

AN ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC DOMINANCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the economic hegemony of South Africa in the SADC Region, by answering the primary question: What is the extent of economic dominance by South Africa over its neighbours who belong to the same club, commonly referred to as SADC? Three central issues were examined, namely, indicators that stand as evidence of that country's hegemony, initiatives of integration that are evident, and the role played by South Africa in progressing such initiatives. Literature review was cited to demonstrate views held by theorists and researchers on the subject of hegemony. Several theories about hegemony were highlighted, including: the conventional approach (Gilpin, 1981); the neoliberal approach (Krasner, 1982); the Gramscian approach (Gramsci, 1971); the radical approach (Laclau, 2000). Gramscian theory was preferred, and its two tenets were explained as domination that is based on coercion, and hegemony that is based on consent. The Survey design was applied to assess thoughts, opinions, and views held about hegemony by personnel from the different embassies of SADC countries, and these were selected using purposive sampling. Two methods of data elicitation were used, namely, the questionnaire and semi structured face-to-face interviews. One of the key findings was that South Africa has, and continues to play a positive role in enhancing, not only the economic integration of SADC member states, but also the social welfare and integration of member countries.