The Future of Southern Africa: consequences of the expansion of regional borders and bipolarity[1]

O Futuro da África Austral: consequências da expansão das fronteiras regionais e da bipolaridade

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ABSTRACT

The Southern Africa region seems to differ from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa due to the advanced process of state-building of some countries in the region and the existence of historical interstate rivalries. In this context, this study evaluates the Regional Security Complex (RSC) in Southern Africa over the last decade and contradicts the characterization made by Buzan and Weaver (2003). It is argued that the Southern Africa RSC includes the countries of the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and is characterized, in the post-Cold War period, by an emerging bipolarity. Based on these findings, one questions: based on the theory of international change of Robert Gilpin, what are the possible trends of change or continuity in the Southern Africa regional system in the light of the changes of the last decade? According to the Gilpin (1981), the possibility of changing the order of a system may occur in a revolutionary or incremental way. In the specific case of southern Africa we consider that such possibilities are directly related to the increase of the possibility of conflict arising from the recent expansion of the system and, mostly, the interests of the two regional powers (South Africa and Angola) in transforming or maintaining the status quo.

Keywords: Regional Security Complex. International Change. Southern Africa. Angola. South Africa.

RESUMO

A região da África Austral parece se diferenciar do restante da África Subsaariana devido ao processo mais avançado de construção estatal de alguns países da região e pela existência de rivalidades interestatais históricas. Nesse contexto, este trabalho avalia o Complexo Regional de Segurança (CRS) da África Austral na última década e contraria a caracterização feita por Buzan e Weaver (2003). Argumenta-se que o CRS da África Austral engloba os países da região dos Grandes Lagos da África Central e é caracterizado, no período pós-Guerra Fria, pela bipolaridade emergente. A partir dessa constatação, questiona-se: quais seriam as possíveis tendências de mudança ou continuidade no sistema regional da África Austral à luz das transformações da última década, frente à teoria da mudança internacional de Robert Gilpin? Segundo o autor, a possibilidade de mudança do ordenamento de um sistema pode ocorrer de forma revolucionária ou incremental (GILPIN, 1981). No caso específico da África Austral considera-se que tais possibilidades estão diretamente relacionadas ao incremento das possibilidades de conflito decorrente da recente expansão do sistema regional e, sobretudo, aos interesses das duas potências regionais (África do Sul e Angola) na transformação ou manutenção do status quo.

Palavras-chave: Complexo Regional de Segurança. Mudança Internacional. África Austral. Angola. África do Sul.

1 INTRODUCTION

The adaptation of Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) descriptive model of Regional Security Complexes (CRS) in Africa is rather problematic. This is due mainly to the fact that the state structures construction process is quite incipient in most countries in the region. In the case of Southern Africa, the situation seems to be different because of a more advanced state-building process in some countries and the existence of historical interstate rivalries. However, the Buzan and Waever descriptive analysis of power distribution in the region in the post-Cold War period shows significant gaps, chiefly because it fails to address the most current political reality (especially after 2002).

It has been argued that, based on the analysis of the evolution of the regional security dynamics over the last decade, Southern Africa's Regional Security Complex (CRS) includes those countries in Central Africa Great Lakes region and is characterized by emerging bipolarity. Firstly, the key issue is the movement to regionalize conflicts in the Great Lakes region that has being observed since late 1990s. Secondly, it should be noted that, if the polarity of any Regional Security Complex is to be defined by the number of regional powers (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003), the rise of Angola to such a position, at least with regard to material capabilities, seems to challenge the argument of the authors by which the Southern Africa CRS is unipolar (centered in South Africa).

Based on this finding, the question is: *what are the implications of expanding borders and redistributing tangible and intangible capabilities to the balance of southern Africa regional system?* To elucidate this issue, we consider the international change theory proposed by Robert Gilpin (1981) in his book *War and Change in World Politics*. According to the author, the possibility of changing the order of a system may occur in a revolutionary or incremental way (GILPIN, 1981). In the specific case of southern Africa it is clear that such possibilities are directly related to the interests of and benefits to the two regional powers (Angola and South Africa) in the transformation or maintaining the current *status quo*, kin addition to the increased possibility of a conflict arising from the recent expansion of the system.

The article is subdivided into three sections: The first section contains a theoretical evaluation of the possibility of incorporating the Gilpin's international change theory in the regional systems transformation process. In the second section the empirical elements that allow us to infer such changes in the regional structure of Southern African system over the last decade are evaluated. The third and final section seeks to establish the scenarios for a potential evolution in Southern African regional system, with a view to (i) the empirical analysis made in the previous two sections and (ii) the Gipin's theory of international change. The objective is to establish whether the expanded CRS frontiers and the increased Angolan capabilities will result in a divisive reorganization of the regional system (revolutionary change), or whether a peaceful regional reorganization that is compatible with the new distribution capabilities is possible (incremental change).

2 CHANGES AND REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES: ROBERT GILPIN THEORY'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Buzan and Waever (2003) Regional Security Complexes (CRS) descriptive model provides important advances as far as the study of International Relations in Lakatosian terms is concerned. It should first be noted that the model is embedded in the theoretical debate of the New Regionalism that focuses on the relevance of regions in the international relations, as shown by Kelly (2007) and supported by Lake and Morgan (1997b), Katzenstein (2000; 2005), Lemke (2002) and Buzan and Waever (2003). For these authors, regions are currently acquiring growing relevance in international relations due to both empirical and theoretical factors.

In the first case (empirical), the argument is supported by those positions that highlight the importance of geography and territoriality with regard to strategic issues[4], volatility and ephemerality of strategic interests by the great powers[5] and the existence of a neo-regionalist current in the post-Cold War period[6]. In the second case, it should be noted the fact that region studies seek to give partial answers to the limits of parsimony[7], to the limits

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[4] According to Buzan and Waever (2003), the main security threats to non-global powers are those geographically closer (regional level). For the authors, as well as for Thompson (1973), Lemke (2002), Lake (1997) and Morgan (1997a), "*most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones*" and "*most states historically have been concerned primarily with the capabilities and intentions of their neighbours*" (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003, p. 4).

[5] The penetration of large powers in other regions is limited by a cost-benefit logic that links strategic interests to overstretch problems. In regions with relatively low strategic interest, the scope for regional powers is greater, as suggested by Katzenstein (2000) regarding the post-Cold War reality. However, these regions continue to be a potential target for global powers. This is so because they may be of strategic interest to emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil, and also because the interests of traditional global powers are more or less volatile and ephemeral. In the case of Africa, for example, after the Cold War and the US failure in the Somalia war, this traditional power found an strategy way out of Africa. This has fundamentally changed since the War on Terror and the perception that the weakness of some African states could provide a haven for terrorist groups.

[6] As we have seen, the post-Cold War has been a period of uncertainty where the inability of the superpower to permanently affect all regions (overstecht) opens scope for regional dynamics and the neoregionalist trend that has been observed after the emergence of several regional integration processes (KELLY, 2007; KATZENSTEIN, 2000; 2005). There is, however, uncertainties about the future of the international system and even the possibility of neoregionalism collapse upon the emergence of a new superpower, for example (KELLY, 2007, p. 199).

[7] The excessive parsimony of general theories about the International System generates an inadequacy to explaining the particular circumstances found in some regions (i.e., regions where weak states predominate) (KELLY, 2007, p. 201).

of the *overlay process*[8], to Lakatosian efforts on discipline progress[9] and the prospects of studies correlating the structure of the international system to regional power structures[10].

The CRS model advances in such specific points and stands out by the sophistication of the conceptual framework due to the possibilities to expand the explanatory character of the structural realism up to regional levels and by enabling the integration, even in a preliminary way, of perceptions on national security and human security. On the other hand, this model has a few limits that are linked both to difficulties in analyzing Africa and to the possibility of dealing with systemic changes.

In the first case, there is some incompatibility between a model built under a state-centered perception and a region where the volume and intensity of interstate relations are relatively low vis a vis the domestic dynamics in the countries of the region and the interstate dynamics in other regions worldwide. Thus, the detachment regarding the African case and such particularities found in its process leads to hasty interpretations of CRS characteristics in the continent.

In the second case, in addition to specific difficulties in the CRS model[11], there are more general challenges in the new regionalism current. Although the new regionalism has advanced significantly in the construction of both analytical models and historical-comparative studies, little progress has been seen toward adding to the current capacity to explain larger regional systems processes. With regard to international change, as well as with regard to International Relations theory in general, such new regionalism proved to lack theories to explain systemic changes and predict the consequences thereof.

Assessing Robert Gilpin (1981) political change theory could be the first step to produce a coherent regional change theory linked to the new regionalism studies current. Under this same scope, it becomes critical to find clues about the characteristics of systemic changes and how relationships between structures and systemic agents such may lead to such changes, either peacefully or violently.

The clues provided by Gilpin include two main ones. The first one sets out three possibilities for significant changes in systems (GILPIN, 1981, p. 39-40). The first and most fundamental change is the change in the system, "*a change in the nature of the actors or diverse entities that compose an international system*". The second one is a systemic change, "*a change in the form of control or governance of an international system*", that is, the distribution of power, prestige hierarchy, and the array of rules governing inter-state relations. The third type of change is the change in interaction, more specifically, "*a change in the form of regular interactions or processes among the entities in an ongoing international system*". In addition, the change in the boundaries of the system could also be mentioned, which may be related both to changes in the system and to interactional changes, as discussed below.

Gilpin's second clue proposes an analysis of how the behavior of political actors, based on cost-benefit calculations, can generate changes in the international system and when such changes will imply conflict and hegemonic wars. Although he is also concerned with structural factors, such as power and prestige distribution, as well as military and technological aspects, the author allows large space for the study units' agency capacity. As he says, "international political change must focus on the international system and especially on the efforts of political actors to change the international system in order to advance their own interests" (GILPIN, 1981, p. 10). Thus, his interaction model holds that "the relative stability of the system is, in fact, largely determined by its capacity to adjust to the demands of actors affected by changing political and environmental conditions" (GILPIN, 1981, p. 13)[12].

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8 *The penetration of global powers in different regions is not a one way process. Local powers use the interests and the patronage of global powers to persecute local politics and the global powers should be aware of this reality (i.e., Kissinger's mistake in Angola) (KELLY, 2007, p. 200; VISENTINI, 2010). Therefore, "since regions matter more in the current era, the costs of underrating them could be even higher" (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003. p. 41).*

9 *Expanding the scope of international relation studies adds great value to knowledge, despite the difficulties, the costs and the expectations of the dominant academic communities (escape the comfort zone). Creating or improving theories based on new empirical studies can be the first step in this endeavor.*

10 *The specificities of regions (patterns of conflict / cooperation, polarity, polarization) seem to interfere with the degree of capacity/power of those countries belonging to such region as well as with the standing of such countries towards other regional or global powers.*

11 *There are important gaps in the model proposed by the authors, especially regarding the lack of rigor in the operationalization of such concepts as polarity (number of regional or global powers), polarization (configuration of alliances) and borders. As a result, measuring such elements in each region is rather problematic. Under polarity, their descriptive analysis fails to measure the capacity of the countries in the regions. Consequently, there is no evidence to identify regional and global powers. There is also an omission regarding how such concept will act in subcomplexes (ratio between subcomplex and complex powers). As a result, the authors overly emphasize polarization relationships (friendships and enmities), despite their measurement to be made by applying random variables that change from region to region. With regard to borders, the authors did not explain which elements lead to and comprise a CRS.*

12 *In this regard, Gilpin seems to prefigure answers to further discussions on the agent-structure dilemma in International Relations. Currently, the political realism appears to be producing significant developments in this discussion, which has become increasingly important after the publication of Alexander Wendt (1987, 1992) seminal works. On the one hand, Buzan and collaborators criticism remains unsurpassed (1993, p. 116-121) whereby Waltz neorealism produces a wide and full blown state theory. There is still a need for "much more fully systemic and multisectoral theory than that offered by Neorealism" (1993, p. 9), seeing that "in confusing structure with system, Waltz has lost sight of the systemic interaction element that is essential to give the notion of system meaning" (1993, p. 39). On the other hand, more significant efforts can be found in the initiatives of those authors who align with the neoclassical realism current (LOBELL; RIPSMAN; TALIAFERRO, 2009; ROSE, 1998; SCHWELLER, 2003) and in recent attempts*

This study sought to draw on the descriptive, explanatory and predictive potential of Gilpin's theory to evaluate two Southern Africa CRS priority elements in the 2000s. First, focus is placed on the change of borders that can be observed during that period. Two types of border changes in regional systems can be detected. One of them, of a structural aspect, would entail expansion of a type of unit from one system to other regions or system, following a logic that is linked to territorial expansion and production modes. It is related to what Fernand Braudel called, in capitalism, World Economy, which expands historically. In peripheral regions, it ends up involving changes in the nature of the units. For example, pre-modern units (pre-colonial) are replaced by colonial states (empires) and subsequently by national States.

Another type of borders change, more relevant to this work, is related to the change of interaction between units. This type of change is linked to the idea of interaction regions or CRS that depend (result) on more or less cooperative or conflictual dynamics between actors. The connectivity of units due to security (the case of CRS), political, economic or social dynamics would then set up the geographic boundaries in the region. Changes in such connections could imply changes in regional boundaries. In such case, border demarcation involves certain arbitrariness, since "*what constitutes an international system (or subsystem) lies to some extent in the eye of the beholder*" (GILPIN, 1981, p. 38). Change, therefore, will depend on the characteristic of such new dynamics, as will be shown in the specific case of southern Africa.

It should be noted that any changes in boundaries may result from changes in the power projection capabilities shown by regional/global powers (related to potential systemic change), since "*boundaries of the system are defined by the area over which great powers seek to exert control and influence*" (GILPIN, 1981, p. 38). On the other hand, the inclusion of new units in the system due to the expansion of borders may also imply a systemic change should a new power be inserted into the system. At this point we reach the second Gilpin-proposed adaptation for this research, namely the identification of systemic change. In this case, this study focuses on the distribution of material capabilities between States (second section), but also assesses the implications of leadership and prestige elements in this relationship (third section).

Finally, the adoption of Gilpin is also important for this research regarding the assessment of how the interests of regional/global powers in their region can affect its interaction in the system and imply higher or lower levels of conflict. Such interests are based on cost-benefit calculations, enveloped in complex socio-historical processes. According to Gilpin, "*the explanation of international political change is in large measure a matter*

of accounting for shifts in the slopes and positions of the indifference curves of states and in the specific objectives of foreign policy" (GILPIN, 1981, p. 23).

This insight provided by Gilpin is related to the development of the realism of the transition of power. For Douglas Lemke, elites act toward status quo (or systemic orders) because, in addition to representing a key element in international politics, an order fitting their interests can generate internal gains such as tangible and intangible benefits (legitimacy) (LEMKE, 2002 p. 22). The stance of a unit towards the order of the system will involve its degree of satisfaction in relation to such same order (LEMKE, 2002, p. 22). Maintaining the status quo and a peaceful systemic order will depend on how such order is seen as legitimate by those powers capable to cause significant changes in the system (SCHWELLER, 2006, p. 47). These are generally rising powers that failed to get involved in the construction of the rules and regulations that support the established order (SCHWELLER, 2006, p. 41).

Interactionally, the contrast of opposite projects on the systemic order – added to the great action momentum of States (based on a perception of conflicting social benefits) – can generate environments tending to be conflicting (AYOOB, 1999, p. 258) and result in potential revolutionary changes in the order of the system. On the other hand, when a rising power has no interest or do not detect any significant benefits arising from the change in the rules that help planning the system, then the trend to conflict is lower. Potential changes in systemic planning could be delayed or occur incrementally and non-violently.

In the following sections we seek to apply such discussions to the Southern Africa Regional Security Complex case study, seen here as a changing regional system.

3 STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL SYSTEM: EXPANDING FRONTIERS AND THE EMERGENCE OF BIPOLARITY

The purpose of this section is to assess the evolution of two structural elements in the Southern Africa Regional System that have an impact on the formulation of the foreign policy of the States in the region. **Firstly**, we will be considering CRS border demarcation. **Secondly**, we will evaluate system polarity (distribution of material capabilities), taking into account military and economic indicators. Our working hypothesis is that two fundamental change processes occurred over the last two decades in Southern Africa CRS: i) the expansion of its borders as a result of a movement to regionalize the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, observed since the late 1990s and ii) the emergence of bipolarity as a result of the rise of Angola, at least with regard to material capabilities.

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to adopt the advances in historical sociology to the International Relations theory (HOBSON, 2003, p. 210-213).

3.1 Expanding Boundaries in the Southern Africa Regional System.

The analysis of the Southern Africa CRS security dynamics suggests a close connection between this complex and the security dynamics existing in the Central Africa Great Lakes. For Buzan and Waever (2003, p. 246), however, there would be an isolated CRS in the Central Africa Great Lakes, comprising Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the eastern provinces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Such isolated CRS would not include the central government of DRC, which would belong to the southern Africa CRS. This section argues that such configuration seems to be unlikely and suggests that the security dynamics in the Central Africa Great Lakes region cannot be separated neither from the central government of DRC nor from southern Africa CRS.

This fact is the result of three key factors. **First**, in the sociological and practical origin of conflicts in the region, the DRC government, and formerly the Zaire government, had always been directly involved in such dynamics – either in training and financing armed groups, or in the implementation of policies that tensed or softened the region, or in direct military action. The political, financial and military support provided by former Congolese President Mobutu Sese Seko to *Hutu* groups linked to *Interahamwe* militia and ex-FAR (former members of the Armed Forces of Rwanda) who, after committing genocide in *Tutsi*, in Rwanda, sought asylum in easter Zaire, was central to trigger the first major conflict in the region (First Congo War, 1996-1997). Later, Laurent Kabila (the new president who ousted Mobutu) used the same policy. Despite having ascended to power by using an anti-Mobu speech and advocating Congo's *Tutsi* (*Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge*), he took advantage of the support from the same *Hutu-based* groups, then gathered under the ALiR acronym (*Armée de Libération du Rwanda*), to protect himself from the Second Congo War aggressors (Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi). In the middle of this war another group began to receive support from the Congolese central government, namely the FDLR.

In the case of the LRA, their operations in northeastern DRC are currently only possible because of the years of war and the destruction of the precarious basic infrastructure in the region. This is the Ituri region conflict (northeastern DRC), in which the Congolese State had active performance by militarily equipping and financing the rivalry between *Hema* and *Lendu* groups. Rivalries between ethnic *Hema/Gerere* and *Lendu/Ngiti* groups had already been instrumentalized, manipulated and transformed into serious territorial conflicts by colonial and Mobutu administrations, favoring the *Hema* group (HUMAN..., 2003, p. 14). Later, Joseph Kabila government (son of Laurent Kabila, who took office in January 2001 after his father's murder) funded training for *Lendu* and *Ngiti* militia to fight against Uganda-supported groups, such as UPC *Hema*. At stake was the control of areas rich in natural resources (mainly gold and recently oil and gas). Rivalries in the region continued after the formal end of the Second Congo War (2003) and caused more destruction in the region – hostilities between local groups only ended in 2008, when LRA activities intensified in the DRC.

Second, the current characteristics of the conflict, particularly the action of groups like the FDLR, Mai Mai and M23 (Mouvement du 23-Mars), have been deeply influenced by the Second Congo War. Not a few people considered this conflict to be the African World War, particularly for the number of casualties (3.8 million) and the forces involved (10 armed forces in total and nearly 15 guerrillas proxy). The main forces involved included, on the defender side, DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia; and on the aggressor side, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi[13]. The fact that the conflicts that followed in the wake of the Second Congo War had their causes directly related to that war points to their necessary connection to broader regional security dynamics, involving the range of countries engaged in the conflict.

It is also important to make it clear that the main security problems in the Great Lakes region are directly related to such instabilities resulting from the way the Second Congo War was resolved (only formally and insufficiently). Two elements that generate of instability and are directly related to the resolution of the Second Congo War can be identified. The first relates to the fact that most of the belligerent groups in the Second Congo War were automatically inserted in the armed forces and national institutions (bureaucracy and political system) due to power-sharing mechanism, in a framework where there is almost total absence of state capacity to ensure the integrity of the institutions In this case, in addition to the fact that the Congolese State did not have the monopoly of coercive power – the state integration instruments act to postpone the production thereof and to dissolve the limited political and military power that the state still has. The second phenomenon concerns the fact that those groups not engaged in the state and political systems were not defeated (including LRA and FDLR). The lack of power to defeat them is related to the Congolese military inability and to external interests in maintaining such groups.

In short, it becomes clear that the continuation of armed conflicts in the Great Lakes region is directly related to the complexity of the Second Congo War and to the instruments employed for the resolution thereof. Thus, it is impossible to dissociate current conflicts in

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13 Despite the small number of troops from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, they were instrumental in blocking the advance of the aggressor forces and in the defense of Congo territorial integrity. Besides, without the help of such regional forces under the auspices of SADC, Laurent Kabila's regime would possibly last a few days and would give way to a widespread looting environment.

region from the historic involvement of DRC and its major allies in the Second Congo War (Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia).

The **third factor** that makes evident the integration of Central Africa Great Lakes region to Southern Africa CRS is the presence of southern Africa powers in the conflicts and in the resolution of conflicts in the region. In the current days, the DRC government is still the central player in the conflict; Tanzania and Zambia play a role in all negotiation processes; and Angola, despite being out of the Great Lakes region, actively participates in the process, along with South Africa. In other words, the ability of the strongest countries in the region (namely Angola and South Africa) to project forces suggests that the conflict cannot be disconnected from these actors In the case of Angola, it should be noted that the participation of this country in the Second Congo War had a key relevance. Notwithstanding the small number, Angolan troops had a key role in the protection of coastal cities in response to Rwandan blitzkrieg early in the war (TURNER, 2002). Moreover, despite the poor maintenance, its air power was a decisive advantage in the war and to guarantee the defense of Kinshasa, even against a potential attack from Mbandaka (INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP, 2000, p. 4). It should also be noted that since the end of the conflict, Rwanda and Uganda invasions into the Congolese territory were frequent and only ceased after the August 2006's Angola statement that 30,000 troops were ready in Cabinda region to be employed against any Rwandan invasion (STRATFOR, 2006)[14].

In the case of South Africa, it is relevant to say that this country was and still is essential in the security dynamics in the Great Lakes. First, it is important to highlight its relevance as a mediator for the resolution of the Second Congo War, especially former President Thabo Mbeki. It is also relevant to remember that South Africa was the main sponsor of MONUC (UN Mission in Congo, currently MONUSCO) and ensured the moderation of spirits, the credibility of the ceasefire, as well as a more forceful action by MONUC troops in crisis situations, such as in 2004's Gatumba massacre. South Africa also had central advising involvement and was engaged in the training of Congolese police and armed forces under the Security Sector Reform program[15].

Southern Africa CRS is characterized here, based on these three elements, as composed of 15 countries, namely: South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, DR Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Map 1 provides a graphical representation of this subject area. You can see the expansion of Southern Africa security dynamics for the Central Africa Great Lakes region.

The stabilization of regional conflicts in the central area in the southernmost region of the continent between the apartheid regime and the Front Line Countries was followed by the conflict in the periphery (northern CRS). The expansion of regional boundaries increased the level of peripheral conflict and leads to the potential for a wider regional destabilization. However, such possibility should be checked against the policy of regional powers, which is a factor with potential to actually generate either cooperation or conflict in the center of the system.

**Figure 1. Map - Southern Africa Regional Security Complex**

Source: In-house (2014).

3.2 The Emergence of Bipolarity: the rise of Angola as a regional power.

Buzan and Waever (2003) point out that South Africa supports the regional unipolarity in Southern Africa due to its economic dominance over its neighbors in the region and to the openness of States in the region to accept its leadership. However, an updated analysis of the indicators leads us to say that CRS polarity in Southern Africa over the last decade seems to have at least moved toward an unbalanced bipolarity, where South Africa has economic and military power disproportionately higher than all other countries; but Angola stands out among the other countries in the region due to the strength of its economic growth and the size and experience of its armed forces.[16] This reality becomes evident when we look at the size of the security forces in the region (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Military Contingent in Active, 2014 (thousands men).
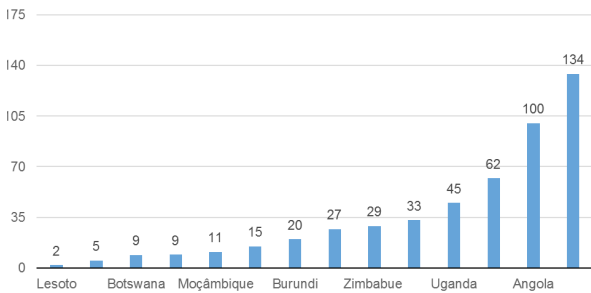
Source: Own compilation based on International Institute for Strategic Studies (2014).

Besides representing the most effective military contingent in Southern Africa[17], FAA (Angolan Armed Forces) acquired considerable experience in recent decades from coping with regular and irregular threats. In the case of conventional threats, the following can cited (i) SADF (*South African Defense Force*) from the apartheid era, then employed to support UNITA (National Union for Total Independence of Angola), (ii) UNITA itself, in regular tactics battles, and (iii) Rwandan troops during the Second Congo War. In the case of irregular battles, the guerrilla tactics adopted by UNITA several times during the civil war is to be remembered, especially at such times when they were at relative disadvantage, like in the early 2000s.

In the case of South Africa, the last significant conventional war was fought in Cuito-Cuinavalle (1987-88), when a relative parity of forces in relation to Angola became evident. However, we emphasize that Angolan forces were fighting with the help of 20,000 Cuban and in their own territory. Currently the most relevant war experience for SAND (*South African National Defense Force*, the new name given to South African forces) includes only peace missions, which puts into question its real regular combat capability. Nevertheless, the South Africa's economic superiority in relation to its neighbors (see Chart 2) made it possible for this country to channel significantly greater resources to defense during the 2000s (see Chart 4). Such resources supported the important Armed Forces modernization process that was conducted over the last decade (CASTELLANO DA SILVA, 2012, 2013).

On the economic front, with respect to national income, it should be remembered that Angola

Chart 2. Austral Africa: GNP, 2000-2013 (Current USD, millions)

Source: Own compilation based on World Bank (2014).

16 Based on a realistic scenario, the systemic polarity is determined by the "distribution of capabilities across units" (WALTZ, 1979, p. 131). Although there is recent trend to accept that all intangible capabilities should be accounted for, this section of paper merely measures materials capabilities and aassumes that these are a preconditions for immaterial and behavioral aspects to be properly realized and then affect systemic polarity (FRAZIER; STEWART-INGERSOLL, 2010, p. 738). From this perspective, Kenneth Waltz highlights the distribution of material capabilities among the elements that make up the systemic structure and considers such factors as population, territory, natural resources, wealth, military force, political stability, and competence as criteria whose distribution among units will determine polarity (WALTZ, 1979, p. 131). John Mearsheimer, in turn, argues that the capabilities of the States to maximize power in the system are related to the availability of potential power (population size and wealth) and concrete power (military capability, especially armies) (MEARSHEIMER, 2002, p. 67). This section will focus on the distribution of economic and military capabilities in the Southern African regional system. For further analy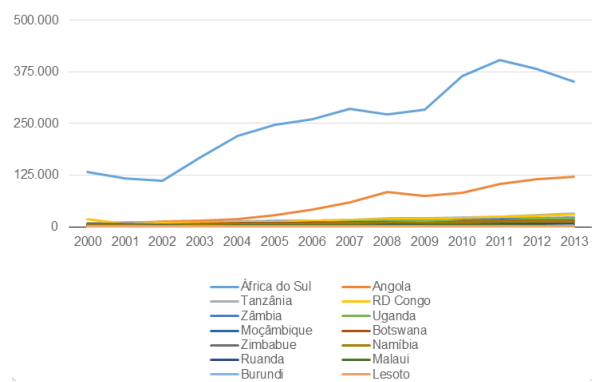sis, see Castellano da Silva (2012; 2013). 17 Although DRC possesses the largest security forces in the region, some 134,000 men, it is worth mentioning that this number is absolutely misleading. This is for two reasons: first, it is a process aimed to expand Congolese armed forces, intensified in 2008 when the total country's military contingent increased from 51,000 to 120,000 men. This explosion in the number of troops was due to the beginning of a second phase in the integration process, the national forces, the belligerents

from the Second Congo War, and subsequent armed conflicts. The second reason for this number to be misleading derives from the first reason: DRC Armed Forces are typically ineffective. This is because the integration process was conducted in an uncontrolled way, without an effective training program and brassage (forces are individually mixed and geographically redistributed). As a result, one of the bad guys in the current Congolese State of Violence is a portion of the armed forces that attack the national populations, looting, murdering, and sexually abusing some communities.

Chart 3. Austral Africa: GDP growth of the top 5 economies, 2000-2013 (% per year)
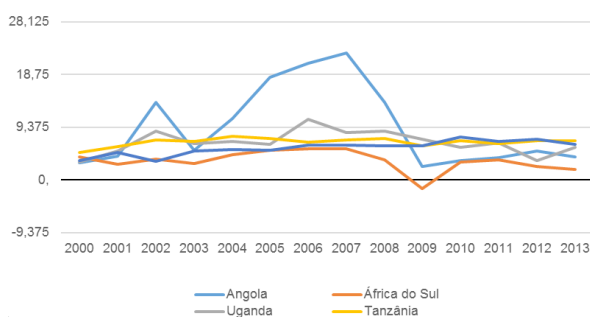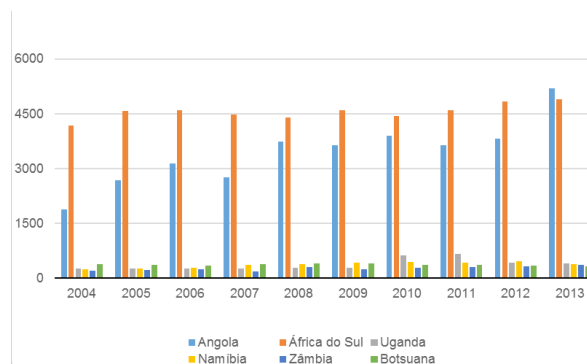

Source: Own compilation based on World Bank (2014).

has accrued the highest GDP growth in the region over the past decade, reaching growth peaks above 20%/year (see Chart 3). This progress was consolidated in the increase of country's absolute GDP. The Angolan national income corresponds to more than three times the national income of the next country in the ranking (see Chart 2). This, even considering 2008's economic return. This growth was also detected in the country's per capita GDP, namely US$ 4,081.22 in 2009, more than twice as much as the regional average (US$ 1,833.71) and fairly close to that of South Africa (US$ 5,785.98). However, it should be noted that the economic growth over the last decade was chiefly based on the rise of oil prices and the expansion of oil exploitation. As a result, the increase in per capita GDP does not necessarily mean that there was some distribution of national wealth. There obviously is low economic dynamism in Angola[18], whilst South Africa shows a relatively diversified economy, although hard hit by the 2008's crisis[19].

18 Angolan economy was directly favored by both the end of the civil war and the rising oil prices due to the approaching of Iraq War (this sector accounts for 50% of GDP). Some authors say the country will be capable in the near future to overcome the production of Algeria, Libya and Nigeria, thereby tripling its production and becoming the biggest oil producer in Africa (JANE'S, 2009b, p. 7). Diamond ores also brought some comfort to Angolan economy, especially after the approval of Kimberley Process's certification scheme. However, oil and diamonds were the only sectors of the economy that really continued in operation after the war. Fishing, coffee production and the industry collapsed with the armed conflicts. Country's infrastructure was also destroyed by the war, which gives critical importance to the partnership with China. Currently, huge investments are required to open the access to the countryside and clear landmines (JANE'S, 2009a, p. 7). There is still dependence on food imports and there would be a 36% revenue deficit if oil is excluded from income (INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE ..., 2004, p. 343).

19 South Africa's is the most developed economy in the African continent and it is characterized as the dominating economic power, both diplomatically and strategically, in the Southern African environment (JANE'S, 2009b, p. 4). It accounts for one third of the proceeds in the sub-Saharan Africa, for a large part of its military spending, and is a key source of foreign direct investment in the continent. South Africa's economy was also hit particularly hard by the 2008's economic crisis, as a consequence of capital outflow and the subsequent revenues drop and budget deterioration, severely hampered by the cumulative inflation from previous years, which reached 10% in 2010. During the 2000s, the economy gained new impetus, with increase in employment, appreciation of national securities, and consequent

Chart 4. Austral Africa: Absolute military spending, 2004-2013 (Constant USD, millions)
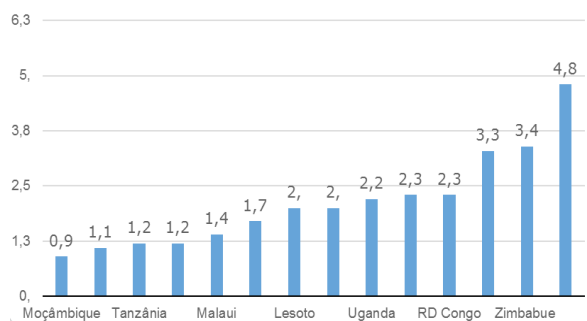

Source: Own compilation based on Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2013).

Due to the exponentially higher increase during the decade, Angola military spending in 2010 surpassed that of South Africa. In addition, throughout the decade the country kept a prominent position before the rest of the region. This data suggests that, throughout the decade, Angola reduced its asymmetries in relation to South Africa and held important differences in relation to other CRS countries. As regards absolute military spending (see Chart 4), excluding South Africa, all other countries in the complex (including those not represented in the figure) spent together, during the decade, just a little more than half of Angola's expenses. That is, whilst Angola accumulated 42.14% of all Southern African spending, South Africa accounted for 41.72% of such expenses and all other countries accounted for 16.15%.

Combined with the economic instability of recent years there are also economic and social pressures for control and reduction of military spending in South Africa – which has been a constant situation throughout the post-apartheid period. On the other hand, the low participation of such resources in GDP (see Chart 5)

Chart 5. Military Spending (% GDP, 2013)

Source: Own compilation based on Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2013).

increase in national reserves. However, such positive results were regarded with caution. The government chose to establish fiscal prudence and seek budget surplus, which generated significant effects on the relative restraint in military spending.

would open space, at least in theory, for a sustainable increase in the balance (up to approximately 5% of GDP) in the case of necessity and political consensus.

Finally, a quantitative analysis of the inventory (Table 1) allows us to detect the significant numerical superiority of South Africa with regard to naval forces. This superiority is also detected in a qualitative analysis, considering that the country, unlike Angola, has submarines and combat frigates, whilst Angola has to settle for only a reasonable anti-ship defense system – including patrol aircrafts (Air Force operated) and land missile defense. However, the capabilities of both countries seem to be more equivalent in the case of air and ground forces. With regard to the Air Force, although South Africa has modern multifunction aircrafts, Angola has a diverse array of relatively modern aircrafts for air combat and attack, as well as between 8 and 14 Sukhoi Su-27 Flanker, with capacity and range comparable to the South African JAS39D Gripen. On the one hand, both fighters show similar missile capabilities and simple weaponry (approximately 30mm and hangers for up to six missiles). On the other hand, the Angolan fighter features higher speed (2.5000 km/h against 2204 km/h), greater flight range (3.530km against 3.200km), higher service ceiling (18.500m against 15.240m) and higher maximum load capacity (30,450 kg against 14,000 kg). As for the army, despite having an older technology, Angolan T-72 MBTs are capable to face the South African Olifant Mk1A in conventional combats. Despite showing some weakness in the shield of their tower, T-72 features more weaponry than Olifant Mk1A (125mm against 105mm) and reaches similar speeds (about 60km/h).

In short, during the 2000s, South Africa economic primacy was constantly closely followed by Angola, which has always stood out among the other countries in the region. With regard to military factors, SANDF are more modern and have superior maritime capabilities than FAA. However, the latter feature relevant land and air capabilities, supported by their extensive experience in regular and irregular fighting, which ensure the material basis for the regional power position. Taken together, this data supports, therefore, the interpretation that an unbalanced bipolarity exists in Southern Africa favoring South Africa, but similarly qualifying Angola as a differentiated power in comparison with other countries in the region.

Given the rise of a new regional power, according to the power transition and system changes theories, it is relevant to study the probability of a systemic conflict to result from this structural change. As discussed in the previous section, the level of a systemic conflict in southern Africa was increased by the expansion of regional boundaries. This reality helps to increase the tension levels and regional disordering, at least with respect to the periphery of the system. In addition, upon the rise of Angola to the position of a regional power, the probability of a systemic central conflict is increased. However, such a probability can only materialize if Angola becomes a revolutionary power in relation to the existing regional order. To check this possibility, it is important to assess South Africa and Angola regional policy and prospect potential outbursts of revolutionary changes in the latter.

4 CONTINUITY OR CHANGE IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL SYSTEM?

This section discusses the relationship between structural changes in southern Africa CRS and the foreign policy adopted by regional powers, namely South Africa and Angola. Two dimensions that are interrelated with

Table1 - Angola and South Africa: Compared Inventory

Armed Forces Manpower	107.000	62.100
Army	100.000	37.150
Tanks (MBTs)	300	34
Armored	1.030	1.426
Artillery	1.408	1.255
Anti-Tank Defense	500	159
Air Defense	950	76
Navy	1.000	6.250
Tactical Patrol Submarines	0	3
Frigates	0	4
Coastal Patrol Boats	22	6
Coastal Defense	1	6
Mine Countermeasures	0	6
Landing Crafts	0	2
Air Force	6.000	10.650
Aircrafts	83	50
Multifunction	*0*	*0*
Fighter	*24*	*0*
Attack	*34*	*26*
Transportation	*50*	*35*
Training	*39*	*74*
Utility	*0*	*0*
Helicopters	105	91
Assault	*0*	*0*
Attack	*44*	*11*
Support	*8*	*76*
Multifunction	*53*	*4*

Source: Own compilation based on International Institute for Strategic Studies (2014).

the foreign policy formulation process will be considered: the interests and objectives pursued by each State in their region and the recognition of the regional prestige of such States[20]. Thus, the objective is to understand whether the regional system is moving toward a new balance based on the peaceful reorganization of its governance institutions in view of the new distribution of power, or whether the challenge posed by the Angolan rise to leadership in Southern Africa will result in a conflict between the two States.

4.1 South Africa Regional Foreign Policy

The end of the Apartheid regime in 1994 paved the way to a transformation in South Africa foreign policy strategy. At the heart of this change was the realization that South African political transition process would enable the country to reshape the *aggressive* and *isolationist* image that was linked to the previous regime by adopting a *peaceful* and *cooperative* image before the international community and the countries in its region (Barber 2005; RIZZI; SCHUTZ, 2014). Besides, Pretoria realized that the country's capabilities conferred on it a leading role in Africa and of significance in the construction of a new global order. As summarized the paper *Defense Review* de 2012:

> South Africa is undeniably a major power in Africa (with the leading economy accounting for 24% of Africa's GDP and 33% of that of Sub-Saharan Africa) and is obliged to play a continental leadership role, in conjunction with African partners, extending to matters such as conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and security sector reform. This will manifest in contributions to UN, AU and SADC security, democracy and good governance initiatives, as well as the conclusion of specific bilateral partnerships with other African states in the political, economic, social and security realms (SOUTH AFRICA, 2012, p. 28).

If globally South African claims are finding support in the South-South cooperation initiatives that reflect the multi-polarization process and the rise of emerging countries like the BRICS, IBSA and G20 (VISENTINI; PEREIRA, 2010), at the regional level constraints to the desired South Africa leadership are becoming higher. Neighboring countries also show a kind of distrust that was inherited from the apartheid period and fear the comeback of an expansionary policy from Pretoria. In this way, the international presence of South Africa is marked by the dichotomy[21] of an active and revisionist attitude regarding global issues, but such attitude has to be extremely cautious in the region. As Daniel Flames says:

> While South Africa's leadership is fully accepted on the global stage, acceptance in Africa is lower. **Far from being seen as a benevolent hegemon, South Africa is viewed by some other African states as a selfish hegemon bent on advancing its narrow economic interests at the expense of less developed African countries** (FLEMES, 2009, p. 150, emphasis added).

In this context, the issue faced by South Africa is *how to use its economic and military capabilities (relatively strong under African standards), in such a manner that its reputation as a regional leader will be strengthened?* This problem is further aggravated in so far as Pretoria is required to respond to those security dynamics emerging not only because of interstate rivalries, but mainly from the troubled state-building process in many countries in the region and of its own. In Nelson Mandela (1994-1999) government, diplomatic tensions with Nigeria, then governed by Sani Abacha (1996), and the problems encountered in the peacekeeping missions headed by South Africa in DRC (1996) and Lesotho (1998), made evident the difficulties imposed on south African foreign policy (BARBER, 2005).

Because of this, South Africa adopted as a strategy to strengthen regional governance institutions and use them as the main actuation tool in the regional policy. Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki, succeeded in articulating a wide continental Africa agenda, along with the leaders of Nigeria (Obasanjo), Algeria (Boutlefika), Senegal (Wade) and Libya (Kadaffi), aimed to consolidate the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD) (LANDSBERG, 2008; 2011). In the Southern Africa context, *Southern*

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20 The recognition of such regional leadership role is relevant for the analysis of the systemic imbalance when there is divergence between the distribution of material capabilities and the hierarchy of prestige among components. According to Gilpin, "*In every international system the dominant powers in the international hierarchy of power and prestige organize and control the processes of interactions among the elements of the system (GILPIN, 1981, p. 29). Thus, such systemic imbalance would occur concurrently with a disjunction between the distribution of capabilities and the hierarchy of prestige. This discrepancy could lead to the emergence of revisionist or revolutionary States, that is, States that believe the benefits of changing institutional system governance would outweigh the costs. According to Randall L. Schweller and David Priess (1997): "at issue in the enduring conflict between satisfied and dissatisfied states is the legitimacy of the institutional arrangements or governance structures that define the established international order" (SCHWELLER; PRIESS, 1997, p. 11).

21 The dilemmas faced by South Africa are characteristic to those States that possess great capacities in relation to their regional surroundings although not characterized as global powers. These countries, while in need of regional integration as a way to leverage their political power in the international scenario, face the suspicions of their neighbors when they adopt more assertive positions to address regional issues. AA comparison with the Brazilian situation is inevitable, as Cepik and Schneider (2010) summarized: "South African situation is quite comparable to the Brazilian situation, but there are some notable aggravating factors: a country that predominates in all statistical indicators when compared to others, but is facing more acutely than Brazil the dilemma of deciding between the allocation of resources in regional or internal order (which poses whopping problems), besides having to address more effectively the fear of other countries in its own region regarding a "natural" South Africa leadership"(CEPIK; SCHNEIDER, 2010, p. 204).

African Development Community (SADC)[22] and *Southern Africa Custom Union* (SACU)[23] are priority organizations as far as South African attention is concerned. This is the institutional framework through which Pretoria plans to infiltrate in the region without arousing the suspicion of its neighbors. As emphasized by Paulo Visentini and Analúcia Pereira:

> Because of asymmetry and this regional relations background, which causes South Africa to be regarded with some suspicion by its neighbors, and because of the internal contradictions facing the country, such as the great social inequality and the economy duality, post-apartheid South Africa is striving to adopt a non-confrontational and non-hegemonic position before its continental neighbors. **This is the perspective with which currently the country has managed to insert in Africa's power relations and Africa's major multilateral institutions, both within the African Union and NEPAD scope and in the scope of SADC and SACU** (VISENTINI; PEREIRA, 2010. p. 82, emphasis added).

Despite the advancements in Southern Africa regional cooperation in recent years, its institutionalization is marked by tensions arising from both the uneven nature of South Africa's capabilities in relation to its neighbors and t*he expressed contradiction between ANC and the great South African capital, still controlled by the beneficiaries of apartheid* (VISENTINI 2010. p. 125). Such tensions are reflected in the ambiguous attitudes on the part of Pretoria which, although emphasizing its intention to lead a joint regional development process, does not seem to be willing to give up certain national interests and reallocate resources to fund the reduction of regional disparities. This becomes evident in such issues related to economic integration which, if not accompanied by compensatory mechanisms, will compromise the economic competitiveness of weaker States[24]. It is also relevant to highlight that, despite representing 63.47% of SADC's GDP, South Africa's trade with those countries belonging to the block accounts for only 6.8% of South

Africa imports and 9% of South Africa exports. This is due both to the discrepancy in the size of the markets to the lack of integration between the economies of the States belonging to the organization (MATTES, 2008, p. 2).

The duality between consolidating Pretoria desired *leadership* and not to promote *distrust* among its neighbors regarding hegemonic pretensions is also reflected in the scope of security[25]. South Africa has also to balance its efforts between combating domestic violence[26] and the goal of establishing in the region "a leading role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and security sector reform" (SOUTH AFRICA, 2012 p. 28). In this way, although SANDF continues to be the most modern forces in the region (CEPIK; SCHNEIDER, 2010, p. 201; IISS, 2014), there is a mismatch between the goals and the ambitions of the regional foreign policy and its force projection military capacity. This fact becomes even tenser due to the restructuring of Angola armed forces as discussed in the previous section. The review conducted by the Military Balance (2014) highlights the main difficulties faced by SANDF:

> Army personnel strength means maintaining a consistent deployment cycle (train–deploy–return–rest) is a serious challenge; the air force has difficulty keeping pilots current, has limited airlift and no dedicated maritime patrol capability; the navy has a limited inventory and no sealift; and training and maintenance are hampered by funding levels. **Successive defense ministers and parliament's defense committee have repeatedly warned that the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) is, as the latter put it, in a fatal downward spiral'** (IISS, 2014, p. 414, emphasis added).

This reality contributes to the limited role South Africa is playing in peace operations in the continent: "*Its armed forces possess some of the most advanced platforms available on the continent, but it is towards the bottom end of the top ten African contributors to peacekeeping forces*" (IISS, 2014, p. 414).

Note that South African foreign policy ranged from a conservative and expansionist profile, a characteristic of the apartheid period (mainly between

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22 SADC origin dates back to the organization of the Front Line States, which used to take a stand against racist regimes in the region and originally comprised Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In 1980, after the signing of Lusaka Declaration, the scope of this group was expanded to become the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and include regional integration in the agenda. After the accession of Namibia in 1992, the organization was renamed and became the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and only in 1994 South Africa became member of the institution. SADC current members include South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

23 SACU comprises South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.

24 Former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa stressed this when he said that "I would urge South Africa to accept a larger proportion of the responsibility to push this prospect forward through more investment in the industrialization of the rest of the SADC region.", pois, "with its superior infrastructure, South Africa can become the conduit of foreign direct investment from outside to the rest of the SADC region" (MADAKUFAMBAS, 2004).

25 Elizabeth Sidiropulos (2007) considers that this duality is one of the causes the bolder stance adopted by South Africa in building security institutions at continental level. As the author says: "While the country has provided bold vision and vigorously supported the building of Africa's new diplomatic and security architecture, there remains an element of hesitation born out of South Africa's apartheid legacy. This may help explain why South Africa has been more proactive and persistent in building multilateral structures at the AU level and taking a lead in mediating conflicts further north while showing reluctance to exercise leverage within its own sub-region with the most notable example being that of Zimbabwe, and in some ways the most complicated" (SIDIROPOULOS, 2007, p. 11).

26 According to UNODC, the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the country in 2008 was 36.9, very high if compared to other countries in the continent, such as Algeria (1.0), Angola (19.0), Zimbabwe (7.7) and Nigeria (12.2).

1975 and 1988), to an integrationist approach aiming to build a Southern Africa regional system under a liberal perspective (especially after 1994). However, the current South African strategy is faced with the distrust of the other States in the region because of the historical legacy left by the previous regime and the asymmetric nature of its capabilities. These elements have hindered its regional leadership status as well as its ability to influence the formulation of a cooperative development agenda for Southern Africa.

4.2 Angola Regional Foreign Policy

After the resolution of the civil and regional war that lasted almost thirty years, Angola has emerged as the main winner in the conflict, having defeated its main rivals in the region. This outcome, as shown above, was accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative FAA restructuring that positioned the State, in terms of military capability, as an emerging regional power in Southern Africa. On the other hand, Angolan political institutions are still outdated and its economic structure is still largely based on exports of natural resources.

Moreover, the characteristics of Angola's foreign policy do not seem to indicate any interest of the country in taking a leadership role in the regional system or to effect radical changes in the systemic order. In fact, the excessive emphasis given by Luanda to issues related to internal security allows us to characterize its regional action as isolationist. The result of this perspective is that Angola will only interfere in the regional policy if its internal stability is at stake.

In formal terms, the objectives of the Angolan foreign policy are broad and prioritize, among other things,

> 3. [...] **strengthening the African identity and strengthening the action of African States** in favor of maximizing the cultural heritage of African peoples [...] 4. The Angolan State does not allow the installation of any foreign military bases within its territory, without any detriment to the **participation** in **regional** or international organizations, in **peace-keeping forces** and in military cooperation and **collective security** systems (ANGOLA, 2010, article 3, emphasis added).

Some authors even emphasize the proactive role of the Angolan diplomacy in solving regional problems. This consolidates the "image of the country as a partner for stability and security" (JOSEPH, 2011, p. 114, 122). The presidential diplomacy José Eduardo dos Santos contributed to this prestigious position. The president has "recognized leadership in the continent, which has helped increase the political credibility of the Country and support confidence in the guidelines and commitments adopted by the government" (JOSEPH, 2011, p. 151).

On the other hand, stated objectives are, in practice, limited by the priority interests of the MPLA-PT government regarding the internal security of the country. Historically,

> to **ensure its survival at home**, the Angolan regime dedicated much of its efforts to affect positive transformation in its regional environment by actively working towards regime change in its neighboring countries (MALAQUIAS, 2007, p. 6, emphasis added).

In the long run, this strategy enabled the construction of a regional environment that became gradually favorable to Angola state unity and territorial integrity. Because "distrust is a hallmark in the relations between individuals and institutions" (JOSEPH, 2011, p. 103), Angolan actions in the regional system aimed, primarily, its own stability and survival. There was recognition of the clear "*connection between domestic security, regime survival, and regional and international politics*" (MALAQUIAS, 2011, p. 5-6).

As a consequence, the post-Cold War Angolan regional policy has focused on such situations directly linked to the internal problems of the country, related to the construction of the State. Its involvement in the DRC and Congo-Brazzaville wars, connected to the expansion of regional boundaries, the alliance with Namibia and the penetration in the Zambia territory to suppress UNITA forces, are indicators that appear to support such perception (KHADIAGALA 2001 p. 147). Even more recently, the Angolan support to the training of DRC security forces appears to be linked to the fact that the security of that neighboring country directly influences its national security. In addition, the partnership with China and the US has mirrored this attitude of using diplomacy pragmatically as a facilitator in the state-building process, currently based on an economic growth that is focused on high flow of commodities trade and investment in infrastructure (MALACHI, 2001, p. 11). This position converges with the idea that there is the need of "*a form of Marshal Plan for the reconstruction of the country, which, in many respects, must involve the participation of the international community*" (ANJOS, 2008, p. 10).

With the exception of its isolationist profile, it could be observed in the case of the DRC, when, in 2006, Angola hinted that it would assist Kabila government again in the case of an invasion by Rwanda. This happened even after UNITA threats had already been demobilized. In addition, the emphatic stance adopted by the Angolan government during the election crisis in Ivory Coast in 2011 – in support to the stability of Laurent Gbagbo government as well as to a solution proposed by those African countries with a peaceful and negotiated profile – showed the more ambitious interests of Angola in continental politics. In March 2011, Angola took command of the mission to reform Guinea-Bissau armed forces (MISSANG) as part of a policy that had been announced in 2009 seeking the creation of mechanisms capable to

enhance regional security in the area under scope the Gulf of Guinea Council (JOSEPH, 2011, p. 205, 254).

However, while these actions may signal a potential inflection in the Angolan foreign policy, such commitments are still rather timid. In the case of Ivory Coast, Angola's stance was unable to establish a policy articulated with those countries sharing its position in support to President Laurent Gbagbo, which signaled limits on the recognition of Angolan leadership in the continental policy. In addition, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, internal and external pressures led the Angolan government to cease its operations on April 10, 2012, thereby paving the way for the triggering of April 12 military coup (SECURITY..., 2012).

As an example of this still timid stance, when President Dos Santos listed, in a speech delivered in 2011, the structural principles of the Angolan foreign policy, he only made reference to the regional integration on the tenth bullet and in very general terms, without specifying neither the Southern Africa nor Africa (SANTOS, 2011). This attitude can also be explained by the still existing difficulties for Angola to be able to project power and garner recognition as a regional leader.

> [...] Angola is not in a position to play a hegemonic role whether or not this is its ambition. Although its military is disproportionately large and its operational capabilities are highly developed – the result of nearly three decades of civil war and regular encounters with the South African army under the apartheid regime – Angola's non-military elements of national power are deficient as a consequence of the debilitating effects of the long and complex war (MALAQUIAS, 2007, p. 9).

Besides being harmful to the region, the relative isolation of Angola affects its own international insertion because "an increased Angola's ability to influence cannot be achieved through isolation or alleged self-sufficiency in resources" (JOSEPH, 2011 p. 123).

On the other hand, the relative isolation of Angola from the region also precludes in the short term any possibility that Angola's rise as a regional power will result in a hegemonic war seeking a review of the regional order. As long as the national reconstruction efforts are sustained on high economic growth, Angola will be relatively satisfied with the limits of the economic and trade cooperation in the region and with the current alternative dispute resolution. In the first case, it is to be highlighted that Angola has repeatedly postponed its accession to SADC Free Trade Zone (VERANGOLA, 2014), but provides no alternative to this project (currently focused on the South African economy). On the second point, Angola was relatively displaced from the diplomatic articulations that established a new UN intervention brigade (FIB) in the Congo, which included South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi, whose mandate has an unprecedented offensive character. These points are complemented with the increased in the relations Pretoria-Luanda hub, strengthened by the rise of

Jacob Zuma government, which has historical connections with Angola and chose that country as the destination of his first official visit as the South African president in 2010.

Therefore, in view of South African and Angolan external policies, respectively based on the limits to the effectiveness of the leadership (recognition of neighboring States) and reduced interest in producing and implementing an alternative regional project, there is little evidence that the rise of Angola in terms of material capabilities will lead to a hegemonic conflict in the region. However, as discussed in this paper, the expansion of regional boundaries for the Central Africa Great Lakes region is already impacting the level of conflict in the region. Moreover, the capacity of the regional power to establish a viable order capable of enlisting followers is directly related to its competence to take up the costs and offer benefits in this new conflict zone that was recently integrated to regional dynamics.

5 CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the influence of the last decade's structural changes in the Southern Africa Regional Security Complex and also the regional policy adopted by South Africa and Angola, the two States that hold most of the material capabilities in the region. The paper assessed how the specific interests and goals of these two countries may impact the maintenance of a cooperative regional system or an increase in inter-state tensions in Southern Africa.

The first conclusion is that the increase in Angola military and economic capabilities was not accompanied by the formulation of a foreign policy aimed to play a more significant role in regional issues. Luanda tends to act assertively in the region only in the presence of issues directly related to its internal security and shows no willingness to bear the costs of a regional integrationist project. On the other hand, despite possessing the strongest military forces in the region, the most dynamic economy, and declared intentions to take regional leadership, South Africa faces serious constraints to fulfill this role. This is due both to mistrust on the part of its neighbors, to its own difficulties to internally formulate a coherent and cooperative integration project for Southern Africa. Pretoria oscillates between strong measures that contribute to strengthening regional institutions and attitudes that cast doubt on its concern about the reduction of asymmetries before its neighbors, especially with regard to economic and trade issues. In this way, there is no clear definition as to which model South Africa will adopt to consolidate its influence in the region:

> The leader's regional influence will depend on an ability to determine the co-operation agenda whether **influence can be achieved through co-operative or unilateral hegemonic leadership, or through co-operative hegemony** (FLEMES, 2009, p. 138, emphasis added).

Therefore, the low prestige of South Africa has not been enough to incite the rise of revisionist or revolutionary regional powers with capacity for systemic change. However, this situation should not be cause for pacifist utopias. The degree of systemic conflict in Southern Africa has been aggravated by the expansion of regional boundaries, which increases uncertainties and the possibility of large peripheral wars (similar to the Second Congo War). Such conflicts have a potential to become central as long as they involve regional powers, particularly on opposite sides. Moreover, the inclusion of Democratic Republic of the Congo in the region may represent in the future the possibility of rise of a new regional power, which would make the system even more complex. This may occur if the reconstruction process of the Congolese State comes to strengthen State capabilities and equate the population, territorial and economic potential since this country was once the third largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, although there is a growing Africanist identity among the countries in the region (now including post-apartheid South Africa), there is no guarantee that the future will be stable. After overcoming the difficult phase of state reconstruction, Angola will tend to put more energy in its regional policy and to implement regional policy projects best suited to its grand strategy. For these main reasons, we must be mindful of the future of Southern Africa.

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