

African Sub – Regional Systems

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Abstract: In studying Africa on regional systems basis we should first find an appropriate model whereby the tremendously frightening massive amount of data can be reduced to practically manageable categories. Such a model is obtainable in terms of one of two methods. We can either attempt to compile an original model or we can adopt an existing one; and then apply this model to the concerned data. In this article we follow the second avenue in identifying five African sub – regional systems.

Keywords: regional basis, model, originality, adoption, and manageable categories.

AFRICAN SUB – REGIONAL SYSTEMS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Before we commence this disputation, it may be relevant as well as being interesting to make the following remark:

The Know Africa books are the result of some seven years of research and extensive travels throughout Africa by a team of African scholars, writers and journalists who have accomplished one of the most important tasks in the field of general education in Africa. Know Africa aims at discriminating the era of publications of Africa which reflect the colonial perception of the continent. Our hope is that it will become the cutting edge of a new approach towards the understanding of Africa, its history, its peoples, and its vast potential. Ours is a time of change. Yet, until now very little has changed in the way that Africa has been portrayed in numerous books, press, radio and television reports both inside and outside the continent.

Source: Markers of Modern Africa: Profiles in History, of 1981:13

I. Introduction

We now look at Africa in terms of its regional systems. However, to do so satisfactorily, we should first find a *model* whereby the tremendously frightening massive amount of data can be reduced to practically manageable categories. Such a *model* is obtained according to one of two methods. We can either try to compile an *original model*, or we can adopt an *existing model*, and then apply it to the data concerned. We follow the second avenue in this article.

We shall use the *model* developed by L. J. Cantori and S. L. Spiegel [1970:6 – 7]. The decision to use this model should not be ascribed to a lack of originality, but should be regarded as recognition of the fact that, with the exception of a few aspects; this framework cannot be readily improved upon. In more than one respect it is extremely suitable for application to the study of Africa.

II. The Purpose Of This Article

The purpose here is threefold: adopt L. J. Cantori's and S. L. Spiegel's model; apply this conceptual framework in dividing Africa into five regional areas and indicate the composition of each of the African sub – regional systems.

III. African Sub – Regional Systems

3.1 The basic premises of Professors L. J. Cantori and S. L. Spiegel

Terms *model* and *theory* need to be defined to enhance clarity in the study.

The term *model* is regarded as synonymous to the term *theory*. An analytical model is a mental image of some phenomenon that actually exists, and which is directed at knowledge of its variety and composition [S. B. M. Marume 2015].

3.2 The basic premises of Cantori and Spiegel

When adopting the model of some other author or authors, it is necessary first to pay attention to the basic premises used in the construction of such a model. Such premises provide a basis for judging the particular model, and in our particular case it enables us to judge the applicability of the model to the subject under discussion.

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:1 – 25] based their model on the following premises:

- a. The actions of all the members of a particular regional system (whether friendly or antagonistic) serve as significant determinants of the personal foreign policy of an individual member of the same regional system.
- b. Although a member or some of the members of a particular regional system may have interests outside the boundaries of the system to which they belong, their involvement in foreign affairs is usually primarily related to their own regional system.
- c. Generally, the extent to which the aims of a member of a particular regional system may be successfully achieved outside its regional boundaries is determined by the measure of its success in obtaining and consolidating a permanent position in its own regional system.

Briefly, *Cantori's and Spiegel's* [1970:1 – 40] premise implies that the foreign policy of any state is determined by its involvement and position in the regional system of which it is a member. This point of view is apparently validated by the urgency which characterised the relations between states within a single regional system. These relations are often exercised in an environment of direct contact, without the significant influence of distance as a stabilising factor [S. B. M. Marume:1985].

3.3 A division of the regional system as a focal point

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:20, 22 and 25] assume that a regional system is identified and delimited. Then there may occur a division of the regional system concerned into *three subordinate systems*, that is:

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The core sector 2. The peripheral sector 3. The external sector | } | internal system |
|--|---|-----------------|

We should first pay special attention to the meanings attached by *Cantori and Spiegel* to the various terms used in the threefold division.

3.3.1 The core sector

The core sector consists of a state or a group of states which form a central focus of the international politics within a given region [Cantori and Spiegel:1970:20].

3.3.2 The peripheral sector

The peripheral sector includes all those states within a given subordinate system which are alienated from the core sector in some degree by social, political, economic, or organisational factors, but which nevertheless play a role in the politics of the subordinate system [Cantori and Spiegel:1970:21].

We wish to make a single significant remark in regard to the above definition. The 'alienated' here denotes a lack or absence of those factors which contribute to the cohesiveness of the states in the core sector as such. It need therefore not necessarily be accomplished by one – sided or mutual antagonism.

3.3.3 The internal system

The existence of an internal system, which consists of the core and peripheral sectors, is merely implied by *Cantori and Spiegel*. By distinguishing such an *internal system*, it is possible to form a clear image of the concept 'regional system', and to distinguish more readily between it, and what will be called here the influence of the *external system*.

3.3.4 The external system

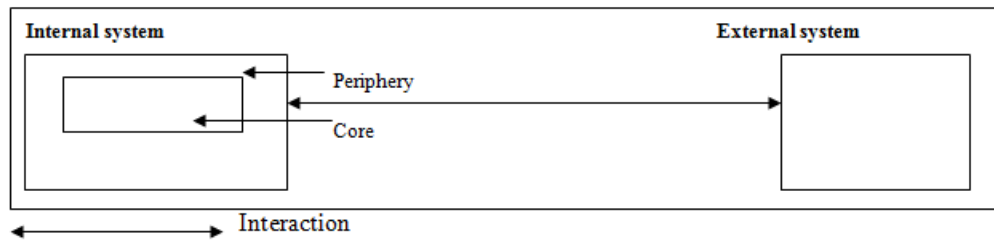
Cantori and Spiegel do not use the term external system but use the term intrusive to mean external. An external system is constituted by the politically significant participation of foreign powers in the international relations of the regional system [Cantori and Spiegel, 1970:25].

It soon appears from a study of the *global international political system* that the states which form the *core and peripheral sectors* of a *regional system* are not the only states to play a role in the activities of this regional system. This is due to the fact that some states become involved in activities outside the boundaries of their own regional system. Apart, from the interaction of factors between bona fide members of a particular regional system, it is also necessary to pay attention to the interaction of factors which are affected by the intervention of other states in the regional system.

3.4 Graphic representation of African sub – regional systems

The following graphic representation provides us with a clear insight into the foregoing discussion:

Regional system



3.4.1 A preliminary indication of the variables

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the interaction between particular variables play a determining role in the above mentioned threefold division of a regional system. However, the following question now arises: *which variables are involved here?*

Although we shall later discuss in greater detail the nature and role of the variables concerned, it is necessary at this stage to indicate them provisionally. *Cantori and Spiegel* [1970:6 – 25] attach importance to the following variables:

1. The nature and level or cohesion.
2. The nature of communications.
3. The level of power.
4. The structure of relations.

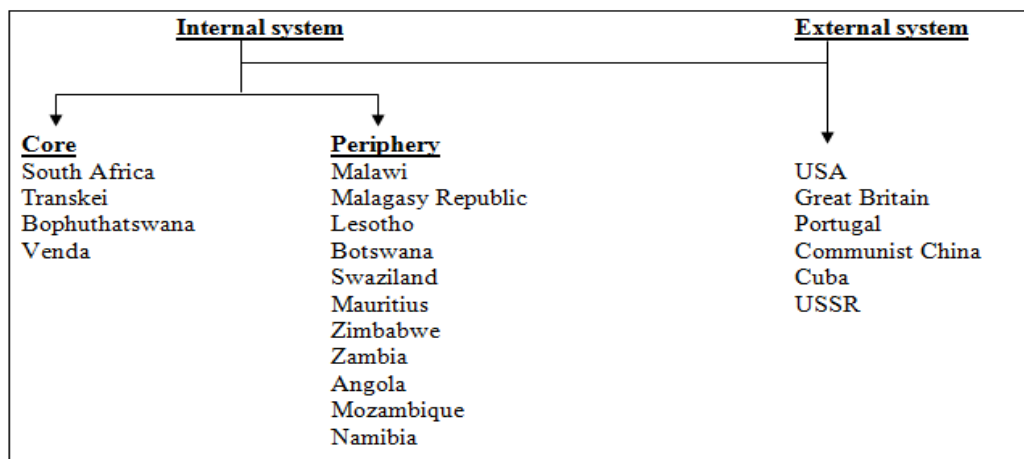
We should note that the above four variables on reality represent categories of related variables. The variables involved here will become evident in a more detailed discussion of the variables concerned later in the study.

3.4.2 Application of the regional systems to Africa.

A significant question which arises at this stage is: *How the foregoing apply to Africa and this study of the continent?* We should at this stage, therefore, pay attention to the manner in which the foregoing, slightly abstract, discussion may be applied to this study of Africa [Van Dyke:1960:38 – 39].

On the basis of the above conceptual framework Africa is divisible into five regional areas. These regional areas, with their components are shown as follows:

1. Southern Africa



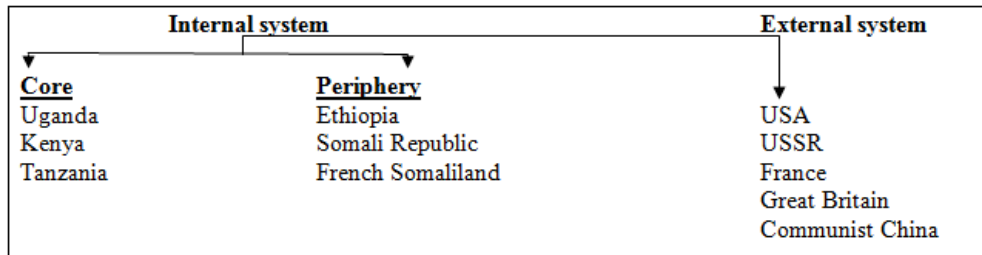
Indicates what apartheid South Africa called homelands for Africans due to its separate development policy [Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei]. There have been radical changes since 1994 when South Africa became a majority rule government. The changes were:

- a. South – West Africa has become an independent state as Namibia since 1990 under SWAPO.
- b. separate development was dismantled and homelands have disappeared as political entities.
- c. South Africa, now has nine [instead of four former] provincial authorities with definite political and administrative powers.

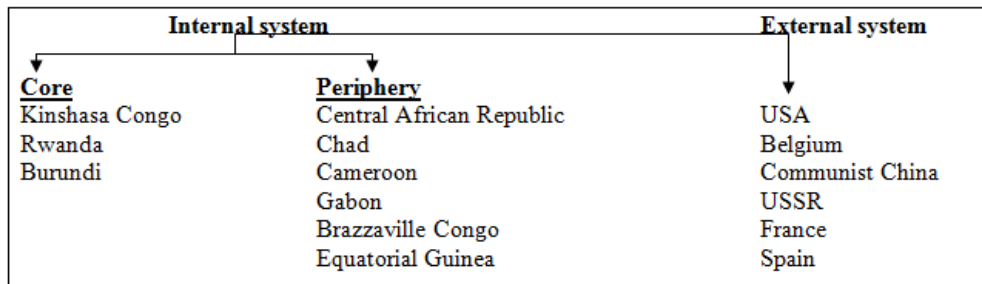
Tanzania geographically belongs to East Africa but by choice and deliberate association is an important member of SADC, due to its active role in the Frontline states which were charged by OAU to liberate Southern Africa, [particularly Zimbabwe and Namibia].

Malagasy and Mauritius later joined SADC member states as did Namibia and South Africa on their attainment on majority rule government in 1990 and 1994 respectively.

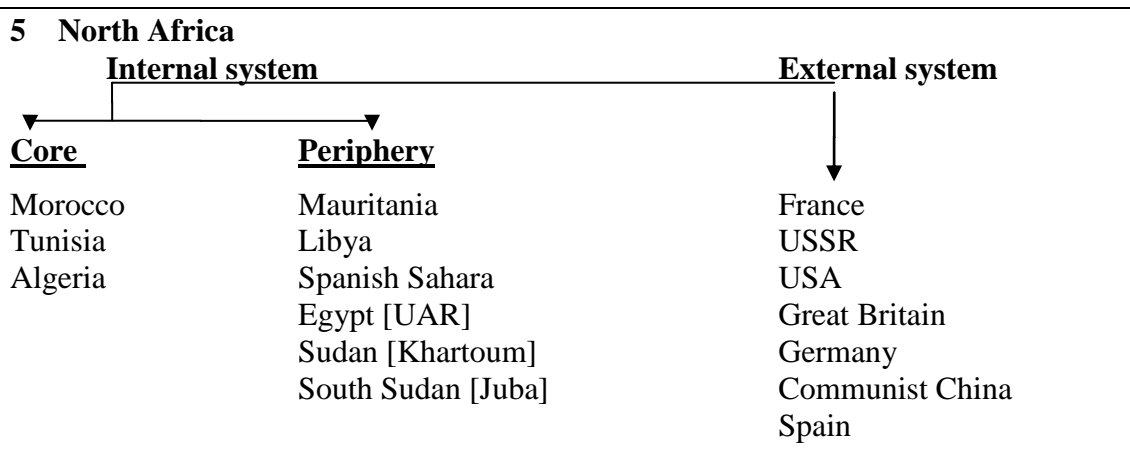
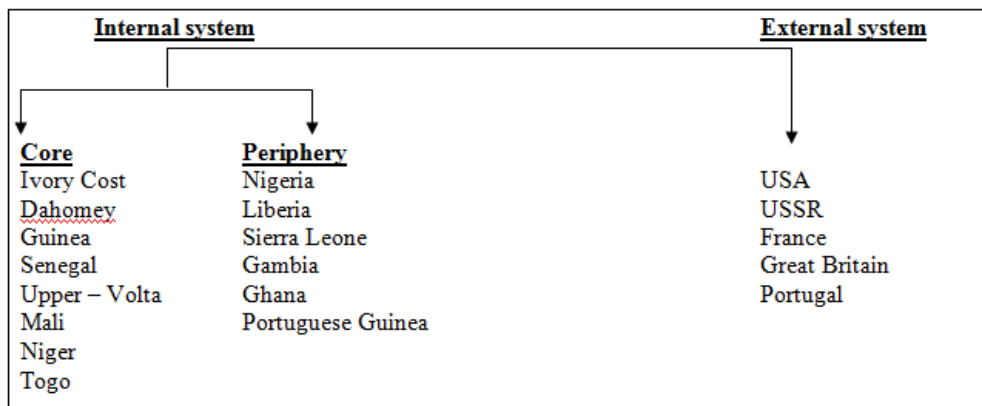
2. East Africa



3. Central Africa



4. West Africa



3.5 The variables used in the regional system

In the previous preliminary indication of variables which influence the interactions of regional systems, we pointed to the fact that these variables represent categories for related variables. It is necessary at this stage to study the nature of these variables in greater detail, to provide a clear image of the grounds on which the division of regional systems in the preceding sub paragraph was based.

3.5.1 The nature and level of cohesion

Cantori and Spiegel distinguish clearly between the concepts of ‘cohesion’ and ‘integration’. By cohesion they refer to the degree of similarity or complementarity in the properties of the various political entities, and the degree of interaction between these entities. Other than in the normal usage of the concept ‘integration’, the concept of ‘cohesion’ does not indicate the gradually diminishing independence of the relevant entities. Although both concepts imply mutual co-operation and dependence, they differ fundamentally in respect of degree and nature.

Since the concept of cohesion indicates a group of related variables, it is necessary to pay attention to the variables involved here. *Cantori and Spiegel* distinguish the following: *social cohesion, economic cohesion, political cohesion, and organisational cohesion*.

- In social cohesion the focus falls on matters such as similarities and differences in regard to race, language, religion, culture, and history
- Economic cohesion refers to the division and complementarity of economic resources, and the nature of trade patterns.
- Political cohesion refers to the nature of and degree to which differences in forms of regime contributes to, or detracts from, the cohesion of the regional system.
- Organisational cohesion directs the attention of the possible influence on regional cohesion of the membership of the political entities concerned of international or regional organisations.

3.5.2 The nature of communications

The second category of related variables which are of significance here is the nature of communications, which is divided by *Cantori and Spiegel* into the following components:

- personal communications (postal, telegraphic and telephone services);
- mass media newspapers, the radio and television;
- exchanged between elite groups (intra regional educational exchange programmes, diplomatic visits, tourism), and
- transport (road, rail, air or water).

3.5.3 The level of power

The variable of power is seen by *Cantori and Spiegel* [1970:6-25] as the present and potential ability and willingness of one state to alter the internal decision processes of other states in accordance with its own policy.

The concept of power may be further subdivided to three main aspects, that is, *material power, military power and motivational power*.

- a. *Material power*: may be regarded as the foundation of the possibilities of a particular state. It embraces aspects such as a state’s available resources, the structure and size of its population, its industrial and economic ability, its gross national product per capita, its production and consumption of energy.
- b. *Military power*: refers to the ability of a state to wage war. It embraces, amongst others, the following aspects: military techniques, weapons, available manpower, and the efficiency of its armed forces.
- c. *Motivational power*: is more difficult to describe than the foregoing elements. It centres on the pursuit of power by a state within the international community. It is the driving force behind the development of the first two elements of power, and is influenced by factors such as ideological commitment, morale, nationalism.

Although most of the above factors are readily distinguishable, and may, therefore, be relatively easily indicated, you should note that, with a few exceptions, they are either readily quantifiable, or completely unquantifiable. This seriously complicates the task of dividing political system into particular categories of power. One should note in this regard that any classification will be imperfect since it is based on subjective criteria.

This is also true of the criterion used by *Cantori and Spiegel*, which is the ability, or inability, of a particular national political system to exercise any amount of influence outside the boundaries of its own regional political systems. On this basis the two prominent authors in question compiled a sevenfold classification of possible categories of power:

1. *Primary powers* – involved in various regional areas.
2. *Secondary powers* – restricted more to merely selected regional areas.
3. *Middle power* – restricted even more to merely a single, selected area outside their own.
4. *Minor powers* – restricted to the influencing of other members their own regional areas.
5. *Regional states* – more restricted than the minor powers, only at times able to exert an influence within their own regional areas.
6. *Micro – states* – practically no influence within their own regional areas, since a lack of influence has subjected them almost totally to a more powerful state.
7. *Colonies* – areas which serve as mere extensions of the actions of colonial powers.

Although this classification of *Cantori and Spiegel* certainly has many shortcomings, it provides a serviceable basis for determining the level of power in the internal as well as the external systems of a regional system.

3.5.4 The structure of relations

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:6 – 22] suggest that three aspects should be considered when determining the structure of the relations between the members of a regional area. They are the following:

1. Which states co-operate, and which ones conflict with one another (the spectrum of relations);
2. The basis of their co-operation or conflict (the causes of relations); and
3. The means which they utilise in this regard (the means of relations)

The spectrum of the relations

According to *Cantori and Spiegel* [1970:6 – 25], it is possible to illustrate the relations between members of a particular regional system by means of the following spectrum:

1. Bloc co-operation indicates a situation in which two or more nations act in international politics as if they were one political entity – this represents the closest possible co-operation.
2. Alliance represents a situation in which co-operation takes place in specified fields, usually also in the military field.
3. Limited co-operation refers to a co-ordinated action over a relatively short period, with a view to realising a specific purpose.
4. Equilibrium represents a power situation between two or more parties which satisfied all the parties concerned. It may also be described as an acceptance status quo situation.
5. Stalemate refers to a situation of contention in which neither of the parties concerned is prepared, or able, to alter the situation.
6. A sustained crisis comprises a situation in which the parties concerned persistently attempt to alter the balance of power between them, without, however, resorting to military action.
7. Direct military conflict represents hostilities between the armed forces of the conflicting parties.

On the basis of the spectrum, the position of relations between members of a particular regional area may be fairly readily determined. It should be noted, however, that the spectrum merely provides a general basis, and that there may be differences of opinion located. This is particularly true of the intermediate positions.

The cause of relations

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:18-25] maintains that states are not always consistent in their relations. So for example, two states may co-operate in respect of economic matters, but may be in conflict over border issues. It is, therefore, necessary to award particular values to the relative importance of the relations between states.

The nature of the causes of interstate co-operation or conflict should thus be studied. Economic considerations, for example, are less important than a mutual enemy.

The means of relations

One may also obtain a clear indication of the nature of existing relations within a regional system if one observes the means which are used in such relations. Thus the type of warfare being waged within a regional area, that is, economic sanctions or guerrilla warfare, to a large extent reflects the nature of the relations concerned. The nature of the diplomatic relations between two states, for example, indicates the type of co-operation existing between them.

3.6 The variables as determining factors in a division of the regional system

The foregoing exposition gives rise to the question of how these variables may assist us to accomplish the previously mentioned threefold division of the regional system? In the subsequent discussion we shall deal more fully with the relation between these variables and a division of the regional area.

3.6.1 The internal system

The internal system consists of two sub-systems; namely, core sector and peripheral sector.

a. The core sector

The nature and level of cohesion gives a clear indication of the minimal conditions which are necessary for the distinct delimitation of the core sector. Note should be taken in this regard of social, economic and political similarities, complementarity and interaction within a particular group of states. A thorough analysis of these factors of cohesion creates the possibility of delimiting the core sector. However, all these factors need to necessarily be present before an indication may be obtained of the core sector. They need also not be of the same magnitude.

The nature of communications within a regional system gives a further indication of which states belong to the core sector. A high level of communication results in greater cohesiveness, whereas a lack of efficient communications is often a striking characteristic of the relations between the *core and peripheral sectors*.

The level of power clearly indicates the political abilities of the various states within the core – sector. It may thus be found that the core sectors of some regional systems contain a single pre-eminent member who completely dominates all the other members. In other cases, the division of power may be largely characterised by equality. Attention should, therefore, be paid to the relative differences in power of the states of the core sector, as well as to the relative power of the core sector as against that of the peripheral sector, since the latter may vary from complete domination to a relative equilibrium of power.

The structure of relations serves to complete the image of the core sector and in conjunction with the former variable informs us of the dynamics within the core sector. It should be noted in this regard that differences in the level of power within the core sector may seriously influence its internal relations.

b. The peripheral sector

All that needs to be said at this stage regarding the peripheral sector is that, in contrast to the core sector, it is inclined to cultural, social, economic and political heterogeneity, with few binding factors. Usually, there is little interaction between the various members.

A further significant characteristic of this sector is the fact that the diplomatic activities of the states in the peripheral sector usually take place outside, rather than inside, the regional system.

c. The relation between the core and peripheral sector

We should, in this brief survey of the relations between the core and the periphery, pay attention to the fact that the alienation of the periphery in respect of the core exerts an extremely significant influence. *Cantori and Spiegel* regards it as the central factor in the determination of the relations between the core and the periphery.

Note should be taken of the following remarks regarding the determination for the nature of the relationship between the two sectors of the internal system:

- i. A large number of factors may be responsible for the alienation of the members of the periphery in respect of the core.
- ii. Whereas there may often be a degree of tension between the members of the periphery and those of the core, tension is practically non – existent within the periphery, mainly as a result of the weak interaction between peripheral members.
- iii. The extent of the alienation between the two sectors may to a certain extent be determined by nothing which peripheral states may possibly become core members, and which states display no possibilities in this regard.

3.6.2 The external system

It is evident from the foregoing discussions that not only the states of the internal system merit attention, but also those states which exist outside a particular regional system and which play a significant part in the affairs of the particular system.

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:20 – 40] divide the involvement of states from the external system in the affairs of a particular regional system into two categories that is politically insignificant, and politically significant, involvement. Under politically insignificant action we classify matters such as assistance, trade

relations, economic investment and cultural and educational treaties. Politically significant involvement includes any kind of attempt by a state from the external system to alter the balance of power within the internal system. This involves a large number of possibilities on which we need not elaborate here.

Cantori and Spiegel [1970:39 – 40] distinguish nine types of involvement of external states in the affairs of a particular regional system, namely: multilateral agreements; bilateral agreements; trade and economic investments; possession of a colony; military intervention; subversion; use of the United Nations (UN system); cultural and educational activities.

3.6.3 Influence of variables in determining the regional system

We now examine the influence of these various types of involvement on the four previously discussed variables.

a. The nature and level of cohesion

The involvement of states of the external system in the affairs of the internal system may exert either a positive, or a negative, influence on the nature and level of the social, economic, political and organisational cohesion within a regional system.

b. The nature of communications

States of the external system may influence the communications within a particular regional system, in various ways. We refer here particularly to economic assistance, which often leads to the expansion of postal and telegraphic services, road, rail and air communications.

c. The level of power

Members of the external system perhaps exert their strongest influence in respect of the level of power as a variable. We need to make the following remarks regarding the three general aspects of the power which were previously discussed.

i. Material power.

Evidently, the material power of members of the regional system is affected in many respects by the economic and other assistance programmes of states of the external system.

ii. Military power

The influence on the balance of power within the regional system of military assistance by members of the external system is of even greater significance. This may, inter alia, include aspects such as the provision of arms, the training of troops, the provisions of technical knowledge, as did *China and North Korea to Zimbabwe [in mid 1980s]*, *USSR to Angola and Mozambique [1970s]*, *Cuba to Angola [in mid 1980s when apartheid South Africa attempted to invade Angola]*, and so on.

iii. Motivation power

Members of the external system probably play their most significant role in the affairs of a particular regional area in respect of this aspect of the level of power. Members of the external system may, as a result of their involvement in the affairs of the regional system, completely alter the politics, social and ideological policies of certain states within the regional systems. This is particularly true in the ideological field. The particular ideology of a particular state in the external system may largely determine which state within the internal system will be prepared to assist and support, whereas the ideology of a particular state within the regional area will determine from whom he will be prepared to accept assistance, and whom he will be prepared to support.

It should be noted in this regard that the above mentioned of the external system on the regional system may endanger members of a particular regional system in several ways. Certainly the most important of these hazards is that members of the regional system may become so dependent on a particular state or states in external system that they may lose their right of decision – making regarding their domestic affairs. There are a number of additional dangers, but the above example serves to illustrate how extensively the involvement of the external system in the affairs of a regional area may alter the level of power within such a regional area.

d. The structure of relations

It appears from the foregoing paragraph that external states play an influencing, and at times even determining, role in the structure of relations within a regional system. This is particularly true of the means of relations that is by military and economic system play a more indirect, though by no means a less significant role. Although the causes are often exploited by members of the external system to realise their aims and objectives within the regional system.

and DRC]; and **Africa** [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and **internationally** [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Ireland; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Spain (Nice), France, Geneva in Switzerland, former Yugoslavia-Belgrade; Rome and Turin in Italy; Cyprus – Nicosia; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, Osaka, in Japan]; ten years as management consultant and part – time lecturer for BA/BSc and MA/MBA levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University, and PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India, and Zimbabwe Open University; currently senior lecturer and acting chairperson of Department of Public Administration in Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University; a negotiator; a prolific writer as he has published five books, twenty five modules in public administration and political science for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and thirty seven journal articles in international journals [IOSR, SICA, IJESR, MRESR, IJSER, IJBMI, IJHSS and Quest Journals] on constitutional and administrative law, public administration, political science, philosophy, Africa in international politics, local government and administration, sociology and community development; vastly experienced public administrator; and a distinguished scholar with specialist qualifications from University of South Africa, and California University for Advanced Studies, State of California, United States of America: **BA** with majors in public administration and political science and subsidiaries in sociology, constitutional law and English; postgraduate special **Hons BA** [Public Administration], **MA** [Public Administration]; **MAdmin** magna cum laude in transport economics - as major, and minors in public management and communications; **MSoc Sc** cum laude in international politics as a major and minors in comparative government and law, war and strategic studies, sociology, and social science research methodologies; **PhD** summa cum laude in Public Administration .



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