwean government to pay for its

imports declined. It was estimated that Zimbabwe owed Eskom US\$ 5 million in 2002 alone. The total amount of Zimbabwean debt to South Africa parastatals, the Reserve Bank and private companies was estimated at US\$ 458 million by 2003 (Hughes 2004, 113-4). In this respect, South African financial assistance was not only meant to save Zimbabwe's economy, but also to help the Zimbabwean government pay back its debt to South African parastatals and implement projects run by other parastatals, like the Industrial Development Corporation and Development Bank of Southern Africa (McKinley 2004b, 357-64).

Assistance to the Zimbabwean economy was also meant to reverse the negative impact of the crisis on the regional investment climate. The crisis had led to the increase in the region's political risk, the decline of FDI, and the rise in the cost of borrowing. South Africa's contribution to Zimbabwean economic recovery was thus meant to stabilise the region, and so provide an environment conducive to international investment. This was in addition to the desire to contain the economic and social cost of receiving the two to three million Zimbabwean refugees in a country where unemployment already amounted to around 25 percent (Lahiff 2003).

The other reason for South Africa's contribution to Zimbabwe's economic recovery has to do with its need to maintain economic relations with Zimbabwe and secure the future economic opportunities to be gained after the recovery of the Zimbabwean economy. Evidently, the crisis increased Zimbabwean dependence on South African imports, especially essentials like fuel, electricity and food.

During the period from 2000-2006, Zimbabwean imports from South Africa represented around 45 percent of its total imports. South Africa's trade surplus with Zimbabwe increased from R3.6b in 1999 to R11.7b in 2009 (SA Trade and Industry Statistics 2011). The key to Zimbabwean economic recovery since 2009 has been the introduction of a multicurrency regime that allows for the use of the American dollar and South African Rand along with the Zimbabwean dollar. Zimbabwe has also borrowed from South African banks to raise money for its imports; South Africa is the largest African lender to the Zimbabwean government (Jones 2011, 38). This has led a number of scholars to suggest that the Zimbabwean crisis paved the way for immediate and future profits for the South African economy (Adelman 2004, 267-8; Makochekanwa and Tekere 2010, 12-3).

This does not suggest that South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe was shaped solely by economic interests, nor that all South African companies have benefited from the Zimbabwean crisis. Rather, it suggests that an assessment of the economic costs and benefits of contributing to Zimbabwean economic recovery and to avoiding a further deterioration factored into South Africa's economic policies towards Zimbabwe. The position of South African business on the Zimbabwean crisis will be detailed later.

- *South Africa and economic recovery in Zimbabwe: Could it have been more effective?*

As Mugabe demonstrated his determination to cling to power at all costs, a number of voices within the alliance partners and civil society called upon the South African government to cut, or at least threaten to cut, supplies of fuel and electricity. It was suggested that a gradual decrease of fuel and electricity supplies could cause minimal deprivation to the Zimbabwean people, but produce fast political results (Geldenhuys 2004, 134).

There is, however, little evidence to support these expectations. Given Mugabe's style of leadership and his stature within his party and in the African continent, it is not certain that using economic sanctions would have forced Mugabe to behave differently (Holman 2007, 154-5). Furthermore, Zimbabwe could have depended on other close African allies to secure energy supplies. Libya's Qaddafi backed Mugabe's regime, funding ZANU-PF's electoral campaigns in 2000 and 2002 and donating \$360 million to alleviate Zimbabwe's fuel crisis. Furthermore, Libyan companies increased their investments in Zimbabwe to make up for the decline in foreign investments (Gumede, 2007a, 224; Johnson 2010, 345). As noted earlier, the Zimbabwean government also depended on Chinese loans free of political conditionalities. Thus, in addition to increasing the suffering of ordinary Zimbabweans, South Africa would have been harmed not only diplomatically but also economically if it had severed its economic relations with Zimbabwe (Ngubentombi 2004, 155; Alden and Schoeman 2003, 11).

In addition to pressuring the Mugabe regime for an end to the political stalemate and a resolution to the land issue that fed into the economic crisis, South Africa could have contributed to Zimbabwe's economic recovery by leading a collective regional pressure on the Zimbabwean government to fix its economic policies, a step that appeared to have come too late. It was only at their extraordinary summit in 2007 that SADC leaders clearly invited the Zimbabwean government to adopt robust and predictable economic policies. This indicated that SADC countries had started to hold the Zimbabwean government responsible for the economic crisis and its implications for the region after several years of blaming international sanctions. An earlier movement of collective pressure to end the political stalemate and reform Zimbabwe's economic policies could have caused Zimbabwe's economic recovery to begin sooner, and thus reduced the negative regional economic implications of the crisis.

One of South Africa's tools of intervention to help the process of economic recovery in Zimbabwe was the role of its business. But to what extent did the South African state succeed in co-ordinating with business to perform this role? To what extent did state-business relations affect this co-ordination? And what was the position of South African business on the Zimbabwe crisis? These questions are discussed in the next section.

4.2.2. Business interests and South Africa's Policy towards Zimbabwe

This section argues that contrary to the claims that South African business opposed the state's 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe or that South African policy was

shaped by business interests, not all South African business organisations and corporations took the same position on the state's policy or benefited from this policy. More importantly, the active and independent role of South African business provided both opportunities and challenges for South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe. The continuation, and in some cases increase, in South African investment in Zimbabwe in spite of the crisis maintained strong connections between the South African and Zimbabwean economies. However, the lack of co-ordination between the state and business, and of sufficient state protection for South African investments in Zimbabwe, limited the possibility of using these investments as a leverage to influence the process of political reconciliation and economic recovery in Zimbabwe.

South Africa's business links with Zimbabwe are extensive. Several South African corporations have investments or subsidiaries in Zimbabwe. A report has estimated that 27 of South Africa's biggest listed companies have operations in Zimbabwe, and some of them are listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE). These companies offer employment to around 200,000 Zimbabweans, representing a majority of employers in these companies. The same report noted that 60 percent of the companies listed in the ZSE are South African. These companies operate in different sectors. They own 60 percent of Zimbabwe's formal gold mines and 90 percent of its platinum mines. Additionally, a number of South African commercial banks and construction and retail companies hold shares in various Zimbabwean corporations (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007, 31).

Broad statements have been made to the effect that the predominantly white South African business was negatively affected by the crisis in Zimbabwe, and that it was not in favour of the state's policy towards the Zimbabwean crisis (Games 2006, 78; Geldenhuys 2004, 121-2; Johnson 2010, 359). Conversely, some scholars have argued that South Africa's diplomacy towards Zimbabwe was shaped by economic interests and aimed at dominating the Zimbabwean economy in the long run. According to McKinley, for instance, South Africa's policy served the interests of black and white South African businesses. In his opinion, South African economic assistance to the Zimbabwean government was not meant to save Zimbabwe's economy, but to help the Zimbabwean government pay back its debt to South African parastatals (McKinley 2004b, 357-64). Other scholars support this analysis, suggesting that as a result of the crisis, South Africa not only eliminated its main economic competitor in the region, but also ensured its control over the Zimbabwean economy (Adelman 2004, 267-8). In the words of two Zimbabwean scholars, Zimbabwe has become a *de facto* province of South Africa (Makochekanwa and Tekere 2010).

However, there is little evidence that there was any systematic co-ordination between the state and business on involvement in Zimbabwe, nor that the state's policy was determined by business interests. As illustrated earlier, most engagements concerning Zimbabwe have been on a government to government basis with little consultation with social forces, including business. Business figures raised the issue of Zimbabwe in the meetings of the Big Business Working Group with the president in the early 2000s. However, they complained that the

government focused on explaining rather than discussing its position with stakeholders. Zimbabwe had gradually slipped out of focus in business-presidential meetings (Hughes 2004, 137-8; SAIIA 2011, 13).

South African business also showed a high degree of independence from the state in forming its positions and making its decisions concerning Zimbabwe. In keeping with this autonomy from the state, business reactions to the crisis in Zimbabwe were mixed at the organisational and company level (Hughes 2004, 136). There was thus no single coherent business position on Zimbabwe. A number of business organisations and figures issued statements or declared views that criticised South Africa's soft policy towards Zimbabwe. The South African Foundation (now Business Leadership South Africa) released a press statement in 2002 that criticised South Africa's diplomacy highlighting its negative impact on the credibility of NEPAD. The same view was voiced by leading business figures. Other organisations, like the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) and BUSA, clearly condemned Zimbabwean government policies, but were more reluctant to criticise South African policy (Hughes 2004, 136-8; Soko and Balchin 2009, 42-3). Also noteworthy is the fact that the intensity of these criticisms changed with the development of events. Some businesses urged South Africa to take a more critical approach towards abuses against the rule of law and human rights only when these abuses started to affect their own operations (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007, 9).

Importantly also, not all South African corporations investing in Zimbabwe were equally affected by the country's economic crisis, nor were they all forced to limit their operations. This depended on the nature of the corporations' activities. Corporations producing for the domestic market were more affected because of the decline in the number of customers, and in the purchasing power of Zimbabweans. The South Africa retail company Shoprite, for instance, took a decision to put plans for expansion in Zimbabwe on hold owing to political and economic uncertainties (*The Herald*, 14 October 2009). South African parastatals have also lost millions as a result of the inability of the Zimbabwean government to pay for its fuel and oil imports from South Africa (Hughes 2004, 113-4). A number of commercial farmlands owned by South African corporations were also confiscated. To mention one example, several agro-industrial operations owned by Anglo American subsidiaries in Southeast Zimbabwe were listed for compulsory acquisition (Games 2006, 107).

But some other companies were still making good profits. Some businesses believed that despite the economic crisis, Zimbabwe was still a good place to do business compared to many African countries because of its strong business sector and relatively good infrastructure. This was especially true for companies working in the export sector, although this sector was badly affected by the government's policy on foreign currency (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007, 32).

The South African mining corporations in particular continued to operate actively in Zimbabwe despite facing problems related to the scarcity of foreign currency,

unfavourable exchange rates, power supply cuts and fuel shortages, and deterioration of the transport system. Despite disinvestments by several major mining companies, foreign investments in the sector increased with new, mostly South African, players entering the field during the last decade. Within a few years, new South African-led capital had restructured ownership in large and medium scale mining. In 2002, Metallon Gold purchased the Independence Gold Mining Group for \$15.5 million, controlling 60 percent of the formal sector gold mines. From 2001-2005, the giant platinum company, Impala Platinum (Implats), secured two deals for around \$250 million in Mimosa Platinum Mine and Zimplats Selous Mine. The deals allowed the company to increase its production by 17 percent by 2004. In 2003, Angloplat started a \$92 million mining project (Games 2006, 94, 110; Saunders 2008, 71-2).

Interestingly, black empowerment figures featured prominently in some of these mining deals. Metallon Gold is owned by the South African mining magnate Mzi Khumalo, one of the prominent BEE figures. Another two BEE figures, Patrice Motsepe and Tokyo Sexwale, have sought new business opportunities for their corporations in the recovering Zimbabwean market (the Zimbabwean, April 06, 2009). The South Africa-based Mwana Africa mining, a consortium bringing together politically-connected business interests in Zimbabwe, South Africa, the DRC, Kenya and Ghana, secured a number of deals in Zimbabwe from the time of its establishment in 2003. It bought a 53 percent stake in the Bindura Nickel operation from Anglo American and the Freda Rebecca mine from AngloGold, and took over Cluff Mining Zimbabwe (Saunders 2008, 73).

Asset acquisitions sometimes came as a result of the indebtedness of Zimbabwean companies to their South African counterparts. In 2003, ABSA bank sold Implats a 30 percent stake it had acquired in Zimplats. This paved the way for Implats to take over Zimplats three years later for R972 million (Makochekanwa and Tekere 2010, 12). Eskom continued its power supply to Zimbabwe despite payment problems and strengthened its partnership with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), hoping to trade its debt for a stake in Zimbabwe's power utility (Games 2006, 54; *The Economist*, Sept 26th, 2002).

Some of the new investments of South Africa's corporations were supported by the state's financial institutions. Mwana Africa's development of the Freda Rebecca mine was made possible by a \$10m loan facility granted by the IDC. The IDC also offered a six-year \$30m line of credit to two of Zimbabwe's finance institutions, Agribank and the Industrial Development Corporation of Zimbabwe. Two thirds of the loan was allocated to firms operating in the agri-business, manufacturing and mining sectors (IDCZ 2011, *The Zimbabwean*, March 25, 2011). The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) granted a loan of \$206m to Zimbabwe for road infrastructure development (*The Herald*, October 7, 2011).

Generally, most South African companies did not pull out of Zimbabwe during its economic crisis. Rather, they found ways to adapt their operations to the declining economy in expectation of political and economic recovery (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007, 31-4; Games 2006, 81-4). Since 2003, South African companies have undertaken investment projects in Zimbabwe totalling more than US\$619 million

in different sectors, including the metals, minerals, tourism and financial service industries (*South Africa Info*, March 27, 2012).

The increasing investments of South African corporations in the ailing Zimbabwean economy invited criticisms from the Zimbabwean opposition. In July 2005, Tsvangirai blamed international, especially South African, companies for supporting the Mugabe regime. He was quoted as saying 'it is disconcerting that under such flagrant violations of the rule of law, South African companies such as Impala Platinum and Anglo Platinum are still negotiating deals...when the country is imploding' (Tsvangirai in *Games* 2006, 79).

Interestingly also, the gains of these businesses may not have been confined to Zimbabwe. According to a UN report on the illegal exploitation of the DRC's resources, Mugabe and ZANU-PF's military elite facilitated the access of some business corporations to the DRC's resources (UN 2001). Some of these corporations have allegedly been South African. PetroSA was accused by the UN of engaging in oil deals with foreign business corporations that exploited the DRC's resources and shared profits with Mugabe and his Defence Force (Lipton 2009, p. 339).¹

Against this background, business representatives gave varying accounts of the impact of Zimbabwean government policy, especially the Indigenisation and

¹ The exploitation of the DRC's resources, especially by mining companies, continued even after South Africa's mediation of a peace deal to end the conflict in the country. A UN report noted that the South African-based Dimension Resources, a natural resources company, acquired 18 percent of the shares of Geminaco, a company accused of exploiting DRC's gold. See (UN 2010, 157)

Economic Empowerment Act, on their businesses. The act, which was passed by parliament in 2007, required all companies operating in Zimbabwe to arrange for at least 51 percent of their shares to be owned by indigenous Zimbabweans. South African companies with broad Zimbabwe-held shareholdings, like Murray and Roberts, have been impacted only minimally by the Act. The fact that the majority of their shareholders and managers are Zimbabweans has also meant that they are more able to understand the business environment and find ways to deal with the risks (interview with Fowler 2010). Conversely, the director of the African operations of a leading South African bank expressed his frustration and uncertainty with regard to Zimbabwean government policy and the reaction of the South African government (anonymous interview). Similarly, the investment insurance giant Old Mutual had to sell more shares to Zimbabweans to comply with the indigenisation legislation (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007, 37). In the mining sector, some companies, like Anglo American, disinvested from small operations, concentrating on larger projects. Others, like Implats, have been trying to negotiate agreements with the government to avoid selling assets to local partners. Metallion Gold has been sued by two Zimbabwean empowerment partners for its failure to comply with indigenisation rules. But interestingly, all three corporations have expanded their operations since 2007 in spite of the enforcement of the Indigenisation Act (Saunders 2008, 76-8; SAIIA 2011, 12).

To protect its interests, the South African business community kept lines of communication open with all the political parties in Zimbabwe during the crisis. To give one example, BUSA established links with both the Zimbabwean

government and the opposition and worked behind the scenes to protect the interests of its companies. These links also paved the way for initiatives to explore new investment opportunities after the GPA was signed (Interview with Grant 2009; BUSA 2009).

On their part, Foreign Ministry officials claimed that the South African state was not aware of any structural or major obstacles facing businesses in Zimbabwe (interview with Asmal 2009). A DTI official who was extensively engaged in negotiations with the Zimbabwean government on the signing of an investment protection agreement indicated that South African business saw this agreement as a prerequisite for expanding their activities in Zimbabwe (interview with Monyemangene 2009). After seven years of negotiations, the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments Agreement (BRPI) was signed in November 2009 to reduce the risks of investing in Zimbabwe (DTI 2009). However, South African business has cast doubt on the sufficiency of the agreement to protect their investments. They argue that the challenges faced by South African business on the ground have not changed as a result of the signing of the agreement. Further, they claim that business was not sufficiently consulted during the negotiation process (SAIIA 2011, 13-4).

To sum up, although there is evidence that some South African corporations have benefited, or will benefit in the long run, from the crisis in Zimbabwe, there is little evidence to suggest that South African policy was basically influenced by commercial interests. The interests of some South African business may have

converged with the state's vision on Zimbabwe. But business has shown great autonomy in designing its policies and pursuing its economic interests. It has also depended on its connections and adaptability strategies, more than on the South African state's arrangements, to protect its interests. The co-ordination between state and business to resolve conflict in Zimbabwe was less than successful.

4.2.3. COSATU and the Zimbabwe Crisis

This section observes that in spite of its alliance with the ANC, COSATU adopted policies on the Zimbabwean crisis different from those embraced by the ANC party and government. It demonstrates that the federation used its multiple strategies to influence government policy towards Zimbabwe and show solidarity with its Zimbabwean counterpart. In so doing, COSATU, in co-ordination with other civil society groups, has balanced, complemented and checked the role of the South African state in the Zimbabwean crisis. Finally, I argue that the tension between Mbeki and COSATU has affected both the federation's position on Mbeki's diplomacy in Zimbabwe and Mbeki's position on the MDC as a trade union-based party.

Unlike Mbeki and the ANC, COSATU blamed the Zimbabwean government, and not western governments, for Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis (COSATU 2003). In one of its press statements, COSATU criticised SADC's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis, claiming that the reason for the failure to attract investment and achieve economic recovery was not western sanctions but the economic policies and political repression of the Zimbabwean government (COSATU

2007b). In another statement, the federation indicated that ‘while COSATU recognises the heroic role played by the Zimbabwe government and people in the liberation of South Africa, and President Mugabe's willingness to confront the hypocrisy and aggression of the U.S government, that does not mean that the federation will close its eyes when his government tramples on workers' and human rights’ (COSATU 2007c). COSATU also criticised the Zimbabwean government’s land policy calling it a ‘chaotic land grab campaign’ aimed solely at diverting attention away from government failures (Vavi 2008, 47). This meant that COSATU succeeded in what the South African state failed to do, that is in differentiating between the acknowledgment of the historical role of Zimbabwe’s liberation movement and of its anti-imperialist position on the one hand, and disagreement with its economic policies and condemnation of its undemocratic practices on the other.

In line with this conception, the federation used multiple strategies to deal with the Zimbabwean crisis. Firstly, it condemned the Zimbabwean government’s repeated assaults on ZCTU and other civil society activists. It stated that these assaults demonstrated Mugabe’s disdain for human rights and democracy. Secondly, it showed solidarity with ZCTU in its struggle against the violations of its political and economic rights. This included sharing experiences with ZCTU on managing the relationship with the state. In its solidarity actions, COSATU tried to co-ordinate with other trade unions in the region. The Zimbabwe democracy campaign, which included demonstrations and pickets highlighting the plight of

Zimbabwean workers and people, was conducted in co-operation with other trade unions in Mozambique and Botswana.

Thirdly, COSATU lobbied the South African government to pressurise Mugabe to respond to demands for democracy, restoration of the rule of law, and free political activity. It argued that the Zimbabwean government's violations of human rights contradicted the principles of good governance and democracy promoted by NEPAD and the APRM. It invited all the democratic governments of the African continent, including South Africa, to condemn these violations (COSATU 2003, 2006, 2009).

COSATU used its alliance with the ANC to voice its disagreement with government policy. Disagreement in defining the crisis and the ways to deal with it made Zimbabwe an increasingly divisive issue within the tripartite alliance. The former president of the ANC Youth League, Fikile Mbalula, criticised COSATU for standing at odds with the South African government's policy and supporting sanctions against Zimbabwe (Mbalula 2004). COSATU's criticism of South African government policy became more acute after the deportation of the former's delegation from Zimbabwe in October 2004. The delegation, which was visiting Zimbabwe on a fact-finding mission and led by COSATU's Secretary-General Zwelinzima Vavi, was arrested during its meeting with ZCTU and dumped at the Zimbabwe-South African border. The deportation of the delegation opened a public spat between the ANC and its government on the one hand, and COSATU on the other. The South African government's reaction acknowledged

the right of the Zimbabwean government to apply its legislation 'as it may deem appropriate and in its own interest' (DFA 2004). The ANC considered the visit a 'contempt for a head of state and sovereign government' because it was embarked upon in spite of Mugabe's indication that COSATU's delegation would not be welcomed (ANC 2004). Vavi replied by claiming that the delegation had been deported so as not to reveal human rights violations and that COSATU would not remain silent about these violations. Furthermore, Vavi threatened to block the Zimbabwean- South African borders to pressure Mugabe to change his policies (Afrol news, October 27, 2004). Another delegation of COSATU was denied entry into Zimbabwe in February 2005 (Afrol news, February 3, 2005).

The disagreement continued even after the signing of the GPA. COSATU supported the ZCTU position that the agreement was an elite deal that would not solve the crisis in Zimbabwe. It concurred that the GPA's aim was to 'maintain a defeated dictator in power in defiance of the popular will' (COSATU 2008a). After the controversy surrounding the presidential elections in 2008, COSATU considered Mugabe's government to be illegal and illegitimate (COSATU 2008c). It called on South Africa and other African countries not to recognise this government.

Fourthly, COSATU and its affiliates co-ordinated with other civil society organisations to influence the state's policy and propose alternatives. Sometimes its role proved to be more effective than that of the government. Blocking the Chinese arms shipment to Zimbabwe in April 2008 was a case in point. The South

African National Conventional Arms Control Committee issued a permit authorising the transfer of the weapons across South Africa to Zimbabwe. The South African government declared that it could not stop a legal transaction. In co-ordination with other civil society forces, COSATU members were able to force the ship to cancel the unloading of its cargo at the Durban port by demonstrating there. The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) announced that it would not offload the weapons nor facilitate their transfer through South Africa. Furthermore, SATAWU co-ordinated with civil society in Mozambique and Namibia, urging them to take a similar position (Fritz 2009, 4-6).

Although it is believed that the shipment may finally have been smuggled into Zimbabwe through Angola, COSATU and civil society's efforts made it difficult for China, South Africa and other African governments to deliver these arms to Zimbabwe (interview with Makue 2010). This move showed that civil society was taking the lead, ahead of national governments, in pressurising Mugabe's regime (Greste 2008; Southall 2008). Further, it indicates that an active civil society capacitated by democratic institutions can check the foreign policy positions of the state, holding the government accountable to the foreign policy principles it claims to embrace (Fritz 2009, 10; Bond and Desai 2008, 6). This confirms Evans thesis about the capability enhancing potentials of democratic systems. Although consultations with civil society did not impact on the state's policy, civil society activism supported the Zimbabwean cause, balancing the state's reluctance to take a tougher line against the Zimbabwean government.

COSATU has also engaged with civil society efforts in areas where the state's role has been insufficient or inefficient. One of these areas was in dealing with Zimbabwean migrants. The South African state did not develop an institutional and legal framework to deal with the large number of Zimbabwean migrants who flowed into South Africa (Polzer 2008; Mosala 2008, 9). When the wave of xenophobic attacks erupted in May 2008, COSATU's provincial representatives criticised the way in which Mbeki's government handled the crisis. They participated in a task force in Gauteng and the Western Cape to prevent the spread of violence against migrants, and to provide humanitarian assistance to victims (CRAI 2009, 17). In a statement during the attacks, the federation's Central Executive Committee called on its affiliates to urgently convene shop steward council meetings at all levels to convey the message that 'the working class must not turn its guns against itself'. Sectoral unions, like the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), held pre-emptive meetings to make sure that the assaults would not spread to foreign migrants in their sectors. But at the same time, COSATU showed less interest in organising and defending the rights of Zimbabwean migrant workers.¹ As established in section 4.1.4, nationalist

¹ COSATU recognised that migrant workers in general, and illegal migrants in particular, are often exploited. They are offered low wages and work under bad working conditions. But most of the sectoral unions have not mobilised migrant workers. South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), for example, has accepted women workers from Zimbabwe to join the union, but has had no clear policy for recruiting migrants. The NUM has tried to organise construction workers from Zimbabwe, especially after the increase in their number prior to the 2010 Soccer World Cup. But in general, unions have not organised migrants as part of the struggle for the rights of the working class. On their part, most Zimbabwean migrants choose not to join a union for fear that this would affect their job security. Only 7 percent of Zimbabwean migrant workers are unionised. See: Hlatshwayo (2009, 28-35); Mosala (2008, 21).

tendencies have sometimes taken precedence over solidarity with foreign workers (Hlatshwayo 2009). There has been a common perception in some sectors that Zimbabweans who have fled their country since 2000 are 'taking jobs' from South Africans, and thus undermining labour standards and wage levels, especially in the informal sector (Mosala 2008, 13).

Finally, COSATU co-ordinated with trade unions in the region to propose alternatives to SADC approach towards Zimbabwe. Trade unions in Southern Africa presented a plan for resolving the Zimbabwean crisis to the SADC summit that took place in August 2008. The plan called for a transitional government widely representative of Zimbabwean society with the limited mandate of facilitating the drafting and adoption of a new constitution and organising free and fair elections (COSATU 2008b).

But the COSATU-ANC divergence over Zimbabwe poses a number of questions: did COSATU fail to use its alliance with the ANC to influence the latter's stance on Zimbabwe? And if yes, why? And how did the tense relationship between the ANC and COSATU under Mbeki influence the ANC's position towards the Zimbabwean issue in general, and towards the MDC in particular?

It is evident that COSATU's calls for taking a tougher position on Mugabe's regime and for showing more support for the MDC fell on deaf ears. For COSATU, the inability to influence South African policy towards Zimbabwe reflected the attempts of the leadership and some circles inside the ANC to sideline the leftist partners in international, as well as domestic, issues. In the words of

COSATU's international secretary, 'the hostility towards COSATU's demands' within the ANC under Mbeki explains the inability of COSATU to use its alliance with the ruling party to change the government's policy on the Zimbabwean crisis (Interview with Masuku 2009). COSATU, together with the SACP, went even further, warning the ANC that, like ZANU-PF, it could face declining popularity if it continued to follow the same policy lines. The two leftist partners complained of a 'Zanufication' of the ANC and were joined by other voices that criticised the rising arrogance, intolerance of criticism, the use of the 'race card', and the growing gap between the leadership and the grassroots (Gumede 2007b; Du Preez 2002).

In fact, the tense relationship between the ANC and COSATU under Mbeki was seen as an explanation for the bad working relationship between the South African government and the MDC. As noted earlier, given the trade union base of the MDC, the ANC may have feared that MDC's rise in Zimbabwean politics would revive the debates on establishing a party to represent labour in South Africa (Hughes 2004, 134; Cawthra 2010, 30-1; Lipton 2009, 340). The MDC itself believed in these explanations; according to Austin Moyo, the representative of the MDC's assembly in South Africa, the South African government would not have accepted a labour-based party forming the government in Zimbabwe because labour in South Africa was a critic of the state's policies (Interview with Moyo 2010).

For other leftist scholars, however, the ANC-COSATU alliance had a totally different impact. According to McKinley, for instance, the alliance prevented COSATU from openly criticising the ANC's support for a rising black bourgeoisie in the Zimbabwean ruling party. The ANC-COSATU division over Zimbabwe is thus not more than 'verbal battles and differences over tactical approaches'. In other words, the alliance with the ANC prevented COSATU from waging a true working class struggle against capitalist dominated states both in South Africa and in Zimbabwe (McKinley 2004a).

It is true that COSATU's position reflected support for democracy and human rights, including workers' rights, rather than support for a working class project. It is also true that COSATU's pressure on the South African government under Mbeki was less than successful. However, the federation's outspoken criticism of the Zimbabwean government and its different roles in the Zimbabwean crisis indicated its active and independent role in foreign policy issues. The MDC also acknowledges that COSATU's pressure enhanced the ANC's view of the MDC and toughened the ANC's position towards Mugabe's regime, especially with the change in the party's leadership in 2007 (interview with Moyo 2010). This suggests that in a democracy, even if social forces have little direct influence on decision making, their role can balance, and sometimes check, the role of the state.

4.3. Conclusion

The South African state policy on the Zimbabwe crisis was a manifestation of the dilemmas of its broader regional role conception, which was in turn a reflection of

the features of the South African state and its relationship with social forces. Through the active involvement of President Mbeki, South Africa has shown a high commitment to helping resolve the Zimbabwean crisis. Showing solidarity with ZANU-PF and rejecting western intervention in the Zimbabwean crisis at the expense of NEPAD principles of democracy and respect for human rights mirrored the ANC's solidarity with liberation movements and its anti-imperialist posture. It also reflected the desire of the South African state not to be seen as a Trojan horse for the west or as a continuation of the apartheid state. The centrality of race and of the redressing of historical inequalities in South Africa's conception of the land issue in particular, and the Zimbabwean crisis in general, was an extension of South Africa's racial politics. It confirms the view that for South Africa to lead an African Renaissance and pursue an effective regional role, it has to achieve a renaissance at home by accomplishing its nation-building project.

The impact of Mbeki's relationship with leftist alliance partners on the effectiveness of his role in Zimbabwe's political reconciliation illustrates the importance of engaging social forces in foreign policy making. His tense relationship with COSATU and the ANC's fear of the rise of a workers' party in South Africa has contributed to the negative view of the MDC held by Mbeki and the ANC. This has affected South Africa's position as a neutral broker in Zimbabwe's political negotiations, at least from the MDC's point of view.

Apart from the position of some business interests which showed little rejection of the state's policy, South Africa's social forces have effectively balanced out the

state's bias towards ZANU-PF. They have made the distinction between accepting the historical legitimacy of a liberation movement and rejecting the policies of a despotic regime. While the South African state has focused on engaging the Zimbabwean political parties to agree to an agenda for gradual reform, South African societal groups have engaged with their counterparts and called for the inclusion of Zimbabwean civil society in any arrangement for resolving the crisis. In some cases, such as the blocking of the Chinese arms shipment to Zimbabwe, civil society organisations have checked the state's policies and held it accountable to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights. It remains true, however, that there has been untapped potential for co-operation between the state and social forces.

Conclusion

This study set out to explain and evaluate the regional roles of two pivotal states, Egypt and South Africa, in the last two decades. It noted that variables related to the two countries' capabilities and to the structure of the international system do not adequately explain the difference in their regional performance. It suggested that the two countries' regional roles can be better understood by reference to the state's relationship with society, a variable that has long been underplayed by international relations and foreign policy literature. This relationship shapes the opportunities and constraints of the regional engagements of both the state and non-state actors. The study has argued for a cross-disciplinary approach using debates on state-society relationships in comparative politics and political economy to understand and evaluate the two countries' foreign policies.

Following this approach, the study's analytical framework was based on the following premises; firstly, it suggested redefining the concept of state capacity in international relations and foreign policy based on a review of the developing discussions on this concept in comparative politics and political economy. Accordingly, state capacity is defined not in terms of insulation from, and domination over, social forces, but in terms of the ability to engage these forces to implement the state's policies and achieve policy objectives. According to this definition, soft states are those that are not able to design and/or implement their policies because of their focus on domination over social forces. As far as regional powers are concerned, state capacity is translated into the ability of a regional power to accomplish its regional project in co-operation with social forces. Secondly, according to this definition of state capacity and the literature on the

foreign policy of soft states, it is argued that soft states tend to focus on mobilising external resources for maintaining domestic control. Owing to the high cost of domestic extraction, these states focus on external extraction of material, and sometimes non-material, resources instead of reforming their domestic politics to achieve regional pre-eminence. This constrains the state's regional role. Thirdly, this definition of state capacity links up with the type of regime governing the regional power. Literature argues that democratic regimes are more competent since they engage social forces in the design and implementation of their domestic and foreign policies. This does not only legitimate these policies but also generates the capacities of social forces and enhances their contribution to the state's foreign policy objectives. Conversely, authoritarian regimes demobilise and weaken social forces, and thus hinder their contribution to the state's foreign policy.

In this concluding chapter I introduce the major findings of the study. I examine the extent to which these three analytical arguments explain the comparative regional roles of Egypt and South Africa in the last two decades.

Egypt's and South Africa's Regional Conception: Stability versus Reform

Role theory defines the concept of role as encompassing two aspects; the role conception, which refers to the attitudes and interests of the state or non-state actor, and the role performance, which covers the actions and behaviour of actors. The study analysed the extent to which the state's relationship with society in Egypt and South Africa has impacted on the two states' vision for the region. It evaluated this vision against two criteria; clarity and the ability to generate

consensus. Comparing the two cases, it noted that the central difference between Egypt and South Africa lies in the capacity of the state to develop a regional project or blueprint. By holding the banner of the African Renaissance and proposing the NEPAD initiative, South Africa has proposed a reformist regional agenda. This agenda suggests that democracy and peace are prerequisites for development. It urges African countries to enhance their governance through free elections, transparency and accountability. It encourages these countries to introduce economic policies that encourage the growth of the private sector, attract domestic and foreign investments and increase Africa's integration into the world economy. It calls upon international donors and financial institutions to support the process of African renewal by increasing their development assistance to African countries, enhance the access of African exports to international markets, and improve the participation of African governments in the decision making bodies of global governance institutions.

Although this agenda can hardly be described as transformative, as it does not challenge the governing rules of regional and international institutions, it nevertheless promotes the gradual reform of these institutions. Further, South Africa under Mbeki invested in implementing its regional agenda by putting in place organisations, including the African Renaissance Fund, for promoting democratic institutions and post-conflict reconstruction and development. At the same time, South African business has used the state's discourse to legitimise its expansionist policies on the African continent. This suggests that a convergence of

interests has emerged in Mbeki's era between the state's vision and the interests of business as far as South Africa's Africa policy is concerned.

While the central focus of South Africa's regional agenda has been reform, that of Egypt's regional conception has been stability. The attempt of the Mubarak regime to maintain its patron model that ensured stability for three decades and sustained its domination over social forces made stability the core value of Egypt's regional agenda. With rising social upheavals and pressures for democratic reform, especially in the last decade of Mubarak's regime, the state's discourse used the fragile regional environment as an excuse for the delay in carrying out economic and political reforms at home. Mubarak responded to western calls for democratic reform by emphasising that reform should not endanger stability. He took a reactive and defensive position towards western initiatives for democratic reform in the Middle East. He advised the American administration that the region was not ready for democracy, and that it should accept 'fair dictators' to run the countries of the region.

And while the official discourse of the South African state has largely focused on commitment towards the African continent, that of the Egyptian state raised the slogan of 'Egypt first', rationalising its regional policies by reference to domestic threats and priorities. South Africa justified its commitment towards peace, democracy and development in African countries by arguing that it cannot be an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty. At the same time, it stressed the historical support of the African governments and peoples to South Africa's democratic

struggle and the cultural ties that link it to the African continent. In contrast, the Egyptian state's discourse contended that domestic challenges necessitate prioritising Egypt's national interest. Especially at times of regional crises, Mubarak made it clear that Egypt would not be dragged into conflicts in defence of other regional actors so as not to be distracted from its domestic concerns. The ruling party intelligentsia emphasised that every regional role has a cost and that active engagement in the region means directing resources away from domestic development.

Interestingly also, while the state's official discourse in South Africa emphasised the common identity that ties South Africa to the African continent, the state intelligentsia in Egypt revived the discussion about Egypt's contested identity. This was meant to justify the domination of the political elite, especially the president, in the definition of Egypt's national interest. Since there is no agreement on Egypt's identity (national, Arab, or Islamic), policy makers, this intelligentsia argued, are entitled to determine what identity takes precedence and what course of action should be followed in certain situations.

Claiming regional leadership while showing less willingness to contribute to the region created a dilemma in Egypt's regional conception. It was not clear how the Mubarak regime's argument that Egypt is still the hub of the Arab world coincides with its slogan of 'Egypt first' and with its profession that domestic challenges and the rise of other regional actors have affected its regional pre-eminence. This dilemma can be explained in the light of the reluctance of the state to redefine its

role in response to both domestic and regional challenges. The intelligentsia inside and outside the former ruling party agreed that Egypt could have played the role of the exemplar by presenting a model of a modern neo-liberal democratic state. This role would not have entailed directing much resources to the region. However the state's reluctance to introduce political and economic reforms that could change the bases of its relationship with society hindered the realisation of that role. In this sense, the soft Egyptian state has shown less willingness to transform its politics of domination to present an exemplar for the region, but has been more willing to use the regional environment to maintain such mode of domestic politics.

Yet, the South African case indicates that elaborating a regional blueprint is not a sufficient condition for playing an effective regional role. There is little evidence that Mbeki's vision of the African Renaissance and his NEPAD initiative resonated at the popular level within South Africa or attracted wide support of other regional actors. The scepticism of social forces towards NEPAD points out the importance of engaging social forces in the formulation of the state's regional agenda. Although South Africa's negotiated transition has created a model of politics based on engagement and compromise, Mbeki tried to dominate foreign policy making and insulate himself from societal pressures. The design of NEPAD without public consultation has affected its legitimacy in Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. Attempts to engage civil society in the initiative and its mechanisms, especially the APRM, did not dispel the criticism of social groups. The resistance of unorganised social forces to the state's foreign policy, of which the xenophobic attacks were one illustration, indicated that the South African state must

accomplish its nation-building project and address its domestic challenges if it wants to sustain its regional role. The importance of engaging social forces at the early stages of designing the state's regional project offers a lesson to Egypt in its current transitional period.

Regional Conception in Practice: high activity, limited effectiveness

To demonstrate the impact of state-society relations on the regional performance of Egypt and South Africa, the study selected two case studies, the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and the Zimbabwean economic and political crisis respectively. Literature on the role of the two countries in the two cases has often focused on evaluating the performance of the state or examining the influence of a specific social actor. The study has attempted to transcend this focus in two ways. Firstly, it has tried to explain the state's policy by reference to state-society complexes. Secondly, it has investigated the convergence or divergence of the interests and engagements of state and non-state actors.

For geographical, historical and political reasons, both Egypt and South Africa were well positioned to play a central role in the case studies examined here. Both countries played an active role in mediating between the parties to the two conflicts and preventing the spread of chaos and violence through their regions. But interestingly, the diplomacy of both states was less than influential, failing to exert pressure to change the positions of the parties to the conflict and to propose alternatives to resolve these conflicts. Further, this diplomacy provided the diplomatic cover for the policies of the Mugabe regime and subsequent Israeli

governments. It allowed them to buy time with little change to their policies. However, the features of the Egyptian state and its relationship with society put more external constraints on its role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict compared to South Africa's role in the Zimbabwe crisis.

Mubarak's attempt to maintain his alliance with the U.S through which he sustained the financial and diplomatic support of successive American administrations affected his policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. With rising domestic threats related to increasing social upheavals and pressures for democratic reform and the rising power of the Muslim Brotherhoods, the use of Egypt's role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to serve domestic ends became increasingly important. The Mubarak regime developed its role from an effective mediator between Israel and the Palestinians in the beginning of the 1990s to a partner in implementing American and Israeli security policies in the occupied territories in the 2000s. In playing both roles, Mubarak's regime portrayed itself as an indispensable ally to the U.S in the region and the only regional power that could pressure the Palestinian Authority to respond to American and Israeli demands or that could protect Israel's security. After more than a decade of rejecting this policy, it improved its economic relations with Israel by signing a gas export deal and the QIZ agreement in 2004. This came in spite of the tensions between Presidents George W. Bush and Mubarak, something that indicates that personal factors do not stand as sufficient explanation for Egypt's foreign policy choices. Although these choices did not pay off in terms of resolving the conflict or moving towards the objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state, it

secured the flow of American aid and support to the Mubarak regime, and its indispensable military institution, especially in the face of the rising domestic challenges.

At the same time, Mubarak used the rise of Hamas to power in Gaza, which came after a strong performance by the MBs in the parliamentary elections in Egypt in 2005, to raise the fears of the west in general, and the American administration in particular, towards Islamist forces. This was meant to entrench the external legitimacy of the Mubarak regime and obstruct any opportunity of rapprochement between western governments and Islamist movements. Mubarak and his intelligence chief, Omar Soliman, portrayed Hamas and the MBs as radical movements and presented Egypt as a partner to the U.S in fighting radicalism.

Thus, in pursuing its policy in Palestine, the soft Egyptian state under Mubarak focused on using its regional role to maintain its domestic politics of domination over social forces, mobilise the resources needed to sustain its clientelistic policies, and delay the implementation of economic and political reforms. This supports the analysis of Lake, Ikenberry and Mastanduno on the foreign policy of soft states. It also indicates that the arguments of David, Karawan, and Barnett and Levy that the change of Egypt's alliance in the 1970s was a result of its domestic politics apply also to Egypt's policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the 1990s.

But at the same time, to avoid outbidding by the rising Islamist forces, the Egyptian state claimed that it is the defender of Palestinian rights, a claim that contradicted its increasing co-operation with the U.S and Israel. Crises and violent

confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians often revealed the contradiction in the Egyptian position as Egypt showed its unwillingness to be dragged into violent confrontation in defence of the Palestinian side. This explains why Egypt sought to achieve stability and avoid any escalation that could expose its vulnerability vis-a-vis domestic and international actors.

Although South Africa had different commitments as far as its policy towards Zimbabwe is concerned, it was more eager to show independence from western powers. One of South Africa's priorities in managing the Zimbabwean crisis was showing that SADC could take care of its own business. The ANC's anti-imperialist posture and the African Renaissance principle of presenting African solutions to African problems may explain this orientation. Yet, this came at the expense of South Africa's influence on the parties to the conflict, especially on the Mugabe regime. More importantly, by failing to exert pressure on the Mugabe regime to stop his violent acquisition of lands, his intimidation and harassment of the opposition and his problematic economic policies, South Africa departed from NEPAD principles of democracy and respect for human rights. South Africa adopted its typical approach of gradual reform through the restructuring of ZANU-PF and the encouragement of a change in its leadership. But Mugabe's reluctance to introduce reforms meant that South Africa's diplomacy played into Mugabe's hands, allowing him to stay in power through controversial elections without introducing many concessions. Importantly also, in dealing with the Zimbabwe crisis, South Africa missed the opportunity to form an African reformist coalition that could push its regional agenda.

Since South Africa had more tools of influence in relation to Zimbabwe, compared to Egypt's tools in relation to Israel, South Africa's limited influence on the Mugabe regime begs for an explanation. I have argued that this limited influence can be attributable to a number of factors that relate to South Africa's domestic politics. Mbeki's and the ANC's tendency to present the Zimbabwe crisis as one about colonial legacy and race to mobilise the support of a considerable black constituency explains their lenient position towards ZANU-PF and Mugabe's land policy. The ANC's psyche of a liberation movement that values ZANU-PF's struggle for democracy and claims that there is a western conspiracy against liberation movements in Southern Africa contributed to Mbeki's and the ANC's soft policy towards the violence against the opposition in Zimbabwe. At the same time, social forces in South Africa were divided on how to deal with the Zimbabwe crisis. While some forces called for taking a tougher stance towards the Mugabe regime, others supported Mbeki's approach towards Zimbabwe. Further, divisions emerged within these forces. Business organisations and corporations took different stances towards the crisis based on the extent to which their interests were affected by Mugabe's policies. These divisions gave Mbeki a leeway to enforce his vision of resolving the crisis. This shows that the mere engagement of social forces through established institutions and channels of negotiations is not the only factor for ensuring the constructive participation of social forces in foreign policy making. The willingness of the political leadership to respond to concerns of social forces and the coherence of the position of these forces also matter.

Although the nature of domestic politics in the two countries is different, the state's relationship with particular social forces has negatively impacted on the acceptance of the state's role in the two conflicts. In the case of Egypt, the state's confrontation with Islamist forces at home was extended to the regional arena. Hamas, which declares its allegiance to the MBs, was considered a common threat to both Egypt and Israel. It was thus unsurprising that Egyptian intelligence joined forces with American and Israeli intelligence to weaken Hamas' control over Gaza. As a result, Hamas often questioned Egypt's neutrality and rejected its role in training the PA security institutions. As for South Africa, the tension between Mbeki and COSATU and the ANC's fears of the formation of a workers' party contributed to the president's and the ruling party's negative views of the MDC in Zimbabwe. For the MDC, Mbeki and his party did not accept a labour-based party to form the government in Zimbabwe because COSATU is a critic of state policies in South Africa. In some instances, Mbeki's lenient positions pushed the MDC to ask Mbeki to step down as a mediator between the Zimbabwean political parties. The MDC in government continued, however, to depend on South Africa for implementing the GPA and supporting Zimbabwe's economic recovery.

The Role of Societal Forces: How democracy matters

The comparison between the role of the state in Egypt and South Africa in resolving the conflicts in Palestine and Zimbabwe respectively shows more similarities than differences. It is the role of societal forces that distinguishes the performance of the two countries. In spite of the tendency towards the

concentration of power in the presidency in the Mbeki era, the study shows that societal forces were able to engage in the making of policies that are most related to their interests. The role of trade unions in introducing the 'buy local' agreement through consultations with the state and business in NEDLAC to limit the competition with SADC countries is a clear example.

Where direct engagements failed to shape or change the state's policy, organised business and labour in South Africa played different active and effective roles that complemented, checked, and balanced the state's role. This indicates that the opportunities offered in a democracy for a country's regional role performance are not confined to societal participation in decision-making to legitimise policies and to enhancing the capacities of societal forces as Crone, Lamborn, Evans, and Hall all argued. With little co-ordination with the state, both business and labour in South Africa have, through their continental outreach, exported some rules governing the relationship between state, business and labour in South Africa to other countries of the African continent. In co-ordination with other trade unions in Southern Africa, COSATU has defended the principles of democracy and respect for human rights holding the South African state accountable to these principles.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the impact of business and labour on Mbeki's policy has been limited for the reasons identified earlier. However, the two social forces have engaged in the Zimbabwe crisis in different ways. South African businesses in Zimbabwe found ways to adapt their operations to the declining Zimbabwean economy, keeping lines of communication open with different Zimbabwean

parties to protect their interests with little help from the state. COSATU employed multiple strategies to signal its objection to the state's policy. It expressed its opposition to the government's silence towards human rights abuses and towards violence against the opposition in Zimbabwe in the context of the tripartite alliance meetings. Its criticism may have contributed to toughening up the ANC's language towards these abuses and improving the party's position towards the MDC after the change in the ANC's leadership in 2007. On another track, COSATU co-operated with civil society organisations to show solidarity with their counterparts in Zimbabwe. In contradiction with the state's 'elite-reformist' approach to resolving the Zimbabwe political crisis, these organisations proposed an approach that engages civil society and de-legitimises ZANU-PF control of power via controversial elections. They joined forces to block arms transfers to the Zimbabwe regime via South Africa, holding the South African government accountable to its own democratic institutions and to the principles of its regional project. In other instances, some of these organisation intervened where the state's role was missing or ineffective. Assisting the Zimbabwean migrants was a clear case in point.

In this sense, societal forces, though with little co-ordination with the state, contributed to the state's regional objectives. This is not, however, to romanticise the engagements of civil society organisations or to ignore the relevance of the role of the state in checking these engagements. The role of South African business, including parastatals, in exploiting the DRC resources with the help of ZANU-PF is a case in point. The position of South African sectoral industrial trade unions

towards African migrants is another example. These and other examples indicate that there is a need for more co-ordination between the state and societal forces as far as the regional policies of these forces are concerned. They also indicate that civil society organisations can check and monitor the regional engagements of other societal forces, especially business. The importance of co-ordination and monitoring is also one of the lessons that Egypt could learn in its transition to a more democratic regime and a more effective regional role.

In contrast with the roles played by societal forces in South Africa, the demobilisation of societal forces in authoritarian Egypt weakened the regional performance, and the very conception, of Egypt's societal forces. The co-opted business community tried to make use of its external links to push reforms at home without challenging the state's domination. The few regional initiatives elaborated by business organisations avoided tackling the state's control of societal forces, although this control is a major obstacle towards regional integration. The regional conception of the most effective opposition force, the MBs, was confused reflecting its formal exclusion from the political process. Based on the inclusion-moderation thesis, the inclusion of the Brotherhoods in the political process could have developed and moderated their regional and foreign policy conception.

At the level of performance, business acted at the state behest and depended on its protection as far as relations with Israel are concerned. The state gave the green light for the business community to start negotiations with its Israeli counterpart for signing the QIZ agreement. It protected the interest of business against legal

contestation in the gas deal with Israel. These deals were meant to serve the narrow interests of politically-connected business figures or to make up for the state's inability to implement reforms in its national industries. Accordingly, Egypt was not willing to use its improved economic relations with Israel to increase its tools of influence in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Instead of using Hamas' links with the MBs as an opportunity for a better influence on the former's positions, the Egyptian state reacted to the rise of Hamas by fighting both movements. The Egyptian attempt to meet its commitments towards Israel and the U.S while claiming that it was defending Palestinian rights became increasingly problematic. Egypt's participation in the Gaza blockade and its security co-operation with the U.S and Israel against Hamas badly affected its regional and international image.

Although Egypt's policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict helped Mubarak maintain his international alliances and domestic politics in the short run, it gradually led to the erosion of the international image and the domestic legitimacy of his regime. Protestors who took the streets on January 25th 2011 were expressing not only their grievances towards Mubarak's domestic policies, but also their disappointment at Egypt's increasing dependency on the U.S and its collusion with Israel. Their signs and chants called on Mubarak to seek refuge in Israel. They held pictures of Mubarak with the Star of David on his forehead. This confirms Krasner's argument that authoritarian regimes may be able to mobilise domestic or external resources to achieve their policy objectives on the short run.

However, they do not have the capacity to maintain and develop material and non-material resources at the long run.

Egypt's and South Africa's Foreign Policy: Bringing people back in

One of the key insights to be drawn from the analysis in this study is the need to bring people back into the study of foreign policy. While the study devoted its attention to organised interest groups and religious movements, it found out that the attitudes of less organised groups are no less important. Eventually, these groups may not subscribe to the state's foreign policy vision and may affect the achievement of this vision and the image of the country in the region and beyond. Unorganised groups that do not buy into, and are not engaged in, the South African state's regional agenda have shown different forms of resistance against this policy, including waging xenophobic attacks against African migrants. Interestingly, a study conducted by a South Africa scholar and journalist highlighted how the locally organised groups in a township that was a centre of xenophobic attacks have set their own conditions for accepting the presence and work of African migrants among them (Harber 2010). This indicates that local politics may have a totally different logic than the discourse of African solidarity and interdependence promoted by the state. Hence, examining the attitudes and practices of groups and elites at the local level as they relate to foreign policy issues is a research area that is worth further exploration.

In the same vein, one of the lessons to be drawn from the revolutionary change that brought an end to Mubarak's regime is the need to transcend the focus on the

state and Islamist movements to look at the rising role of social movements. The foreign policy implications of this change are worth examining. Opening up the political space to different forces in Egypt in the wake of the January 25th revolution is expected to give a boost to civil society and social movements activism at home and in the region. More generally, the democratic transformation of the Egyptian state in general, and the rise of civil activism in particular, pose a number of questions. What will be the position of a democratic Egypt on issues of political reform in the region and to what extent will it be able to balance defending democratic values and non-intervention in other countries' affairs? If non-democratic Egypt made the progress of political reform dependent on the advancement of peace in the region, how will a democratic Egypt's approach be different towards the Middle East peace process? How will civil society activism translate into a more active societal involvement in regional issues? And how can the state's policies and societal engagements be harmonised? These and other questions could form a future research agenda for scholars of Egyptian foreign policy.

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