SOUTH AFRICA: A BENIGN OR MALIGN REGIONAL HEGEMON? THE CASE OF THE 1998 SOUTH AFRICAN-LED MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LESOTHO

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Abstract

In 1998 South Africa and Botswana, under the auspices of SADC intervened militarily in the Kingdom of Lesotho. The military intervention triggered various responses. Some viewed the intervention as a benign response by the regional hegemony- South Africa to safe guard democracy in the region while others, especially opposition political parties in Lesotho felt it was an invasion by South Africa in its bid to project its dominant regional hegemony. This paper examines whether in launching the military intervention South Africa was motivated by its national hegemonic interests or by safeguarding democracy and a democratically elected government in Lesotho. The paper is part of a doctoral qualitative research project on the SADC preventive diplomacy in the Kingdom of Lesotho. The findings are part of the interview responses from participants at the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), representatives of political parties and Civil Society Organisations in Lesotho, ex-soldiers from the Botswana Defence Force who participated in the Lesotho interventions, academics, and the post 2007 Lesotho Dialogue facilitator. The paper argues that while South Africa may have had benign motives for the intervention, the process was marred by legitimacy questions, the apartheid South African military history of regional destabilisation and lack of consistency in South African government conflict mediation policy. The legitimacy questions, coupled with lack of consistency in its interventions in regional conflicts gave birth to perceptions, right or wrong that South Africa was exerting her hegemonic might on mainly the weaker and geographically enveloped Lesotho.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War in the first half of the 1990s and the subsequent collapse of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 heralded in a new political climate in the politics and relations of member states in the SADC region. This transformation marked the end of an era of South Africa's politics of conflict and destabilisation of the region in defence of its diabolic political system. More importantly the period heralded in a new role for South Africa in the region as far as regional integration and peacekeeping are concerned. Because of its economic, political and military clout, South Africa, like Nigeria in the ECOWAS region has been dubbed the pivotal state, aspiring/emerging/potential hegemon, middle power or regional hegemon according to the perspectives and orientations of different scholars (Adebayo and Landsberg 2003,Habbib 2003, Prys 2007, Issaka [Internet: assessed 03 February 2012). Whatever label is attached, in the SADC South Africa is the regional superpower and after the 1994 democratic transition she had to take her natural role of providing leadership in the region. When South Africa attained a democratic dispensation, numerous questions were raised as to whether; a democratic majority South Africa would totally shed the apartheid conflictual status to be a cooperative and harmonious member of SADC. Put differently many wondered whether South Africa would utilise its hegemonic position to enhance regional integration, development and peace (security) in the region. There were fears that instead of exercising benign hegemony, South Africa may become a malign or dominant hegemon (Adedeji 1996, Matlosa, 1997, Molomo 1998, Makoa 1998, Southall 2001). The latter position would be adverse to regional stability as it would be resisted by other regional member states. In the SADC region,

the South African hegemonic role has been resented by other established regional powers such as Zimbabwe and Angola (Adebayo and Landsberg 2003, Mulaudzi 2006).

Since attaining the position of regional hegemon, South Africa has led numerous peace missions not only in the SADC region but in Africa as a whole in pursuance of the policy of African Renaissance (Habib, 2003, Pry 2007, Meierding: Internet, accessed, 03 February 2012). In the SADC region, South Africa was involved in the peace missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), (1998) Lesotho (1994 and 1998) and Zimbabwe (2000 to the present). In the case of the DRC conflict and the 1994 Lesotho political crisis, South Africa applied a multilateral diplomatic engagement of the stakeholders and regional partners in the resolution of the conflicts. In the 1998 intervention in Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana intervened militarily. What triggers some questions is that while in the DRC and Zimbabwe there was deepened political crisis as was the case in Lesotho; South Africa has adhered to negotiations and quiet diplomacy respectively rather than coercive intervention. This inconsistency raised questions on the coherence and credibility of South African regional leadership. As Southall (2001: 168) puts it "[t]he handling of the interventions was taken as evidence of inconsistency in South Africa's post-apartheid policy. The shift from an insistence upon the need for a negotiated settlement in the case of the DRC and ...imposition of a political [military] solution in Lesotho inevitably aroused concern." The schizophrenic hegemonic behaviour patterns by South Africa also sparked off perceptions that South Africa employed coercive measures on Lesotho because of its weaker economic, political and geographical status within the region. According to Ngoma (2005: 168) the intervention raised questions as to whether "the SADC intervention was not facilitated by the size of the country-relatively small and engulfed by a larger country." This is the position which was projected by most of the participants in this study. While there were some who felt that South Africa played a benevolent role of restoring peace and a democratically elected government in the troubled Kingdom, there were many (especially from the opposition parties in Lesotho) who felt that the regional hegemon was exerting its dominant hegemonic muscle on the weaker Lesotho to safeguard its national strategic interests and position as a regional power (Mills, 1992, Sessay 2000, Mashishi 2003,Vale 2003, van Walraven 2005). It is in this context that the respondents were asked whether the 1998 South African-led military intervention in Lesotho was justified and what the participants think motivated the military intervention. As indicated most of the respondents felt that it was not justified and it was motivated by selfish national interests of South Africa therefore with malign intent rather than benevolent. There are also several scholars who share the view that the South African –led military intervention was a reflection of a realist dominant regional power over a comparatively weaker state to protect its national interests such as the Lesotho Highland Water Project and national stability than the benevolence of peace and stability in Lesotho itself (Likoti 2006). Sessay (2000: 293) argues that the South African –led military intervention in Lesotho is "proof that regional hegemons will move into neighbouring states if their interests are threatened."

Theoretical Framework

The paper is informed by the Hegemonic Stability Theory of International Relations as propounded by neo-Realist theorists such as Robert Keohane, Charles Kindleberger, Robert Cox, Robert Gilpin, Antonio Gramsci and Mittelman. The concept of hegemony is mostly associated with International Political Economy (IPE) and it suggests that in the international system or regional set-up there is need for a hegemonic state which possess the sufficient economic, political and military might and will to create a stable regionaland global environment. The USA and Britain played this hegemonic leadership role after the Second World War when they employed their economic and political power (not coercively) to regulate economic and political recovery in the post-war Europe and beyond (Issaka, Sotorios, Meierding, Internet, accessed 03 February 2012, Mulaudzi 2006). The theory is premised on the view that each region has or should have a regional power house to provide leadership in the social, economic and political affairs of the particular region. In the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), ECOWAS and SADC, to mention a few, the United States of America, Nigeria and South Africa respectively are the

hegemons in their respective regional blocks. Issaka posits that regional hegemons should be mobilisers and stabilisers during times of regional instability. That is, they should possess persuasive powers to urge others to appreciate the need for collective action for the sake of peace and stability. The point is that such a power should be able "not only to articulate the rules and norms for respective regions but also convince other states to follow such rules and adhere to established norms" (Barengu and Landsberg, 2003: 174). The term hegemony is also used to refer to dominant states with the economic, political and military capabilities to persuade, mobilise and employ coercive measures for peace, stability and development in the region. In other words "a hegemonic power's actions have more profound impact on regional affairs than those of less powerful nations" ((Dehez 2008: 1). With specific reference to South Africa in the SADC region, Matlosa (1997: 118) posited that a regional hegemon "influences the content, context and pattern of their (regional countries) foreign policies. It has a bearing on the security architecture of the region." These are states "that for better or worse dominate" the region (Dehez, 2008: 1).

Habib and Selinyane (2008: 181) vividly capture the role of a regional hegemon thus; "[e]very hegemon is a pivotal state. But it has to be more. Hegemons not only aspire to leadership, and are not only endowed with military, economic, and other resources. They also have—necessarily—a political and socio-economic vision of their transnational environments, and a political willingness to implement such a vision. If that vision is one of security, stability, and development, as is often the case, then the hegemon undertakes to underwrite the implementation of these goals...It...takes responsibility in the last instance to ensure that the features of its vision are operationalised in the region it sees as its sphere of influence..." In this sense, a regional hegemon should be prepared and willing to contribute the bulk in regional affairs compared to its subordinate regional partners. The question is, is the particular country "prepared to accept the full burden of hegemony?" (International Peace Academy, 2000: 13). For example, Nigeria and South Africa contributed more in terms of resources and troops during their regional organisations, ECOWAS and SADC peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and Lesotho respectively. Similarly, during the Gulf War of 1991 and the NATO interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo of the 1990s, the USA "was willing to bear the principal costs, while convincing others to support these efforts" (Adebayo and Landsberg, 2003: 174). Scholars on regionalism maintain that for regionalisation to prosper there is need for a regional hegemon to fully resource the project (Herbst 2000, Ajulu 2004, Van Walraven 2005). Herbst (2003: 314) aptly states that "[f]or a collective good to be produced, one country may have to take on the costs disproportionate to the benefits it expects to reap and provide leadership." Ajulu (2004) and Van Walraven (2005) observe that regional integration and the Inter-Governmental Authority and Development (IGAD) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) failed in their bid to fully regionalise and implement and their goals of regional development and peacekeeping because they lacked a clear hegemonic leadership to execute their mandates.

Benign hegemony

There are three ways through which a regional power can exercise its hegemonic power. The hegemonic power could be benign, benevolent and constructive, dominant and malign for the region or a combination of the two in the form of "carrots and sticks." In a benign hegemonic setup, the regional power projects a relation in which consensus, cooperation, partnership and engagement of all the stakeholders rather than coercion takes the centre stage in the interest of the region. That is the regional power's foreign policy stance is poised to "use its regional hegemony and domination not against, but to the benefit of its neighbours" (Matlosa, 1997: 119). Inter-alia, the regional hegemon is concerned with acceptability and the legitimacy of its actions, behaviour and regional interactional trends with other regional members. This is crucial because, as Issaka observed "hegemony or leadership is often based on a general belief in the hegemons capabilities in the eyes of the subordinate countries whose interests it needs to embody and defend...It also needs the legitimacy of the dominance state in the eyes of its weaker allies" (Issaka, Internet: accessed 03 February 2012: 2). Benevolent hegemony fits well into Patrick's view that "hegemony rests on a combination of preponderant power, a participatory ideology, and very

importantly, willing associates. In short, the ability to wield power in non-coercive ways with the consent of other states and the ability to pay military and economic costs are critical factors in exercising hegemony" (cited in Adebayo and Lansberg, 2003: 173). Haukkala (2006: 6) credits the European Union's (EU) for exercising its normative power on the basis of "perceived legitimacy of its actions and policies in the eyes of its partners." An often cited example of benevolent hegemony is when America, through the Marshall Plan assisted Western Europe and Japan's economic and political reconstruction after the devastations of World War Two (Krasner 1982, Matlosa 1997, Gilpin 2001, Adebayo and Landsberg 2003, Mulaudzi 2006, Habib, Internet: accessed 03 February 2012). In view of the above, Moller (2005: 68) notes that the success of SADC "depends on South Africa's continued commitment to the organisation and acceptance by other members of its role as a benevolent hegemon..."

What is worth noting though is that even within the realms of constructive hegemony, national interests of the regional hegemon are of primary importance. That is, "[t]he benevolence of the hegemon,... does not undermine or contradict its national interest" (Matlosa 1997: 123). "On the contrary the two may be mutually supportive" (Oden, Boas and Soderbaum, 1995: 6). In international relations politics "it is unrealistic to expect nations...to behave altruistically" without any accompanying benefits (Stoneman, 1998: 99). In reality regional hegemons "intervene principally in pursuit of his ow n interests in whatever way these are formulated..." Therefore since the regional hegemon "has his own interests to consider, mediation or intervention might be achieved for reasons other than the peaceful settlement of the conflict" (Van Walraven, 2005: 79). What is important to the regional hegemon is that it has protected its national interests and has convinced other regional members to belief that the intervention had benign intent. Nye, in Ohlsons (1993: 293) describes such behaviour as "the alternative way of exercising power, namely, to set the agenda and make others feel they accept the agenda." In fact the reasons for intervention are always couched in democratic vocabulary such as restoring peace, stability and humanitarian mission to elicit constructive intentions and benefits for the target state and the region at large. Arend and Beck (1993: 114) note that "although humanitarian motives are often cited to justify intervention, genuine instances of humanitarian interventions are rare if they have ever occurred at all." The critical point is that the motive for intervention is inseparable from the national interests of the intervening power. In the words of du Plessis (2000: 32-33) "...the fact cannot be ignored that national interests but not necessarily the defence of national security or territorial integrity (of the target nation) is likely to remain paramount as motivation for military intervention."

Issaka credits Nigeria in the ECOWAS region as a benign hegemon because it has never used its military might for expansionist incursion and for having brought peace and stability in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Pry also give credit to South African leadership stance in the resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis through multilateral engagement of the regional stakeholders and partners. However such views are contested by Dehez (2008) who argues that although some interventions in Africa are motivated by humanitarian considerations, African hegemons rarely acted as benevolent ones, like the United States did in the immediate post World War Two period. Some commentators maintain that South Africa pursued a benevolent regional leadership to create a break from the coercive and confrontational dominant posture projected by the apartheid regime (Matlosa 1997, Habbib and Selinanyane 2004). A democratic South Africa did not want to be viewed as a coercive big brother but a regional partner for peace, stability and development in the region. To a large extent the democratic dispensation in South Africa in 1994 "transformed the political and security complex of Southern Africa away from confrontation towards engagement and reconciliation...Regional relations have changed for the better: cooperation has replaced confrontation, diplomacy has taken the place of aggression and suspicion among states has been replaced by mutual trust" (Matlosa, 1997: 122). South Africa, once viewed as the harbinger of destabilisation became a leading power in regional peacemaking and peacekeeping (Rotberg 1995, Matlosa 1997, Adebayo and Landsberg, 2003, Prys 2007). While South Africa is regarded by some as a benevolent hegemon, there are some regional members who are very suspicious of her regional leadership. Zimbabwe and Angola could be potential competitors for regional hegemony status. This was reflected

when President Mugabe as the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security challenged Mandela as the Chair person on SADC by calling for an autonomous security organ. This geo-political competition threatened the unity of SADC and led to a disjointed intervention in the DRC in 1998 (Nathan, 2004, Neethling 2005, Ngoma 2005, Mulaudzi 2006). Lesotho opposition parties as shall be reflected in this paper are very hostile to South Africa due to its 1998 military-led intervention which they interpreted as an incursion by the regional hegemon. In fact Thompson (1999: 61) is of the view that "[t]he idea of a benevolent, self-sacrificing hegemony as portrayed by proponents of hegemonic stability theories is...particularly in the Southern African context, nothing more than a myth." In the view of Matlosa (1997) South Africa's interactions with its regional partners is reflective of a benign big brother. He therefore advises South Africa to act benevolently towards its weaker partners for mutually interdependent regional development and security. "A South Africa that exhibits even minimal calm and continuity is likely to remain the dominant force and the major economic, financial, technical and military power in the region, contributing decisively to the sub-continent's security..." (Ohlson and Stedman, 1996: 139). Matlosa (1997: 119) argues that a benevolent South Africa should "use its regional hegemony and domination not against, but to the benefit of its neighbours." This is because South Africa "...cannot build the South African economy in isolation from its Southern African neighbours. Such a path would benefit nobody in the long run. If South Africa attempted to dominate its neighbours, it would restrict their growth, reducing their potential as markets, worsening their unemployment and causing increasing migration to South Africa" (Oden etal, 1995: 11).

Malign hegemon

The opposite of benign hegemon triggers some negativity in the regional relations between the regional hegemon and the smaller regional countries. Negative labels such as malign, dominant, imperialist, exploitative, neglect and indifferent hegemon have been used by different scholars to refer to this brand of regional leadership. It is characterised by the domination- subordination relations between the hegemon and other regional member states (Matlosa 1997, Adebayo and Landsberg, 2003, Prys 2007). Adebayo and Landsberg (2003: 175) argue that hegemony is a term that has been interpreted differently by different political analysts and "in popular usage, the term conjures up negative images of a bullying, domineering power imposing its will on weaker states." To that effect Myers (1991) defines a regional hegemon as a state which possesses sufficient power to dominate and subordinate its regional neighbours. To this end, the regional hegemon has the capability to "single-handedly dominate the rules and arrangements by which ...regional political and economic relations are conducted" (Mansfield, 1992: 3-4). Apartheid South Africa was an appropriate example of a dominant hegemon when it wreaked havoc on the SADC member states that opposed apartheid and supported the liberation struggle (Matlosa 1997). More often than not, the national interests of the regional power are in the forefront of its leadership and regional foreign policy. In view of the above, Oden, Boas and Soderbaum (1995: 7)noted that "an exploitative hegemon seeks to create a regime that serves its own myopic short run national interests, through exploitation of fellow partners, while a benign hegemon facilitates the emergence of mutually beneficial relationships." According to Rotberg (in Vale 2003: 133) "the country which dominates the region writes the rules-always has and always will." During interventions or peacekeeping operations, regional hegemons use their economic, political and military might and leverage to dominate the process and its outcome for fulfilment of their national interests. Sessay (2000: 241) noted that dominant hegemons monopolise the right to interpret and influence the laws and norms to "attain a situation in which it can invoke the entire authority behind its interpretation of the rules in support of its own interests."

While regional hegemons are expected to provide regional leadership, they have always been subjected to criticisms of using the regional organisations to advance their selfish national interests. Moller (2004: 125) states that "[a]s the net provider of security, the USA certainly felt entitled to a greater say on alliance matters than its European allies, all of which were net consumers of security. NATO thus became

a vehicle for the U.S hegemony over Western Europe." Nigeria and South Africa have also been accused of malign hegemony during their respective regional organisations' military missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Lesotho respectively. These interventions were deemed in some quarters as imperialist adventures by the regional powers to exert their might on other regional member states. During its 1998 military-led intervention in Lesotho South Africa was accused of being "the dean, administrator, regulator and geographer of the intervention" (Tuathail and Agnew: 1998: 83). The intervention triggered questions as to "whether the region with South Africa taking the lead is sliding back into the era of destabilisation" (Molomo: 1998: 9). Such accusations and perceptions have created a dilemma for regional hegemons as to which intervention is necessary and acceptable to all regional members (Ngoma, 2005). Horvei (1998: 162) noted South Africa's dilemma thus: "[i]f it ignores the region, it is seen as callous; if it becomes actively involved, it is seen as returning to the domineering ways of the past." Similarly a Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS Cheik Diarra once observed that "Nigeria is both the problem and the solution in the move towards a Pax West Africana. ECOWAS needs Nigeria; but the spectre of a bulldozing hegemon is still a source of concern for many states" (in the region). He therefore advised that "[b]ecause Nigeria is expected to play a dominant role in West Africa, its actions must be responsible, accountable and transparent" (International Peace Academy: 2001: 15). Regional hegemons have the responsibility to reassure their regional partners that "their intentions are noble: to promote peace and economic integration as the public goods of constructive hegemons... [They] should also be modest in their conduct to down play any apparent suggestions of having ambitions to dominate their sub-regions for their own interests or for national aggrandizement" (Barengu and Landsberg, 2003: 194). That is, "peacekeeping must above all be conducted in such a manner as to uphold the legitimacy and credibility of the intervening party" (Annan cited in Mortimer, 2000: 204), "combining the principle of neighbourhood with the principle of distant impartiality" (Salim Ahmad Salim, cited in Joseph, 1999: 15).

South Africa has been suspected by its SADC neighbours of failure to successfully transform from the confrontational politics of the apartheid regime to an acceptable regional partner. Upon attaining democratic governance in 1994 the resounding question was "[w]ill due attention be given to restricting hegemonic relations with South Africa's neighbours towards a more equitable, fair and less tense ones?" (Adedeji, 1996: 3-4). Barengu argues that "[t]he common denominator between the apartheid and the new South African state is the quest to maintain and sustain the Republic's hegemony in regional affairs" (cited in Ngoma, 2005: 152-153). Similarly Nigeria's hegemony has always suffered from the Anglophone and Francophone divide as fuelled by France which aimed at halting Nigeria's hegemonic drive in the ECOWAS (Barengu and Landsberg 2003, and Issaka, Internet.) Their "different colonial experiences, combined with widely divergent contemporary political systems increased the potential for suspicion, hostility and conflict" (Meierding: Internet: 10). What is important is that however high moral grounds, regional hegemons have to realise that any military operation mounted from their capitals risk the fears and suspicions of other regional powers (Mortimer 1996). This is because "[i]t would always be difficult to distinguish the (arguably disproportionate) exercise of military force for selfish or predatory reasons, or for a strategic advantage from its use for lawful, justified or humanitarian purposes. [Moreover], since...interventions cannot be completely delinked from national interest irrespective of justification, it will always be questioned and deemed suspect by non-beneficiary actors" (du Plessis, 2000: 333). Regional hegemons are always perceived as imperialist giants and bullies who use their might and resources in malignant ways against their weaker neighbours (Malosa 1997, Barengu and Landsberg 2003). Therefore "...the challenge of hegemony is leadership without bullying dominance and the willing acceptance of such leadership by others" (Barengu and Landsberg 2003: 174).

Benign-Malign hegemon

The third way in which a regional hegemon can exercise its leadership role is through applying both benign and malign strategies in the form of "carrots and sticks," accommodation and aggression to achieve its foreign policy objectives (Barengu and Landsberg, 2003). That is "the hegemon must make it

clear to the hegemonised that it has the capacity to reward and punish" (Barengu and Landsberg 2003: 174). A correct blending of carrots and sticks strategies can achieve the desirable results without necessarily projecting bullying tactics. The regional hegemon may use peaceful means such as engagement, negotiations, partnership, consensus and promises of economic or political aid to arm-twist a regional member to bend and be accommodative for regional peace. It may also flex its muscle through the use of force or threats to employ force if the target state does not comply. Global hegemons such as the USA and Western European powers employ the carrots and sticks strategies to influence and control the political behaviour of the world. Haukkala (2006) noted that the European Union offers or withhold economic benefits depending on the target nation's willingness to comply with the Union's agenda. During the SADC mediation in the 1994 Lesotho crisis South Africa is said to have employed the strategy of negotiations and threat to use force. It is on record that while the Troika negotiations were on-going, South African military flights flew over the Lesotho space and this was interpreted as threat to use force if the King did not accede to the negotiated settlement (Vale 2003, Ngoma 2005). In this way "diplomatic South Africa cajoled a reversal of the King's coup...with a mixture of arm-twisting and negotiations" (Southall, 1998: 5). Through this blending of carrots and sticks, South Africa's credibility as the regional hegemon remained intact while it also achieved its goal of preventing instability and spill-over effects within its midst. The intervention was hailed as a legitimate SADC mission rather than a result of South Africa' bullying tactics.

South Africa as a regional leader has long been accused for its vacillating regional foreign policy. Makoa (1998: 19) describes the post-apartheid South Africa's regional inconsistent hegemonic behaviour as "...an indifferent and hesitant, and an aggressive and bullish" reflected by the hegemon's response to the DRC and Lesotho crises respectively. In view of this dichotomous regional policy, Van Nieuwkerk (1998: 15) feels South Africa has "...not attained the right blend of strategies and practices to implement its proclaimed role as a regional leader, mediator and peace maker." The hesitant regional posture by South Africa emanate from her ugly past of institutionalised destabilisation of her neighbours. Hence a democratic South Africa does not want to be viewed as a dominant and aggressive hegemonic power but a cooperative and democratic regional partner at both regional and global levels

South Africa as a regional hegemon in the SADC region

There is no shade of doubt that South Africa is the natural and undisputed regional hegemon in the SADC region. Like Nigeria in West Africa, South Africa possesses disproportionate military, economic and political power relative to other regional states (Barengu and Landsberg 2003). Apartheid South Africa used its hegemonic powers in a destructive way. A democratic post-1994 South Africa was therefore expected to change the destructive hegemony pursued by the apartheid regime and become a constructive hegemon for regional peace, stability and development. Several factors make South Africa a leader in the SADC region. Economically, South Africa dwarfs its regional members in terms of infrastructural development, basic economic indicators, and provision of services, standard of living and resource endowment. South Africa dominates the region in terms of its Gross National product (GDP), trade (exports and imports), and agricultural and industrial production capacity (Ohlson and Steadman 1994, Cilliers 1996, Matlosa 1997, Barengu and Landsberg 2003). According to Cilliers, (1996: 19) "[t]he total combined Gross National Product (GDP) of the members of the SADC in 1992, excluding South Africa, was US$28 billion; far below that of South Africa which was US$106 billion" as the regional giant. Most of the SADC member states, especially Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are hyper dependent on South Africa for their imports and exports. In this sense South Africa is so pivotal and dominant that "its collapse would spell trans boundary mayhem..." (Habib, 2003: 2).

South Africa also dwarfs its regional member states in terms of military strength and capabilities. Compared to other regional states South Africa has a developed arms industry which flourished during the apartheid regime. That is "[i]ts aggregate capabilities in terms of economic, diplomatic and military capacities, in relation to other [regional] nations, automatically define it, at least for now, as a regional

power or hegemon" (Habib, 2008: 3). Heitman, (1996: 136) noted that South Africa is "one of the very few outside the major industrial powers with capacity to develop complex defence equipment and systems from concept to service." In this sense South Africa remains the dominant military power in the region, and is expected to contribute to the regional bloc's security and peacekeeping missions (Venter, 1996, Habib and Selinyane, 2006). South Africa's economic and military might bolsters in political leverage and therefore has the sufficient clout to shape the political climate in the region. Historically, the rise of hegemons is accompanied by consolidation of political power to make them dominant and influential in a given region (Dehez 2008, Issaka Internet: accessed 03 February 2012). South Africa continues to be the epicentre of the political and security climate in the SADC region (Ngoma 2005).

With such economic, political and military clout "South Africa, like Nigeria in West Africa, is seen as a country destined to lead Southern Africa" (Chase, Hill and Kennedy, cited in Mulaudzi, 2006: 19). Prys (2007: 12) posits that "South Africa's status as the regional power can, at least in material terms, simply not be denied and its neighbouring states have to position themselves in a particular way towards this hub in their middle." With the exception of a few regional nation-states such as Angola, other regional member states, especially Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are so dependent on South Africa economically through the Southern African Customs Union such that their combined economic capabilities fall far much below that of the regional superpower which is South Africa. This dominant military and political regional status of South Africa has been resented by other regional member states such as Angola and Zimbabwe. Barengu and Landsberg (2003) argue that after the fall out with South Africa on the DRC intervention Zimbabwe and Angola (especially Angola with its vast diamonds and oil wealth) projected themselves as potential challengers to South Africa's regional leadership status. They maintain that "[t]hough Pretoria has some hegemonic attributes in the form of its preponderant military and economic power relative to its neighbours, it has often failed to convert these qualities into genuine influence, as its leadership has been challenged by Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola" (Barengu and Landsberg 2003: 186). The lack of acceptance and political legitimacy by regional members has compelled some scholars to regard South Africa and Nigeria as aspiring or pivotal states rather than regional hegemons (Barengu and Landsberg 2003), Habib, Internet, accessed 03, February 2012).

The questions to ask are whether South Africa has used its economic, political and political might in a benign or malign manner considering its adventures during the Lesotho military intervention of 1998. In other words the questions to answer are "what is South Africa's role in the region? What should it be? And what has it been?" (Habib, 2003: 2). There are diverse views on whether South Africa has politically and militarily behaved as a benevolent or destructive regional hegemons. Matlosa (1997: 125) notes that "South Africa still acts like a Big Brother towards its weaker neighbours. But the crucial issue is whether such Acts, unilateral as they may be, are premised on good (benign) intent or bad faith (malign) intent."

Methodology Design

This study employed the qualitative research design to establish whether the 1998 South African-led military intervention in the Kingdom of Lesotho had benign or malign intents. The study is part of a doctoral research on the topic "An analysis of the SADC Preventive Diplomacy in the Kingdom of Lesotho: a case study." This article is based on the responses of 24 participants from the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, the Lesotho political parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Lesotho Monarchy, academics from the Political Science Departments at the University of Botswana (UB) and the National University of Lesotho (NUL), retired soldiers from the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) who participated in the 1994 and 1998 SADC interventions and the SADC facilitator in the post-2007 election dispute in Lesotho. The respondents were purposively selected from Lesotho and Botswana on the basis of their involvement and/or experiences within the Lesotho political context and SADC interventions. The purposive (purposeful) procedure is whereby "a selection of those to be surveyed is made according to a known characteristic (such as being a politician or union leader)" (May 1999: 88). The researcher selects those who are "fit for the purpose" in terms of being in a position to provide

informed data and answers to the research questions due to their professional training, occupational advantage or experiences of the phenomenon under study (Patton 1990, May 1999). As Potter (1996: 98) puts it "[t]he world...is constituted in one way or the other as people talk it, write it and argue it." In this qualitative study, the aim was to have in-depth understanding of the particular event within its context through the eyes of the actors (Bryman 2001, Babbie and Morton 2006).

Data were obtained through in-depth interviews to determine the motivations and/or justifications for the 1998 military intervention in Lesotho. While in 1994 and 2007 the SADC intervened non-coercively in the Kingdom of Lesotho, in 1998 South Africa and Botswana intervened militarily arguably under the auspices of the regional bloc SADC to maintain peace and stability. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they feel the 1998 mission was justified or not and what they think motivated the military action. As expected in an interpretive qualitative research paradigm, a wide range of responses were received from the different participants in line with the positions of their different institutions, organisations, political orientation, inclination and affiliations as well as personal views and opinions on the matter. The information obtained from the interviews was coded and inductively analysed identifying emerging themes and sub-themes in line with the research questions and the aims of the study. Data from the research was matched, categorised, compared and contrasted for systematic presentation. As a qualitative study, data presentation was bolstered through verbatim quotations of the participants' responses and references to available literature on the research topic. For ethical and confidentiality purposes, the respondents were labelled as Respondent one (R, 1) etc.

Analysis and Discussions

The findings are presented on the basis of whether a particular response reflects a benign or malign intention by the 1998 South African-led military intervention in Lesotho. Although there were some respondents who felt the intervention was a benevolent move by the regional hegemon to restore law and order, the overwhelming majority of the participants maintained that it was indicative of a regional bully exerting its might on a weak regional neighbour. In light of the above Matlosa (1997) argues that, in its regional interactions South Africa remains a benign big brother whose interactions are motivated by protection of its long-term national interests. Therefore, if South Africa is to use its hegemonic role benevolently it would be "better advised to consider an approach and posture that is sensitive, shows modesty and learn to engage others in the region as partners not cronies to carry out Pretoria's wishes" (Habib, 2003: 7).

South Africa as a benevolent hegemon

There are views that since attaining a democratic majority rule in 1994, South Africa has proved to be a benign regional hegemon prepared to work in partnership with other regional member states for the development and stability of the region. In its foreign policy documents South Africa has pledged to shed the confrontational politics of apartheid and pursue politics of solidarity and engagement in dealing with regional affairs. According to Matlosa (1997, 122) "...regional relations have changed for the better: cooperation has replaced confrontation, diplomacy has taken the place of aggression and suspicion among states has been replaced by mutual trust." In fear of being labelled a regional big brother, South Africa has been compelled to maintain cordial regional relations. As such South Africa's regional foreign policy was shaped by its determination to shed the domination-subordinate relations which characterised the apartheid era. A democratic South Africa's foreign relation was therefore dictated by the fear of history (Ngoma 2005, Prys 2007, Habib, Internet, accessed, 03 February 2012). South Africa also feels that it owes the region for the sacrifice and contributions it made during the liberation of the country from the grips of apartheid. In one of the post-1994 statements on regional relations the South African government indicated that "[t]he region sustained us during our struggle and, with our own, its people's blood was spilled to end apartheid. Our destiny is intertwined with the region's; our people belong to each other..." (In Mulaudzi 2006: 16). The pledge here is that "South Africa would use its regional hegemony and

domination not against, but to the benefit of its neighbours (Matlosa, 1997: 119). This suggests that "...[a]lthough South African dominance inevitably creates a hegemonic position, the relations between the countries will have a more genuine multilateral character than in the exploitative regionalisation scenario. As the benevolent hegemonic regime is of mutual benefit for all countries in the region, the other states are also prepared to accept South African hegemony" (Oden etal 1995: 7-8). South Africa has been credited as a regional power which promotes multilateralism, partnership, solidarity, consensus building and engagement at both regional and global levels through multilateral organisations such as the SADC, the AU and the United Nations. In its approach to the DRC and Zimbabwe crisis South Africa refused to engage militarily and instead opted for a negotiated settlement of the crisis (Schoeman 2003, Habib and Selinyane, 2004, Prys 2007). Through its policy of African Renaissance, South Africa mediated conflicts in the Sudan, DRC, Zimbabwe and Burundi albeit with different levels of successes. This resonates with the belief that "hegemony can sometimes contribute to stabilizing conflict situations and need not always be associated solely with bullying dominance" (International Peace Academy, 2000: 13). The then South African Minister of Defence Mosiua Lekota maintained that the post-1994 South African foreign policy would be framed to provide peace and stability without appearing to be "a bull in a China shop rushing in as the old South African Defence Force did" (cited in Ngoma 2005: 159). With a foreign policy shift to a non-hegemonic cooperation South Africa "is now a potential peacemaker and peacekeeper" (Rotberg, 1995: 8). These cordial foreign policy positions put South Africa at the forefront of resolving not only regional but also continental and international political and security problems, therefore a benign hegemon. As such "[t]he idea of sub-regional actors like Nigeria and South Africa acting as potential hegemons in managing conflicts while controversial and contested, need not be negative. Due to the financial and military resources of these two states, they are often indispensable to regional efforts to manage conflicts. It may be sensible to harness this hegemonic potential into multilateral framework involving sub-regional organisations and the UN" (International Peace Academy, 2000). In the peace operations in which South Africa and Nigeria launched in Lesotho, and Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively the two regional hegemons contributed more than their regional partners.

Among other things, the fact that South Africa has been at the forefront of most regional peace missions as reflected in the cases of the DRC, Zimbabwe and Lesotho is a clear indication that South Africa is playing its leadership role effectively in partnership with other regional member states. In the international arena South Africa is regarded as "the point man" to always maintain peace and security in its backyard. The European Union, in its Communication of its new Strategic Partnership with South Africa stated that "South Africa has emerged as a leading nation and a peace broker in the region and on the African continent..." (Cited in Prys, 22007: 25). Proponents of this view maintain that South Africa has not at any time used its military might to invade any of the regional states (except for peace making and peacekeeping purposes) as is characteristic for some malign and dominant hegemons. Issaka used the same assumption to describe Nigeria as a benign regional hegemon. Inter-alia, that South Africa joined the SADC as an equal partner is an indication that, though preponderantly powerful, South Africa respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its regional neighbours therefore a benevolent member of the regional bloc. "South Africa as a benign hegemon would be prepared to provide a regime that is aiming at a more balanced regional development. The short term interests of South Africa...are tempered in favour of a regionalisation strategy which takes all interdependent ---albeit asymmetric---relations into consideration..." (Matlosa 1997: 120). Regionalism in Southern Africa can be deepened if South Africa is willing to play the role of a benevolent hegemon through mutually beneficial partnerships with its regional neighbours (Mulaudzi 2006).

Views and perceptions that the 1998 intervention had benign intent

Perceptions emerged from the responses of some participants that the South African-led military intervention was a benevolent action by the regional hegemon to maintain regional order and defend democracy as per the requirements of the SADC treaty of 1992, the Organ on Politics, Defence and

Security (OPDS) and Mutual Defence Pact (MDP) Protocols. Commenting on the intervention, The Cape Times Newspaper (cited in vale 2003: 121) noted that South Africa could not "...sit back and allow the subversion of democracy in any country" in the region. As an emerging democracy and regional superpower South Africa was increasingly required to play a leading role in regional peacekeeping and protection of democratic governance. Justifying the military intervention, the South African government stated that "the military faction in Lesotho threatened a democratically elected government and that the basic aim of the military intervention in the name of SADC was to restore stability in Lesotho" (du Plessis, 2000: 350).

As such the respondents who argued that the intervention had benevolent intents reasoned that SADC is a regional organisation mandated to assist a member state when there are threats to democracy and security which could destabilise regional peace. The SADC states "...had good reasons for wanting explicit commitment...to the norms of civil rule and democracy; they were not prepared to stand back and see that commitment breached...within the regional organisation" (Southall, 2001: 162). This is in reference to the military-cum monarchy coup against the then Prime Minister Mosisili's Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) government following the disputed 1998 elections. In light of this, Respondent 2 maintained that "...it is relevant and acceptable in our treaty...and protocols that the member states can support each member in the event that a member state feels threatened and that exactly what we did." The respondent further noted that "...that all of the member states accepted to enter into this protocol clearly saved as a stepping stone to have an assistance to be provided to other member states" (Interview with R, 2; 28 June 2010). It therefore follows that since Lesotho is a member of SADC and has ratified all its treaties and security protocols, the intervention was therefore a benign measure within the mandate of the regional bloc. As one of the respondents indicated "[i]f SADC is a democracy, one of its tenets is to ensure that we democratise the region...So where democracy is at stake, there can be no other justification...Here the rule of law, democracy itself was at stake. So it was justified" (Interview with R, 6; 19 August 2010).

It has also emerged that the intervention was benign as it was within the mandate of the 1994 SADC intervention in which the Troika of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe were tasked to be the guarantors of Lesotho democracy following the post-1993 electoral disputes and the subsequent coup against the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) government of Ntsu Mokhehle. After 1994, SADC was "...charged with looking after the affairs of Lesotho literally. The Troika in particular was to keep an eye on what was happening in Lesotho" (Interview with R, 15; 07 July 2011). The SADC countries "...have already been committed to be guarantors of democracy in Lesotho and they were already involved in the process" (Interview R, 7; 13 July 2010). The 1998 coup paralysed the government and the security forces were in the forefront of jeopardising democracy as such the guarantors of Lesotho democracy had to come in and restore order and democracy as mandated by the regional bloc in 1994. One of the respondents who formed the 1994 SADC Troika stated that "[t]his is where the Memorandum of Understanding came in. We gave an undertaking that we shall be umpires; we shall look at the play and adjudicate where we feel anyone of the two parties had gone against the agreement in Pretoria. ... This is why South Africa and Botswana went in..." (Interview with R, 10; 23 May 2011). In other words Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa as signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding "...remained seized with efforts to secure peace stability in Lesotho" (Interview with R, 13; 16 June 2011). As such to some respondents the intervention was legitimate and benign "...in terms of restoring the democratically elected government and also encouraging debate to see where the problem is" (Interview with R, 8; 10 August 2010). Respondent 7 further indicated that to some extent the South African and Botswana military intervention was motivated by the spirit of good neighbourliness since whenever there was a crisis in Lesotho, the two countries would be adversely affected. He stated that "I think the thing which motivated [the] countries to intervene was the spirit of brotherhood; the feeling that in any case...if Lesotho were to burn, where will Basotho go to" (Interview with R, 7; 13 July 2010). That the Lesotho Congress for Democracy was restored to power and peace and democracy were saved is a sign of constructive hegemon by South Africa in the SADC region. In the words of one respondent "it was a

frightening situation. Any force that could restore order and stability was definitely justified...the government has collapsed. The only force which could restore the government to power and thereby ensure... order was the SADC" (Interview with R 16, 07 July 2011).

Another reason advanced by those who felt the intervention was benevolent is that since Lesotho is geographically in the belly of South Africa, it is not surprising that the latter took the lead in preventing chaos which no doubt would endanger its newly established democracy. Molomo (1998: 8-9) argues that "Lesotho finds itself in an unenviable geo-political situation of being totally surrounded by... South Africa..." One respondent aptly captured the point thus "[h]ere was a political hot spot which was hanging in the bowels of South Africa so to speak. So it was only South Africa which could be expected to keep order within its geographical area. No other power" (Interview with R, 4; 04 August 2010). The South African Director General of Foreign Affairs L.H Evans stated in an interview that "Lesotho [is] totally surrounded by South Africa. Any instability in that small country has repercussions for us" (cited in Sejanamane, 1996: 70-71). As a result of the military-cum-monarchy coup Lesotho became volatile and ungovernable. The ugly security situation was aggravated by the fact that "such acts were undertaken by the institutions that are employed to ensure that there is peace and security in the country" (Interview with R, 2, 28 June 2010). Therefore military intervention was benign and justified to defuse the spread of violence in the entire region. The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) "...was no longer following the constitution or its reason for existence in whatever they did in Lesotho because they were...encouraging lawlessness" (Interview with R 12, 04 May 2011). There was, no doubt a benevolent reason for South Africa to intervene not only to restore law and order but also to contain the calamitous effects of influx of Basotho refugees in the country. As one respondent puts it "... if it depreciated because of state anarchy, South Africa was going to take its toll of casualties in uplifting and aiding Basotho...The problem was going to spill into Bloemfontein and further expand into South Africa and that would enhance insecurity of citizens in South Africa" (Interview with R 11, 04 May 2011). Both Botswana and South Africa as the closest neighbours of Lesotho were going to experience refugee influx if the anarchy in Lesotho was not nipped in the bud (Interviews with R 7, 11 and 16, 13 July 2010, 04 May 2011, and 07 July 2011 respectively). In view of the above, from a benign perspective South Africa would have benevolent interests in the stability of Lesotho to avoid destabilising turmoil in its belly. As the Commander of Operation Boleas Colonel Robbie Hartslief argues in the case of the Lesotho mission "[e]verything possible should be done to prevent civil war and this can be achieved only if intervention takes place before armed conflict can occur... (cited in Neethling 2000: 317).

It also emerged that the intervention was a benevolent move because it halted the violence and insecurity which engulfed the Kingdom following the coup and paralysis of the government. Sejanamane (1996: 81) feels that the military intervention halted the blood bath which was about to embrace Lesotho. He quizzed "[w]ould the two protagonists have resolved their destructive struggle without some form of tutelage and pressure? In all likelihood, the country would have degenerated into an all-out civil war with no possible clear winner." The loss of life, especially the assassination of the Deputy Prime Minister instilled a sense of fear and the SADC had to move in to protect life as a humanitarian measure. This was also in line with the SADC treaty pledge to intervene by whatever means in instances where there is large scale violence which threaten lives and gross violation of human rights and freedoms. According to one respondent "what was happening is that it reached a point where it was difficult for government and the people to conduct normal life..." But what really triggered the intervention was the killing of the Deputy Prime Minister Baholo. The soldiers "gunned him in cold blood. That really changed the tempo. The question was that if these guys can kill a whole Deputy Prime Minister, whom are they going to shoot next? So that is what really triggered the move into Lesotho" (Interview with R 12, 14 June 2011). In other words, "...the operation was directed at saving lives and preventing further escalation of violence...where a state of anarchy is anticipated or has already taken place" (Interview with R 11, 04 May 2011). For example, Article 11 (b) (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) on the jurisdiction of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security states that the SADC states are duty bound to intervene in intra-state conflicts in which there is large scale

violence between the state and the population amounting to genocide, ethnic cleansing and gross violation of human rights.

Among other things, suggestions that the 1998 South African-led military intervention in Lesotho was a benevolent action are based on the fact that the SADC was invited by a legitimate government of Lesotho. In fact in its treaty and security protocols the SADC should intervene upon invitation by the government of the day. Article 7 of the Mutual Defence Pact reads thus: "no action shall be taken to assist any State in terms of this Pact, save at the State partys's own request or with its consent..." (SADC Mutual Defence Pact, 2004). During the post-1998 electoral coup Prime Minister Mosisili wrote a letter to the then SADC Chair (South Africa under President Mandela) describing how a coup was unfolding in the Kingdom and how urgently the government needed a military intervention from the regional bloc to restore order, constitutional normalcy and democracy. In his letter requesting for assistance Prime Minister Mosisili described an ugly scenario "...of a city and government held at ransom by the demonstrators of the Basotho Congress Party(BCP), Basotho National Party (BNP) and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) with their leaders urging them on... The most serious tragedy is that the police and most particularly the army are at best spectators." The Prime Minister went on to state that "...[t]he only intervention I can and do request is of a military nature... It is against this background that I submit a formal and urgent request...in accordance with the SADC Agreements to put together, quickly a strong military intervention to help Lesotho return to normalcy"(cited in Molapo, 1999: 1). In view of the above several respondents deemed the intervention as a benign regional response from the regional members to assist a member state as per the regional treaty. The following are some of the responses to that effect:

- You must also realise that SADC did not take the unilateral decision. There was an invitation from the government of Lesotho particularly from the Prime Minister that a coup has occurred...and the government was in a state of paralysis...so the Prime Minister himself said the assistance we request is of military nature" (Interview with R 1, 25 may 2010).
- Lesotho had a legitimate government...it was the one that requested assistance from the regional body and the government had the right to ensure the security of the nation and protection of the entire citizens (Interview with R 2, 28 June 2010).
- It was the decision of the government that there should be an intervention. So the government in its wisdom found that it was necessary for the intervention to be carried out...A sovereign government has the right to do so...Whether some people were questioning its legitimacy or not, they were a government and they were entitled to call for intervention...They would account to the populace whether it was right to do so or not" (Interview with R 14, 20 June 2011).

With such evidence SADC or South Africa "cannot be faulted for coming to the help of a legitimate government, recently elected which has requested for assistance" (Southall, 2001: 166). In fact when there were questions as to why there was a military intervention in Lesotho, the Prime Minister told Parliament that "[t]he armed forces of Botswana and South Africa are in Lesotho at the express invitation of the government of Lesotho. That they are not an invasion but an intervention force" (Interview with R 13, 16 June 2011). The SADC has pledged in its protocols that it would not tolerate unconstitutional means of attaining power in the region. One respondent noted that "...we were happy in the manner in which SADC handled it (the intervention). There was not any other way. That was the government elected by the people. So other people were not accepting the outcomes of the elections..." As such the intervention was benign in terms of restoring the democratically elected government and also encouraging debates for peaceful resolution of the dispute (Paraphrase from interview with R6 and R 8, 19 August 2010 and 10 August 2010 respectively). As an emerging democracy South Africa was duty bound to defend democracy and protect democratically elected government in the region. This was in order "to avoid small election irregularities becoming a route for ambitious elements in the military forces in the sub-region to pursue their political ambitions" against democratically elected governments (Mashishi 2003: 80). In line with the above the South African cabinet endorsed the intervention as "principled and

correct" and commended the South African troops for the "firm manner in which they conducted themselves" (The Star, September 1998, cited in Vale, 2003: 128). In the view of the South African government the intervention was a benign action for the good of Lesotho and the region. Hence the then Government's spokesperson, Parks Mankahlana stated that "the candidness of our government does not deserve to be rewarded with verbal abuse and disingenuous disregard" (The Star 14 October 1998, cited in Pherudi, 2003: 131). The government further noted that the military intervention in Lesotho saved a democratically elected government and restored stability in Lesotho and the region (du Plessis, 2000). That the intervening forces restored order, established the Interim Political Authority (IPA), in which all political stakeholders were represented, reformed the electoral system, retrained the security establishments and prepared for the fair and free elections in 2002 are indications of the good intent of the South African-led intervention. That South Africa did not harbour any hegemonic occupation of Lesotho, she withdrew from the Kingdom after peace and stability was attained. South Africa, therefore "had a specific interest in restoring, or in assisting the Lesotho people to restore stability" (South Africa Department of Foreigfn Affairs, cited in Matlosa, 1997: 129).

Views/perceptions that South Africa is a malign hegemon

Numerous political commentators argue that in spite of the pledge for partnership and solidarity with other regional powers, in practice South Africa is a dominant malign regional hegemon. Post-1994 democratic South Africa has entrenched in its foreign policy pledges for effective partnership for collective socio-economic and political. However South Africa has used its economic and political might to stifle its comparatively weaker regional partners. Questions were rife as to whether South Africa would become a regional partner in redressing the past imbalances or would maintain existing inequalities as a regional powerhouse (Davies 1993, Matlosa 1997, Mulaudzi 2007). The question according to Davies (1993: 72) was would South Africa act "to promote its own partisan and immediately evident interests, while remaining resistant to the needs and demands of the rest of the region, and indifferent to longer term implications of reproducing or exacerbating existing imbalances or inequities." Van Nieuwkerk (1991: 1) aptly captures the fears of regional members as to "whether South Africa having achieved a black-led government, would actually undergo a complete change from one which exported violence to one which would live in harmony and utilise its economic dominance to improve the general economic levels of the region...as an accepted and trusted member of Southern African region."

Although South Africa has politically related peacefully with its regional partners in dealing with most of the regional conflicts through partnership, solidarity and consensus, (cooperative and participatory hegemony) its dominant hegemonic tendencies were reflected. Some regional powers, such as Zimbabwe and Angola have resented South Africa's hegemonic tendencies which they felt undermined their sovereign status. As Matlosa (1997) observed in international relations small states are usually vulnerable to actions of the regional hegemon's policies and strategic interests. And in Southern Africa these small states have not escaped this domination-subordination syndrome in their dealings with South Africa. The latter has been accused of playing "a patronising and paternalistic role of "big brother" (Matlosa, 1997: 118). The aim of a regional hegemon is to increase its powers within the framework of regional organisations. For example, in the economic sphere South Africa is the regional superpower. Its domination and promotion of unfair trade relations with its neighbours has been resented by others. In the SADC region according to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, "South Africa cherishes the notion that because it is developed country in the region it can use the other SADC countries as receptacles of its goods while protecting its industries" (cited in Cooper and Taylor, 2001: 35). This is characteristic of a dominant hegemon bent on stifling the development of its regional neighbours.

Within the SADC regional bloc, South Africa as the regional hegemon has played a prominent role in security and stability in the region. It was involved in resolving the Zimbabwean crisis through the policy of quiet diplomacy and negotiation within the security protocols of the regional bloc. However, there are numerous commentators who feel that the 1998 military intervention in the Kingdom of Lesotho was

reflective of malign regional tendencies by South Africa. Together with Botswana, South Africa militarily intervened in the Kingdom under the auspices of the regional bloc. The intervention was marred by legitimacy controversies since it was not clear as to whether the SADC mandated the intervention. Worse still, it was not authorised by the United Nation's Security Council as per its Charter. Southall (2001: 167) noted that "[t]here is little doubt that peacekeeping is essentially a UN responsibility that should be endorsed by the world body and conducted in accordance with the international ethos of the UN Charter." According to the International Peace Academy, (2000: 12) "[i]t remains unclear what form of approval (if any) was given to the South Africa-Botswana intervention in Lesotho in 1998." Nathan (2004: 12) opines that "in the absence of a summit approval, the deployment did not comply with the SADC decision-making rules." Illustrating this defect one of the respondents argued that "...there was never a SADC sanction. There was never an African Union sanction and there was never a United Nations' sanction in respect of the intervention" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011). Furthermore it is not clear who took the decision, where it was taken and what the decision entailed (de Conning 1998). That the operation was fraught with legitimacy questions led to several perceptions that the intervention was not a SADC mission but a South African operation to exert its regional muscle on its weaker and vulnerable neighbour. Mashishi (2003) argues that the South African government realised that the conflict was an opportune moment to establish its hegemonic role. The mission was dominated by South Africa with the largest number of troops (6000) and South Africa was the first to enter Lesotho militarily. That is "it was South Africa that initiated the possibility of mounting peace intervention on Lesotho. It was the South African troops that...intervened first without a proper mandate from SADC" (Mashishi, 2003: 84).

Worse still, the South African troops were accused of hoisting the South Africa flag and the mission's command structure was headquartered in Bloemfontein (South Africa). In view of this situation one respondent commented that the involvement of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) "was to improve the image that it must be SADC, not South Africa, conducting the intervention" (Intervention with R 4, 08 August 2010). This precipitated the views that the mission was a South African incursion on its weaker neighbour (Molomo 1998, Mashishi 2003, Ngoma 2005). As such "the extent to which one can in all honesty refer to...the Lesotho intervention as a SADC operation is doubtful" (Schoeman, 2002 :20). This means that "any justifications for military intervention on the grounds that it is in the interests of peace should be in line with the UN Charter" (Neethling 2000: 317). However in the case of Lesotho, peacekeeping and peacemaking through peaceful measures were sacrificed for coercive power politics for the gratification of the regional hegemon (Vale 2003). Therefore in the case of Lesotho "one is hard pressed to dispel the thinking that it was the case of the strong prevailing over the weak" (Molomo (1998): 8). Even if the decision emanated from noble motivations and intentions, it was adversely soiled by numerous questions on its legality. Among other things, from time immemorial military intervention has always been regarded as "a tool of the powerful against the weak...of world politics against these marginalised or peripheral" states (du Plessis, 2002: 38).

The controversial South African-led military intervention aggravated the "...already growing resentment throughout the region at what was increasingly perceived to be South Africa's new hegemony. The dubious legality of the intervention and Lesotho's defacto status as an encircled and powerless dependency inevitably encouraged perceptions that South Africa was a bully" (Southall, 2001: 167). According to Molomo (1998: 8) "the question of paramount importance in the Lesotho intervention is whether or not it was legitimate? [And] "this begs a further question, legitimate for whom?" A BCP leader lashed out that South Africa was exploiting the Lesotho crisis as an excuse to flex its muscle in the region (Mashshi 2003, Ngoma, 2005). The intervention was therefore viewed by the Lesotho Defence Force and opposition protestors as an invasion by the powerful South Africa with the intent to incorporate the Kingdom as her tenth province (Southall, 1999a). Opposition politicians felt that South Africa's "...real agenda for intervening was to prepare the way for the eventual political integration of Lesotho" (Southall, 1999b: 7). A Member of Parliament for the defunct New National Party, Geldenhuys also shared the view that the military intervention was to annex Lesotho. he questioned "[w]hy [if that was not

the intention] was the South African flag hoisted on the premises of the Palace? Was this to demonstrate a deed of annexation because this is how it is interpreted in Lesotho" (cited in Molapo, 1999: 2-3). The intervention seriously cast doubts on the sovereignty of Lesotho as an encircled and highly dependent impoverished state. In light of this Sejanamane (1996: 60-61) stated that the South African led military intervention "...signalled the end of an era where Lesotho could even remotely claim to be a sovereign state in Southern Africa."

With such views, the intervention could not be interpreted as constructive or with any benign intent but an incursion which compromised the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country by a dominant regional bully. It was such perceptions which triggered a gallant resistance from Basotho against the South African National Defence Force. As one BCP leader puts it "[a]ny intervention from outside will be interpreted by our people (the Basotho) as an aggression against King Letsie and his Kingdom...Lesotho is a sovereign state and not a SADC colony" (cited in Ngoma, 2005: 33). According to one respondent "[t]here was an understanding that South Africa was invading and taking over the country. And all, by and large, that was the information that was being spread over that South Africa is taking over the country. And again when South Africans got to the Palace, they raised their flag and that was very offensive... It was assumed that these people are now raising up their flag at the highest seat of government in Lesotho. Basically it meant that South Africa has taken over. That is how it was interpreted and that is one of those things that led to the mass uprising by the people who said we would rather burn down everything else" (Interview with R, 14, 20 June 2011).

Several participants raised the above stated views which reflected that the South African led-military intervention was an invasion on a weak and vulnerable nation-state. The 1998 intervention sparked responses such as "military incursion", "violation of the Basotho sovereignty, territorial integrity and nationhood" "and interference in the domestic affairs of Lesotho." The humiliation of the military intervention was aptly captured by respondent 19, thus "...the military might will always hurt someone. And we...felt we have been raped as men when a man comes into your country and bombards your army places, even entering the palace and pointing guns at the King's house. That was the biggest humiliation we have ever suffered as a nation" (Interview with R 19, 07 July 2011). One of the respondents reacted that "it was not an intervention. I call it interference in our domestic affairs. It was a purely political matter between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and opposition parties over how the LCD was running the country" (Interview with R 18, 07 July 2011). The following precepts further illustrate how several participants viewed the 1998 military intervention as a malign South African move which compromised Lesotho's independence and territorial integrity:

- The intervention was not justified to the extent that it went to encroach on the sovereignty of the country" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011)
- If you have an external force intervention, with that kind of superior military might and totally subordinating the country, that country is not sovereign at least during the temporary occupation...Lesotho lost its sovereignty during the entire SADC military presence in the country...They determined and directed the course of things and processes, how people behaved and so on...which of course was unconstitutional (Interview with R 16, 07 July 2011).
- It was a violation of international law. It was total interference, unwarranted and not supported by any legal instrument" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011).
- So to them we are not an independent country. We are not a sovereign country. They think we are just a small boy on which they can do anything they like in our country. And we feel so bad about it (Interview with R 18, 07 July 2011).

With such perceptions, it would be difficult for Basotho nationalists to regard the military intervention as benign. This is because at the material time Lesotho's continuing independence was in very large measure

dependent upon adherence to regionally endorsed and imposed sovereign norms (Southall and Petlane, 1995).

Another reason advanced by those who question the justification of the military intervention as a benevolent move by South Africa is that the SADC (South Africa) is not consistent in its application of interventions. They accuse the regional hegemon (South Africa) of double standards. The respondents who hold this view felt that while South Africa swiftly moved into Lesotho through coercive measures she has not done the same in the DRC, Zimbabwe and Madagascar which they feel have been embraced by similar political turmoil. One respondent quizzed as to "why they don't go sending an army into Zimbabwe...Why don't they do it in Madagascar now? Why don't they do it in the DRC? Why did they do it in Lesotho only?" (Interview with R 18, 07 July 2011). The perceptions that South Africa as a regional hegemon is selective in its coercive interventions inevitably triggered views that she only targets the weaker member states to intervene militarily. In view of that one of the respondents noted that "...it all depends on who you are. Look at what is happening in Zimbabwe...in Madagascar. They didn't do anything except what happened in Lesotho. The cases of Zimbabwe and Madagascar shows you that they are double standard people or they were able to only attack the weaker" (Interview with R 19, 07 July 2011). Makoa (1998) lambasted South Africa for being fork-tongued in its regional foreign policy because while it advocated dialogue in the DRC, it swiftly engaged militarily in the case of Lesotho. In the same vein, Reverend Meshoe of the opposition African Christian Democratic Party said "[w]e fail to understand why our executive did not use the same caution and wisdom before deciding to invade the tiny Kingdom of Lesotho" (cited in Molapo, 1999: 3). According to the South African Council of Churches, the military intervention "...denied the basic premise upon which our democratic nation was founded, the principle of negotiated settlement and peaceful resolution of differences by the parties concerned without any dominating intrusion of outside forces" (Khadalie, cited in Likoti, 2006: 177).

Within these parameters Molomo questioned whether coercive measures would be applied if there was an abrogation of democracy in any other Southern African country. For instance "[i]f the governments of Zimbabwe or South Africa faced similar problems, would SADC forces intervene?" (Molomo, 1998: 8). Said differently "it begs the same question as to why when we saw that human rights were being violated in Zimbabwe there was no [military] intervention...." (Interview with R 7, 13 July 2010). One respondent diplomatically answered the question in turn revealing that the coercive intervention was also driven by the small size of Lesotho. He said "[n]o I don't think we took advantage of the smallness of Lesotho. But at the same time, it could have been difficult if Lesotho were South Africa. We would have wished to go in but would have found the game was not worth the gamble. We would not achieve the intended objectives...Certainly we thought Lesotho was not as powerful as South Africa" (Interview with R 10, 23 May 2011). This response gives credence to the view that the intervention was a malevolent move by a regional power over a vulnerable neighbour. It follows therefore, as one of the respondents puts it that "when it comes to the powerful members of SADC, no similar interventions can be conducted, whether it is South Africa or Zimbabwe. No. So Lesotho was an easy target because of its small size" (Interview with R 4, 04 August 2010). This confirms Santho's (2000: 1) assertion that "small states are susceptible to risks and threats, both internal and external sources. Such states have a relatively lower threshold than larger states given the interaction between size and vulnerability." In view of these perceptions, there is no shade of doubt that questions were raised as to whether the South African-led intervention in Lesotho was motivated by the small size and the engulfed geographical location of Lesotho within the regional giant which is South Africa (Ngoma 2005). This is mainly because military intervention is "primarily the prerogative of the more developed, influential and rich actors in world politics" (du Plessis 20002, 37). In the case of Lesotho it is difficult to dispel the perception that it was the case of a regional hegemon prevailing over the weak and geographically engulfed Lesotho (Molomo, 1998). Sejanamane (1996: 82) argues that military intervention in Lesotho "...was possible because of the diminutive status of Lesotho in Southern Africa. (Since) the mechanisms which were used cannot be reproduced in other circumstances and in countries like Zimbabwe for example."

That there are doubts as to whether the South African–led military intervention in Lesotho was a benevolent expedition is also borne by the fact that South Africa required Lesotho to pay for the expenses and destruction which resulted from the intervention. Article 13 of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho (1998: 6) states that "[t]he Parties agree that the Receiving Party shall be liable to the Sending Party for all real expenses and costs incurred by the Sending Party, the Receiving Party shall pay expenses and costs within a period of 30 (thirty) days. Interim accounts may be lodged by the Sending Party and upon conclusion of the military assistance; a final account shall be lodged." If indeed it was a humanitarian mission to safeguard democracy, human rights and human lives as justified by the South African government, it baffles the mind why then; an economic giant such as South Africa would require compensation from such a small, vulnerable and economically dependent nation such as Lesotho. This also gave credence to the established suspicions as to whether the military intervention was really a SADC peace operation or a South African mission driven by its national agenda and interests. In fact, if it was truly a SADC mission, mandated by the regional bloc within its operational rules and modalities, the SADC should bear the costs of the operation. Inter-alia, the intervention agreement would have been signed between the government of Lesotho and the SADC as the regional body rather with an individual member state. The fact that the agreement was signed with South Africa, which in turn required to be paid for the operation gave credibility to the suspicions that the mission was a South African hegemonic adventure. In light of this, one of the respondents stated that "[t]hen we are saying payments were made to South Africa. Lesotho paid South Africa...If it was a SADC exercise; the expenses would have been that of SADC isn't it. And the question is, would SADC have charged Lesotho for intervening in a political conflict? We don't think so" (Interview with R 17, 08 June 2011). The respondent further argued that people should not be deceived by the retroactive statement from the SADC headquarters that the mission was sanctioned by the organisation because "[i]n our humble view it was just an afterthought...A cover up of something that had been done already. It was not initiated by them. That is why we are saying in so far as we are concerned; the so called SADC intervention in Lesotho was in no way a SADC intervention but a South African intervention" (Interview with R 17, 08 June 2011). With such evidence, one is compelled to agree with those who hold that the operation was dressed as a SADC operation for political expedience to safeguard the image of the regional body and the integrity of South Africa from being labelled a regional bully.

It is on record that both Botswana and South Africa used their national resources during the intervention. It has also been established that while South Africa saddled the already poor Lesotho with the costs of the mission, Botswana pledged to cover for the expenses of its participation in the operation. This was in spite of the fact that "[t]he Botswana Defence Force was stretched to the limit by this operation which ate into their coffers for that financial year" (Interview with R 13, 16 June 2011). In light of the above, it is Botswana which should be acknowledged for its benign intentions in the Kingdom rather than the regional hegemon which pushed its dominant malign agenda in the Kingdom.

Among other things, there is an established perception in international relations politics that a nation will always intervene in another when its national interests are in jeopardy. Realists belief that no nation would sacrifice its resources when there are no benefits be they economic, political or strategic that would boost it status or position. Powerful nations have always intervened, mainly in comparatively weaker countries with the false pretext of defending democracy, protecting human rights and lives, while in actual fact they are defending their national interests (Arend and Beck 1993, du Plessis 2000, Vale 2003, Terriff etal, 2004, Van Walraven 2005). Vale (2003: 123) asserts that "intervening powers establish their credentials through the technical aspects of the mission –casting intervention in narrow, non-political terms, a process that sanitises its true purpose. This approach...avoids the necessity of asking the important political and moral questions that are at the base of the intervention." In resonate with this view one respondent stated that "member states, no matter what framework we put in place, they will always go where they have those interests. National interests at the end of the day call the shots. We may agree as

a region that we need to intervene in a particular area, but as to where we will go, individual member states will determine that on the basis of their interests" (Interview with R 14, 20 June 2011).

There are many commentators and Basotho who feel that the 1998 South African-led military intervention had nothing much to do with the SADC and defence of regional peace and security. On the contrary, it was a resource-motivated hegemonic invasion of Lesotho. South Africa was pushing its realist agenda of bolstering its economic grip on Lesotho to also protect its economic interests in the Kingdom. The most cited economic resource which South Africa is said to have moved in to defend is the Lesotho Highland Water Project; the Katse Dam which is vital for the supply of hydropower to her manufacturing industries in the Gauteng Province. South Africa has invested hugely in the project hence swift intervention to safe guard it during the post-1998 election coup. This was mainly reflected by the fact that while the disturbances were mainly concentrated in the capital Maseru, the South African National Defence Force descended in land to the dam and killed all the Lesotho Defence Force soldiers on guard at the dam. It is not surprising that many people still belief South Africa was only motivated by protection of its national interests rather than that of Lesotho. In light of this Matlosa (cited in Vale, 2002: 127-128) vividly argues that the intervention "...was part of the grand scheme and notably at the heart of the entire South African National Defence Force intervention. And the fact that the project was the very first target of the entire military operation makes perfect sense in terms of the hierarchy of South Africa interests in Lesotho."

If the motivation for the intervention was protection of her economic and political interests, then the South African military intervention in Lesotho is "a typical case where countries use the pretext of international organisations to further their own interests" (Discussants at the African Dialogue on Lesotho, 1999: 26). As such "[t]he substance of the factual rationale or motivation for the intervening parties must be studied, since they impinge heavily on the character, execution and outcome of intervention" (Van Walraven, 2005: 79). The point is that more often than not, "[t]he publicly aired motives for intervention are not ipso-facto evidence of the rationale of the third party actors" (Van Walraven, 2005: 79-80).

Against this background several respondents argued that South Africa had no benign intentions for intervention other than defence of its national interests. One respondent noted that "when SADC intervenes, it should be with a view to protect the interests of that nation; the member state. Then they can say the interests of this nation are at stake as a member state. We intervened to safeguard, to protect those interests and the wellbeing of that state. But with this intervention, it was not so. It was merely a dictation of South Africa as a stronger neighbour and purely for economic interests" (Interview with R 17, 08 June 2011). One of the questions which persisted within the responses of the opposition participants is, since the protests were concentrated in Maseru, why did the South African troops capture the dam inland? The answer to this question coalesced around the suspicion that South Africa was on a dominant realist mission to defend her national assert. Thus another respondent observed that "[t]he first moment they came in, once their armoured vehicles entered the border, they were already at Katse right inside the country...In the early hours of that morning, they did not only occupy the Highlands Water area, they actually massacred the Lesotho soldiers who were on guard....Remember that there were no protests at Katse. The protests were in Maseru the capital city. But instead they went to their only interest; water; to purely safeguard their national interest-the Highland Water Scheme" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011). The same sentiments were echoed by respondent 18 who felt South Africa was only eyeing its water resources and other economic endowments. He stated that "[w]e control all the water here...We have a lot of things which South Africa is eyeing and that is why South Africa has always been wishing Lesotho becomes part of South Africa so that we can share these resources" (Interview with R 18, 07 July 2011).

The view that the 1998 South African military-led military intervention was a benign move in defence of a democratic government has been highly contested by mainly respondents from the opposition parties. They felt that South Africa was being hypocritical in that the Langa Commission instituted by the South African government to investigate the sources of the post-election disputes found that there were

irregularities in the conduct of the elections although it surprisingly concluded that the irregularities do not warrant the annulment of the election outcomes. To the opposition, if South Africa is a true champion of democracy as it claims, it should not have supported the LCD government which attained power through fraudulent polls. To the opposition, the South African government could not have been benign in its intervention since it betrayed the Lesotho voters to safeguard an undemocratic government. If it was benign in its intentions, it should have listened to the cries of the masses who felt unfairly denied of victory through fraudulent polls. In view of this Molomo, (1998: 9) questioned whether the intervention was "...on behalf of the people or the government of Lesotho." The fact that the commission was instituted by South Africa, not SADC, and was led by a South African judge Pius Langa, and the fact that the release of the report was delayed gave credit to suspicions that it was being doctored by the South African government to help the LCD government remain in power despite the irregularities which brought them to power. As Reverend Stanley Mogoba of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) stated "[t]he manner in which we (South Africa) handled the Langa Commission report was very clumsy. We took so long and tensions in Lesotho complicated the situation instead of simplifying them...The added problem is the legitimacy of the present government in the light of the Langa Report and...it is an embarrassment to us... But the critical point is that if we intervene in Lesotho, it should be for the sake of defending Basotho...rather than the present government" (cited in Molapo, 1999: 3). In light of this one respondent accused SADC, under the control of South Africa of always protecting autocratic rulers at the expense of the brutalised masses. He argued that for instance "you find that when people, say in Lesotho or in Zimbabwe, when Mugabe kills ordinary citizens, none of the SADC countries will ever tell Mugabe that look, you are doing nonsense. But when the people in Zimbabwe can rise against Mugabe, you will see SADC then stepping in. In Lesotho the same thing happened...we tried to speak to SADC, we wrote to SADC, we sent emissaries to SADC, they just kept a blind eye as if nothing has happened. But when we rose against Mosisili, they came rushing into the country, and acted like a big bully" (Interview with R 18, 07, July 2011).

The majority of opposition respondents expressed serious misgivings about South Africa as a regional leader and champion of democracy due to the casual manner in which it handled the findings of the Langa Report. The delayed release of the report exacerbated the suspicions that it was being doctored in favour of the government and tensions intensified. One of the respondents expressed his disappointment when he said the report "was referring to some irregularities that may have happened and we were of the view that may be from that report...measures would be put in place to rectify what was done wrong. But that is not what came to be...The report was never published to the nation. In fact, when we thought that it would be given to the stakeholders, it was taken to Mauritius and there after everything stalled" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011). The Basotho opposition felt South Africa, under the auspices of SADC was engaged on a grand scheme to assist the LCD government to stay in power instead of reasoning with the democratic concerns of the Basotho electorates. One respondent concluded that "SADC was intervening on behalf of, or was reacting in that way...sort of saving the face of a fellow SADC member state" (Interview with R 7, 13 July 2011). The above perspective was shared by another interviewee who noted that "there is no good will in the running of SADC because SADC is run by people who are not vey democratic themselves. It's not an entity or an establishment that is for people. In fact, it is an entity for rulers; for the power holders; those who are in power. That is the problem with SADC. It cannot be effective in that sense because we say it now becomes an entity whose function is but to protect those in power. It is a club of rulers. They protect each other; they make favours for each other" (Interview with R 17, 08 July 2011). The organisation is therefore "losing face in the territories of operation because the decisions it takes are those of the government of the day" (Interview with R 5, 04 August 2010). The feeling that South Africa was bent on propping up the LCD government against the will of the Basotho populace was also shared by respondent 19, who stated that "it's always South Africa's hand that really translates everything into action rather than the body itself" (Interview with R 19, 07 July 2011). This implies that South Africa, in the case of Lesotho acted as a dominant hegemon which marginalised the regional body for its selfish national interests. As Fawcett and Hurrell (1995: 52) observe, "[i]f the

hegemony is in an extremely dominant position, the very extent of that power may make institutions, and in this case institutionalised regionalism unnecessary or at best marginalised." In the case of the Lesotho military intervention South Africa may have used its might to overshadow the regional body. For instance, it was the South African government that received a request from Lesotho and initiated the military mission in Lesotho without a clear mandate from SADC (Mashishi 2003: 84). It this sense, it is logical to view South Africa as having acted as a dominant regional hegemon over Lesotho. In light of the above one respondent mentions that "...it was not the SADC which was planning. It was just between the countries interested to assist the Lesotho government" (Interview with R 8, 10 August 2010).

Conclusion

From the arguments above, it can be concluded that although there were positive gains from the intervention such as the restoration of democracy, law and order in Lesotho, the formation of an Interim Political Authority (IPA), reforms of the First Past the Post electoral system, retraining of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) which are indicative of benign results, the controversies surrounding the legality of the mission and the lack of clarity as to whether it was a SADC mission and the unprofessional conduct of South African troops in Lesotho give credibility to the suspicions that South Africa hid behind the regional organisation to project its regional might and defend its national interests. South Africa hid behind the pretext of defending regional peace, democracy, protecting human lives and human rights while she was mainly entrenching her dominant position in the region. In its regional relations, South Africa will always preach regional consensus, partnership and solidarity while its main agenda in practice is to prop up its regional power. In other words "[t]he affairs of the region [will] continue to pivot around the strongest player...South Africa as the first in a community of unequals" (Vale, 2003: 123). It can further be concluded that South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 constituted a paradox for Lesotho – a welcome crisis" (Southall, 1999a, 20). This is because for Lesotho "...to assert its independence and sovereignty, it has to find the right balance to co-exist with its powerful neighbour on mutually beneficial terms. The maintenance of that balance has not been [and will not be] easy for the Kingdom" (Molomo, 1998: 8-9).

Implications for teaching and learning

The findings of the study have crucial implications for teaching and learning. This is because conflicts are ineradicable in human society including schools. It is important for education curriculum and classroom instructions to instil and entrench conflict resolution strategies and skills among students. In the school context students should be conscientised on the significance of peace and stability, a conducive school environment, and good working relations between students and teachers for effective teaching and learning to take place. School curriculum and system should teach students and train teachers on how best to resolve conflicts, be it among students and/or students and teachers through problem-solving, and win-win mechanisms rather than bullying, intimidation and imposition of authority which aggravate the conflict situation. Lastly teaching and learning should embrace problem-solving skills so that they contribute to conflict management and resolution in their communities and country (Thapa, 2015).

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