Regionalism in theory and practice:
The transformative potential of civil society in Southern Africa

by
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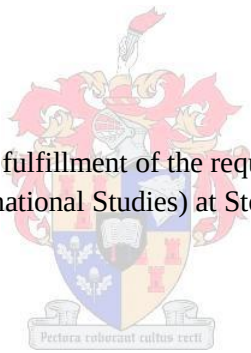

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Declaration

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Abstract

This study seeks to analyse regionalism in theory as well as in practice with regard to the Southern African region. Its purpose is thereby twofold: Firstly, this work claims to make a contribution to critical and reflectivist theorising of regionalism. The study of regionalism remains highly dominated by rationalist theories focusing predominantly on states as regionalising actors as well as on formal inter-state frameworks and market-led processes of regional integration. The hegemonic status of these approaches reinforces a specific form of regionalism which is compatible with neoliberal practices in the world economy. In order to reveal shortcomings and normative tenets of conventional theories and to account for the complexity and multidimensionality of regional projects and processes, a combination of theoretical insights from Robert W. Cox's Critical Theory (CCT) as well as from the New Regionalism(s) Approach (NRA) are proposed as the theoretical framework for the study. The second objective is to bring civil society as a regionalising actor into the debate. Focusing on the highly exclusive and elite-driven regional project pursued by the region's most comprehensive inter-state framework, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the study addresses the question, as to what extent civil society at the regional level can act as a transformative force in terms of people-centred socio-economic development and social equity.

After introducing crucial meta-theoretical, conceptual and methodological considerations, the major theoretical contributions to the study of regionalism are reviewed critically and a critical/reflectivist approach is proposed as an alternative to mainstream rationalist theorising. In a broad historical overview, the social, political, economic and cultural contexts which characterize the contemporary region of Southern Africa are discussed. Subsequently, four regional civil society organisations, namely the SADC Council of Non-governmental Organisations (CNGO), the Southern African Trade Union's Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) and the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN), are scrutinized with the intention to assess their transformative potential within SADC. The research conducted for the study is based on an eclectic employment of a combination of mostly qualitative methods, among them field research interviews, participatory observations as well as the analysis of primary and secondary sources/data.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from this work: Firstly, an explicitly anti-reductionist and critical theoretical approach is seen as essential to account for the myriad of multi-level structural as well as agency-related factors influencing regionalism and regionalisation in Southern Africa. Secondly, the impact of regional civil society actors investigated in this study with regard to a more socio-economically inclusive form of regionalism remains limited, because of institutional and structural constraints, limited representativeness and a lack of strategic coordination among civil society organisations. Nevertheless, recent developments within civil society at the regional level also provide some reasons for optimism that a broader societal movement might be evolving which, as a transformative alliance, could challenge SADC's contemporary approach to regionalism.

Opsomming

Die studie probeer om regionalisme teoreties en empiries te analiseer met as fokus die Suider-Afrikaanse streek. Derhalwe is die navorsingsdoelstelling tweevoudig, eerstens, is die navorsing daarop gemik om ’n bydrae te lewer tot die kritiese en reflektiewe teoretisering van regionalisme. Die bestudering van regionalisme word steeds oorweldigend oorheers deur rasionalistiese teorieë, en fokus primêr op state as die belangrikste streeks-akteurs, asook op formele inter-staat raamwerke en mark-verwante prosesse van streeksintegrasie. Die hegemoniese status van hierdie benaderinge bekragtig ’n spesifieke vorm van regionalisme wat saamhang met neoliberale praktyk in die wêreld-ekonomie. Ten einde die tekortkominge en normatiewe aannames van konvensionele teorieë uit te wys, asook om rekening te gee van die kompleksiteit en multi-dimensionaliteit van streeks-projekte en prosesse, word ’n kombinasie van teoretiese insigte gebruik uit Robert W. Cox se Kritiese Teorie (CCT), asook insigte uit die Nuwe Regionalisme-benadering (NRA) en aan die hand gedoen as teoretiese vertrekpunt vir die studie. Die tweede navorsingsdoelwit is om die burgerlike samelewing as streeks-akteur binne die analise te inkorporeer. Met as empiriese fokus, die hoogs eksklusiewe en elite-gedrewe streeks-projek wat bedryf word deur die mees omvattende inter-staat streeksinstelling, die Suider-Afrikaanse Ontwikkelingsgemeenskap (SAOG), evalueer en assesseer die studie die vraag tot watter mate die burgerlike samelewing op streeksvlak kan optree as ’n krag vir verandering binne die raamwerk van mensgesentreerde sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling en sosiale gelykberegtiging.

Na die bekendstelling van ’n aantal meta-teoretiese, konseptuele en metodologiese oorweginge wat van kardinale belang is, word die hoofstroom teoretiese bydraes tot die bestudering van regionalisme krities beskou, en word ’n krities/reflektiewe benadering voorgestel as ’n alternatiewe benadering. Vervolgens word ’n breë historiese oorsig van die sosiale, politieke, ekonomiese en kulturele kontekste wat kenmerkende is van die teenswoordige Suider-Afrikaanse streek gelewer. Hierna word vier burgerlike samelewings-organisasies, naamlik, die SAOG Raad vir Nie-regeringsorganisasies (CNGO), die Suider-Afrikaanse Vakbonde Koördineringsraad (SATUCC), die Ekonomiese Regverdigheidsnetwerk (EJN) van die Gemeenskap van Christelike Rade in Suider-Afrika (FOCCISA) en die Suider-Afrikaanse Mense Solidariteitsnetwerk (SAPSN), onder die loep geneem ten einde hul veranderingspotensiaal binne SAOG te assesseer. Die navorsing wat hiervoor onderneem is, is gegrond binne ’n eklektiese vermenging van hoofsaaklik kwalitatiewe metodes, insluitende veldnavorsing-onderhoude, deelnemende waarneming, asook die analise van primêre en sekondêre bronne en data.

Twee belangrike gevolgtrekking word, ten slotte, gemaak. Eerstens, ’n eksplisiete en anti-reduksionistiese, krities-teoretiese benadering word as essensieël beskou om rekenskap te kan gee vir die meervoudige en meervlakkige strukturele asook agent-verwante faktore wat regionalisme en regionalisasie in Suider-Afrika beïnvloed. Tweedens, die impak van die burgerlike samewelings-akteurs waarop hierdie studie gefokus het, om ’n meer sosio-ekonomiese inklusiewe vorm van regionalisme tot stand te bring, is beperk. Die redes hiervoor is van ’n institutionele en strukturele

aard, beperkte verteenwoordiging en ’n gebrek aan strategiese koördinering tussen burgelike samelewings-organisasies in die streek. Nietemin, is daar redes vir optimisme wat voortspruit uit onlangse ontwikkelinge binne die streek se burgerlike samelewings organisasies. Hieruit is dit moontlik dat ’n breë sosiale beweging sou kon ontwikkel wat, in die vorm van ’n veranderings-gerigte alliansie, die SAOG se huidige benadering tot regionalisme kan uitdaag.

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Let me finally lose some words about this continent which has exerted so much fascination on me over the last couple of years. The beauty and diversity of Africa as well as the amicability, happiness and frugality of its people are simply breathtaking. In many regards I consider Africans therefore as much richer than the rest of us. My thoughts shall remain with the many needy ones in Africa who, despite the continent's richness, suffer because of the overgrown material wealth of a few. Let me close with a

quote I did not find while studying the Bible, but rather stumbled over in a book by Fredrik Söderbaum whose research has inspired me greatly:

"For the needy
shall not always be forgotten:
the expectation of the poor
shall not perish forever."
Psalm 9: 18

Stellenbosch, October 2012

AT Zajontz

Contents

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
AEC	African Economic Community
AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
AIDC	Alternative Information Development Centre
ANC	African National Congress
ANSA	Alternatives to Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa
ASSOTSI	Associação dos Operadores e Trabalhadores do Sector Informal
AZIEA	Alliance for Zambian Informal Economy Associations
BLS	Group of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
CCT	Coxian Critical Theory
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
EAEC	East African Economic Community
EBA	Everything But Arms
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
EJN	Economic Justice Network
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPC	European Political Community
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FANR	SADC Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLS	Frontline States
FTA	Free Trade Area
FOCCISA	Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution plan
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
HDI	Human Development Index
HIIK	Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
IS	SADC Directorate of Infrastructure and Services
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
LDC	Least Developed Country
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MNC	Multi-national Corporation

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWENGO	Mwelekeo wa NGO
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NP	National Party
NRA	New Regionalism(s) Approach
NRsA	New Regionalisms Approach/Weave-world
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OPDSC	SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation
PDSC	SADC Directorate of Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation
PPRM	SADC Directorate of Policy Planning and Resource Mobilisation
REC	Regional Economic Community
RISDP	SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RPRF	Regional Poverty Reduction Framework
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADC-CNGO	Southern African Development Community Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAPSN	Southern African People's Solidarity Network
SATUCC	Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council
SAYM	Southern African Youth Movement
SDI	Spatial Development Initiative
SHDSP	SADC Directorate of Social and Human Development and Special Programmes
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TDCA	Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement
TIFI	SADC Directorate of Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment
TNC	Transnational Cooperation
UDAO	Union Douanière de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (West African Customs Union)
UDEAC	Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (Economic and Customs Union of Central African States)
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECLA	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
UNISA	University of South Africa
WOA	World Order Approach
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZISA	Zimbabwe Informal Sector Association
ZTUC	Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress

For practical reasons the following abbreviations are used in relation to references:

art	article
ch	chapter(s)
n	foot-/endnote
nd	no date
sn	*sine nomine* (no named publisher)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

> "For a century the dynamics of modern society was [*sic*] governed by a double movement: the market expanded continuously but this movement was met by a countermovement checking the expansion in definite directions. Vital though such a countermovement was for the protection of society, in the last analysis it was incompatible with the selfregulation of the market, and thus with the market system itself" (Polanyi 1944: 130).

Against the backdrop of the current global economic crisis and its devastating effects on the livelihoods of a majority of the world's population, the questions related to structural transformation, raised by Karl Polanyi over 60 years ago in his work on the rise and fall of the market society, have become salient once again: Are we witnessing an overexpansion of the free market? What are the chances for a "return of the political" as a means of societal self-protection? Are regions – as anticipated by Polanyi – going to be the *loci* of the "countermovement" in a second great transformation? And, who are the crucial agents for progressive social change? (Hettne 2006: 60-61; 2005: 30-38 and 1999: 6-7; see also Murray 2012: 150; Polanyi 1944; Block 2008).

In fact, the experience of a "will to renew politics" (Arditi 2008: 57) and the "rise of post-hegemonic regionalism" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012: 1) in Latin America over the last ten years might lead the observer to assume that there is social and structural change underway, away from the global orthodoxy of neoliberal *laissez faire* and towards more inclusive socio-economic governance. Similarly, the increase in regional interactions within and between state-led regional frameworks in East Asia, particularly since the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis, is significantly informed by "the illiberal underpinnings of the 'Asian values' construct, which stresses a communitarian ethic ('society over the self')" (Söderbaum 2009: 485; see Acharya 2002: 27-28) and increasingly accompanied by regionalised critical societal groups (see Gilson 2011; Igarashi 2011). Furthermore, the enormous socio-economic dislocations presently experienced in the European Union (EU), which has often been referred to as the 'role model' of regional integration, reveal intimate reciprocities between the processes of economic globalisation and regionalisation. Likewise, the crucial question here is whether the European peoples will succeed in changing the Union from a merely economic into a social community (see for example Pianta and Gerbaudo 2012). Last but not least, the call for 'African solutions to African problems' has always had a specific regional, especially Pan-African, connotation and the global economic crisis seemingly brings a nascent renaissance of developmentalist ideas in Africa, at least in the academic debate and political rhetoric (see Shaw 2012; Noman and Stiglitz 2012).

However, despite these recent trends, a fundamental "return of the political", in terms of a more horizontally organised, regionalised and, most importantly, socio-economic equitable world order, is arguably still to come. The chance for social and structural change has therefore for a long time constituted a prominent subject of academic debate among critical thinkers (see for instance Cox with Sinclair 1996; Gill 1993b; Hettne 2006; Polanyi 1944). The blatant contradictions and inequalities

within the contemporary neoliberal world order are alarming, the overall ethical silence of decision-makers and academics alike even more so. Hence, this study is dedicated to the question as to whether social transformation is possible and probable and who could be its drivers in a region where the contradictions inherent in the contemporary world order are more evident than elsewhere, namely, Southern Africa.

A reasoned argument about the probabilities of social change in any historical structure requires a thorough analysis of historical events as well as social, political, economic and cultural contexts in which structures prevail and actors are embedded. With regard to potential drivers of social, economic and political transformation, civil society has again become a major object of research and political debate, particularly since its prominent role during the transformation of Eastern and Central Europe and Latin America in the 1980s (Glasius *et al.* 2004: 3; Schechter 1999: 1). Civil society subsequently became a "buzzword" in politics, not least in the field of development cooperation (Howell and Pearce 2001: 1; Glasius *et al.* 2004: 3). Furthermore, an academic 'growth industry' has evolved around the transnationalisation of civil societies and the search for a Global Civil Society – the Occupy Movement, the Arab Spring or Wikileaks being some of the prominent phenomena under contemporary investigation (see for instance Kaldor *et al.* 2012; Richter *et al.* 2006; Germain and Kenny 2005; Keane 2003). However, the role of civil society at the regional level has attracted little academic attention in studies on regionalism so far (see Söderbaum 2007: 319; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003a: 222). An analysis of the transformative potential of the regional civil society in Southern African therefore addresses crucial questions – in theoretical as well as practical terms.

1.2 The research problem

Studying civil society in a regional context presents the researcher first and foremost with several theoretical obstacles. To start with, most existing theories of regionalism do not provide much analytical space for regional civil societies (Hettne 2005: 555). This overall neglect of civil society, particularly in mainstream theorising, reveals central theoretical weaknesses in the field of study. Dominant theoretical approaches analyse regionalism through specifically state-centric lenses and their research is preoccupied with formal inter-state frameworks and market-led regional integration, thereby explicitly employing the experience of European integration as a theoretical "blueprint" (Söderbaum 2004b: 1-2; Hettne 2005: 554). In fact, as Söderbaum puts it, "the neglect of 'civil society regionalisation' is to a large extent a theoretical and methodological problem. There is a need to develop the ways in which we theorise and study civil society at the regional level" (2007: 319). The understanding of civil society must thereby go beyond Western liberal notions and take into account the realities of the specific region under investigation, since "civil society logics are intimately dependent upon the sociocultural and political contexts within which they are played out" (Söderbaum 2007: 319).

Moreover, the research emanating from the theoretical mainstream does not bestow much consideration upon African regionalisms and, "[i]f regionalism in Africa receives any recognition at all, then the standard argument is that it is primitive" (Söderbaum 2004b: 1) and "characterized mainly

by failed or weak regional organizations and a superficial degree of regional economic integration" (Grant and Söderbaum 2003: 1; see also Gibb 2009: 701).[1] Theoretical and analytical innovation is therefore much needed and has been driven by a number of critical and reflectivist scholars (see for instance Söderbaum and Shaw 2003b; Bøås *et al.* 2005; Shaw *et al.* 2011b). It is argued here that neither Eurocentric nor any other form of reductionist theorisation is sufficient, in order to grasp the dynamics between globalisation and regionalisation processes, the complexities in inherent in "state-society-economy triangle[s]" (see Marchand *et al.* 1999: 900) and the interplay and overlapping of formal and informal, as well as bottom-up and top-down, regionalisation in Southern Africa (see for instance Grant and Söderbaum 2003: 1-2; Hettne 2005: 555).

Apart from theory, the social, economic and political realities in the region under investigation here necessitate a closer examination "by whom, for whom and for what purpose various forms of regionalism occur" (Söderbaum 2004b: 4). Indeed, in official statements the most comprehensive inter-state framework in the region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which will serve as the analytical 'reference point' in this study, commits itself to "promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration" (SADC 2008: ch 3 art 5(1)). However, the region remains marked by a large discrepancy between such stated goals of people-centred development and the daily reality of the majority of its population. An implementation gap applies also with regard to the role of civil society in regional decision-making. SADC explicitly emphasises that "[i]n pursuance of the objectives of this treaty, SADC shall seek to involve fully the peoples of the region and nongovernmental organisations in the process of regional integration" (SADC 2008: ch 7 art 23(1)). Yet, the few existing studies on regional civil society in Southern Africa unveil *unisono* that the political role of civil society in the region remains at best limited (see Landsberg and Mckay 2005; Söderbaum 2004b and 2007; Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011; van Schalkwyk and Cilliers 2004).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study has two main objectives. The first one is of a theoretical nature: This work claims to make a contribution to critical/reflectivist theory-building on regionalism. The study shifts ontological premises away from state-centrism and market logics in conventional regional theorisation in order to do justice to the complexities and multidimensionality of regions and regional processes. Thereby, the analytical value of both Robert W. Cox's international critical theory as well as the New Regionalism(s) Approach (NRA) for challenging the theoretical hegemony in the field of study and its impact on contemporary regional projects are elaborated. The theoretical framework proposed in this study draws specific analytical attention to historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts

[1] Söderbaum (2004b: 27) mentions as examples for the neglect of Africa in major rationalist studies on regionalism the works of Mansfield and Milner (1997), Adler and Barnett (1998), Fawcett and Hurrell (1995) and Mattli (1999).

of regions and regionalism and stresses the importance of both structural factors in which regionalisms are played out and the myriad of actors involved and their respective regional strategies.

The second objective is to bring civil society into the regional equation, in the context of the highly exclusive and elite-driven regionalism of SADC. By doing so, the study attempts to illuminate regional processes and actors which are all too often overlooked by mainstream theories but constitute crucial elements of the 'real' political economy of this region. Against the background of widespread political and socio-economic marginalisation in Southern Africa, the study addresses the research question of whether civil society at the regional level constitutes a transformative force in terms of people-centred socio-economic development and social equity.

1.4 Meta-theoretical considerations

The study of regionalism is still dominated by rationalist theorisation. Yet, the advent of critical, reflectivist and constructivist thought in the disciplines of International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE) has also had a lasting impact on the field of regionalism. As will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2, the NRA has incorporated crucial insights from critical/reflectivist IPE as well as from constructivist scholarship. The main meta-theoretical assumptions of these schools of thought are incorporated into the ontological, epistemological and methodological foundation of this study and are hence outlined below. I refer thereby in particular to the critical theory of Robert W. Cox as well as on what Söderbaum termed "reflectivist constructivism" (see 2004b: 40-42). It is argued that resorting to a combination of meta-theoretical strengths of both Coxian Critical Theory (CCT)[2] and more agency-centred constructivist accounts results in an eclectic theoretical synthesis which is conducive to a better understanding of the complex entanglement of exogenous and endogenous factors influencing the making and unmaking of regions as well as of formal and informal regionalisation processes and the actors involved.

1.4.1 The critical/reflectivist challenge of the rationalist mainstream

The rather loose school of 'critical IPE' has had significant influence on the debate between rationalists and reflectivists, often referred to as the Fourth Great Debate in IR (Wæver 1996: 164-166; Mittelman 1998: 63-64; Leysens 2008: 8; Smith 2007: 5; see for instance Cox 1981; Ashley 1984; George 1989; Linklater 1990). In his seminal 1981 *Millennium* article Cox differentiated between two

[2] In the literature Cox's critical theory is often discussed under the rubric of "World Order Approach" (WOA). Even though the latter draws certainly not only on Cox (see for instance Gill 1995a; 1995b), I shall subsume the WOA under CCT in this study, since, when discussing the WOA in the next chapter, I refer specifically to contributions drawing on Cox.
CCT is also often labeled "Neo-Gramscian" (see for example Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007a: 7-9). Cox, indeed, is a "neo-Gramscian" in the sense that he draws on and developed a Gramscian conceptualisation of hegemony, power and the state, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, Cox also draws on many others such as *inter alia* Georges Sorel, Giambattista Vico, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Robin G. Collingwood, Fernand Braudel, Edward P. Thompson and Ibn Khaldun. The neo-Gramscian label confines CCT unnecessarily to the employment of Gramscian concepts and thereby overlooks the "eclectic, original quality" of this work (Mittelman 1998: 66; see also Leysens 2008: 42-43).

kinds of theory – "problem-solving" and "critical" – which pursue different purposes.[3] According to him, the former "takes the world as it finds it, with prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework of action" (Cox 1981: 128). It aims at "provid[ing] guidance to correct dysfunctions or specific problems that arise within this existing order" (Cox 1995: 31-32). In other words, problem-solving theory searches for pragmatic solutions in analytically subdivided issue areas in order to maintain the *status quo* without questioning the very nature of it and whose interests it serves. Contrary to that, critical theory calls existing social and power relations and respective institutions into question by asking in a holistic vein "how the existing order came into being and what the possibilities are for change in that order" (Cox 1995: 32; see also 1986: 208-209; Gamble and Payne 2003: 46). Thereby, Cox argues, critical theory "is more reflective upon the process of theorizing itself" (1986: 207-208) and aware of biases inherent in *all* theories (Söderbaum 2004b: 39). Hence, it does not conceal its own politico-normative content by "embrac[ing] an overt normative commitment to progressive social change" (Neufeld 2001: 130).

This study follows the tradition of reflectivism[4] (or "constitutive" theory) by rejecting the claim that social 'sciences' are able to identify value-free, law-like and general theories about the nature of world politics, the global political economy or other social phenomena such as regionalism. This claim is sustained by rationalist (or "explanatory") theories and their respective foundationalist-positivist epistemology which still dominate the disciplines of IR and IPE (Smith 2002: 70-72; Smith and Owens 2008: 176-177; see also Cohen 2007: 198; Wæver 1998: 688-689). Rationalist theories, first and foremost neorealist and neoliberal accounts but also, to a lesser degree, mechanical forms of Marxism,[5] share the "believe in naturalism in the social world" and in the "separation of facts and values" and, following natural sciences and economics, have committed to the logic of causal explanation, prediction and falsifiability as well as to mostly (quantitative-) empiricist methods to "uncover patterns and regularities in the social world" (Smith 2002: 71; Leysens 2008: 36; Mittelman 1998: 74; Cox 1986: 214-215). These theories interpret ideational factors in a purely instrumental way, if they consider them at all, and "downplay ethics, history and praxis in order to create empirical social science theory in the liberal epistemological tradition", *i.e.* foundational positivism (Wæver 1998: 722 n 121).

As will be further discussed in the second chapter, a "neo-neo synthesis" (Wæver 1996: 163-164) has not only evolved in regard to epistemological concerns but also concerning the basic ontology of international relations and the global political economy. Indeed, neorealists and neoliberal

[3] Cox's distinction between problem-solving and critical theory is by some traced back to Horkheimer's juxtaposition in his 1937 essay on *Traditional and Critical Theory* (see for instance Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007b: 6). However, this insinuated connection is not uncontroversial (see Leysens 2008: 75).

[4] Reflectivist reasoning is shared by a diverse conglomeration of approaches including, among others, critical theory, postmodernism, feminist, postcolonial and normative theory, historical sociology and anthropological accounts. Their common denominator appears to be the rejection of a rationalist ontology and a positivist epistemology. However, as Smith has rightly stated, "[r]eflectivist approaches tend to be more united by their opposition to realism and positivism than by any shared notion of what should replace it" (2002: 72).

[5] Cox points out that what he terms "structural Marxism" of Althusser and Poulantzas, for instance, also employs an "ahistorical, essentialist epistemology, though not its precision in handling data nor […] its practical applicability to concrete problems" (Cox 1986: 214-215; see also Gill 1993a: 22).

institutionalists still disagree as to what extent "institutions can mitigate the effects of international anarchy, and whether the main actors in international politics (states) pursue absolute or relative gains". But, at the same time, according to both strands, the international system is marked by anarchy and the most important actors are rational and unitary states whose outward behaviour is dependent on their pre-defined interests (Smith 2002: 71; see also Ruggie 1998: 3). Rationalist theories have been complemented over the last two decades by the majority of constructivist research which claim to occupy the "true middle ground" between rationalists and reflectivists (Adler 1997: 322; see also Wendt 1999: 2; see also Katzenstein 1996). Yet, these scholars pragmatically align with a positivist research agenda and attempt to incorporate ideational factors into otherwise rationalist ontologies (Söderbaum 2004b: 40-41; Smith 2002: 74-77; Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 268, 278; see also Bøås 2000: 311; Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007a: 11-13).

Following Cox's often cited reasoning that "[t]heory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose" (Cox 1986: 207; original emphasis), this work, in contrast, is based on the reflectivist meta-theoretical assumption of the inseparability between subject and object and, respectively, the constitutive nature of theory. It is argued that theory is both shaped by the experienced reality as well as constitutive of it and, therefore, can never be free of values let alone lead to absolute knowledge or universal truth (Cox 1986: 242-243 and 1995: 31; see also Neufeld 2001: 130; Leysens 2000: 266 and 2008: 42; Söderbaum 2004b: 38-39; Scholte 1993: 141). Hence, as Leysens puts it, "[t]heory […] must be evaluated in terms of consistency, comprehensiveness and coherency, but also in terms of whether it reflects in upon itself, its historical development and origin within a particular social context" (2000: 266-267; see also Neufeld 1995: 20). CCT therefore proposes an alternative historical approach to knowledge, namely historicism – or "historical materialism of a 'special kind'" (Leysens 2008: 45).

1.4.2 Coxian Historicism

Cox's historicist mode of thinking focuses on the continuing processes of historical change within the social world. For him, the "framework of action" which is subject to change over time is the "historical structure", understood as "persistent social practices, made by collective human activity and transformed through collective human activity" (Cox 1987: 4; see also 1986: 217-218). Historical structures are therefore characterised by particular configurations of forces in the form of material capabilities, ideas and institutions. Material capabilities are understood as "productive and destructive potentials", including *inter alia* technologies, natural resources and military as well as economic capabilities. Ideas can be distinguished into "intersubjective meanings", *i.e.* "those shared notions of the nature of social relations which tend to perpetuate habits and expectations of behaviour", and "collective images of social order held by different groups of people" (Cox 1986: 218-219). Institutions, as the third force in any historical structure, are, in Cox's words, the "particular amalgams of ideas and material power which in turn influence the development of ideas and material capabilities" (1986: 219).

Drawing especially on the Italian 18th century historian and philosopher Giambattista Vico as well as on Italian communist leader Antonio Gramsci, Cox argues that "human institutions are made by

people [...] [and] constituted by intersubjective ideas" (Cox 1986: 242). Thereby, he specifically refuses the ahistorical positivist assumption of fixed ontologies "standing outside and prior to history" in favour of the Vichian notion of a continuing modification of human nature and human institutions (Cox 1986: 243; see also 1996c: 51-53; Mittelman 1998: 74-75; Bieler and Morton 2001: 17-21; see Vico 1984; Gramsci 1971). By adding ideas and institutions as categories of forces to the analysis of historical structures, Cox overcomes the narrow focus of rationalist theories, in particular neo-realism, neo-utilitarian theories of cooperation and scientific Marxism (or "historical economism" in Gramsci's words), which give attention to technological and material capabilities/interests only (Cox 1986: 211-212, 216; Mittelman 1998: 76; see Gramsci 1971: 158-168; Leysens 2008: 45-47).[6] Herein lies the distinctiveness of Cox's historicist method: It proposes a "link between the materialist world and ideas" (Leysens 2008: 43). Thereby, Cox rejects any determinism concerning the interrelation between the forces constituting historical structures (1981: 98; see Leysens 2008: 48).

Cox's historical method "is defined in terms of a dialectic between continuity and change" inherent in any historical structure (Mittelman 1998: 66). This dialectic has a dual-sense, namely on the level of logic and on a historical level. According to the former, the task of the analyst is to "focus on contradictions as a guide to explanation" which necessitates the constant adaption of concepts to the changing reality (Leysens 2008: 45). The historical dimension of dialectic is "the potential for alternative forms of development arising from the confrontation of opposed social forces in any concrete historical situation" which may trigger structural change (Cox 1996d: 95). It is the dissatisfaction of critical theory with existing "asymmetric power relations […] and patterns of dominance and hegemony" (Söderbaum 2004b: 39) which explains the intrinsic dedication to "human emancipation" or – as Cox prefers to say – transformation aiming at "social equity" (Leysens 2008: 2, 121; see also 2000: 266; George 1989: 274; Linklater 1990; Linklater 1996: 281).[7] This "unbending concern for the excluded, poor and marginalized people […] implies a critical questioning of existing structures and in whose interests prevailing strategies are carried out" (Söderbaum 2004b: 39) and challenges the "ethical silences" of rationalist theories (Mittelman 1998: 74). In this regard, the analytical inclusion of Gramsci's insights on hegemony and civil society become salient, as will be elaborated on in Chapter 2.

1.4.3 Shedding light on the 'Gordian Knot'[8] of the structure-agency debate

Unfortunately, the theoretical value of Cox's historicist approach for the structure-agency debate has been widely overlooked (Bieler and Morton 2001: 6, 16-17; see for instance Hollis and Smith 1990; Ruggie 1998). I do not claim that Cox's contributions have successfully transcended the dualism of

[6] Cox's historicism also differs from Marx, Hegel and Carr's in the regard that he objects – in a Popperian manner – to the possibility of discovering "the law of historical evolution and the perfect social order" (Navon 2001: 619; see Popper 1960 and 1964).

[7] Cox quest for transformation goes beyond socio-economic justice. He underlines the necessity of a broad counterhegemonic bottom-up movement which "presupposes the rediscovery of social solidarity and of confidence in a potential for sustained collective creativity, inspired by a commitment to social equity, to reciprocal recognition of cultural and civilizational differences, to biospheric survival, and to nonviolent methods of dealing with conflict" (2001: 59).

[8] See Bieler and Morton (2001).

agency and structure once and for all, which might indeed constitute a "Gordian Knot" (see Bieler and Morton 2001: 7). Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to look closer into Cox's method of historical structures which, in fact, attempts, meta-theoretically, to provide an analytical conciliation between structure and agency in an insightful manner, especially regarding the question of how to study the two. Contrasting the monocausal determinism of orthodox structuralism, Cox does not view "structure as the ultimate determinant of human action" (Leysens 2008: 48), he rather argues that "structures are made by collective human action and transformable by collective human action" (Cox 1987: 395; also cited in Leysens 2008: 149 n 3; see also Gill 1993a: 22). This implies a reciprocal and dialectic relationship between structure and human agency (Cox 1995: 33). In order to account for this co-constitution of structure and agency, which he had discussed long before the 'constructivist turn' in IR (see Checkel 1998), his historicism implicates "that the actors-interaction (agency-structure) model of social sciences, which indicates the separation of these spheres, is forsaken in favour of a focus on historical structures" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 21; see Cox 1987: 395).

Cox states that the "research program" of the historicist mode of thought "is to find the connections between the mental schema through which people conceive action and the material world which constrains both what people can do and how they can think about doing it" (1996c: 52). The focus on intersubjective understandings of the social material world as the constituents of historical structures and Cox's assumption of the unity of the objective and subjective attribute a clear "social ontology" to historical structures and stress their socially constructed nature (Bieler and Morton 2001: 17, 22, 24, 25).

Coxian historicism thereby offers a more nuanced picture of the structure-agency relationship than, for instance, Giddens' structuration theory by introducing the temporal/historical factor into the analysis (Bieler and Morton 2001: 25-26).[9] While agreeing that all structures are the products of intersubjective ideas and respective social interaction, Cox, in this context particularly akin to Gramsci, argues that "what is subjective in understanding becomes objective through action" (1996e: 145). Social structures, although they are non-physical human constructions, can therefore attain "real" existence by corresponding to the "historical subjectivity of a social group" (Gramsci 1995: 347-348) and through "individuals act[ing] *as though* these […] realities exist, and by so acting they reproduce them" (Cox 1986: 242; original emphasis). In other words, intersubjective categories, such as for instance states, have "humanly objective" consequences on the present reality of people and

[9] At first sight, Cox's logic resembles Giddens' argument of the "duality of structure" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 25-26; see Giddens 1979: 5; 1984: 25; Söderbaum 2004b: 43). This notion within Giddens' structuration theory proposes that "structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize" (Giddens 1984: 25). Structure and agency are hence "two sides of the same coin", rather than "two separate coins which periodically knock against one another" (Hay 1995: 197; also cited in Bieler and Morton 2001: 7). Accordingly, structures do not have any ontological existence "independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity" (Giddens 1984: 26). In other words, "all aspects of structure exist due to human interaction" and are therefore reduced to a "virtual existence" in social practices (Bieler and Morton 2001: 25, 8; see Archer 1990: 79). However, Cox adds a temporal component to the structure-agency problem and consequently portrays the relationship of structure and agency as a dialectical, deeply intertwined dualism, in contrast to both Giddens' duality logic but also to a dualism of simple opposition. For critiques of Gidden's structuration theory see Archer (1990) and Hay (1995).

hence become part of their "objective" material world (Bieler and Morton 2001: 22; see Gramsci 1971: 445-446; Cox 1996e: 145). This is because they have often been instantiated by human action in the past and institutionalised over time. Subsequently, they are understood as "given" objects, even though they have been "made" in the past (Bieler and Morton 2001: 9, 20, 26). In other words, "although 'reality' is mediated by thought, this does not mean that it is *only* constituted by thought" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 20; see Femia 1998: 89). In fact, the deeper and longer intersubjective meanings are embedded in a historical structure, the more they are perceived as "objective" and thus condition – though not determine – social interaction and the choice of alternative strategies for actors in the present (Bieler and Morton 2001: 26-27; see Cox 1981: 135).

Against the background of deep interlinkages and reciprocities between agency and structure, the epistemological question of the appropriate research programme for studying social and historical change becomes salient. In contrast to a mere "critical appraisal of the actual", inherent in the rationalist approaches, Coxian historicism aims at "understanding *and* explanation" (Cox 1996b: 65; emphasis added; see also 1986: 254 n 32). Cox states that "[t]he historicist is a 'holist' who considers individual events as intelligible only within the larger totality of contemporaneous thought and action" (1996b: 66). Thus, Coxian historicism attempts both to *understand* the nature of social structures and how they were made and changed over time and to *explain* "how such structures are materially experienced by individual and collective agency, as both enabling and constraining properties" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 14, 21). This interpretative and hermeneutic epistemological attempt to connect "individual motivations and social structures […] by explanatory hypotheses" (Cox 1996c: 58 n 6) is anything but simple. The combination of understanding and explaining definitely remains a crucial 'internal' challenge of CCT and the historicist mode of thought which, ultimately, results too often in conceding "ontological primacy" to structural factors and analytical preference to the macro-level (see Söderbaum 2004b: 40; 2003a: 11). In the following, I will elaborate why CCT and its historicist 'research programme' can thus profit, epistemologically as well as ontologically, from insights of "reflectivist constructivism".

1.4.4 The chance to 'learn' from "reflectivist constructivism"

Critical-reflectivist scholarship has repeatedly been confronted with the accusation of not constituting legitimate scholarship due to a "lack of a clear reflective research program" and "testable theories" (Keohane 1989a: 173, 174; also cited in Smith 2002: 73; see also Walt 1998; Katzenstein *et al.* 1998; Leysens 2000: 267; Schechter 2002: 5; Mittelman 1998: 74). This critique is mainly driven by rationalist scholars and results in the prevailing sidelining of critical-reflectivist approaches, particularly in US academic circles (Smith 2002: 73-74; see Wæver 1998). While this kind of criticism from the academic mainstream is hardly surprising, it does yet indicate the backlog demand in critical-reflectivist scholarship, not least in CCT, concerning the "link between theory and practical research" (Leysens 2000: 267).

As Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit argue, "little effort was made to apply the conceptual and methodological apparatus of either modern or postmodern critical theory to the sustained

empirical analysis of issues in world politics" (1998: 263). Indeed, Cox's meta-theoretical distinction between problem-solving and critical theories has arguably resulted in the persistence of a "misleading and overstated" dichotomy between the two kinds of theory, especially within critical IPE (Schechter 2002: 14; see Neufeld 1995: 59). This has led to a prevailing hesitancy among many critical scholars to resort to empiricism or causality, generally and not only in a positivist-foundational manner, as tools to gain insights in contemporary phenomena.

In order to keep theoretical relevance, particularly in times in which the legitimacy of hegemonic ideas seems to be increasingly questioned, it is therefore crucial for CCT to enhance innovative practical research on pressing issues of the social world. Cox himself accentuated that "[r]egularities in human activities may indeed be observed within particular eras, and thus the positivist approach can be fruitful within defined historical limits, though not with the universal pretentions to which it aspires" (1996c: 53; see also Leysens 2008: 45). Referring to Jürgen Habermas, respectively Fernand Braudel, both Anthony Leysens and James Mittelman therefore outline that Coxian historicism, in its call for understanding and explaining, explicitly allows for "a combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches for studying change in the global political economy", *i.e.* the attempt to incorporate besides the *longue durée*, the process of long-term structural change, also the *histoire évènementielle*, a "'snapshot' of reality at a given moment in time" (Leysens 2000: 266; see Mittelman 1998: 76; Sinclair 1996: 6; Cox cited in Hoogvelt *et al.* 1999: 392-393; Braudel 1980). It is here where CCT and its historicist method can profit, in an epistemological and ontological sense, from "the constructivist project of conceptual elaboration and empirical analysis [which] need not violate the principal epistemological, methodological or normative tenets of critical international theory" (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 259; see also Söderbaum 2004b: 42).

First of all, we must note some differences in constructivist traditions. As touched upon above, a large share of constructivist scholarship, in particular the neoclassical and naturalistic strands, reveal an epistemological affinity and, in some cases, even alignment with mainstream theorising (Söderbaum 2004b: 40-41; see Ruggie 1998: 35-36; Bieler and Morton 2001: 10-13). Moreover, the contributions of Alexander Wendt, particulary his more recent works, and the work of David Dessler, both of which Ruggie allocates to the naturalistic camp, have a clear structural bias (Bieler and Morton 2001: 10-13; see Dessler 1989; Wendt 1992; 1994 and 1999). Within the third tradition, postmodern constructivism, on the other hand, "the linguistic construction of subjects is stressed […] [and] discursive practices constitute […] the foundational units of reality and analysis" (Ruggie 1998: 35). Whereas the former two variants operate rather on the rationalist side of the rationalism-reflectivism continuum, the latter principally doubts the possibility of finding regularities in the social world and, therefore, the existence of "legitimate social science" (Söderbaum 2004b: 41).

Hence, Söderbaum makes the case for a form of "reflectivist constructivism" in order to enhance the study of regionalism. He locates this form of constructivism clearly, and in contrast to the neoclassical and naturalistic forms, in the reflectivist camp, but "closer to the [dividing] fence compared to the postmodern constructivists", thereby actively promoting the legitimacy of

critical/reflectivist social science in contrast to mainstream research (Söderbaum 2004b: 41, 42). He emphasises both structures and agencies. While underscoring the importance and necessity of those structural approaches which challenge inequalities inherent in the contemporary order, Söderbaum argues that they need to be complemented by specifically sociological analyses of reflective actors and how their interests and identities are created and recreated (2004b: 40; see for instance also Neumann 2003). Therefore, a complementary micro-oriented approach is needed which takes the very construction of actor's mindsets fully into account. Besides the analytical macro-focus on the dualistic interplay between structures and agencies in terms of the influence of intersubjective understandings and institutions on actors sets of motivations and strategies, the analyst has thus to take into consideration learning as well as interest/identity-building processes. The latter are not solely the function of prevailing intersubjective categories but might be significantly altered by the "reflective capacity of concerned actors" (Söderbaum 2004b: 44-45). I argue that it is impossible to live up to the historicist ambition to understand *and* explain if individual and collective actors, their strategies and actions as well as the processes they find themselves in are not analysed in depth. Such analyses thereby necessarily need an empiricist element. Gramsci's call for giving "precedence to practice" and "the real history of the changes in social relations" (1977: 385-386; also cited in Morton 2004: 167) remains unfulfilled as long as research in the Coxian tradition privileges the historical study of the genesis of structures over the empirical inquiry of their 'creators' in contemporary processes. To put it simply, both matter. Söderbaum's "insertion of a more process and agency-oriented content into the NRA" can therefore contribute, in a meta-theoretically synthesising manner, to the advancement of the historicist research agenda by enriching it with empiricist methods and ensuring thereby that agency and regionalisation processes are incorporated ontologically (Söderbaum 2004b: 40, 43). Needless to say, such an eclectic and holistic meta-theoretical approach does not reflect the mainstream understanding of a research programme in terms of a parsimonious theory testable in a deductive-nomological model. But that is not its intention. Its intention is to understand and explain a highly complex phenomenon, namely regionalism, by means of a historical and contextualising analysis.

1.5 The research approach

I argue, in accordance with Söderbaum, that the critical/reflectivist meta-theoretical assumptions outlined above do not necessarily "imply an automatic acceptance of a purely anti-foundationalist and relativist position" doubting any value of (empiricist) evaluation of truth claims or any form of causality (2004b: 38-39). Söderbaum makes the case for "an eclectic and dynamic understanding of the hypothetico-deductive research approach, which combines and alternates between (empirically informed) theory and (theory-loaded) empirical evidence, whereby both are reinterpreted in the light of the other" (2004b: 3). This implies the rejection of both a purely deductive as well as strictly inductive research design. While research needs to provide ever-deepening insights into the empirical world, it should also contribute to the revision and reformulation of theory and existing hypotheses. Hence, "any anticipated contradiction between induction and deduction […] is unnecessary" and should give way to a research process of "cross-fertilization and feedback between theory and

empirical analysis" (Söderbaum 2004b: 3, 4). After the introduction of some major concepts central to this study, I will advocate a case study as the most appropriate research design, before discussing the concrete research methods and materials employed. Lastly, this subchapter will mention the scope as well as some limitations of the work.

1.5.1 Conceptualisations

Concepts such as region, regional integration or regionalism have been rightly described as "elusive and evolving" (Söderbaum 2009: 478) or as "moving targets" (Hettne 2005: 544). The definition of the term region itself is highly contested and can include "geography, economic interaction, institutional or governmental jurisdiction, or [...] social and cultural characteristics" (Chingono and Nakana 2009: 397). To counter oversimplification, through all too parsimonious definitions, and to account for the changing nature of "imagined communities" (Hettne 2003: 28; see Anderson 1991), a growing number of scholars acknowledge that "there are no natural or 'scientific' regions" but that "all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested" (Söderbaum 2009: 478, 479; see also Jessop 2003: 183; Bøås *et al.* 2005: 173; Söderbaum 2011: 54-55). Nevertheless, the widely accepted analytical distinction between macro-, meso- and micro-regions is useful for studies on regionalism. *Macro-regions*, or world regions, constitute "territorial units or sub-systems between the 'national' and the 'global' level", whereas *micro-regions* "exist between the 'national' and 'local' level", but "are becoming more and more cross-border in nature rather than [remaining] within the boundaries of a particular nation-state" (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008c: 13). The level of analysis of this study is the *meso-region*, a sub-region characterised by "mid-range state or non-state arrangements and processes" (Söderbaum 2003a: 6; see also Shaw *et al.* 2011a: 12-13).[10] As will become evident in the following chapters though, processes and actors at the three regional levels are deeply interrelated and SADC as a meso-region is impossible to analyse without reference to crucial insights from the micro- and macro-regional as well as global level (see Hettne 1999: 14-16; Bøås *et al.* 2005: 4; Söderbaum and Taylor 2008c: 14; Söderbaum 2004b: 45-48, 52-53).

The concept of *regional integration* is closely connected to classical integration theories, particularly to the neofunctionalist school which coined the term (see Haas 1958: 16; Lindberg 1963: 6). Regional integration is seen as the "process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (Haas 1958: 16; also cited in Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 47). Whilst attempts have been undertaken to differentiate the concept into economic, social and political integration (see Nye 1971: 26-27), it remains closely associated with "an earlier discourse", namely the academic debate on European integration, and is hence biased towards formal, institutionalised and market-led processes which imply the transfer of

[10] The usage of the categories macro-, meso- and micro-region in the literature is inconsistent. Whereas Söderbaum classifies Southern Africa as a macro-region (2004b: 6), in the form of SADC, I regard it as a meso-level region due to its empirical embeddedness between micro-regional processes, often cross-border in nature, and macro-regional initiatives, such as for instance the African Union or New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (see also Shaw *et al.* 2011a: 13).

political authority from nation-states to supranational entities (Hettne 2005: 544-545; Söderbaum 2003a: 8; Olivier 2010: 20; see Haas 1970: 610-611). Yet, despite its biases, the term regional integration can hardly be avoided entirely in this study, particularly since it is specifically referred to by SADC as well as civil society actors in many instances. This means that regional integration is still a component of the (official) regional discourse in Southern Africa. Similarly, *regional cooperation* has, first and foremost, been used to explain rational, problem-oriented interstate activity at the regional level, albeit in a more open-ended manner and without the necessary component of sovereignty transfer to the supranational level (Hettne 2005: 545; Söderbaum 2003a: 20 n 1; see Haas 1958: 16; Axline 1994a: 217).

For reasons which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, I embrace *regionalism* and *regionalisation* as more appropriate concepts to best account for the "multidimensionality, complexity, fluidity and non-conformity" of regional projects and processes (Söderbaum 2003a: 1). The former should be understood as "the ideas, identities and ideologies related to a regional project" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 900). Regionalism is "usually associated with a formal programme, and often leads to institution building" (Söderbaum 2009: 479). Regionalisation, in turn, is the "actual process of increasing contact, exchange, cooperation and integration within a given region", *i.e.* the outcome (Taylor 2010: 3). Again, there exist certain disagreements about these definitions, as some authors confine regionalism to a state project (see Gamble and Payne 2003: 50; Grugel and Hout 1999: 10), whilst others argue that non-state actors at various levels are not only passive participants of regionalisation processes but rather bear their own regional agendas and visions (see Bøås *et al.* 2005: 6; Hveem 2003: 83; Söderbaum 2003a: 7-8). This work follows Bøås *et al.* who state:

> "[R]egionalism is clearly a political project, but it is obviously not necessarily *state-led*, as states are not the only political actor around. […] [W]e clearly believe that within each regional project (formal or not) several competing regionalizing actors with different regional visions and ideas coexist" (2003: 201; original emphasis).

It is therefore legitimate to speak of several regionalisms, rather than of only one regionalism, occurring simultaneously – not only across world regions but also within a specific region (Söderbaum 2003a: 2; Bøås *et al.* 2003: 204). This conception becomes particularly important when scrutinising the significance of alternative regional projects within civil society in SADC.

The notion of *regionness*, which was originally introduced by Hettne and has subsequently experienced further theoretical development, is another valuable concept in the context of this study (see Hettne 1993, 1999 and 2003; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000; Bøås *et al.* 2003)[11]. It is closely interrelated with deepening regionalisation and proposes an evolutionary development of a region, comprising the levels of regional space, complex, society, community and institutionalised polity (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 462-468; Hettne 1993: 219 and 2003: 28-29). While Hettne himself notes that regionness should not be misunderstood as a deterministic stage theory and that its degree

[11] Hettne has introduced regionness in analogy with the concepts of stateness and nationness. Increasing degrees of regionness are, according to him, the result of the neo-mercantilist quest for a new regulatory reference framework beyond the nation-state in a globalised world economy (Hettne 1993: 219 and 2003: 28).

"can both increase and decrease" (1993: 219), Bøås *et al.* rightly criticise his assumption of "a natural history of regionalization" (Hettne 2002: 35; see Bøås *et al.* 2003: 203). However, if not interpreted as a generalisable blueprint for regionalisation, the concept of regionness can indeed serve as a useful indicator of the "relative convergence of dimensions such as cultural affinity, political regimes, security arrangements and economic policies (ie relative sameness)" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 900). Hettne sees for instance a regional community taking shape "when an enduring organizational framework (formal or less formal) facilitates and promotes social communication and convergence of values and actions throughout the region, creating a transnational civil society, characterized by social trust also at the regional level" (2003: 29). This ideational reference to regional identity is crucial in the context of this study.

Last but not least, despite, or probably rather because of, its inflationary use in academic and public debates nowadays, the meaning of civil society "is as contested as the social and political institutions it purports to describe" (Hunt 1999: 11). Indeed, Louis Hunt is right that "any attempt to fix its meaning through a definition will appear arbitrary" due to the ambiguities associated with the term – in political and academic debate but also in social practice (1999: 11-12). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, Jan Aart Scholte's understanding of civil society as "a political space where voluntary associations deliberately seek to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspect of social life" seems insightful (2002: 146; also cited in Söderbaum 2007: 322). This definition does justice to the diversity of civil society actors and organisations, encompassing faith-based or kinship institutions, the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities and social movements as well as trade unions and professional bodies *etc.* (Parekh 2004: 19; Söderbaum 2007: 322). Moreover, it treats civil society neutrally and avoids considering it *per se* as the force of good, a prevalent bias in many Western liberal notions of the concept, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.4.1. Notwithstanding this conceptual inclusiveness, Scholte's definition has, at the same time, at least two qualifying characteristics which seem appropriate for this analysis. Firstly, civil society, as understood here, has a deliberate and "active political orientation" (Söderbaum 2007: 322). Secondly, Scholte's definition implies a voluntaristic element, which does not considers, for instance, political parties or corporate actors as part of civil society (Söderbaum 2004b: 117), without, of course, denying the close and, at times, intimate relations between these actors and civil society. In other words, the conception of civil society chosen here serves the purpose of the study, since it is suggested that social and structural transformation driven by civil society necessarily requires both a political and a voluntaristic element. After having introduced the most important concepts related to this study, the methods employed in this study are subsequently discussed.

1.5.2 The case study of Southern Africa and its civil society

A methodological approach which I consider compatible with the meta-theoretical foundation of this work is the case study design. The latter "places cases, not variables, center stage" (Ragin 1992: 5). As Henn *et al.* underline:

> "The purpose for using a case study design will be to *examine the intricacies and complexities of the situation (or setting or group)* selected for study in order to reveal its most important features. Unlike the experimental research design, the case study design will consider *contextual conditions* in order to discover whether or not they are relevant to and impact upon the topic of investigation. The research will be systematic and extremely detailed, and researches will tend to draw upon a *wide variety of data*, not hesitating to deploy *more than one research method* if doing so enables the development of a complete account of the social process(es) under investigation" (2009: 65; emphases added).

The relevance of studying the potential for social transformation in the region under investigation here, Southern Africa, has been outlined before. However, what is understood by 'Southern Africa' must still be clarified. As aforementioned, a region has different meanings to different people as well as elusive boundaries and is subject to change over time, not least in terms of its geographical extent. This is also the case with regard to Southern Africa, as Chapter 3 will elucidate. Contemporarily however, 'Southern Africa' is most often defined – both in politics and academia – as the social, political and spatial constellation comprising the 15 current member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Söderbaum 2004b: 9): These are Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar[12], Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Since SADC is arguably seen as "the most robust of the larger regional political and developmental organizations" (McKeever 2008: 456) in Southern Africa, it is also the analytical 'reference point' of this study.

SADC's relative political significance becomes also apparent when looking at civil society engagement in the region. An estimated 100,000 NGOs are operating in Southern Africa with 17,000 either directly or indirectly involved in issues related to regionalism in SADC (Landsberg and Mckay 2005: 3, 33). These numbers illustrate that an all-encompassing or representative study, with the intent of making supposedly generalisable propositions about the entirety of a phenomenon under investigation, is simply impossible, even if the research focus is confined to NGOs and other professionalised civil society organisations (CSOs). Yet, since the primary goal of this research "is an understanding of social processes rather than obtaining a representative sample" (Arber 1993: 73; also cited in Henn *et al.* 2009: 183), a choice of critical cases was made through a combination of "snowball sampling" and "theoretical sampling", the latter emanating from the tradition of grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss 1967). Snowball sampling "relies on the researcher obtaining a strategically important contact who can recommend other possible participants who might be approached to take part in the study" (Henn *et al.* 2009: 183). By employing theoretical sampling, cases are "selected specifically because the analysis is intended to shed light on some aspects of theory that you are interested in" (Henn *et al.* 2009: 71). Theoretical sampling is particularly conducive to the aspiration of a reciprocal interpretation of theory and empirical insights. While the selection of cases is informed by existing theoretical assumptions, the former are expected to contribute to the

[12] Madagascar has been suspended from SADC since the unconstitutional change of government in 2009.

advancement of the latter, *i.e.* theory-building (Henn *et al.* 2009: 71; see also Neuman 2011: 270; Arber 1993: 74).

The critical cases for the analysis of regional civil society in Chapter 4 are the SADC Council of NGOs (CNGO), the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) and the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN). As aforementioned, most theorising of regionalism does not bestow consideration upon civil society and, simultaneously, little attention is specifically given to the regional level in general literature on civil society. Thus, these organisations were chosen because of their explicitly regional agendas, which make them distinct from civil society organisations operating in only one or a few countries in the region as well as from initiatives having continent-wide or even global aspirations. While the latter are not less crucial, the focus here lies on civil society operating at the regional meso-level. All of the four CSOs under investigation here try, even though in varying ways, to influence rules governing social, economic and political spheres of the region, *i.e.* they have a clear political orientation. Another common characteristic of CNGO, SATUCC, EJN/FOCCISA and SAPSN is that they are all so called apex or umbrella organisations at the regional level. Their membership is comprised of respective national umbrella bodies or sectoral and local organisations/movements in the SADC member states. While by far not fully representative of the region's population, these four CSOs cover crucial societal sectors, such as NGOs, organised labour, Christian churches and social movements, and are therefore considered as relevant with regard to the question of social transformation. They differ in their approaches, be it towards SADC or with regard to their operational strategies. This diversity among the four actors provides the opportunity to examine more closely which regional agenda is pursued, to what extent the respective approaches are successful and in how far there is a chance for a broader coalition within regional civil society striving for social and economic transformation.

As will be discussed in further detail in the following subsection, the research was not strictly confined to these four organisations. In order to get a more comprehensive picture of their regional impact, the following institutions were also consulted: the SADC Secretariat to find out more about those organisations' relationship to state-led regionalism; member organisations of the four CSOs to grasp the organisational structure, the internal *modi operandi* as well as the programmatic orientation of the cases under investigation; and donor agencies to get an insight into relations to donors.

1.5.3 Methodology and source materials

The research is based on an eclectic employment of several methods and sources, predominantly but not exclusively qualitative in nature (see Kvale 2007: 46-47). The two empirically informed chapters (3 and 4) differ thereby in their respective combination of applied methods and data. The broad overview of the historical, political, economic, social and cultural characteristics of Southern Africa and SADC undertaken in Chapter 3 draws mostly on the vast amount of secondary academic literature on the region, emanating from the disciplines of history, political science, political economy, economics *etc.*, as well as on primary sources such as official statements and documents, treaties and

statistical information. The data for the second empirical part (Chapter 4), focusing on the regional civil society, comes mainly from field research interviews, participant observations and a variety of text documents and publications from the respective organisations under investigation. These materials are supplemented by the few secondary academic sources existing on the regional civil society in Southern Africa.

Qualitative field research interviews were conducted with stakeholders from civil society organisations, the SADC Secretariat as well as donor agencies in Gaborone, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Harare and Cape Town during February, March and August 2012. For these "elite interviews" (see Kvale 2007: 70; Pierce 2008: 119), the semi-structured form of interviewing was considered most appropriate, since, as Bernard underlines, such elite interviewees "are accustomed to efficient use of their time" and in the most instances there is only one chance to talk to them (2000: 191). Additionally, the semi-structured form of the interviews gave me the opportunity to balance between following a certain agenda of topics I wanted to cover, but, at the same time, to remain flexible enough to follow new leads, from my side as well as from the respondent's side (Bernard 2000: 191; see also Pierce 2008: 127). Interviews were audio-recorded with interviewees' acquiescence and transcribed by a third party. In very few cases recording was declined by the interviewee or was regarded as non-conducive to an open interview atmosphere by key informants and, thus, abstained from. In those two cases, minutes were made. Interview guides were designed on the basis of findings from desk research and re-evaluated and slightly adapted in the course of the research (see King and Horrocks 2010: 37-38; Bernard 2000: 191). Interview guides partially differed, namely according to three clusters of interviewees, which were civil society representatives (eleven interviewees), SADC Secretariat officers (three) and donor agency staff (two):

- Questions for civil society representatives were centred around the following issues: (1) history, institutional structure and programmatic objectives of the organisation as well as financial resources, membership and representativeness; (2) nature of the relationship with SADC and strategies chosen to promote the respective ideas and visions; (3) concrete objectives of the organisation in the realm of socio-economic development and standpoint towards SADC's approach to regional integration and development; (4) coordination among and relationship between organised civil society at the regional level, personal assessment of future prospects in this regard as well as donor-dependency.
- Interviews with SADC officials focused on the following: (1) tasks of the Secretariat and personal assessment of the role SADC and its Secretariat plays within the region; (2) nature of the relationship with civil society and personal assessment of it in the officer's specific sector; (3) SADC's approach to regional integration, particularly in relation to socio-economic development, and respective role of civil society; (4) endogenous and exogenous obstacles to regional integration and SADC's development approach.
- Questions for respondents from donor agencies: (1) standpoint of the respective agency in regard to SADC's approach to regional integration and socio-economic development; (2) personal

assessment of the relationship between SADC and the regional civil society; (3) strengths and weaknesses of regional civil society and the role of donors.

Several individuals served as "key informants" (see Neuman 2011: 454). Notable among them are the staff from the Gaborone office of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation as well as a Senior Officer from the German development agency Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) who have provided valuable information and materials and connected me, in some instances, with interviewees.

In early 2012 participant observations were conducted at conferences and meetings of SADC-CNGO, SATUCC and the steering committee of the 'Apex Alliance' between CNGO, SATUCC and EJN/FOCCISA, in Gaborone. Moreover, extensive travels in several SADC countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) have significantly deepened my understanding of the region and its complexity and multidimensionality, as well as of the formality-informality nexus typical for regionalisms in Southern Africa.

1.5.4 Limitations of the study

The study is, of course, not free from limitations. Firstly, the diachronic analysis of the region in Chapter 3 is far from comprehensive and should be seen as a an overview of historicities and developments crucial to the region. While the theoretical approach followed in this study makes the case for an in-depth analysis of ideational, institutional and material changes over time and respective configurations of social forces in the region, limitations in time and space compelled me to focus on historical aspects as well as actors and processes which I regarded as most significant. By its very nature, a study of a region has to generalise to a certain extent, in the sense that not all historical, political or cultural particularities, which clearly vary among states, communities *etc.* within a region, can be taken into account. Furthermore, the analysis of regional civil society in Chapter 4 provides only a 'snapshot' of a particular sector of regionalism and of a limited number of actors and processes within it. Thus, it does neither raise the claim to be exhaustive nor to generate any form of generalisable truths. However, the close investigation of the selected actors intends to give insights into the role and functioning of regional civil society at the meso-level and, therefore, to widen the understanding of regionalisms in Southern Africa.

A practical restriction to the research of this study was that access to information widely differed among the institutions and actors concerned. In the case of SADC, for example, information which goes beyond official statements is difficult to obtain. Concerning information gathered from interviews, moreover, a strong tendency towards the position of the interviewee's respective organisation is to be assumed. In this sense, this study is not spared from a general problem when interviewing elites, namely that the latter attempt to follow "prepared 'talk tracks' to promote the viewpoints they want to communicate" (Kvale 2007: 70; see also Pierce 2008: 125-126). Hence, to the extent possible, respondents' positions have been critically scrutinised or even challenged during the interview. In addition, not all possible relevant interviewees approached were responsive to my

interview request. To reduce these weaknesses as much as possible, the primary information gathered was compared with and complemented by secondary literature, where available.

Last but not least, another limitation emanates from the author himself. Whereas the theoretical perspective taken by this study explicitly calls for interdisciplinarity in the study of regions, the work – while taking, for instance, social and cultural aspects into consideration – remains biased in favour of the disciplines of my academic training, which are, first and foremost, political science, IR and IPE.

1.6 Outline of the study

This study is structured in three main parts. The subsequent chapter provides a broad overview of theorisation of the 'regional', covering both rationalist and relativist contributions to the field and arguing that a combination of theoretical insights from CCT and the NRA is most appropriate to approach the research problem of this study. The theorisation of civil society is also discussed in Chapter 2. Starting from its early history to the contemporary polity, politics and policies of SADC, Chapter 3 sheds light on how the Southern African region has been socially constructed, politically contested and structurally constrained over time. This part of the work constitutes the necessary historical, social, economic, cultural and political contextualisation for the study of this region and addresses the question of how historical structures in the region have developed and changed. Thereby, it takes into consideration formal as well as informal regionalisation processes of a variety of regionalising actors. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, the transformative potential of regional civil society (in the form of the above mentioned regionally organised CSOs) for social and structural change is assessed. Therefore, ideas, identities and strategies of these collective actors, as well as the structural, political and institutional contexts of the organisations, are scrutinised. The study concludes by briefly re-evaluating the central theoretical assumptions and by summarising the nature of regional civil society as well as its possible future prospects as a transformative force.

2 Theorising regions and civil societies

Cross-community interaction and interdependencies between distinct social and political entities have long been evident in human history. Yet, broader academic and political debates about regional cooperation/integration and regionalism first evolved in the post-World War II environment in Europe and was centred upon the question of how to trigger peaceful coexistence between former wartime enemies (Söderbaum 2004b: 16; 2008: 4; Mattli 1999: 1). Meanwhile, the differentiation between an "early" and a more "recent" debate on regionalism has gained acceptance in academic literature and the two categories coincide with a first and a second empirical wave of old, respectively new, regionalisms. The early debate was mainly focused on the European experience and preoccupied with formal regionalism with states and inter-state frameworks as the central objects of analyses. The second empirical wave, in contrast, which started in the latter part of the 1980s within the context of the major structural transformation of the global system and triggered a renaissance of regionalism on a global scale, resulted in a pluralisation of the academic discourse (Hettne 2005: 545-550; Söderbaum 2003a: 3-4; 2009: 479-483 and 2011: 51).[13] Yet, it has been rightly argued that the contrasting juxtaposition between "old" and "new regionalism", in a temporal sense, has its limitations, particularly due to important continuities and similarities – besides major discontinuities – between earlier and more recent regional practices, processes and theorisation (Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 62; see also Hettne 2005: 543; Söderbaum 2004b: 16).

The purpose of this chapter is thus to review major contributions to the study of regions, to highlight the limitations of rationalist theories and to outline the theoretical framework of this study. For this purpose, traditional Eurocentric as well as mainstream IR/IPE theories, which all adhere to epistemological and ontological assumptions based on rationalism and still supply the bulk of research on regionalism, are discussed in the first two subchapters. The third section of this chapter outlines crucial critical/reflectivist contributions to the field of study, namely from the World Order Approach (WOA) and from the 'broad church' of scholars affiliated to the New Regionalism(s) Approach (NRA). These approaches have started to challenge a state-centric, market-focused, formalistic and purely problem-solving theorisation of regionalism from the 1990s onwards and provide the theoretical framework of this study. The last section addresses the theorisation of civil society and makes the case for a culturally and historically sensitive employment of Gramsci's notions of hegemony and civil society, in order to grasp the dynamics inherent in Southern African state-society complexes and regional civil society.

[13] In a recent contribution Shaw *et al.* discern "the embryonic stages of a 'third wave' in the field" in the enhanced scholarly engagement with non-state actors in regionalisation processes, inter-regionalisms and micro-regionalisms during the last decade (2011a: 4). In his comparative work on regional cooperation W. Andrew Axline undertakes a more nuanced differentiation regarding the early debate of old regionalism, including the generations of "traditional free trade areas", "regional import substitution" and "collective self-reliance". His last generation, "regional cooperation in the new world order", is in accordance with the "recent debate" mentioned above (1994b: 1-5; see also Söderbaum 2008: 25).

2.1 Early debate – Eurocentric theories and the question of development

2.1.1 Europe as the nucleus of traditional approaches to regionalism

The early debate on regionalism was preoccupied with the quest to "preserve peace and security in Europe" (Mattli 1999: 69; see Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 63). Therein, the political discourse was significantly impacted by federalists of different strands who constituted a diverse political movement striving for a supranational federation of European peoples. Main proponents of federalism were deeply affected by the experience of two world wars and highly sceptical of the nation-state. Early European federalism, thus, has to be understood as a political programme rather than as an integration theory (Hettne 2005: 546; Rosamond 2000: 23; Söderbaum 2009: 480; Burgess 2009: 31). A major dissension within the camp of European federalists revolved around the question of how to succeed in building a united Europe. This is represented by Antonio Spinelli's "democratic radicalism", aimed at the institution of a powerful European parliamentary assembly which was to be entrusted to draft a European constitution, and Jean Monet's "federalism through instalments", the "political strategy of small, concrete, economic steps [which] would *culminate* in a federal Europe" (Burgess 2009: 32; original emphasis). The collapse of the European Political Community (EPC) and the European Defence Community (EDC) due to resistance of national decision-makers in the early 1950s, however, dampened the hopes, especially of the rather radical federalists, for the establishment of a European federation through a popular constitutional process.

The initial failure to establish a comprehensive political community in Europe triggered a less political, but more systematic and technical, engagement with transnational cooperation. This gave leverage to the functionalist school and its most prominent proponent David Mitrany. While sharing with federalists the normative goal of overcoming European nation-states and their conflictual history, in the eyes of Mitrany, the functionalist dictum, that form follows function, should be the guiding principle for transnational activities and cooperation (Hettne 2005: 546; Mattli 1999: 21-23; see Mitrany 1943 and 1948). Functionalists were highly sceptical of promoting a regional political union which would reproduce the Westphalian logic of territoriality and its inherent conflictuality – simply at another level – instead of pursuing functionality (Rosamond 2000: 36-38; see Mitrany 1933: 116; 1975: 72; Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 63). Functionalist reasoning "breaks away from the traditional link between authority and a definite territory by ascribing authority to activities based in areas of agreement" (Mattli 1999: 21) and, thus, proposes cooperation "around basic functional needs, such as transportation, trade, production and welfare" (Hettne 2005: 546). Its driving force is the technocratic and rational pursuit of the common good which should be subservient to economics rather than politics and determine the shape of transnational organisations (Rosamond 2000: 33; Söderbaum 2009: 480).

In the late 1950s, Ernst Haas articulated, arguably, the first substantive regional integration theory which would dominate the debate surrounding European integration for almost a decade, while claiming general applicability during that time (see for instance Haas 1958 and 1961; Haas and Schmitter 1964). Haas' neofunctionalism – as the name already indicates – shares the functionalist

emphasis on "mechanisms of technocratic decision-making, incremental change and learning processes" around defined sectors of cooperation and regards economic interdependency as the trigger for regional cooperation (Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 46, 49). Central to Haas' theory was the logic of "spillover effects", from one area of policy coordination to the next, which were the result of functional pressures on decision-makers to deepen integration. Once policy integration starts in one economic sector, according to this logic, it becomes necessary to harmonise further economic sectors, as well as other policy fields, a process which increasingly extends competences of supra-national institutions and, thus, creates a dynamic of deepening regional integration (Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 49-50; Rosamond 2000: 60; Söderbaum 2008: 5; 2009: 480; see also Lindberg 1963). In contrast to functionalism, neofunctionalist thought rejects "the functionalist assumption of separability of politics from economics" and directs the attention specifically to the centres of power. It is argued that supra-national actors, be they governmental or non-governmental, become – apart from states – important entrepreneurs and facilitators of regional integration. The process of regional integration is thus seen as led by purposeful elites (Söderbaum 2004b: 21; Mattli 1999: 24; Marchand *et al.* 1999: 901; Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 63; see Haas 1958 and 1964). Due to its commitment to *regional* integration as the object of analysis, as opposed to Mitrany's reluctance to limit integration territorially (Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 46), neofunctionalism has been regarded as the theoretical manifestation of the European "community method"[14] and seemed to explain, and even prescribe, the evolution of the European Communities (EC) in the 1950s and early 1960s (Rosamond 2000: 51-53, 58, 61; Söderbaum 2004b: 21).[15]

Deepening economic integration in Europe also stimulated further research in the field of economics, particularly with regard to the application and further development of Jacob Viner's customs union theory as well as Robert Mundell's work on optimal currency areas (see Viner 1950; Mundell 1961). In the 1960s, Béla Balassa proposed a linear model of successive stages of deepening economic integration, relying on the liberalisation of intra-regional trade and beginning with a free trade area (FTA) via a customs union to a common market and a monetary union and, finally, resulting in a completely integrated economic union (Lee 2003: 19-20; Söderbaum 2004b: 23; Østergaard 1993: 29-30; see Balassa 1961, 1967 and 1975). Balassa's theory of economic integration, which, in the contemporary discourse, is often referred to as market integration, is preoccupied with welfare effects of discriminating barriers to a free market[16] and it thoroughly discounts the political dimension in processes of regionalisation. Söderbaum observes that:

[14] The "community method" is often attributed to Monnet and implies the gradual technocratic integration of various sectors accompanied by deeper institutionalisation at the supranational level (Rosamond 2000: 51-53)

[15] After the failed establishment of the EPC and the EDC, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established in 1951, was complemented by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1957. From 1967 onwards, all three institutions were collectively organised under the umbrella of the EC and governed by the EEC's institutions (de Witte 2009: 9-10; Burgess 2009: 25).

[16] It is important to emphasise that regional economic integration was (and is) regarded as the preferable "theory of the second best" by several neo-classical economists, because the optimal conditions of the ideal theory of perfectly free trade on a global scale remain(ed) unfulfilled. Customs union theory and gradual economic

> "The theory is not concerned with institutional and political dynamics and the choices whereby regions are produced. It focuses solely on welfare effects resulting from economic interaction and policy change, and as such it is not a theory of how regions are made and unmade, and by whom, for whom and what purpose region-builders engage in regionalism. (2004b: 23).

Problematically, this strand of economic integration theory takes several prerequisites for granted which are related to market integration and necessary for it to have market creating effects and produce welfare gains: these are *inter alia* a similar level of industrial development and complementary industries among member states, harmonised macroeconomic policies, political and macroeconomic stability in the region, significant intra-regional trade, the wide distribution of prospective benefits from integration and the willingness on the part of member states to "cede some level of sovereignty to a supra-national body that has enforcement authority" (Lee 2003: 20; see also Gibb 2009: 712-713; Söderbaum 2004b: 24; Østergaard 1993: 31-32). The market integration theory moreover follows a similar, "somehow self-sustaining, rational and teleological", logic of integration as neofunctionalism by assuming an automatised necessity of deepening economic integration from one of the stages mentioned above to the next due to changing welfare implications and respective economic incentives (Rosamond 2005: 244; see also Hettne 2005: 546; Söderbaum 2004b: 23). In fact, "the expansive functional logic laid out by Haas and Lindberg reproduced the thinking of economists [*sic*] writing about international economic integration at the time" (Rosamond 2000: 60; see Webb 1983: 19).

2.1.2 The intergovernmental challenge to regional integration

(Neo)functionalist thought and economic integration theory have had, and still have, enormous impact in both academic and political circles, as will become clear with regard to SADC in Chapter Three. Yet, the "slowdown of integrative momentum" and "the reassertion of nationalist sentiment at the elite-level in West European politics" contradicted the assumptions of a linear process of ever-deepening integration (Rosamond 2000: 75; see Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 64). The crisis of integration became most obvious in Charles de Gaulle's 'empty chair' politics, embodied by France's abstinence from the EC in 1965. What, tellingly, is often referred to as the period of 'Eurosclerosis' opened neofunctionalist theory to fierce and enduring criticism, particularly from state-centric approaches, and made the theory seemingly "obsolescent", as even its founding father Haas has admitted (Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 51-52; Rosamond 2000: 75; Hettne 2005: 547; Mattli 1999: 27; see Haas 1975). Spearheaded by Stanley Hoffmann's analyses of the crises of European integration (see 1964 and 1966), intergovernmentalists argued that European politics remained controlled by the member states and were driven by their respective national interests. Consequently, regional integration takes place only if it serves the member states national interests, and cannot be fostered by supranational institutions, which are only facilitators to control and implement cooperation. According to the intergovernmentalist logic, regional integration therefore remains

integration were, thus, seen as second-best solutions and as a precursor to global free trade (Lipsey and Lancaster 1956-1957: 11-14; Negishi 1969: 391; see also Hettne 2003: 31; Østergaard 1993: 31).

limited to rather uncontroversial "low" politics but does not enter policy fields which affect member states' sovereignty, as anticipated by neofunctionalist accounts (Rosamond 2000: 76-77; Söderbaum 2008: 5 and 2009: 480; see Hoffmann 1966).[17] The intergovernmentalist incursion, as a result of the stagnating European integration process, resulted in a shift towards more state-centric regional analyses and, concomitantly, in an overall declining momentum of studies on regionalism (Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 64).

2.1.3 European integration as the universal 'blueprint'? – The problem of Eurocentrism

But neofunctionalism and the market integration approach were not only challenged by the intergovernmentalist position. Early on, critics accused neofunctionalist thought and the closely connected market integration logic of being "Eurocentric" and hardly applicable to other world regions, especially the developing South (Söderbaum 2008: 5-6; Marchand *et al.* 1999: 901; see for instance Axline 1977: 83, 102; Hansen 1969: 257-261; Aaron 1967). In fact, while studies on regionalism beyond the European case gradually increased in number during the 1960s (see Haas and Schmitter 1964; Dell 1966; Etzioni 1965; Nye 1970; 1971), their ontological assumptions remained deeply informed by European integration (Söderbaum 2008: 5-6; see also Gibb 2009: 708). In the search for a universal integration theory, scholars "used the European experience as a basis for the production of generalizations about the prospects for regional integration elsewhere" (Breslin *et al.* 2002: 2; also cited in Söderbaum 2008: 6). Leading neofunctionalist scholars construed "background conditions" from the European integration process, such as "pluralistic social structures, substantial economic and industrial development and common ideological patterns among participating units", which were regarded as conducive for integration, and applied them to other regions, thereby treating the European case as sort of ideal type of regional integration against which other regions were judged (Rosamond 2000: 69; Söderbaum 2008: 6; see Haas 1961: 374; Haas and Schmitter 1964; Nye 1965). Not only in academia, but also in political practice, the European model of regional integration, with its focus on institutionalisation and market integration, "became the blueprint for regional integration elsewhere, especially in the 'South'" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 901; see Bøås *et al.* 2003: 202). It formed an integral part of policy prescriptions for the global South, as, in the case of Africa, the establishment of the West African Customs Union (UDAO) in 1959, the Economic and Customs Union of Central African States (UDEAC) in 1964 or the East African Economic Community (EAEC) 1967 exemplify. Each of those organisations focused on orthodox economic integration and had very short lifespans (Aly 1994: 11, 14, 60-61; see also Axline 1994b: 2). The institutional design of regional organisations in the global South, as well as their orientation towards the liberalisation of regional markets through FTAs and customs unions, clearly resembled the 'prototype' of the European Economic Community (EEC) (Lee 2003: 28; Østergaard 1993: 28; Aly 1994: 35; Olivier 2010: 28; see also Söderbaum

[17] Even though Hoffmann shared with neorealists the assumption that states are the basic units in world politics, he considered their national interests as more nuanced than mere state survival in the environment of power politics. In fact, he attributed additional significance to ideas, past experiences and domestic forces in the construction of the national interest and, thus, is seen as an "early purveyor of the 'domestic politics' approach to integration" (Rosamond 2000: 76; Hoffmann 1995: 5; see Bulmer 1983).

2003a: 4). Against this background, some scholars were highly sceptical of the utility of trade/market integration as a trigger of regional integration and development and particularly of the applicability of orthodox economic integration in developing world regions. This led to the development of alternative approaches.

2.1.4 The influence of developmentalist thought

Several approaches, of which two will be briefly discussed here, evolved in the 1960s and 1970s and proposed alternatives to the sole reliance on market forces and incentives as triggers of regional cooperation/integration and development.[18] While both 'regional cooperation' and 'development integration' do not regard economic integration as *per se* unconducive to regional development, they consider its attainment through the orthodox liberalisation of intra-regional trade, the establishment of customs unions *etc.* as counterproductive among developing countries due to the vulnerability of their economies. In order to enhance regional development and reach economic integration in the long run, the two approaches thus propose different alternative strategies to *laissez-faire* market integration.

Proponents of regional cooperation emphasise the necessity of voluntary, flexible and problem-oriented regional collaboration which should not be focused solely on the economic sector but rather allow for a wider scope of cooperation fields, such as the political, cultural and social spheres. It resembles thereby, to a certain extent, functionalist reasoning by emphasising the value of sectoral cooperation. Proponents of regional cooperation argue that in developing countries regional cooperation on a gradual, technical and pragmatic base is a necessary precursor for enhanced economic integration, as well as for the associated rapid liberalisation of trade regimes and the relinquishing of national sovereignty (Lee 2003: 22-23; Haarlov 1997: 15-23; see also Ravenhill 1990).

The second alternative approach, development integration, goes a step further by incorporating insights from development economics, thereby inspired particularly by the structuralist school which evolved around economists like Raúl Prebisch, Gunnar Myrdal and Hans Singer in the 1950s (Söderbaum 2008: 6; Østergaard 1993: 34; Gibb 2009: 705-706; see for instance Prebisch 1950 and 1963; Myrdal 1957). Referring to the structural inequalities within the global economy and the declining terms of trade of developing countries which are dependent on the export of commodities (Ocampo and Parra 2007: 157-158; see Aly 1994: 41-43), development integration makes the case for a fundamental "structural transformation" of economies in the South in order to curtail their economic dependency on the North, instead of relying on marginal "efficiency maximisation of existing capacity" (Østergaard 1993: 34). It is argued that large-scale economic capacity is anyhow hardly present in the developing world and, where it is, it resides mainly in the hands of Transnational Cooperations (TNCs) (Østergaard 1993: 34; Aly 1994: 43-45). According to the development integration approach, the focus of regional development strategies therefore must be the "'planned'

[18] Interestingly, even Balassa, one of the neoclassical pioneers of market integration theory, agreed that "present-day underdeveloped countries need more state interference in economic affairs than do advanced economies, since, in the former, market incentives are often not conducive to development" (1961: 10; also cited in Haarlov 1997: 31).

stimulation of productive capacities and investment" and the "balanced distribution of the benefits of economic cooperation and integration" to address intraregional as well as global structural disequilibria (Söderbaum 2004b: 24). Thus, its 'methodology' significantly differs from the market integration approach which trusts the 'invisible hand of the market' to trigger economic development in terms of growth. After the experiences of early African post-colonial regional economic communities (RECs) of the 1960s, which often collapsed because *laissez-faire* market integration had increased internal disequilibria due to the absence of distributional mechanisms (Aly 1994: 58-61; Lee 2003: 24-26), proponents of development integration advocate "high-level political cooperation and integration […] at an early stage" (again in stark opposition to neofunctionalist and orthodox market integration theories). They also propose a distinctively inward-looking and interventionist strategy emphasising the principle of collective self-reliance (Söderbaum 2004b: 24; Østergaard 1993: 34; Axline 1977: 25; 1994b: 3-4). This implied both intra-regional "compensatory measures (transfer tax system, budgetary transfers, preferential tariffs) and corrective mechanisms (planned industrial strategy, regional development, regional development banks or funds, common investment code", as well as import-substitution programmes and other protectionist measures (Söderbaum 2004b: 24; Gibb 2009: 705-706; Lee 2003: 23-27; Østergaard 1993: 35; see also Haarlov 1997: 30-36).[19]

Both approaches have had a significant impact on politics, not least in Africa. The idea of development integration deeply influenced United Nations (UN) institutions such as the Economic Commissions for Latin America (UNECLA), and respectively Africa (UNECA), as well as the Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) programmatically and justified the demand of developing countries of the Non-Aligned Movement for a New International Economic Order (Hettne 2005: 551; Cox 1979: 257; Dabène 2009: 16-17; Gibb 2009: 705-706; Sanchez-Ancochea 2007: 215-219). The ongoing economic marginalisation of Africa's (sub-)regional economic communities and their lasting dependency on the former colonial powers during the 1960s resulted in a strategy shift away from the reliance on market-led externally oriented regional development of the early post-independence period towards regional cooperation and development integration, as the self-reliant and autarkic continent-wide Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 exemplifies, which was heavily promoted by the UNECA. The plan invoked African solidarity and aimed at collective self-reliance through industrial and economic development cooperation within and between the RECs in a continent-wide framework as "a precursor to an eventual African economic community able to interact on equal terms with external economic powers" (Olivier 2010: 29, 30; see Aly 1994: 78-81; Mittelman 1999: 27; 2000: 112; Ikome 2007: ch 3). As will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, regional cooperation, as well as development integration, has also played a crucial role in the Southern African context from the foundation of the Frontline States (FLS) in 1974 up until the early 1990s.[20] Yet, both approaches to

[19] Due to its limited success record, and against the background of the advent of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), the strategy of import substitution industrialisation (ISI), which was an integral part of the earlier structuralist as well as developmentalist strategies, has been increasingly discredited in the debate towards the end of the 1980s (Haarlov 1997: 37).

[20] In this context, I disagree with Lee who attributed a strategy of regional cooperation to SADCC and one of developmental integration to SADC since its foundation in 1992 (2003: 19). The delineation between regional

regionalism had limited success in triggering socio-economic development and did not last long due to internal and external political and structural factors (see Østergaard 1993: 35-39; Aly 1994: 85-87; Lee 2003: 23, 26-27) but also – as will be discussed in the next subchapter – because rationalist regional theorisation, in specific market integration theory, now in the neoliberal form, has obtained hegemonic status in the recent debate.

2.2 Contemporary debate I – hegemonic rationalist theorisation

Due to the deceleration of regional integration in Europe and the collapse of similar integration schemes in the South, theorisation of regional processes, particularly from the *hitherto* dominant neofunctionalist and market integration approaches, has been generally subdued since the second half of the 1960s (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 901). It has only reappeared, on a larger scale, on the academic agenda in the latter part of the 1980s and against the background of the end of the Cold War. This was a reaction to the empirical phenomenon of what was termed "new regionalism". The latter differed from the "old regionalism" in its geographical scope due to its "worldwide reach, extending to more regions, with greater external linkages" (Mittelman 2000: 113; also cited in Söderbaum 2003a: 4; see also Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 457). Furthermore, several scholars have stressed the qualitative differences between old and new regionalisms, which is reflected in the latter's theorisation. Particularly its "extroverted" nature and its interlinkage with the process of globalisation have been emphasised, with some scholars vigorously and often over-simplistically arguing about the question as to whether "regionalization was a stumbling-block or a stepping-stone towards globalization and improved multilateralism" (Söderbaum 2003a: 5; Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 61-62). Ultimately, for some scholars, the new regionalism also stands for theoretical innovation, in order to dissociate themselves from classical regional integration theories and to indicate "the richness of new regionalism theory" (Söderbaum 2003a: 5).

However, as will be discussed in the end of this section, there are – besides discontinuities – also important continuities in the study and practice of regionalism. This section attempts to give an overview of the recent debate. Therefore, it firstly examines rationalist theoretical attempts to make sense of regions and regionalism by looking at important contributions from the broader realist and liberal camps of IR theory. Subsequently, "open regionalism", as the dominant paradigm of the last two decades in the global (political) discourse on regionalism, is discussed.

2.2.1 Breaking the silence – rationalist 'grand theories' in IR/IPE and regionalism

Until the 1980s, studies and theories of regional integration/regionalism have led a wallflower existence within the broader disciplines of IR and IPE. Particularly the dominant realist paradigm, with Waltz's structural realism leading the way, has "not been much interested in European integration processes" (Stone 1994: 457; also cited in Rosamond 2000: 132) and "several prominent Neo-realists

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cooperation and development integration is a useful analytical tool. However, the empirical reality often reveals an overlap between the two, as the case of SADCC exemplifies. While the latter indeed preferred regional cooperation before integration, concomitantly its agenda clearly had developmentalist ambitions and stressed collective self-reliance and interventionist industrialisation, at least rhetorically (see Aly 1994: 75, 81-87).

basically shun the idea of European integration as a relevant phenomenon in International Relations" (Pilegaard and Kluth 2010: 7). Indeed, the neorealist preoccupation with the distribution of power in an anarchic international system with formally and functionally equal basic units, namely nation-states striving for survival and jealously guarding national sovereignty, leaves little space for the interpretation of deepening regional cooperation or integration (Hout 1999: 14-15; Rosamond 2000: 132; see Waltz 1979; Waltz 1996). However, neorealism does foresee possibilities for cooperation among states when the distribution of power makes it necessary to balance the power of another state or group of states (Söderbaum 2011: 53; see Gilpin 1987). Drawing *inter alia* on Robert Gilpin's hegemonic stability theory, several realist scholars argue that local hegemonic leadership makes regional cooperation more probable, particularly because local hegemons can provide the resources to create and maintain regional institutions (Grieco 1997: 173; Hurrell 1995: 52-53; see Hout 1999: 15; Söderbaum 2004b: 18-19; Gilpin 1987). By (partly) diverging from Waltz's "structural stringency" (Rynning 2011: 28), realists undertook the attempt to explain the prominence of regional cooperation/integration in order to remain theoretically relevant in a world in which the role of the nation-state significantly changed and regionalisms occured not only in Europe, but globally. Joseph Grieco, for instance, reads the successful passage of the Treaty on EU and the establishment of a Monetary Union as being the result of a sequence of interstate bargains which revealed a common interest among the participating states. Thereby, "the weaker but still influential partners will seek to ensure that the rules so constructed will provide sufficient opportunities for them to voice their concerns and interests" (Grieco 1995: 35). Grieco thereby tries to bring institutionalisation in line with the neorealist assumption "that states are the primary actors and that they are best conceived of as unitary entities deploying instrumental rationality" (Rosamond 2000: 134; see Grieco 1995).

A seminal contribution to the field of (regional) security studies which originated from within the broader realist camp is Barry Buzan's work on the "regional security complex". Buzan originally defined the latter as "a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another" and, thus, emphasised the significance of the regional level in international relations (1991: 190; see also Söderbaum 2004b: 19-20 and 2011: 54).[21]

The increase in global interdependencies, through deepening (economic) globalisation and the respective quantitative and qualitative rise in international cooperation, has resulted in a liberal-institutionalist challenge of conventional neo-realist assumptions, which constituted one of the main features of the Inter-Paradigm Debate in IR (see Smith 2007: 4-5). Thereby, early liberal institutionalism was inspired *inter alia* by the broader liberal tradition and its pluralist assumptions as well as by (neo)functionalist thinking, especially with regard to the mediating influence of

[21] Together with Waever, Buzan has later – after his personal alignment with the constructivist approach – adapted his concept by departing from neorealist state-centrism and introducing the concepts of "securitization" and "desecuritization" as processes of social construction (Söderbaum 2011: 54 ; see Buzan and Wæver 2003; Buzan 2003).

international institutions (Söderbaum 2004b: 20).[22] The basic argument of early liberal-institutionalist work in IR was that the international system, and particularly the international economy, is marked by "complex interdependence" (see Keohane and Nye 1977). Whereas they agree that this complex international interdependence takes place in an anarchical system, scholars – now under the label of neoliberal institutionalism, the currently dominant liberal-institutionalist strand[23] – argue that international organisations and regimes play a crucial role in overcoming collective-action problems and transaction costs, *inter alia* by providing states with information about preferences and actions of other states or by monitoring states' compliance to international agreements (Martin 2007: 111; see Keohane 1982 and 1984; Krasner 1982). According to the neoliberal logic anarchy is therefore "notably modified by the presence of institutions" (Cornett and Caporaso 1992: 233; also cited in Rosamond 2000: 142). Indeed, states as the dominant actors in international relations are considered as interest-driven and rational (Keohane 1989b: 142). However, in contrast to neorealist reasoning, they are seeking absolute and not relative gains. International cooperation in formal or informal institutions is therefore desirable for states, if it generates absolute gains in relation to respective national preferences. With regard to regionalism, Söderbaum argues:

> "According to neoliberal institutionalists, regionalism is primarily motivated by the procurement of public goods, the avoidance of negative externalities from interdependence, and absolute gains. Regionalism is expected to be an incremental problem-solving process, mainly driven by or through formal and informal institutions. Transactions and commerce generate a demand for regulation, institutionalization and supranational governance. In essence, 'institutions matter' and efficient regionalization is expected to become ever more institutionalized" (2004b: 22).

There is some innovative research on the "new regionalism" emanating from the liberal tradition in IR and economics. Diana Tussie, for instance, rejects the simplistic account of regionalism as either a stepping-stone or stumbling-block for multilateralism. She argues that "regionalism thrives in the policy spaces left by multilateralism but that at the same time when these lacunae are too many or too wide these tensions are then re-played in the multilateral sphere" (Tussie 2003: 100). Moreover, for her, "regions may well prove to be a good vehicle for smaller countries to enjoy more of a voice in international trade" (Tussie 2003: 115). Similarly, Percy Mistry, states that regionalism – in the context of hitherto "dysfunctional" multilateralism – is "the most tractable risk management strategy available to developing countries for coping with the challenges they confront in the twenty-first century". He challenges orthodox market integration and makes the case for a more "holistic theory of regionalism" which could be attained through "pragmatic empiricism" (Mistry 2003: 137, 138). Despite their reservations towards specific features of existing liberal-institutionalist, as well as liberal-economic, contributions the two authors investigate the new regionalism from the conventional rationalist and problem-solving meta-theoretical position and remain preoccupied with state and market actors in interstate-frameworks (Söderbaum 2003a: 5, 11, 14).

[22] Joseph Nye for instance has significantly contributed to the development of both neofunctionlist integration theory (see 1965 and 1970) as well as interdependence theory (see Keohane and Nye 1977).
[23] For a discussion of different institutionalist strands in relation to European regional integration, see Rosamond (2000: 113-122) and (Pollack 2009: 125-129).

2.2.2 The resilience of Eurocentric theories

The revival of European integration in the late 1980s, marked by the 1985 White Paper on the internal market which found implementation in the Single European Act of 1987 and the respective gradual establishment of a Single Market by 1992, has resulted in a striking comeback of European integration theories. The school of supranational institutionalism emerged, which partly builds on neofunctionalist thought. It regards the incremental implementation of the internal market, which was particularly driven forward by the private sector, organised at the European level, and the European Commission under Jacques Delors, as empirical evidence for the logic of deepening integration as a consequence of functional necessities in the economic sphere and the distinct role of supranational actors as agents of regional integration (Rosamond 2000: 98-102, 126-127; Sandholtz and Zysman 1989: 96; see also Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998). Economic analyses, moreover, consider the successful completion of the Single Market Programme as a reinforcement of neoclassical economic integration theories (see for instance Baldwin and Wyplosz 2009: 26, ch 10 and 11). The establishment of the Single Market is interpreted by state-centric accounts in a different manner. Under the label of liberal intergovernmentalism, scholars argued that member states intensified economic integration, since this corresponded with the national interests of the most powerful member states and the preferences of dominant domestic social groups (Moravcsik 1991: 25-26 and 1993: 480-481; see also Moravcsik 1998; Söderbaum 2004b: 26). Regional integration is hence understood and analysed as the interplay between, and result of, processes of domestic preference building on the one hand and intergovernmental bargaining at large Council meetings and treaty conventions on the other (Söderbaum 2009: 483; Rosamond 2000: 136-138; see Moravcsik 1993: 515).

It becomes apparent that the earlier discussed 'neo-neo synthesis' in broader IR has penetrated mainstream integration theories. Despite differences in their causal explanations of regional cooperation/integration, they all share the rationalist and state-centric ontological assumptions of interest-driven and unitary states and a research programme focusing on formal interstate frameworks, economic interdependence and the market. The most obvious example is Andrew Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism which portrays integration as a two-level game and combines a liberal domestic politics approach with the assumption of rationalist states in an anarchical environment (Söderbaum 2004b: 26; Rosamond 2000: 135-138). Another characteristic of this 'second wave' of integration theory is its geographical origin, which is paradoxically not Europe, but mainly the home of rationalist/positivist IR/IPE theory, the United States (Wæver 1998: 724).[24] The academic preoccupation with the European integration process, respectively the treatment of the latter as quasi-ideal type of regionalism, has reinforced "Europe's capture of the regional integration paradigm

[24] A major exception is the so called "multilevel governance" approach which cannot be discussed here at length. It tries to incorporate – as its name indicates – several levels of governance, from the sub-national to the supranational, as well as a variety of actors which, according to scholars affiliated to the approach, all influence regional governance (Wæver 1998: 724; see for instance Marks *et al.* 1996; Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 1996; Rosamond 2000: 109-113).

[which] has been hard to shift, and persists in the newer literature" (Fawcett 2005: 21; also cited in Gibb 2009: 717). Thus, the new, now global, wave of regionalist projects has been deeply influenced by the European experience and Eurocentric theorising, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 (see Söderbaum 2011: 58). As Söderbaum eloquently states:

> "One reason for this bias lies in the ways the underlying assumptions and understandings about the nature of regionalism (which most often stem from a particular reading of European integration) influence perceptions about how regionalism in other parts of the world does (and should) look" (2009: 490).

Thereby, the 'prescription' of regional economic integration and Europe-style institutionalisation in other world regions have been supplemented by an outwardly oriented and "more aggressive market integration approach" in the form of open regionalism under the influence of hegemonic neoliberal norms (Gibb 2009: 706).

2.2.3 Open regionalism – the hegemonic regional project

The introduction of 'open regionalism' into the debate in the early 1990s must be understood as a result of the triumphant advent of neoliberalism in the global political economy of the 1980s, spearheaded by the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (see Lee 2003: 9-10). Open regionalism derives from the tradition of neo-classical economics and orthodox market integration theory but has a specific outward-orientation due to its inherent scepticism towards regionalism, which is seen as a hindrance to multilateralism and a global free market. While open regionalism shares the commitment to free market principles and trade liberalisation with traditional regional market integration theory, its neoliberal tenet considers the consecutive stages of conventional regional market integration as unnecessary or even potentially risky, due to their possible impediments to a global free market such as extra-regional protectionist and discriminatory trade or monetary policies. Open regionalism shares the neoliberal dogma of a global free market and constitutes a regional strategy for the promotion of multilateral trade liberalisation and market fundamentalism, as embraced by the 'Washington Consensus' (Lee 2003: 31-32; see Söderbaum 2004b: 25; Odén 1999: 159; Mittelman 1999: 35-36; Hettne 2005: 549).

In practice, open regionalism has been the consequence of a certain paradigm shift within the international financial institutions (IFIs) which has taken place from the early 1990s onwards. Contrary to previous reservations against existing regional economic frameworks, which were regarded as a 'stumbling block' to multilateral liberalisation on a global level, the IFIs began promoting outward-looking market integration in the developing world "as a mechanism to enhance multilateral liberalisation and promote integration in the world economy" (Gibb 2009: 706; see Lee 2003: 31-32; Söderbaum 2004b: 25). "This reversal in policy was a reflection of the realisation that promoting trade liberalisation at the regional level first was more acceptable to African leaders than unilateral liberalisation at the global level" (Lee 2003: 32). In the discourse of the World Bank, open regionalism is thus a means "to create a sub-regional unified, *open* economic space for the free movement of goods, services, capital & people; and move away from unsuccessful import substitution

strategies" (World Bank 2001 cited in Söderbaum 2004b: 92; emphasis added; see also Evans 2010: 111). As the word 'open' in its name suggests, open regionalism does not primarily intend the integration of intra-regional markets, but aims ultimately at the rapid integration of regional economies into the world economy. In this regard, it has been complemented by structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which since the 1980s have constituted the main tools of the IFIs to implement structural reforms on a national level, in form of deregulation, privatisation and unilateral trade-liberalisation (see Lee 2003: 10-11, 32).

Indeed, the hegemony of neoliberalism and the strategy of open regionalism has indeed further enhanced "the globalization of regional integration and praxis" (Schulz *et al.* 2001: 4; also cited in Taylor 2003b: 315). Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne state that "one of the most striking characteristics common to all the regionalist projects is their commitment to open regionalism" (1996: 251). This applies not least to Africa. The continent-wide Abuja Treaty of 1991 signified a clear shift away from its inward-looking, developmentalist, precursor, the Lagos Plan. It embraces economic liberalism and intends to open up Africa's economies both at the level of the RECs as well as at the continental level in the form of an African Economic Community (AEC) (Olivier 2010: 31-32). During the 1990s, African decision-makers, most prominently South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, adopted the Washington Consensus and the dominant regionalist doctrine of open regionalism with its underlying logic of "liberalization, reduced protectionism, and downsizing of the role of the state in the economy" (Söderbaum 2004a: 423; see Taylor 2003b: 311-313). Therefore, Mbeki's 'African Renaissance', the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), contemporary SADC policies and the Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), explicitly lock the neoliberal orthodoxy into African state-led regionalisms and thereby foster the "unquestioning belief that integration of their territories into the global economy is absolutely crucial and inevitable" (Taylor 2003b: 313; see also Olivier 2010: 32-33; Taylor 2005).

2.2.4 Continuities and discontinuities in the study of regions

As the foregoing discussion of major theoretical contributions underlines, not all is new about the 'new regionalism'. Indeed, in contrast to earlier regionalist projects of the 1950s and 1960s, the wave of regionalisms triggered in the late 1980s has become a "worldwide phenomenon" and has taken place within the context of rapidly deepening globalisation (Hettne 2005: 549). This has resulted in an ontological shift from predominantly inward-looking analyses of the early debate to the analytical inclusion of external factors influencing regionalism. Several rationalist accounts stress the extroverted nature of the new regionalism and particularly its interplay with the process of globalisation and multilateralism (Söderbaum 2003a: 4-5; see Barry and Keith 1999; Samspon and Woolcock 2003).

Nonetheless, major overlaps in theorisation prevail. Both integration theories, as well as broader IR theories, remain ontologically preoccupied with formal regionalism, interstate frameworks and trade/market integration. In that sense, they have not yet abandoned their Eurocentric perspective and do not attempt to broaden their research programme by looking, for example, into non-state actors, their regional agendas and respective impact on regionalisation processes (Bøås *et al.* 2005: 1). While

parts of civil society were, for instance, taken into account by early neofunctionalist thought in its consideration of the role of transnationalising interest groups, contemporary rationalist approaches do not pay particular attention to civil society (Hettne 2005: 555; Söderbaum 2007: 320). Bøås *et al.* rightly conclude: conventional approaches to regionalism "still privilege[s] the state, the formal, the institutional and the economic incentives to market integration" (2005: 11). Closely related to this continuity is the unfortunately limited empirical focus of mainstream research on regionalism which is still predominantly occupied with Europe, North America and East Asia (Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 68).

Additionally, regional theorising and practice still display a strong bias in favour of neo-classical economics, now extended by neoliberal logics. With regard to the persistent political significance of market-integration approaches to regionalism, particularly in the form of open regionalism, it is worthwhile citing Richard Gibb at some length:

> "[M]arket-led regional integration is both a model and a discourse, with associated values and norms. It is a particularly eurocentric conception of regional integration, adopting many Western values and […] is underpinned by the notion of universality and a transposition of Western values. The conceptual flaws inherent in market integration theory focus, from a developing-country perspective, on its failure to explore the influence of the spatial and temporal individuality of the states involved. In particular, it neglects the influence of how domestic politics, particularly African-state politics, can call into question many of the economic (and political) assumptions that underpin the market integration approach. However, the resilience of the market-led approach, and its associated structures and values, is a reflection of a powerful and hegemonic postcolonial international political economy (IPE) discourse dominated by a prioritisation of global neoliberal values" (2009: 707).

This citation eloquently underlines the need for alternative approaches to regionalism, some of which will be discussed in the following chapter. Despite the flaws of rationalist theorising, it is not argued here that the latter is free from insightful contributions or that one orthodoxy should be substituted by another – for instance by generally privileging informal regionalism over formal, Afrocentrism over Eurocentrism or sociological over economic accounts. It is instead crucial to choose an approach which allows for a comprehensive picture of the respective regional phenomenon under investigation without *a priori* excluding specific analytical aspects, especially when analysing regionalism, an "object [which] refuses too much reductionism" (Hettne 2005: 550).

2.3 Contemporary debate II – the pluralisation of the debate

This chapter now turns to critical/reflectivist approaches which have contributed significantly to the pluralisation of the theoretical landscape of the field since the beginning of the 1990s. The selection of approaches follows Söderbaum who regarded the World Order Approach and different strands of the New Regionalism(s) Approach as particularly insightful in his case study on the Southern African region (see 2004b: 36). After discussing the major theoretical claims of these approaches, I propose in this subchapter an eclectic employment of their theoretical strengths for the purpose of this study.

2.3.1 Coxian Critical Theory and the World Order Approach

The WOA is highly indebted to Cox's writings (see 1981; 1983 and 1987). While he himself has only lately shown a more peripheral analytical interest in the 'regional' (see Cox 1999; 2004), other authors have applied his theoretical insights to the study of regionalism (see for instance Payne and Gamble 1996; Gamble and Payne 2003; Hout 1999: 22-24).[25] Building on the historicist method discussed in the first chapter, the WOA is specifically interested in social and structural change and the role regionalism as a state(s)-led project plays in the making or remaking of world orders. Regionalism is, besides globalism, understood as one strategy of states, or rather of state/society-complexes, to influence the nature of the world order according to their respective economic interests (Gamble and Payne 2003: 50). While proponents of the WOA do not disregard the possibility that regionalism takes on a form which counters the negative effects of neoliberal economic globalisation, they consider the contemporarily prevailing form of open regionalism as "a step towards globalism rather than an alternative to it" (Gamble and Payne 2003: 51). The proliferation of neoliberal norms through open regionalism mandated by institutions such as the IFIs is interpreted as a regional instrument of dominant social forces in Western state-society complexes, particularly large capital and what Cox termed the "transnational managerial class" (1993b: 261). It aims at serving the latter's private interests by prolonging the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism in a world order in which it can no longer be ensured by a single state as the global hegemon (Gamble and Payne 2003: 59; see also Hout 1999: 23; Söderbaum 2004b: 29; Gill 1995b).

In several regards the WOA offers analytical insights crucial to this study. Firstly, the WOA attempts to reveal existing power relations between different social forces within historical structures. Cox thereby unpacks the state treated by many mainstream scholars as a 'black box', functionally indifferent from other states, and looks closely at the nature of "state-society complexes" composing different forms of states. His emphasis lies on the relation between social forces related to the process of production (Cox 1986: 216; see Leysens 2008: 38-39). Indeed, the specific modes of social relations of production, identified by Cox in his eminent 1987 work titled *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History,* are informed by the societal, political and economic conditions of the industrialised West and, therefore, are not easily transferable to other world regions (see 1987: ch 2, 3 and 4). Aside from that, the preoccupation of the WOA with social relations related to production has rightly been criticised and questions about its applicability to the analyses of social relations at the beginning of the 2010s, not least in a region like Southern Africa which is overwhelmingly marked by informal economies and a high percentage of people who are entirely excluded from production processes (see Bieler and Morton 2001: 23; Leysens 2000: 266).[26]

[25] The first contributions on regionalism from the perspective of the WOA emanated from research projects at the Political Economy Research Centre of the University of Sheffield (Gamble and Payne 1996: x).

[26] In a re-evaluation of his theory Cox himself states that "[m]any people would need to be understood more in their relationship to consumption (or the inability to consume adequately) rather than to production – the more or less permanently unemployed, the inhabitants of shanty towns, welfare recipients, and students. The old production-related categories are not entirely superseded; but the scheme of categories of people relevant to the problematic of social change needs to be rethought" (1999:26).

Nevertheless, analytical sensitivity of a Coxian variety, with regard to relationships of respective social forces within historical structures, is absolutely crucial in order to grasp the 'real' political economy of regionalism. As will be elucidated in the subsequent chapter, the neopatrimonial nature of most Southern African states, for instance, has significant consequences for regionalisation, both formal as well as informal, and has resulted in a "regionalisation of neopatrimonialism" (see Söderbaum and Taylor 2010: 54).

Secondly, the WOA explicitly embeds regionalism into structures and processes at the global level such as the contemporary ideological hegemony of neoliberalism and global capitalism. It emphasises the uneven impact economic globalisation has had on different parts of the world and the resulting polarisation within, but also between, world regions (Gamble and Payne 2003: 57; Hout 1999: 23). By adding another layer of power, namely a vertical one, to the study of world politics, the WOA thus can overcome the narrow focus on the horizontal rivalry between states in rationalist reasoning and reveals patterns of domination and hegemony between social forces in the core regions and state-society complexes in the periphery (Moolakkattu 2009: 447; see Cox 1996d: 95-96). Cox's understanding of hegemony, which will be discussed further in relation to the concept of civil society in the fourth section, can contribute significantly to a critical assessment of the role played by external actors in a region like Southern Africa.

Last but not least, the WOA's normative commitment to social transformation implies that it rejects the notion that social structures are static and unchangeable. In this regard, social forces are seen as possible agents of change which shape historical structures at the local, national, regional and world level by responding collectively "to the physical material context (natural nature) in which human aggregates find themselves" (Cox 1986: 242; see also Leysens 2008: 43). Drawing on Gramsci, the WOA considers civil society as the centrepiece in the making and unmaking of historical structures.

Despite these theoretical strengths of the WOA, the latter by itself certainly cannot provide a holistic understanding of the dynamics and complexities of contemporary regionalisms. This is mainly because the WOA is primarily concerned with formal, state-led regionalism "from a world order and in a systemic perspective" (Söderbaum 2004b: 35). The WOA must thus be supplemented by more agency- and process-focused accounts with a bottom-up perspective.

2.3.2 The New Regionalism Approach and global transformation

Equally interested in the change of world orders, another powerful and lasting contribution to the recent debate has challenged several features of mainstream regional theorisation from a critical/reflectivist position. What became known as the "New Regionalism Approach" (NRA) emanated from scholars involved in the research project of the UN University/World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) which was launched in the mid-1990s (see Hettne 1993; Hettne and Inotai 1994; Hettne *et al.* 1999). The NRA has interpreted the dramatic increase in regionalist projects since the late 1980s as one constituent – besides globalisation – of a "larger process of global structural transformation" (Hettne 1999: 2; see 1994: 10). The new regionalism is hence considered as qualitatively different from its predecessor, the first wave of regionalism, since it

takes place in a multipolar, and no longer bipolar, world which influences nature of regionalisms. In contrast to the first wave of regional projects, which were mainly imposed by the superpowers, the new regionalism is seen to be "a more spontaneous process from within the region" and its constituent states (Hettne 1999: 7; see also Söderbaum 2004b: 30).

Therefore, regionalism is understood by the NRA as a "heterogenous, comprehensive, multidimensional phenomenon, taking place in several sectors, and at least potentially 'pushed' by a variety of state and non-state actors, both within and outside formal regional institutional arrangements" (Söderbaum 2004b: 31; see Hettne 1999: 8). This, as advocates of the NRA argue, necessitates an interdisciplinary approach of analysis in order to go beyond the narrow economism of most rationalist approaches and to include political, social and cultural aspects (Hettne 1999: 17 and 2003: 24). As the concept of "regionness" (see chapter 1.4.1) indicates, the NRA puts emphasis on the making and unmaking of regions and on regional processes rather than following, in a rationalist manner, fixed definitions of, and narrow assumptions about, regions and their supposed purposes (Söderbaum 2004b: 31).

In normative terms the NRA is, like the WOA, highly critical of contemporary globalism, stresses the unequal impacts of globalisation on populations and seeks to reveal existing power relations within the contemporary world order (Söderbaum 2004b: 30). The new regionalism is seen – some argue too optimistically (see Söderbaum 2004b: 33) – as a possible societal response countering the negative effects of globalisation through a "return of the political" (Hettne 1999: 7; 2003: 33-34). In this regard, Björn Hettne, as programme director of the UNU/WIDER research project being one of the pioneers in this tradition, has incorporated Polanyian thought – to which I referred in the introduction – by depicting globalisation and regionalisation as the crucial aspects of the second great transformation of the world order. The latter thereby is understood as "a 'double movement', where an expansion and deepening of the market is followed by a political intervention in defence of societal cohesion – the expansion of market constituting the first movement and the societal response the second" (Hettne 2005: 548). According to Hettne, "[r]egionalism is thus part of both the first and second movement, with a neoliberal face in the first, and a more interventionist orientation in the second" (2005: 548). This shows that the NRA is more optimistic than the WOA about the possibility of regionalism becoming the locus of social transformation (Söderbaum 2004b: 31; see also Mittelman 1999: 47-49).

Notwithstanding the eminent, theoretically critical/reflectivist, contribution of the early NRA, it has rightly witnessed criticism from within the reflectivist camp because of its "implicit tendency to use highly institutionalized forms of regionalization, the EU in particular, as the norm for understanding contemporary practices and processes of regionalization" (Bøås *et al.* 2003: 203; see Söderbaum 2004b: 32-33; 35). Like the WOA, the early NRA remained overly concerned with global structural factors, *i.e.* the external dimension of regionalism, and the reactions of states to the latter.[27] As NRA scholars self-reflectively admit, "our project, in spite of good intentions to the contrary, has been too

[27] Hettne has subsequently acknowledged the weakness encapsulated in this earlier work and now emphasises the importance to analyse regionalism from an endogenous as well as from an exogenous perspective (2003: 26).

state-centric and too focused on formal organisations rather than pinpointing the processes of more informal regionalisation that take place on the ground" (Hettne *et al.* 2001: xxxii). That the research focus of this early variant of the NRA partly resembles the Eurocentrism of the mainstream theories in the field, is illustrated by Hettne, himself, when he argues that "Europe represents the most advanced regional arrangements the world has seen, and it will consequently serve as our paradigm for the new regionalism" (1994: 12; also cited in Bøås *et al.* 2003). Nevertheless, the NRA has been significantly advanced since its inception, especially through contributions outlined in the next section.

2.3.3 New Regionalisms Approach and the 'weave-world' – regionalisms from below

It must be mentioned that this 'approach' explicitly acknowledges the lasting contributions made by the NRA and shares crucial meta-theoretical assumptions with it and other reflectivist/critical approaches, not least the acknowledgement of pluralism in the study of regionalism (see Bøås *et al.* 2003: 198, 202-203). The interchange and academic 'cross-fertilisation' between the protagonists of the NRA discussed above and proponents of a new regionalisms approach and the weave-world is therefore not surprising (Grant and Söderbaum 2003: 3-4; Söderbaum 2004b: 23-33). Hence, for the purpose of this study, I subsume both strands under the label 'New Regionalism(s) Approach' (NRA) and introduce – only for practical reasons – the abbreviation 'NRsA' for the theoretical innovations discussed in this section. The NRsA has been spearheaded by the editors of the 1999 special issue of *Third World Quarterly* on *New Regionalisms in the New Millennium* and has, since then, contributed significantly to a widening of the research agenda and our understanding of regionalism (see Bøås *et al.* 1999a).

First of all, as discussed in the conceptualisation section of the introduction, it was the proponents of the NRsA who broke with the tradition in the field to regard regionalism *per se* as a state-led political project in contrast to regionalisation which involves a variety of actors.[28] For the NRsA, civil societies, informal traders, migrants, criminal syndicates or TNCs, to name just a few, can likewise develop regional strategies, ideas and visions and, thus, there might well prevail a coexistence of regionalisms in any region at any point in time (see Bøås *et al.* 2003: 201; 2005: 6; Marchand *et al.* 1999: 900; Bach 1999; 2003). This notion results in a "multitude of overlapping, disjunct and often contradictory regionalisation processes" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 903; also cited in Lee 2003: 35). In order to do justice to the complexity of regions, the advocates of the NRsA argue that the study of regionalism must transcend the narrow analytical focus on formal regional projects, take the myriad of informal regionalisms serious and direct the attention to the nexuses between formal and informal actors and processes (Söderbaum 2011: 55, 59: 2004b: 33; Marchand *et al.* 1999: 905-906). In fact, it is argued that "often the distinction between formal and informal is purely cosmetic" (Bøås *et al.* 2003: 207).

For the NRsA, "[t]aking new regionalisms seriously implies that actual practices, and not geographical proximity alone or formal political and economic cooperation, will determine the

[28] For critical/reflectivist contributions upholding this state-biased distinction, see Gamble and Payne (2003).

delineation of the region" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 905). Accordingly, regions must be understood as social spaces in which "state, market, civil society and external actors often come together in a variety of mixed-actor collectivities, networks and modes of regional governance" (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003a: 222; see Bøås *et al.* 2003: 204-207). Important in the context of this study, alternative regionalisms are not least driven by regional civil societies, be they academic, cultural or policy-oriented, which, ultimately, hold the potential to contribute to the rise of regionness (see Shaw 2000: 408; 2002: 186-187).

The notion of the "weave-world of regionalisation and globalisation" (Bøås *et al.* 1999b: 1061) refers to the simultaneity and interconnectedness of, as well as contradiction between, processes from the local to the global level and underlines the "multifaceted relationship between globalization and regionalization" (Söderbaum 2003a: 5). To shed light into the complexity of this weave-world, the NRsA thereby directs much analytical attention to "neglected phenomena of the global political economy" and to micro-level strategies of the populace to cope with the negative impacts of globalisation (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 905). Advocates of the NRsA specifically attempt to uncover regional (economic) 'realities' and, in turn, stress the prevailing detachment of official regional organisations in Africa from these realities (Bøås *et al.* 1999a: 1065; see Lee 2003: 36; Söderbaum 2004b: 215 n 8).[29]

The NRsA's sensitivity towards informal regional activities and a multitude of non-state-actors has, of course, epistemological consequences. The NRsA is explicitly agency- and process-oriented and aims at studying regionalisms "from below" (Marchand *et al.* 1999: 905, 906). In order to obtain a holistic and contextualised understanding of the multidimensionality of regional processes, the adherents of the NRsA advocate an interdisciplinary approach to study regionalisms and "take on board insights from parallel disciplines/discourses such as critical geography, post-colonial theory and cultural studies, and post-structuralism" (Bøås *et al.* 2005: 2; see 2003: 198; see Söderbaum 2004b: 33; Neumann 2003). Its critique of early versions of the NRA and other, more structural, accounts, of being preoccupied with formal regionalisms and particularly the European experience, implies a rejection of any "systemic and universalistic logic" and emphasises instead the distinctiveness of regional processes in the global South. However, Söderbaum is correct in arguing that "there is no reason to construct a priori a particular regionalism theory only for the South" (2004b: 35). I propose therefore to draw eclectically from the critical/reflectivist approaches discussed in this subchapter and to make use of their respective theoretical strengths.

2.3.4 Theoretical eclecticism – an attempt to grasp regional complexities in Southern African

Having discussed the insightful contributions of the WOA and two different strands of the NRA, I argue that only an eclectic and reflective use of their various theoretical insights can contribute to a better understanding of the region under investigation here. As discussed in the introduction, I advocate a theoretical synthesis between CCT, an approach specifically interested in the potential of

[29] In its attempt to reveal the "covered" and "unknown" aspects and processes of regionalisms the NRsA follows the critical realist tradition of E.H. Carr (see Söderbaum 2004b: 33).

emancipatory social and structural change, and the NRA, which offers a holistic and comprehensive toolbox to understand dynamics within regions, for the purpose of this study. Such a theoretical synthesis is not only useful to better grasp empirical phenomena, it serves also as a theory-building enterprise which leads to the necessary re-evaluation of existing approaches. While CCT can certainly profit from the NRA in terms of balancing its indisputable bias towards structural factors and formal regionalisation, the former can help to counteract the gradual loss of normative content which, to a certain extent, the NRA has arguably witnessed (Söderbaum cited in Schouten 2008: 3).

As discussed in the meta-theoretical section, I regard the cautious attempt to balance structure and agency analytically and to include formal *and* informal aspects of regionalisation, as well as the nexus between the two, as crucial. The weighting of these respective dimensions of course depends upon the focus of the analysis. However, the complete neglect of one or the other dimension can create, at best, an incomplete, and, at worst, a highly reductionist image of regionalism. In the course of this work, it shall become clear that both agency and structure, as well as formal and informal processes, need to be scrutinised to make sense of Southern Africa's political economy, civil society and its transformative potential. Two examples serve to elucidate the point: Firstly, as the next chapter will illustrate, formal inter-state frameworks, in this case SADC, "serve to discipline other actors (such as states, business groups and social actors) and force them to subscribe to the principles of deregulation and limited state interference in economic activity". Therefore, they can rightly be seen as tools "for achieving the regional 'hegemony' of neo-liberal economic principles", as argued by the WOA (Hout 1999: 24; Söderbaum 2004b: 29). However, ending the analysis at that point would leave it incomplete. As has been impressively demonstrated by NRA scholars before (see for instance Bach 1999; Söderbaum and Taylor 2003b; 2008a), people inhabiting a region put forth sophisticated – in many cases criminalised or illicit – alternative regional strategies to cope with their experienced reality. Secondly, as will become clear when looking closer at the civil society in Chapter 4, regional civil society actors definitely promote their own regional projects and can develop significant capacity and agency, yet, at the same time, they face a variety of structural constraints.

In my opinion, the crucial task of the analyst is therefore not to take an 'either-or decision' between 'structure' and 'agency', but rather to address the challenge of analytically incorporating the two in such a way that insights into how they mutually affect one another can be obtained. I do not think the 'Gordian knot' of the agency-structure problem can be untied just by shifting the balance towards agency. Such efforts to leave behind structures are undertaken by several proponents of the NRA and, indeed, provide crucial insights into social processes and agents in regional settings (see for instance Bøås et al. 2003; 2005).[30] Yet, post-structuralist reasoning reveals a similar weakness to orthodox structuralism, namely a mono-causal way of handling the agent-structure problem or, more appropriately, a shunning of it. Analysts only focusing on processes and agency risk losing analytical interest in the possibility of structural transformation and to be reduced to a practice of "mere" description, for Cox the decisive feature of problem-solving theory (see 1986: 254 n 32).

[30] For differing post-structuralist accounts in broader IR, see for instance Doty (1997) and Suganami (1999).

Last but not least, a central shortcoming of all three critical/reflectivist approaches to regionalism discussed in this section remains the lack of systematic analysis of civil society. While all of them emphasise the importance of the latter in regional settings, "*[c]ivil societies* are generally neglected in the description and explanation of new regionalism" (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003a: 222; original emphasis; for notable exceptions see Söderbaum 2004b and 2007; Godsäter and Söderbaum 2008 and 2011; Igarashi 2011). The theoretical challenge posed here is twofold: While the WOA certainly provides the theoretical tools for the potential study of the role of civil society, its proponents have been highly hesitant so far to employ them in systematic analyses of concrete regional cases and in a synchronic vein. Instead, they remained preoccupied with formal, state-led regionalism. In contrast, the NRA, in its more recent manifestations, is highly sensitive to societal agents and processes, but largely lacks a nuanced theoretical understanding of civil society. In fact, this is where further theoretical synthesis is needed and highly beneficial. For this reason, the following section focuses on the theorisation of civil society.

2.4 In search of the civil society in the region

> "At the end of the day, the possibilities and limitations of transformative regionalism rest on the strength of its links to civil society" (Mittelman 1999: 48).
>
> "[T]here is a need for a strong civil society on the level of the region, transcending Westphalian, state state-centric, or 'old' regionalism" (Hettne 2003: 37).

As the above quotations exemplify, critical/reflectivist scholarship emphasises the role of civil society in regard to social transformation at a regional level. However, while several scholars have stressed the transformative potential of civil society, particularly in opposition to economic globalisation (see Hettne 1999; Mittelman 1999 and 2000), "[t]he NRA's theoretical and analytical treatment of civil society is arguably lacking" (Söderbaum 2007: 320). To put it pointedly: Early NRA contributions seem to have the same flaw as the work of one of their inspirational mentors, Karl Polanyi, namely, to expect transformative regionalism rather to come about automatically, and reify "an abstract entity called 'society' that somehow knows how and when to protect itself", by not attributing sufficient analytical attention to the study of regional civil societies (Block 2008: 2; Hettne 2003: 32; see also Söderbaum 2007: 320; Block and Somers 1984). In turn, other proponents of the NRA are, at the same time, seemingly more interested in the dynamics of region-building than in the normative theoretical quest for social and structural change emanating from civil society (see Söderbaum cited in Schouten 2008: 3). Hence, there is "a need to develop the theory and methodology for studying civil society regionalization" (Söderbaum 2007: 321). This is where not only rationalist theories, which hardly take account of civil society in their analyses of regionalism, but also the NRA can profit from CCT. This section briefly – and, due to the space limitations of this study, not at all comprehensively – outlines the historical evolution of the concept of civil society, thereby underlining the Western liberal bias of the concept. Subsequently, in Chapter 2.4.2, civil society is discussed in both the regional and the Southern African context. Thereby, several crucial particularities of African state-society relations are discussed, in order to overcome the shortcomings of the mainstream discourse on civil society. This is

followed by a discussion of Gramsci's understanding of civil society and Cox's usage of it in the area of global studies/relations. While cautiously considering the warning inherent in reflectivist epistemology as well as in the historicist method not to assume the universal applicability of fixed concepts, in order to avoid falling victim to the same fallacy mainstream scholarship so often does, it is argued that the Gramscian reading of civil society provides crucial insights for the purpose of this study.

2.4.1 The origin of the concept

Since "[t]he debate about its meaning is part of what it is about" (Kaldor 2003: 2), it seems useful to shed some light on the historical evolution of the concept of civil society. The term *societas civilis* emerged first as the Latin translation of the Aristotelian *koinonia politike* and was used in ancient times to contrast the "'natural society' of animals" with the "rational and law-governed society of humans" (Parekh 2004: 15; see Hunt 1999: 16). It was understood as the public sphere of political association which was explicitly independent from the economic realm, the *oikos* or domestic household, driven by a common *ethos* and oriented towards the general public interest (Cohen and Arato 1992: 84-85; Hunt 1999: 16). The concept resumed prominence through the social contract theories of authors such as Hobbes and Locke who, while differing significantly from each other in terms of their anthropological premises, agreed that the cohabitation of humans can only be secured through the invention of a *civil* society, for them a law-based institution consensually agreed upon for rational reason. For most of these pre-Enlightenment thinkers civil society constituted therefore not a distinct realm from the state, but rather the state itself by "forming a single society, by virtue of subscribing to a consensually based public authority and sharing in common the practice of civility" (Parekh 2004: 16; see Cohen and Arato 1992: 87-88).

Important aspects of the contemporary understanding of civil society, in particular the notion of civil society as a social entity distinct from the state, have been developed in conjunction with the advent of the "modern, market-dominated social and political order" in the 18th century (Parekh 2004: 16). Writers of the Scottish Enlightenment regarded a society based on market exchanges between self-interested, free and equal individuals as "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty" (Smith 1950b: 184; see Hunt 1999: 12, 19; Hume 1987: 257). For them, "[a] civilized society was above all a commercial society" (Parekh 2004: 16; see Cohen and Arato 1992: 90; Hunt 1999: 12-13). Thus, civil society constituted "the self-interested realm of freedom, production and exchange" that "can correct itself automatically provided that political authorities do not interfere" (Ehrenberg 1999: 103). Understood as the sphere of social interaction in the market economy, civil society emancipated the individual from direct political coercion and religious or moral dependencies of feudal and ancient times and was protected by "rational legal norms […] and a minimum structure of public authority" as guarantor of civil liberties and property (Parekh 2004: 16-17; see Hunt 1999: 12, 16, 29; Ehrenberg 1999: 104). Enlightenment thinkers were well aware that the commercial society, while liberating individuals from "direct moral and political supervision" as well as communal obligations of public virtue and, thereby, enabling them to pursue their self-chosen interests autonomously, would create

new social dependencies (Hunt 1999: 15).[31] In other words, there is a dialectic tension inherent in this reading of civil society, since it "must be seen as creating the basis of common welfare out of the pursuit of particular interests" (Cox 1999: 6; see Hunt 1999: 13). In Adam Smith's reasoning this problem was solved by the self-regulating nature of the marketplace in which the individual is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his [*sic*] intention" (Smith 1950a: 421). This assumption of a law of unintended consequences implied that individuals pursuing their self-interests would naturally contribute to the "wealth of nations" (Ehrenberg 1999: 102-103; see Cohen and Arato 1992: 98).

Georg W.F. Hegel shared the understanding of civil society as the "realm of particular interests" and thereby the specifically bourgeois conception of the latter, as prevalent in Enlightenment thought (Cox 1999: 5-6; see Ehrenberg 1999: 96-97, 126). For Hegel, civil society, or *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, was the necessary function of the market economy and the realm of the free and self-serving *bourgeois*, *i.e.* the *homo oeconomicus*, and not of the classical *citoyen*, the *homo politicus* (Cohen and Arato 1992: 97; see Ehrenberg 1999: 125-126). Through his famous "tripartite division of domestic, economic and political society" Hegel located civil society between the family and the state (Hunt 1999: 17; Hegel 1967: 122-123). While Hegel acknowledged the unprecedented freedom of the individual in modern civil society, he was highly sceptical about the stability and self-regulating functioning of civil society (Parekh 2004: 17). For him, civil society and the inherent mutual dependence of its constituents represented an infinite "system of needs" with highly unequal effects resulting in "fatal extremes of wealth and poverty" (Ehrenberg 1999: 126-127; see Hegel 1967: 150). According to Hegel, modern civil society remained incomplete, since it "lacked collective self-consciousness, capacity for collective self-reflection, and a sense of moral direction" (Parekh 2004: 17). This is why Hegel undertook the attempt to reconcile the freedom of the individual in the modern civil society with the ancient conception of *ethos* by introducing the state as a "higher ethical category […] outside the market-driven logic of civil society" (Ehrenberg 1999: 128; see Cohen and Arato 1992: 91). The moral and universal role of Hegel's state thereby goes beyond the functional and passive idea of the "night-watchman state" (see Ehrenberg 1999: 104) of the 19th century. It embodies "individuals' dialectical unity, and represent[s] objective rationality, rationally regulated sentiments of love and disinterested concern for the whole, pursuit of collective well-being, and a non-instrumental view of public authority" (Parekh 2004: 17). Hegel theorised the "bureaucratic state as the highest moment of freedom in an effort to supersede the economically driven chaos of bourgeois civil society" (Ehrenberg 1999: 109-110; see Spini 2011: 18).

A thorough critique of *hitherto* conceptions of civil society emanated from the works of Karl Marx. He understood civil society as the entirety of material relationships among individuals, *i.e.* the market economy, and, in accordance with earlier thinkers, as marked by the pursuit of self-interest and the

[31] Among Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, it is was most decisively Adam Ferguson who was highly ambivalent about the social and political effects of commercial society. Adam Smith also clearly outlines defects of the latter too, particularly "the divided character of human beings" and the "differentiation of social functions" in a modern commercial society (Hunt 1999: 20-21, 24, 25).

satisfaction of needs of allegedly free and equal individuals (Spini 2011: 18; Parekh 2004: 17). However, according to Marx, the liberty and equality inherent to the bourgeois society were "deeply distorted and rendered vacuous by the class structure of the capitalist society" (Parekh 2004: 17). In other words, "civil society is nothing more than an expression of the economic interests of the bourgeois class" (Hunt 1999: 13-14). Accordingly, Marx underlined Hegel's observation of the unequal effects and conflictual nature of civil society, yet he drew a different conclusion. He rejected Hegel's idealism that the state as the source of universal normativity and integration could transcend the antagonisms of modern civil society (Ehrenberg 1999: 134-135). Against the background of rapid industrialisation in Europe and his personal experience with the repressive authorities of the Prussian state, Marx regarded the state not as the "agent of the universal ethical community" but rather as a reflection and even manifestation of its base, the civil society (Ehrenberg 1999: 132-133). For Marx, "[t]he universality that it [the state] claimed to represent was nothing but the particular interest of the dominant class masquerading as that of the society as a whole" (Parekh 2004: 18; see Marx 1975a: 48). Thus, Marx considered it both impossible to comprehend state power "apart from the material organization of civil society" and crucial to "understand the mediations between them" (Ehrenberg 1999: 137). Marx's normative objective was "*general human* emancipation", in contrast to "the partial, the *merely* political revolution" which had indeed yielded political freedom and legal equality but, at the same time, created the bourgeois civil society and its inherent class structure (Marx 1975b: 184; original emphases; see also Ehrenberg 1999: 135). Hence, civil society itself must be the object of democratisation and social transformation which would finally lead to its abolishment and a classless society (Ehrenberg 1999: 136, 139-141; Parekh 2004: 18).

In spite of Marx's outspoken materialist critique of civil society, the contemporary understanding of the latter has a clear conceptual genealogy from Western liberal social and political theory. Besides the assumed distinctiveness from the state, further important conceptual characteristics, such as its inherent voluntarism and benign orientation as well as its 'expected' form of appearance, have been developed further in the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. In his analysis of the *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville – without explicitly employing the term 'civil society' – stressed the vital role of "the immense assemblage of associations" (1840: 220) which had become a "necessary guarantee against the tyranny of the majority" (2000: 183; see Parekh 2004: 19) in the United States of the early 19th century. The Tocquevillian notion of pluralistic voluntary associations at once upheld the clear distinction between civil society and the state and revitalised the moral and political function of civil society (Ehrenberg 1999: 161). For de Tocqueville, "[v]oluntary associations fuse personal interest and the common good" and "mediate between the isolated individuals of a commercial society and an increasingly centralized and intrusive governmental apparatus" (Ehrenberg 1999: 164, 169; see Parekh 2004: 19). What often goes unseen though in present-day readings of de Tocqueville, is – despite his enthusiasm about the democratising effect of voluntary associations – his warning that the latter can likewise develop exclusionary tendencies, not least towards minorities (Young 1994: 35; see de Tocqueville 2000: 186).

Overall, crucial consistencies with early liberal thought on civil society prevail. Civil society is commonly considered today as the "area of associative freedom", independent from the state, which allows individuals "to enter into relations with others, pursue common purposes, and form intrinsically or instrumentally valuable associations" (Parekh 2004: 19-20). This conception originates from "an important tradition within liberalism [which] emphasises the need to draw a sharp dividing line between society and the state, minimising the latter's presence" (Spini 2011: 20). In order to ensure associative freedom, civil society, according to the liberal understanding, must be protected by the rule of law and civic and political rights of the individual (Howell and Pearce 2001: 20; Parekh 2004: 18). Civil society is therefore assumed to be necessarily related to and dependent on Western-style liberal democracy (Armstrong and Gilson 2011: 6). This reading of civil society has been significantly reinforced by the "sudden, massive rebirth of civil society" (see Przeworski 1981: 30) related to the democratic transitions in former Soviet republics (Cox 1999: 19; Howell and Pearce 2001: 15; Armstrong and Gilson 2011: 4). The end of the Cold War and the breakdown of state socialism finally resulted in a conceptual homogenisation in favour of liberal ideas portraying civil society "as the force par excellence symbolizing freedom, antistatism, and the defense of democracy" (Howell and Pearce 2001: 4). With the globalisation of the discourse, civil society was also increasingly perceived as the force for "global justice, sustainability, the empowerment of women, respect for human rights, and so on" (Spini 2011: 15, 16). While these assumptions certainly pertain to many social groups, movements and organisations, from the grassroot-level to the highly professionalised activist network with a worldwide reach, they yet simplify, and even glorify, the nature of civil society. It is argued here that the liberal reading of civil society as an associational sphere governed by ethics, and autonomous of the market and state forces, is too idealistic and one-sided. As Söderbaum underlines, "[c]ivil society is by no means homogenous, harmonious or automatically contributing to the common good and a democratic order, which tends to be postulated in much of Western thought" (2004b: 122). Instead of upholding a Western 'ideal type', it is argued here that civil society "has to be understood within its own historical trajectory and studied within specific socio-cultural and political contexts" (Armstrong and Gilson 2011: 6).

2.4.2 Civil society and the Southern African region

The preceding conceptual review reveals two central flaws of the major contributions on civil society in political theory, which need to be addressed in the context of this study. To begin with, the modern concept of civil society has evolved in the historical context of the Westphalian state system and, due to specific historical circumstances, has been primarily portrayed in relation to the territorial nation-state (Spini 2011: 20-21; see also Scholte 2002: 147; Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 150; Söderbaum 2007: 323).[32] However, in a concomitantly regionalising and globalising world, national societies and economies have increasingly lost their territorial distinctiveness and have been penetrated by transnational and global actors. They have also been marked by a changing role of the nation-state

[32] Gramsci's examination of civil society, discussed in chapter 2.4.3, is in this regard no exception, but rather a confirmation, of that rule (Cox 1999: 11).

which authors interpreted in different manners, some as the "end of the nation-state" (see Ohmae 1996), the ascendancy of a "post-Westphalian era" (see Linklater 1998) or the "internationalizing of the state" in the service of "hyperliberal" capitalism (see Cox 1987). It cannot be denied that globalisation has not only had crucial impacts on states, but also on civil societies, and has triggered the trend of their transnationalisation (see Held 1995; Schechter 1999; Scholte 2000). As Debora Spini states eloquently:

> "It is now evident that civil society is no longer a *hortus conclusus*, defended by the walls of individual polities, nor can its activity be conceived as being strictly limited to the 'domestic' sphere. Civil society organisations are actors in what used to be the space of international politics, a space that is now better represented by the image of a multi-level and multi-tiered Mobius knot of governance functions than by the traditional Westphalian vertical architecture. State and non-state actors interact at various levels of governance, and civil society organisations do not need to go through the filter of state institutions, but can exercise autonomously a protagonist role in many fields that used to be the exclusive province of states" (2011: 21; original emphasis).

As referred to in the introductory chapter, there are indeed many empirical reasons to no longer confine the search for civil society to the national realm. Scholte is correct when he argues that "in contemporary politics civil society associations often operate in regional and global spheres as well as local and national arenas. Conceptions of 'civil society' must be recast to reflect these changed circumstances" (2002: 147; also cited in Söderbaum 2004b: 118). With respect to civil societies in Southern African, Söderbaum argues that "the level of regional interaction and regional cooperation is quite strong, at least in certain sectors" (2004b: 117). Historically, regional ties within civil society have developed during the struggle against white minority rule when, for instance, universities, such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) or Fort Hare, became intellectual centrepieces of resistance for the entire region and labour unions as well as civil rights networks established region-wide ties (see Shaw 2000: 408; Söderbaum 2004b: 117). It seems therefore appropriate and necessary to go beyond the genealogical origin of civil society, namely its conception *vis-à-vis* the territorial nation-state, and include civil society at the regional level.

A second subject matter, which requires analytical correction, is the liberal and Western bias of the mainstream conceptualisation of civil society. Conventional Western definitions of civil society exclude a variety of crucial forms of associational life and social collectives and overlook central legacies and modalities of state-society relations in African societies (Söderbaum 2004b: 117; see Woods 1992; Bayart 1986; Gellner 1994; Mamdani 1995; 1996). This has led Stephen Orvis to ask if the contemporary debate is about *Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?* (see Orvis 2001). Firstly, Orvis points out the overall neglect of the persisting influence of "neo-traditional" authorities, such as kinship or ethnic networks, which are not confined to the local level, but often have significant impact on legal and political practices within and beyond the state (Orvis 2001: 31-33). The same applies to "self-help" communities, which "initiate and fund local development projects such as schools and clinics, as well as articulate the interests of the local community vis-à-vis the state and local governments" (Orvis 2001: 29) or are not seldom "shunning any link to the state" (Cox 1999: 25). Furthermore, neopatrimonialism remains a crucial modality of African politics which must be

taken into consideration when examining civil society (see Söderbaum 2007: 323-325; Orvis 2001: 27-29). While patrimonialism was a common feature of pre-capitalist societies throughout the world, neopatrimonial patterns have become a pre-eminent phenomenon across Africa in the wake of colonialism, which constitutes the historical root of its re-emergence (Erdmann and Engel 2006: 19). The highly coercive, exploitative and arbitrary rule of African colonial states left the potent legacies of a "long-submerged and marginalized civil society" as well as of the state's "command relationship with society, its quasimilitary character, its fiscal base rooted in high taxation of the peasantry, and its highly interventionist, regulatory dispositions" (Young 1994: 37). In their attempts to build unified nations and to fill the power vacuum left by the colonial powers, post-colonial leaders tried to force "integral states", regarded as the omnicompetent, all-encompassing, bureaucratic regulatory frameworks for development, upon their people, primarily through coercion rather than consensus within civil society. Having inherited political power without a sufficient hegemonic grounding of it in nascent African civil societies, African leaders thereby failed dismally because of the post-colonial societal realities (Young 1994: 39-42). While the nationalist resistance against the colonial regimes had temporarily, or superficially, united populations within the borders of colonial states, decolonialisation subsequently revealed highly "multisegmented societ[ies]", the results of colonial ethnic classifications, discrimination and subsequent "novel patterns of social consciousness" (Young 1994: 39). The early post-colonial state also failed to make "a major and lasting move to an 'autonomous' legal-rational bureaucratic culture". Growing bureaucracies under increasingly authoritarian rule were rather "challenged and invaded from above and below by informal relationships" (Erdmann and Engel 2006: 19; see Young 1994: 42). The result was the penetration of formal state institutions by informal politics and private interests, a trend which became increasingly institutionalised and still prevails in much of Southern Africa (Erdmann and Engel 2006: 18; see Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 63; Fatton 1992: 53-56; Söderbaum 2007: 323-325; Clapham 1982).

It seems needless to say that the despotic and authoritarian neopatrimonial state, just as its predecessor the colonial state, leaves little space for a vibrant, autonomous, civil society and lacks crucial popular legitimacy by systematically stifling the emergence of a critical "public sphere" (Woods 1992: 85-86; Söderbaum 2007: 331-332, 335; see also Bayart 1986). Since neopatrimonialism does not stop at national borders, but has taken on regional dimensions, it must play a crucial role in an analysis of regional civil society. However, it cannot be treated in the one-sided manner typical for liberal accounts of civil society. The Western liberal understanding is commonly invoked as the appropriate role model for African democratisation and development, both in politics and academia (Howell and Pearce 2001: 2, 4)[33], since, as Dwayne Woods argues, "the use of such a concept in an African context is less problematic than it initially seems, especially if we recognize that the emergence of a bourgeois civil society was reflective of a process of the political and economic development of capitalism, and not something unique to European societies" (1992: 85). Dominant

[33] The term civil society entered the academic debate on African politics in the mid-1980s with Jean-Francois Bayart's seminal 1986 essay on *Civil Society in Africa* constituting one of the early examples of systematic engagement with the concept in Africanist literature (Young 1994: 36; see Bayart 1986).

(neo)liberal discourses about civil society therefore steadfastly "de-legitimise the state, the main locus of nationalist aspirations and resistance to the neo-liberal project" (Beckman 1993: 21), and reify civil society as *per definitionem* democratic, benevolent and historically inevitable, without looking more closely into the distinctive features of African state-society complexes and their social, economic and cultural contexts. This discourse in academia and policy circles falls short of the complexity of state-, society- *and* market-relations in Africa and arouses suspicion concerning its real intent (Howell and Pearce 2001: 2). As Mahmood Mamdani rightly argues, "[t]his tendency involves nothing less than a one-sided anti-state romanticisation of civil society" (Mamdani 1995: 603; also cited in Godsäter and Söderbaum and 2011: 150)[34] and can thus hardly contribute to a better understanding of African societies, let alone to their emancipation. For the purpose of this study, a more nuanced and dialectic understanding of civil society regionalism seems therefore essential, in order to uncover "by whom, for whom and for what purpose it emerges, and the different relationships to states and external actors" (Söderbaum 2004b: 116). I argue that Gramscian readings of civil society and hegemony, which transcend both classical liberal as well as Marx's orthodox economistic contributions, provide valuable theoretical insights, which will be discussed in the following.

2.4.3 Civil society – the site of hegemony

When drawing on Gramscian thought, it is first of all necessary to reiterate that Gramsci followed a distinctively historicist approach to philosophy and history. For him, "every historical phenomenon had to be studied within the context of its own peculiar characteristics rather than confused with other forms of historical phenomena" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 18; see Gramsci 1977: 330-331). Thus, the concepts he developed in his writings were, on the one hand, meant to understand specific empirical phenomena of his contemporary world. On the other hand, "[a] concept, in Gramsci's thought, is loose and elastic and attains precision only when brought into contact with a particular situation which it helps to explain" (Cox 1996a: 125). Nonetheless, Gramsci did not discount, but rather committed his work to "discerning parallels and correspondence between different phases of culture that might be separate in time and space" (Bieler and Morton 2001: 18; see Gramsci 1995: 307-309, 310-313, 314-315). Provided that historical and cultural contextualities are taken seriously, it is thus possible and insightful to make use of Gramscian thought, as Cox demonstrated eminently by 'globalising' Gramsci's thinking on civil society and hegemony, thereby setting the stage for a neo-Gramscian school within IR/IPE (see for instance 1983; 1999; Gill 1993b; Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007a).

Writing as inmate of an Italian fascist prison in the first half of the 1930, Gramsci, before his imprisonment leader of the Italian Communist Party, was preoccupied with "the problem of understanding capitalist societies in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly with the meaning of fascism and the possibilities of building an alternative form of state and society based on the working class" (Cox 1996a: 124). His major concern was to detect reasons why Western capitalist societies had

[34] For an interesting discussion of the flaws of mainstream theorising of the African state and the proposition of a Coxian/Mamdanian theoretical synthesis in order to overcome these weaknesses, see Solli (2009) and Solli and Leysens (2011).

survived World War I, major economic dislocations as well as popular resistance from significant parts of the proletariat and why, in contrast, revolution was (supposedly) successful in Russia (Ehrenberg 1999: 208; see Buttigieg 1995: 11; Cohen and Arato 1992: 143).

Gramsci's key to explain the resilience of capitalism was his conception of civil society, which he found deeply integrated with the notion of hegemony. In doing so, he significantly contributed to a more nuanced understanding of civil society – not only within the Marxist tradition. Transcending Marx's orthodox materialist definition of civil society, Gramsci shed light on the ideological, cultural and organisational components of historical structures and regarded civil society as the "forms of culture and associations that protect bourgeois society even when the economy is in crisis and the power of the state has crumbled" (Cohen and Arato 1992: 143). He elevated civil society thereby from solely being the material relations of society to constituting a complex phenomenon of the superstructure (Cohen and Arato 1992: 145; see Gramsci 1971: 407; Bobbio 1988). Moreover, in contrast to earlier liberal readings which considered civil society as a distinct counterpart to the state, Gramsci understood it as an integral part of the latter, "in fact, its most resilient constitutive element" (Buttigieg 1995: 4, 5). While Gramsci did not provide one fixed definition of civil society but rather, attributed slightly different connotations to the latter within his body of work (Cox 1999: 4; Cohen and Arato 1992: 144-145), he generally used the term to refer to not only "the economy but to the realm of free associational activity, and included the family, universities, the press, trade unions, cultural institutions, working men's clubs and publishing houses" (Parekh 2004: 18). For Gramsci, these institutions constituted the sphere in which the dominant social forces establish hegemony by "manufacturing" the consent of crucial subaltern groups (Buttigieg 1995: 7, 30). As Randall Germain and Michael Kenny put it, for Gramsci "the link between hegemony and consent runs directly through the terrain of civil society" (1998: 14; Cox 1996a: 137; see Cox 1999). Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato point out:

> "[T]he reproduction of the existing system outside the economic 'base' occurs through a combination of two practices – hegemony and domination, consent and coercion – that in turn operate through two institutional frameworks: the social and political associations and cultural institutions of civil society, and the legal, bureaucratic, police, and military apparatus of the state or political society" (1992: 145).[35]

It is this necessary combination of "domination" and "intellectual and moral leadership" (Gramsci 1971: 57) from which Gramsci's famous equation stems: "State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion" (Gramsci 1971: 263; also cited in Cox 1999: 4). The "integral state", in contrast to the totalitarian state, thus combines the elements of consensual hegemony in civil society and the means of coercion of government (Bocock 1986: 28; Green 2011: 70). Thereby, "the social relationships of civil society are relations of power just as much (though in a different way) as are the coercive relations of the state" (Simon 1982: 72, also cited in Bocock 1986: 28). Gramsci's analytical interest lies in the reciprocal relationship between the two

[35] In this context, Gramsci was inspired by Machiavelli's "image of power as a centaur: half man, half beast, a necessary combination of consent and coercion" (Cox 1996a: 127; see Machiavelli 1977: 49-50; Gramsci 1971: 169-170).

realms and their respective function for securing the material conditions of the bourgeois-liberal state (Cox 1996a: 131). Despite this identification of two different superstructural spheres of activity crucial for the consolidation of the economic power of the ruling social forces (Gramsci 1971: 12), he argues that this distinction "is purely methodological and not organic; in concrete historical life, political and civil society are a single entity" (Gramsci 1975: Notebook 4, §38; cited in Buttigieg 1995: 28)[36].

Hegemony prevails as long as the dominant social class is able to establish or uphold institutions and ideologies within civil society which do not "appear as those of a particular class, and will give some satisfaction to the subordinate groups while not undermining the leadership or vital interests of the hegemonic class" (Cox 1996a: 133). Such a structure, implying not only the material dominance but also the "ethico-political hegemony" (Gramsci 1975: Notebook 13, §18; cited in Buttigieg 1995: 28) of the dominant social group in civil society, Gramsci called a "historic bloc" (Gramsci 1971: 366). Despite the stabilising role civil society plays for existing social orders and the dominant forces within it, Gramsci's writings propose – in a dialectical manner – that civil society is also the very arena from which social transformation and counter-hegemony emanate. Thereby, any subaltern social group needs to transcend the levels of "cooperative" and "class" consciousness and develop an alternative hegemonic ideology "which brings the interests of the leading class into harmony with those of subordinate classes and incorporates these other interests into an ideology expressed in universal terms" (Cox 1996a: 133; see also 1999: 15-16; Rupert 1993: 81). It is only by "fostering the development of an independent sociocultural and political consciousness among the subaltern classes and by promoting the formation of self-regulated autonomous organizations" (Buttigieg 1995: 19) within civil society, that an attempt to challenge the dominant powers in society has a chance of succeeding in the long run. Gramsci referred to this long-term strategy as a "war of position" and juxtaposed it to a "war of movement", the immediate onslaught on the political power of dominant classes which all too often constituted only a fragile victory, as exemplified by the case of Russia (Cox 1999: 16; Ehrenberg 1999: 210).[37] A prominent role in this war of position is bestowed upon intellectuals, which are "organically connected with a social class" and "perform the function of developing and sustaining the mental images, technologies, and organizations which bind together the members of a class and of a historic bloc into a common identity" (Cox 1996a: 132).[38] In the context of this study, the question whether the civil society actors under investigation are able to fulfil the leadership function in a counter-hegemonic movement in form of collective organic intellectuals becomes relevant.

[36] All citations from the 1975 Italian critical edition are quoted translations by Buttigieg (1995). Buttigieg is translator and editor of the English collected edition of the *Prison Notebooks*. So far three volumes, containing notebooks one to eight, were published by Columbia University Press.

[37] Gramsci considered the active building of a counterhegemonic historic bloc the main task of the working class by "leaving behind the economic-corporate phase in order to advance to the phase of politico-intellectual hegemony in civil society and become dominant in political society" (Gramsci 1975: Notebook 4, §38; cited in Buttigieg 1995: 28; see Cox 1996a: 132).

[38] For Gramsci, the pivotal collective organic intellectual was the Communist Party (Cox 1996a: 132-133; see 1999: 16; Gramsci 1971: 15-16).

Following Gramsci's dialectic reading of civil society, Cox argues that it "is both shaper and shaped, an agent of stabilization and reproduction, and a potential agent of transformation" (1999: 4-5). It is this comprehension of civil society as the "potential battleground" (Hearn 2001: 43) between alternative ideologies which makes it so valuable for studying the chances of social and structural change, not only within but also beyond national borders. Employing Gramsci's categories to the realm of global politics, Cox employs the Gramscian dialectic in his analysis of the *Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium*:

> "In a 'bottom-up' sense, civil society is the realm in which those who are disadvantaged by globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives. […] In a 'top-down' sense, however, states and corporate interests influence the development of this current version of civil society towards making it an agency for stabilizing the social and political *status quo*" (1999: 10-11; original emphasis).

Using a Gramscian vocabulary, Cox describes the contemporary task in global politics as "building a counterhegemonic historic bloc that could confront the hegemonic formation of globalization in a long term war of position" (1999: 26). And indeed, various potential alternatives to the contemporary world order are extensively debated, in the form of "cosmopolitan governance" (see Held 1995), "global civil society" (see Glasius *et al.* 2002) or "alter-globalism" (see Marchetti 2008), which underline the counterhegemonic potential inherent in civil society. Cox, however, rightly emphasises the challenge "to bridge the differences among the variety of groups disadvantaged by globalization so as to bring about a common understanding of the nature and consequences of globalization, and to devise a common strategy towards subordinating the world economy to a regime of social equity" (1999: 26). Furthermore, Cox and other proponents of the WOA emphasise the role played by international institutions, not least RECs, in support of the "nascent global historic bloc consisting of the most powerful corporate economic forces, their allies in government, and the variety of networks that evolve policy guidelines and propagate the ideology of globalization" (Cox 1999: 12; see 1996a: 137-140; Gamble and Payne 1996: 252-253; Gill 1995a). An important strategy employed to uphold a hegemonic ideology is thereby what Gramsci termed *trasformismo*, the co-option of potentially counterhegemonic ideas and protagonists into a broad coalition, which seemingly represents broader societal interests (Cox 1996a: 130, 139; Buttigieg 1995: 13). In this regard, the promotion of Western-style civil society as the driver of development and 'good governance' in the developing world by Western governments and IFIs in the neoliberal era has led some to ask pointedly whether "the civil society idea [is] simply part of a neoimperialist project of imposing Western hegemony" (Glasius *et al.* 2004: 3). The downright explosion of the so called "third sector" of non-profit and non-governmental organisations, which is regarded in the neoliberal discourse as the source of "social capital" necessary for the smooth functioning of capitalist societies (see Putnam 1993a; 1993b), has been part of the neoliberal strategy to deconstruct state-regulated economies and the welfare state and enhance global free trade (Howell and Pearce 2001: 4-5, 14-16, 25-27). This example underscores that analyses of civil society must go beyond idealisations of the latter as the force for the common good and "recognize [it] as a site of struggle, multivocality and paradox" (Glasius *et al.* 2004: 10), which is

deeply entangled in various, and not only opposing, ways with (inter-)state as well as market actors and processes. Civil society is a normative-laden concept and, in political reality, a highly contested 'playground' in which hegemonic structures are established, sustained but also challenged and altered.

Cox indicates that "[t]he problem of hegemony is posed at the level of the global political economy as well as at regional, national and local levels" (1999: 12). As will become clear further below, the Southern African region is a case wherein global hegemony is formally subscribed to at the regional and national level, while effective domestic hegemony is absent in most of the states in the region (see Taylor 2011a). This is because peripheral countries "have not undergone the same thorough social revolution, nor have their economies developed in the same way, but they try to incorporate elements from the hegemonic model without disturbing old power structures" (Cox 1996a: 137). In Gramscian thinking, such a lack of hegemony constitutes a "passive revolution", characterised by the dynamics of "revolution-restoration", a dialectic stalemate in which reactionary and progressive forces compete over intellectual and political leadership (Cox 1996a: 129; 1999: 16; see Gramsci 1971: 106-110). In this regard, contemporary Southern Africa is reminiscent of Cox's supposition that "hegemony is more intense and consistent at the core and more laden with contradictions at the periphery" (1983: 171). Gramscian conceptual insights thus seem valuable for this study.

Nevertheless, I do admit that the application of Gramscian thought on civil society and hegemony to transnational settings is not entirely unproblematic. Critics underline that transferring the latter "to the global scale requires a lot of 'reading into' Gramsci" (Schechter 2002: 3) and point out the "dangers of removing thinkers from their contexts and 'applying' their frameworks in ways that bear only partial resemblance to their original meanings" (Germain and Kenny 1998: 13). Others accuse Cox's application of hegemony of "Euro-centricism and of making top-down, reductionist assumptions" and postulate a more pluralist conceptualisation including aspects of culture, religion and education by increasingly resorting to other disciplines outside of IR and IPE as potential sources (Worth 2008: 637, 640, 646; see Schechter 2002: 3-4; Hobson 2007). These objections underline the necessity of theoretical eclecticism as discussed above and the value of a theoretical synthesis between CCT and the NRA. Indeed, the Gramscian notions of hegemony and civil society must not be taken – and were by Gramsci never intended to be taken – as universally applicable over time and space. They can serve as analytical tools which, however, need to be tested in a synchronic vein against empirical realities and, as a consequence, might have to be adapted or complemented. This is why the study of civil society in a regional setting requires not only a broad understanding of structural change in a diachronic manner but also a close examination of actors and actual processes in specific settings, as proposed by the NRA.

2.5 Conclusion: A theoretical synthesis – Gramsci and Cox meet new regionalisms

This chapter has provided a broad overview of theories on both regionalism and civil society and proposed a critical/reflectivist framework, building on CCT and the NRA. While differing in ontological details, the major rationalist theories on regionalism discussed in this chapter, emanating

from both the early and the more recent debate, all, even though to various degrees, have underlying Euro-, state- and market-centric assumptions and a clear *status quo*-bias. The preoccupation of these theories with formal inter-state frameworks and market integration, as well as their unchanged predominance in the political and academic debate, underline the relevance of an alternative critical/reflectivist research agenda on regionalism. While state-centred and market-led approaches to regionalism unquestionably shape policies and politics of regional institutions, they overlook crucial dynamics within state-society complexes and ignore entire realms of regional activity, such as, for instance, informal economies and regionalisms, and, thus, what is actually happening on the ground. As the empirical part of this study will emphasise, the realities of African regionalisms are more complex than anticipated by rationalist theories. A multitude of regional actors, be they governmental or non-governmental, pursue distinct, often contradictory, regional agendas which shape the nature of regions. Employing theoretical insights from CCT as well as the broad camp of the NRA, this study undertakes the analytical attempt to privilege neither structure nor agency ontologically, but rather to shed light on their mutual constitutiveness and importance for an analysis of the Southern African region.

Studying the transformative potential of civil society requires a nuanced and contextualised understanding of it. I have argued that the dominant Western liberal notion of civil society does not meet that requirement. Civil society is more than the necessary sphere of freedom balancing unacceptable excesses of state and market domination by propagating the common good. In fact, as Gramsci proposed some eighty years ago, it is a highly complex and dialectic realm of various forms of social interaction in which norms, political ideologies and social structures are at once reinforced and contested. Civil societies are embedded in a triad with respective state and market forces as well as deeply interrelated with the latter two and therefore cannot be analysed isolated from them. In order to understand the complexity of regionalisms and the role civil societies play in regional settings, our investigations must address the question of how a respective region came about historically and take into account the social, cultural, economic and political contexts. From a historical perspective, the following chapter therefore focuses on the social constructions, political contestations and structural constraints characterising the contemporary region of Southern Africa.

3 Socially constructed, politically contested, structurally constrained – the Southern African region

This chapter reflects – admittedly in rather cursory manner and, by far, not exhaustively – regional historicities which not only bring to light previous forms of regionalisms and regionalisation but also constitute crucial social, cultural, economic and political legacies affecting the contemporary Southern African region. Agreeing with Bøås and colleagues' notion that the "regionalized world is […] not a novelty, but an integrated part of human history" (2003: 199), the region's construction as well as its de- and reconstruction from pre-colonial times to the anti-*Apartheid* struggle are discussed initially. In the second part of the chapter, the formation and development of SADC as an institution, its pursued approach of outward-oriented market integration, as well as its performance in the socio-economic realm are scrutinised critically. The last section of the chapter highlights the prevalent modes of regional governance and the nexus between formal and informal regionalisms.

3.1 The history of Southern African regionalisms

3.1.1 Early regional interaction and the arrival of the Europeans

Regionalisation is anything but a novel phenomenon on the African continent. It clearly predates the European colonial incursion into the continent, as – in the case of Southern Africa – the wide geographical spread of San hunter-gatherers, the nomadic pastoralism of the Khoikhoi and the region-wide immigration of people of Bantu origin from the North testify. Early on, sophisticated trade routes were established and connected various chiefdoms and societies, leading to primordial economic, cultural and social exchange. The rise, expansion and fall of the kingdoms of Mapungubwe, Zimbabwe or Mutapa also exemplify that the relations between the different communities populating the southern part of Africa were often conflictual (Thompson 2009a: 242-243; Söderbaum 2004b: 54-55; McKeever 2008: 455; Hwang 2007: 56; Oliver and Atmore 2001: 199-205; Chingono and Nakana 2009: 398).

With the intrusion of the Europeans in 1482, the societal and political structures in the South of Africa changed significantly, resulting in devastating clashes over land and political control and causing a formative restructuring of the region. Southern Africa was, from the late 15th century onwards, not only site of a slave trade, which endured 300 years, but also of major wars, particularly due to population growth and scarcity of fertile land. Thereby, numerous violent conflicts were fought *inter alia* between descendants of Dutch settlers (the Boers), San, Khoi and Bantu peoples. In the beginning of the 19th century, the expansion of the highly militarised Zulu nation under Shaka triggered major waves of forced migration and resulted in the creation of new ethnicities and political entities which tried to resist the Zulu kingdom (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 87-94; Fage and Oliver 2002: 176-177; Söderbaum 2004b: 55-56). As Stephen Chan underlines, "Shaka, the great Zulu Emperor, in his conquests, made unions out of disparate tribes, incorporated either into the Zulu empire or united against it" (2011: 4). What is known in Zulu language as *Mfecane*, the period of "crushing" (Thompson 2009b: 268), led some dissenting Zulu formations from the former Nguni chiefdoms as far

north as Lake Tanganyika and as far west as the Kalahari as well as into modern Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The incorporation between migrating communities and local populations brought forth new and more centralised political entities of often mixed ethnic, cultural and social composition. Respective examples are the Matabele kingdom of the Ndebele people in the Southwest of what is today Zimbabwe, the Ngoni people around Lake Malawi, the rule of Sotho groups in areas of present-day Botswana and Zambia, as well as former Gazaland in modern Mozambique and the still existing Basotho and Swazi kingdoms (Thompson 2009b: 268-273; Oliver and Atmore 1994: 90-94; Fage and Oliver 2002: 177; Söderbaum 2004b: 55-56). Söderbaum argues that the *Mfecane*, together with the increased exodus of Boers from the Cape Colony, which was the result of increasing disaffection with British control and legislation in the Cape Colony and became known as the *Great Trek*, "mark the beginning of a Southern African region" (2004b: 56; see Fage and Oliver 2002: 179-181; McKeever 2008: 455). The 19th century migration created not only historical, social, cultural and linguistic ties between communities inhabiting the southern part of Africa, it also established region-wide links which were later used and expanded by colonialist imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes who "had visions of uniting the whole of southern Africa […] as a self-governing dominion under the British flag" (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 123). However, not only protagonists with commercial interests, but also religious proselytisers, had a lasting impact on native communities and the overall region. Together with the first European colonial expeditions, Christian missionaries set foot on the continent and subsequently entered "most parts of tropical Africa ahead of the colonial governments" (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 145), as David Livingstone's missionary travels in the middle of the 19th century most famously exemplify. While Christianity faced exogenous religious competitors only at the East African coast, where Islam had already been spread by Arabic merchants and Muslim clerics before the arrival of Europeans, over the centuries of European intrusion Christianity expanded throughout the entire region and, to this day, plays a pivotal role in fields such as, for instance, the education or health sectors in most Southern African countries (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 76, 98-99, 146; Fage and Oliver 2002: 134-135; Vansina 2009: 471-478).

The relevance of Southern Africa among the European powers boomed with the discovery of mineral resources in the second half of the 19th century (Hwang 2007: 56). As a consequence, the European powers rushed to claim their annexations in the region culminating in the Berlin conference in 1884/85. Through the pioneering work of Rhodes' British South Africa Company, the British established control over the Union of South Africa and expanded its territorial ambitions northwards in Betschuanaland (now Botswana), in what became known as Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia) and in Nyasaland (now Malawi), while constraining the Germans and Portuguese to German South-West Africa (now Namibia) and German East Africa (now Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and a minor part of Northern Mozambique) in the former case and present-day Angola and Mozambique in the latter. Then British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury consolidated the British dominance by demarcating the territories in treaties with Germany and Portugal in 1890 and 1891 respectively (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 107; Fage and Oliver 2002: 204; Söderbaum 2004b: 57).

France had, from the very beginning, only little impact on the political and economic destiny of Southern Africa. The French Huguenots who arrived in the late 17th century were refugees detached from their motherland and, over time, outnumbered by increasing Boer and English populations (Keaney nd: 28; Walker 1941: 55-56). Moreover, the only French colonial annexation south of the Congo basin, on the island of Madagascar, encountered heavy native resistance which necessitated enormous French efforts to conquer the Merina monarchy (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 118-119). King Leopold of Belgium found himself far away from realistic expansionist ambitions in a vast territory mainly covered with equatorial rainforest and "inhabited sparsely by Africa's most isolated and therefore least developed peoples" (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 131). Lacking the means to establish a functioning administration over the Crown land, he employed cruel tactics of suppression and exploitation and assigned significant areas to concessionaire companies (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 131, 136; Fage and Oliver 2002: 215). With Britain's proactive expansion – despite domestic opposition in London – the notion of a British Empire from the 'Cape to Cairo', embodied most famously by Rhodes and Salisbury (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 108-109), proved dominant over Portugal's idea of a 'Rose Coloured Map' linking "Mozambique to Angola through the Zambezi basin" (Birmingham 1999: 114) or the German ambition of *'Mittelafrika'*, "a central African German empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean" (Louis 1967: 35; see also Poku 2001: 19; Strage 1973; McKeever 2008: 456). All these political projects constituted important exogenously imposed regionalisms in Southern Africa at the turn of the 19th century. This is why "[t]he quest for control of states and the spatial production of the region were mutually reinforcing, and once the colonial boundaries were settled 'the connections between region and state emerged ever more clearly'" (Söderbaum 2004b: 57).

3.1.2 The political economy of colonial exploitation in Southern Africa

Mineral and plantation exploitation by the colonialists caused a vast demand for labour and, thus, a region-wide migrant labour system particularly serving the mines in the Union of South Africa, Betschuanaland, the Rhodesias and South-West Africa. The regional political economy was further interrelated through "infrastructural investments in railways, roads, energy and communications", in order to facilitate the flow of goods, labour and capital between mines or plantations, ports and other economic hubs (Söderbaum 2004b: 58; see also Bauer and Taylor 2011: 7; Poku 2001: 19). The interdependence of the economies in the region was accommodated by the establishment of a customs union as early as 1889 between the British Cape Colony and the *Oranje-Vrijstaat*. The union emerged as the precursor for the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), founded in 1910 by the Union of South Africa and the British controlled Betschuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland and later complemented by South-West Africa under South African rule (Poku 2001: 85; Lee 2003: 74-75).

While the system of colonial exploitation deepened regional ties, particularly in the economic sphere to further capitalist and colonialist interests, it was based on the socio-economic and -cultural marginalisation and the political oppression of Africans. The increasing racialisation of colonial politics became most obvious in the construction of *Afrikaner* nationalism after the Second Anglo-

Boer War (1899-1902), in the institutionalisation of political disenfranchisement, minority rule and territorial separation between colonisers and natives, as well as in cruel atrocities and even genocides against rebellious native communities (Söderbaum 2004b: 58-61; Poku 2001: 21; Curtin 2009: 429). To further break nascent resistance against their rule, the colonial administrators employed '*divide et impera*' strategies in intertribal politics by imposing ethnic classifications, favouring particular ethnic groups over others and, thus, fostering inter-ethnic tensions (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 125, 142-143; Young 1994: 38, 39). Thereby, "[t]he radical reordering of political space imposed by the colonial partition deconstructed potential civil societies" (Young 1994: 38). As Söderbaum underlines: "At the turn of the [19th] century, indigenous African political and social affiliations were heterogenous and not seldom in conflict. The colonizers effectively destroyed and disintegrated local relations and identities" (2004b: 60). Thus, for the first part of the 20th century, the only exceptional incidents of native nationalist thought were embodied in the movement of the South African Native National Congress, formed in 1912 in the Union of South Africa, and in several mission-educated African individuals who promoted the idea of "Christian Churches under African leadership and of African successor states based on the existing colonial territories and governed along western rather than along traditional African lines" (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 147, 150-151; Söderbaum 2004b: 60). It is therefore no wonder that nascent Black African Nationalism was significantly influenced by Africans living overseas. The activism of Pan-Africanist intellectuals such as Edward W. Blyden, Marcus Garvey and William Du Bois had a significant impact on the emergence of national liberation movements and the idea of a Pan-African nation which became an integral part of African regionalism (Vansina 2009: 486-487; Oliver and Atmore 1994: 217). However, "[t]he aims of [African] nationalists stretched all the way from the political claims of ethnic solidarity, via independence as citizens of nation-states fashioned from existing colonial territorial structures, to assorted varieties of Pan-Africanism" (Wilson 1994: 92). It was the independence struggle which had, at least temporarily, uniting effects on African peoples.

3.1.3 The struggle for independence – uniting the region

After the Second World War, the Southern African region became the arena of a protracted and costly struggle for independence with competing regionalisms standing *vis-à-vis*. White minority rule increasingly lost legitimacy in the post-Second World War environment, with the advent of the norms of "equal rights and self-determination of peoples" and newly independent states such as India openly challenging colonial practices within the United Nations (UN). Nevertheless, the Union of South Africa, since 1948 ruled by the National Party (NP), reacted with a highly anachronistic answer to increasing resistance to colonialism (Wilson 1994: 92; see also Stultz 1991). Domestically, the NP consolidated "systemic positive discrimination in favour of Afrikaners" and institutionalised racist policies aimed at "racial-territorial segregation" (Poku 2001: 23) and the maintenance of "the economic relationship in a colonial-style fashion" (Söderbaum 2004b: 63-64). At the same time, Pretoria tried to externalise its formula of "separate development", which was effectuated in the *Homeland* policy and implied the political independence, but concomitantly the drastic economic

dependency, of native reserves on the *Apartheid* state. Although *Apartheid* South Africa could establish what was derisively called *Bantustans* only in its immediate sphere of influence (South Africa and occupied Namibia), it pursued the idea of a "commonwealth-cum-common-market arrangement in southern Africa" (Poku 2001: 27), particularly towards newly independent Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS states), in order to create a 'buffer' zone towards the rest of Africa. In this regard, the SACU agreement was renegotiated with the BLS countries in 1969, in order to ensure their dependency on the South African economy. The establishment of diplomatic relations with Malawi in 1967 constituted another attempt of formalising relations with African-ruled states in the region. At the same time, the regime in Pretoria strengthened its ties with the Portuguese colonial regimes in Angola and Mozambique as well as with Southern Rhodesia under Ian Smith, not least in the military and economic spheres (Poku 2001: 27; Söderbaum 2004b: 62-64; Oliver and Atmore 1994: 261-263). With an increasing number of states in the region gaining independence and actively opposing the *Apartheid* state, South Africa's *détente* approach towards black Africa pursued under Prime Minister John Vorster was replaced by a "Total National Strategy" and active destabilisation of its neighbours under Pieter W. Botha. "In strategic terms this meant undermining the frontline states by direct raids on any ANC [African National Congress] bases sheltered there, economic sabotage and destabilisation through support for rebel guerrillas and freelance bandits" (Wilson 1994: 193; see also Poku 2001: 29-33; Lee 2003: 46). Furthermore, following a "carrot and stick" approach, South Africa invited its neighbours to join the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS), at the end of the 1970s, in order to "promote economic and political collaboration with its neighbors on its own terms, and to preserve access to regional resources without compromising its own political system" (Hwang 2007: 60; Poku 2001: 30-31). South Africa's hardline approach profited thereby from the *Zeitgeist* of the highly polarised Cold War which deeply impacted Southern African politics. Although expelled from most international organisations including the Commonwealth and the UN by the mid-1970s (Klotz 1999: 197; Black 1999: 84), the *Apartheid* regime was considered by major Western governments – and hence strategically presented itself – as "a bulwark against communist influence in resource-rich and capitalist southern Africa" (Klotz 1995: 455; see also Söderbaum 2004b: 65; Westad 2005: ch 6). States such as the United States, Britain, France, West Germany or Japan, and with them respective lobby groups, foundations and corporations remained engaged diplomatically and economically with *Apartheid* South Africa until the pressure of the global anti-*Apartheid* movement and public opinion became too costly in the 1980s (Söderbaum 2004b: 63; Klotz 1995: 465-467, 469, 470; Black 1999: 85, 95-96; Guelke 2005: 197).

Notwithstanding its enormous human suffering and socio-economic costs, which still strain the societies (see for instance Poku 2001: 33-38; Gibb 2007: 425), the struggle for independence had crucial effects on the further development of the Southern African region. With Ghana, in 1957, leading the way into the period of decolonisation, which would dominate Southern African regional politics for over 30 years, Pan-African thought and cooperation gained practical momentum on the continent. In 1958, Ghana's first President Kwame Nkrumah invited African leaders from 28

territories still under colonial rule to the first All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, in order to coordinate independence endeavours and to establish a basis for a united post-colonial Africa. The conference promoted Pan-African solidarity and had unifying effects on African leaders, such as, for instance, Patrice Lumumba from Belgian Congo. Only two years later, in 1960, the Pan-Africanist Lumumba tried to unite the Congolese, after the Belgians had hastily left the country behind, by and large unprepared for sustainable transition (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 218, 225, 230-233; Wilson 1994: 173-174; Fage and Oliver 2002: 274-275). While Congo-Léopoldville slid into political turmoil and – from 1965 – was paralyzed under the military dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko (Nugent 2004: 233-236; Fage and Oliver 2002: 275-277), Tanganyika and its first President Julius Nyerere played an eminent role for Southern African decolonisation. Tanganyika's liberation from colonial rule was the result of the successful establishment of a nationwide, locally rooted political mass organisation, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), founded by Nyerere in 1954. TANU's success in replacing chieftaincy and creating national unity was accompanied by an overall shift in British colonial policies towards decolonisation, embodied by Sir Richard Turnbull, British Governor of Tanganyika, and Iain Macleod, British Colonial Secretary from 1959 onwards (Oliver and Atmore 1994: 228-229; Nugent 2004: 126-127; Fage and Oliver 2002: 277-278). Tanganyika's experience spilled over to neighbouring Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia which gained independence in 1964 as Malawi and Zambia respectively. Henceforth, these newly independent countries, with the exception of Malawi, which maintained diplomatic relations with *Apartheid* South Africa under Hastings Kamuzu Banda (see Fage and Oliver 2002: 320), played a pivotal role in the liberation struggle of those Southern African people still suffering white minority rule. Zambia and Tanzania hosted African liberation movements from the entire region – such as *inter alia* the African National Congress, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, the Zimbabwe African National Union, the South-West Africa People's Organisation, the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* – and actively supported the armed struggle against the remaining colonialist regimes (Nugent 2004: 105, 264-267, 320-321; Wilson 1994: 184; Oliver and Atmore 1994: 247-248).

On the continental level, although "white minority rule in Southern Africa provided a common focus of opposition", deep internal divisions over political objectives and strategic behaviour towards the colonial powers increased with the number of independent states (Nugent 2004: 100-101). In 1960, twelve former French colonies formed what was called the 'Brazzaville Bloc'. The latter pursued a gradual approach towards regional cooperation and maintained an intimate economic and political relationship with their former colonial rulers, thereby particularly distancing themselves from Communist influence. On the other side, the rather "radical" Pan-Africanist camp organised in the socialist oriented 'Casablanca' grouping (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Libya). The Casablanca group "remained as committed as ever to the struggle against imperialism" and accused the Brazzaville group of "complicity with 'French neo-colonialism'" in cases such as the Algerian war or the decolonisation of French Cameroon. The Congo crisis and disagreement over how to handle the "territorial partition of the continent" resulted in further discordance among African

states and several groupings (Nugent 2004: 101-102; Olivier 2010: 27). It is therefore surprising that in Addis Ababa in May 1963, delegations from 32 African countries agreed on the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the first continent-wide regional organisation. The relatively quick achievement of a compromise had its downside. Indeed, the OAU – discernible already in its naming – was committed to the eradication of colonial oppression and 'African Unity'. Nevertheless, its *de jure* acceptance of colonial inherited national boundaries, the strong emphasis on the "state-centric (confederal) Westphalian model of sovereignty" (Olivier 2010: 26) and the reliance on voluntary cooperation between its constituents revealed the OAU's institutional bias in favour of "the concept of state rights as opposed to group rights" (Nugent 2004: 103) and hampered any concrete processes of regional integration on a continental scale (Olivier 2010: 25-27). In economic terms, the institutional design and objectives of the OAU had, in fact, cemented the "shift from the continental geo-political approach to the subregional economic domain of market-driven intra-state or extraterritorial cooperation" (Olivier 2010: 28; see Ikome 2007: 37). This marked the departure from the Pan-African idea of economic "continentalism" and "incremental regionalism" and the return to "pre-independence co-operation and integration arrangements" which, in the form of RECs, followed market-centred and externally oriented integration (Ikome 2007: 37, 40). This adherence to the European approach to regionalism "was informed by the concern for economic revival, renegotiation of position in the world economy and for attracting more aid money" (Bourenane 2002: 18; also cited in Olivier 2010: 28).

Political stalemate and the self-imposed institutional paralysis within the OAU were reflected in its dealings with the remaining white racist regimes in Southern Africa. Only when various diplomatic initiatives and negotiations failed in the cases of Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies in the end of the 1960s, "the OAU openly endorsed the armed struggle" (Nugent 2004: 105). While receiving financial support from countries outside Southern Africa, the OAU Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, established in 1963 and based in Dar es Salaam, was mainly driven by states in geographical proximity to the bastions of white oppression, with Nyerere's Tanzania leading the way (Polhemus 1977: 53; Fage and Oliver 2002: 280-281). As Nugent puts it: "[T]he support of the OAU Liberation Committee was far less important than the willingness of countries like Zambia and Tanzania to provide bases for the conduct of guerrilla operations and to bear the brunt of the reprisals" (2004: 105). In 1974, the coalition between newly decolonised states and liberation movements in the region found organisational manifestation in the group of the Frontline States (FLS) with Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania as founding members. The FLS were joined in 1975 by Angola, one of the epicentres of military conflict with the *Apartheid* state due to its common border with occupied South-West Africa. Tanzania's pivotal role within the FLS provided the basis for the long-lasting relationship between the country and Southern Africa, despite its rather peripheral geographical position to the region and its distinct cultural and economic ties with East Africa. As Söderbaum points out:

> "[T]he anti-apartheid struggle 'bought in' both Tanzania and Angola to 'Southern Africa'. In spite of limited economic and material relationships with Southern Africa, these two countries became key role-players in the anti-apartheid and liberation struggle, particularly within the FLS framework. Southern Africa became defined through the political struggle over apartheid rather than through its material base" (2004b: 199).

Even though the ambitions of the FLS went beyond the scope of political liberation and foresaw regional cooperation to advance social and economic development in the region, the highly militarised South African pariah state and its strategy of regional destabilisation turned the FLS into an "important conduit for constructing and strengthening the realist perspective of security in the region, focusing mainly on the military and state-centric thinking" (Hwang 2007: 60). Thereby, decision-making procedures had an *ad hoc* character through presidential summitry and the nature of the organisation remained rather informal, two factors which facilitated members' commitment and organisational cohesion (Hwang 2007: 60). The FLS paved the way for subsequent, more institutionalised, forms of cooperation.

3.1.4 SADCC – the institutionalisation of regional cooperation

While rejecting Botha's enticing invitation to join the CONSAS framework the FLS, together with newly independent Zimbabwe as well as Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland, aimed at reducing their economic dependence on South Africa through close regional cooperation in the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), founded in Lusaka in 1980 (Lee 2003: 45; Hentz 2005: 28). Besides the reduction of "economic dependence of member states, especially but not exclusively, on South Africa" (Hwang 2007: 61), SADCC's main objectives – manifested in the 1980 Lusaka Declaration – were:

> "[T]he forging of links to create a genuine and equitable regional integration; the mobilisation of resources to promote the implementation of national, inter-state and regional policies; and concerted action to secure international cooperation within the framework of the strategy outlined for economic liberation" (Lee 2003: 45; see SADCC 1980).

Contrary to SADC's contemporary approach, SADCC did not follow – and even rejected – the neoclassical model of market integration, since its members claimed that "in the underdeveloped world the development of the productive capacities precede, rather than proceed from, rising levels of intra-regional trade" (Söderbaum 2004b: 70; see SADCC 1980) and regarded "regional cooperation and development […] as a necessary precursor to market integration" (Evans 2010: 109; see also Hentz 2005: 28; Lee 2003: 45; Godsäter 2011: 4). Simba Makoni, SADCC's Executive Secretary from 1983 onwards, emphasised that "our approach to trade in the region is not based on orthodox trade liberalisation strategies" and that a "laissez-faire approach to regional integration, in a region with gross inequalities, would be inappropriate" (cited in Gibb 2007: 426). The founders of SADCC instead opted for a functionalist process of project cooperation and development coordination in which every member state was in charge of a specific policy sector (e.g. Namibia for culture and information as well as transport and communications, Angola for energy, Tanzania for industry and trade, Mozambique for tourism) (Thompson and Leysens 2000: 4). "Sectoral programming" consolidated the

de-centralised, informal and anti-bureaucratic character of regional cooperation inherited from the FLS and guaranteed the member states their national sovereignty. Moreover, it created a sense of equality among the constituents due to autonomous sectoral responsibilities attributed to each and every member state and allowed for trade-offs between the different sectors (Hwang 2007: 64-65; Hentz 2005: 28). Nevertheless, despite its (rhetorical) commitment to "state interventionist import substitution industrialisation together with the equal sharing of costs and benefits" (Godsäter 2011: 4), SADCC's successes in promoting genuine and equitable development in the region independent from South Africa were limited, "which most researchers argue was due to regional competitiveness between national leaders and the organization's dependence on Western economic assistance" (McKeever 2008: 457; see also Lee 1989; Sidaway and Gibb 1998). Indeed, 90% of SADCC projects were funded from outside of the region and SADCC's economies remained non-complementary, hardly diversified and almost without transport infrastructure, foreign direct investment and skilled labour in the late *Apartheid* period (Hwang 2007: 62; Gibb 2007: 425; Lee 2003: 47). The persistence of South Africa's dominance in all economic sectors can be traced back to the legacy of the earlier colonial period in which "the entire region had been constructed around South Africa with the peripheral states tightly integrated into the core" (Niemann 2000: 111; also cited in Hwang 2007: 62) as well as to South Africa's function as an economic hub "link[ing] the region to the Western capitalist system" (Thompson 1991: 67; also cited in Hwang 2007: 63). Even though SADCC remained economically highly vulnerable and dependent on external actors and the "key to steer and maintain the function and capacity of the organization was the politico-security oriented strategy transferred from the FLS", the organisation's development cooperation which stressed the notion of "self-reliance" reinforced "the importance of a regional collective identity built through learning from past experiences" and paved the way for further state-led regionalism such as since 1992 pursued by SADC (Hwang 2007:67).

3.2 'The SADC we have'[39]

As the NRA indicates, regions are constantly 'in the making' and subject to political and social contestation. The following section examines how SADC's contemporary approach to regional integration came about, by which actors it was, and is, driven and which consequences the approach has had so far on the socio-economic development of the region.

3.2.1 The turn towards neoliberalism

With the start of democratic transition in South Africa under F.W. de Klerk at the end of the 1980s, SADCC's main objective, the political liberation of the region from white minority rule, was finally achieved. Subsequently, the organisation changed not only its name into Southern African Development Country (SADC) in 1992 but also its programmatic agenda. In contrast to SADCC's preoccupation with geostrategic and -political considerations, the 1992 SADC Treaty provided for a

[39] This headline alludes to the 8th Southern African Civil Society Forum which was held in Maputo in August 2012 under the theme 'The SADC we *want*' (see PACT 2012).

comprehensive approach to "development integration" (Thompson 2000: 46-47; Lee 2003: 46-47; Söderbaum 2004b: 66). The founding document stated, among the main objectives of the organisation, not only to "achieve development and economic growth", but also to "alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration" (SADC 1992: art 5(1b)). Besides its "mainly rhetorical commitment to 'development integration'", the transformation from SADCC to SADC with one "C" marked the "paradigmatic shift from introverted towards more open and market-oriented regionalism" (Söderbaum 2004b: 70) which postulates "policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the Region generally, among Member States" (SADC 1992: art 5(2d)). Over the last two decades, SADC has systematically subscribed to the "neoliberal orthodoxy and market integration as the means for regional development, promising redistribution, development, and poverty alleviation through growth" (Evans 2010: 116). Characteristic for SADC's dominating outward-oriented market integration approach, or open regionalism, is the "ambition to synchronize regional market integration with economic globalization/multilateralism" and the "downsizing of the role of the state in the economy in order to boost the private sector and spur competition" (Söderbaum 2004b: 73; see also Gibb 2009: 706). Moreover, open regionalism implies policies prioritising macro-economic stability, "pushing states to meet macroeconomic benchmarks such as low inflation, fiscal deficit and current account of the balance of payments, in order to be competitive on the regional and global markets" (Godsäter 2011: 44).

SADC's turn to open regionalism is important in this context. It did not follow fundamental changes of the macro-economic and structural conditions in the region. The latter remained rather unaltered since the beginning of the 1980s and therefore unfavourable for outward-oriented market integration (Evans 2010: 110; Lee 2003: 47). As Gibb points out, the market integration approach overlooks the economic realities in Southern Africa: First, there is a "lack of economic complementary between integrating states", which are highly dependent on primary production and lack tradable manufactured goods and services, South Africa constituting the only noteworthy exception. Furthermore, "disadvantageous terms of trade between African economies and the industrialized North" have hindered, so far, a successful and sustainable integration of developing countries in Southern Africa into the world economy. Third, additional to the lack of tradable goods, Southern African countries face "severe structural inadequacies in transport, services, banking, labour skills and competitiveness" (2009: 712-713; see also Evans 2010: 109; Aly 1994: 36-37). And, last but not least, the rationale driving regional integration in the North was substantial intraregional trade, a precondition almost absent in Southern Africa where estimates of intraregional *formal* trade range from only 5% – excluding South Africa – to approximately 20% of total trade (Gibb 2009: 712; McKeever 2008: 457; Söderbaum 2004b: 76).

This is why it is crucial to analyse the advent of open regionalism as the dominant development paradigm in SADC against the background of important endogenous and exogenous developments

related to the reconfiguration of the global political economy, particularly the ideological hegemony of neoliberal globalism in the post-Cold War world (Cox 1999: 12; Taylor 2011a: 1235, 1240; Taylor 2003b: 315; Söderbaum 2004a: 423; Kiely 2005: 279; Gill 1995a: 402; Evans 2010: 115-116). To begin with, the liberation struggle had left the countries of the region with massive amounts of dollar-denominated external debts,[40] a situation reinforced by the global recession of the 1980s and depreciating national currencies. The end of the Cold War, and the respective lack of considerable donor assistance from alternative non-Western sources, tied them closely to the dominant economic policies of the industrialised North and international financial institutions (IFIs), notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Evans 2010: 110-111; see Poku 2001: 33-37). Hence, several structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), under which hundreds of industries and the provision of public goods and services were privatised, social spending was dramatically cut and protected economies were forced to open up to world markets, were attached to IMF and World Bank loans and implemented in the region in the 1980s and 1990s – mostly without any consultation with civil society. The SAP-imposed liberalisation policies resulted in further de-industrialisation due to overwhelming competition from capitalist core countries and emerging economies and the mutilation of the states' welfare role (Thompson 2000: 45, 48-49; Lee 2003: 32). While SAPs targeted trade liberalisation at the national level through state-specific strategies, the IFIs also increasingly influenced SADC's regional trade regime in the course of the 1990s. Despite their previous scepticism towards African regionalisms, which were seen as 'stumbling blocks' for multilateralism and global trade liberalisation, the IMF and the World Bank started to promote the idea of open regionalism or "neo-liberal market integration" (Odén 1999: 161). Thereby, the changing attitude of the World Bank and the IMF towards regionalism was deeply affected by the role of the EU, which explicitly "has drawn attention to the negative spillover effects of uncoordinated SAPs" and has framed regionalism not as an either-or alternative to global market integration but rather as congruent with it (Söderbaum 2004b: 94; Evans 2010: 111-112).

Furthermore, the financial, and hence political, dependency of SADC as an institution itself on Western donors and their agencies has hardly decreased during the 1990s with estimated 86% of the organisation's funds originating from Western governments or IFIs (Lee 2003: 48; see also Godsäter 2011: 13). Although, meanwhile, the contribution from "International Cooperating Partners" only amounts to 55% of the total 2012/13 budget, according to SADC's own information (SADC 2012: 3), the organisation is still highly donor-driven. Therefore, Taylor argues that:

> "The current official agenda of organisations such as SADC reflects the hegemony within regional bodies as well as virtually all global institutions and donor nations of liberal, specifically neoliberal, values and practices. The robust role that donors play in formulating policy advice for SADC strongly filters through into SADC positions and ambitions – even if only officially – that emanate from Gaborone" (2011a: 1240; see also 2004; Lyakurwa and Ajakaiye 2007).

[40] Poku estimates the total "*Apartheid* debt" of the FLS and South Africa at $28 billion (2001: 37).

Policy initiatives of external actors such as the 2000 EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement and the respective Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) as well as the United States' 2000 African Growth and Opportunity Act underline the preference on the side of major external powers for market-driven and outward-oriented market integration in Southern Africa. Both legal instruments denote a significant shift from traditional development aid to a more trade-focused relationship and promote the integration of Africa's sub-regions into the global economy (Evans 2010: 112; Söderbaum 2004b: 93; Taylor 2011a: 1234). According to Hurt, the EU is "'locking in' the neoliberal development model in southern Africa" in the EPA negotiations by persistently promoting open regionalism and restricting crucial policy space from governments in the region through agreements which go far beyond only the liberalisation of trade in goods (2012: 495-496). The furtherance of the "synchronization of globalization, multilateralism (within the WTO) and barrier-dropping market integration" is therefore advanced "through the imposition of common macroeconomic conditionalities, hence inevitably, external control" by donors (Söderbaum 2004b: 95).

Endogenously, South Africa's role in reframing SADC's political agenda turned out to be crucial. At the end of *Apartheid* South Africa remained the economic giant in the region with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) outnumbering the cumulative figure of the rest of the region by four and a fourfold intra-regional trade surplus (Hentz 2005: 22). The accession to SADC of the newly democratic South Africa in 1994 generated great expectations, but also deep scepticism, towards its economic and political ambitions in the region on the side of other SADC members – a situation Hentz referred to as the "hegemon's dilemma"[41] (2005: 33; see also Chingono and Nakana 2009: 399). In addition, the ANC-led government was facing serious domestic socio- and politico-economic challenges after its transition to democracy. Indeed, "South Africa's regional foreign policy represents an attempt to square its political circle", trying to pacify two crucial domestic constituencies, the strongly organised labour force as well as its – in the regional comparison – enormous large-scale and outwardly oriented businesses (Hentz 2005: 46; see also Hentz 2008). During the transition, and in the immediate period after the 1994 elections, South Africa took a critical stand towards a pure market integration approach, thereby particularly driven by a domestic coalition of organised labour – spearheaded by Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – and small- and medium-sized businesses both fearing disadvantageous competition through regional trade liberalisation. This was accompanied by a solidary, pro-regional rhetoric which referred to the shared experience of the anti-colonial struggle and the FLS' and SADCC's support for the liberation of South Africa. The ANC-led government and its leaders emphasised "the need for peaceful cooperation *for mutual benefit* if the region's future is to be secure" (Simon 1998: 4; original emphasis; also cited in Evans 2010: 102) and argued that "[t]rade liberalisation has to be complemented by measures to address the historic imbalances between and within countries" (Mandela 1995). During the negotiations of the SADC Trade Protocol establishing an FTA within ten years, the South African government, led by the

[41] Hentz's usage of the concept of hegemony does not resemble neo-Gramscian conceptualizations but rather mainstream "hegemonic stability theory" which interprets hegemony as the capability of a powerful state to coercively dominate its counterparts through material or military means (see Keohane 1984; Gilpin 1987).

Department of Trade and Industry and backed by the Parliament and the Industrial Development Corporation, "registered concern over the neo-classical approach" at SADC and opted instead for a developmental approach to regional integration (Hentz 2005: 33-34, 36).

Nevertheless, the global ideological dominance of neoliberal economic policies did not halt at the borders of post-*Apartheid* South Africa which, in the second half of the 1990s, increasingly aligned with the Washington Consensus and where the balance between labour and business interests tipped in favour of the latter. This development had again exogenous as well as endogenous causes. To begin with, during its democratic transition South Africa's (new) political elite was exposed to particularly vigorous forms of *trasformismo* – to speak in Gramscian terms – on the part of the IFIs and the major economies in the West due to the perception that "the newly independent South Africa could potentially become a counterhegemonic node in the South" of the newly unipolar world (Evans 2010: 113; Alves and Edwards 2009: 103; see Cox 1996a: 130, 139). As William Gumede describes:

> "Key economic leaders were regularly ferried to the head offices of international organizations such as the World Bank and IMF, and during 1992 and 1993 several ANC staffers, some of whom had no economic qualifications at all, took part in abbreviated executive training programs at foreign business schools, investment banks, economic policy think tanks and the World Bank, where they were 'fed a steady diet of neo-liberal ideas.'" (2005: 72; also cited in Evans 2010: 114).

Apart from the close external ideological oversight and influence the ANC's economic policies were subjected to, South Africa experienced its "longest depression (1989-93)" during the transition. Already the late-*Apartheid* regime, therefore, had started to replace "1980s-era sanctions-induced dirigisme" with the gradual liberalisation of the economy, thereby particularly driven by "white English-speaking business", which systematically increased its influence in the beginning of the 1990s (Bond 2010: 15). Coming into office in 1994, the ANC government inherited an "acute crisis of overaccumulation" which was the result of the decade-long mismatch between "the exploitation of cheap Black labour for mineral extraction and the production of luxury goods", on the one side, and the lack of sufficient domestic mass consumption, on the other (Evans 2010: 115; see Bond 2000: 5; 2010: 12-13).[42] Subsequently, "through liberalization, privatization, financialization, and the regional dispersion of overaccumulated capital […] South Africa undertook voluntary alignment with the Washington Consensus and global neoliberal hegemony", ostensibly to minimise the risk of debt crises (Evans 2010: 115; see Bond 2000: 10, 190). South Africa's significant shift in domestic economic policies from the "neo-Keynesian-tinged Reconstruction and Development Programme

[42] The "symbiotic relationship between mass production and mass consumption" which provided capitalism, particularly in the interwar and post-World War period, with the necessary stability by upholding industrial mass production through relatively high wages to trigger domestic mass consumption as well as through regulating social and political institutions is often referred to as "Fordism", a term Gramsci coined in his *Prison Notebooks* (Bond 2010: 12; see Gramsci 1971: 277-280, 310-313). South Africa's *Apartheid*-economy has been interpreted in various veins which cannot be discussed in detail but of which two shall not stay unmentioned: Gelb's proposition of "racial Fordism" assumes a racially exclusionary mass production-mass consumption link, sustained for at least two decades after the introduction of *Apartheid* by constant inflows of "foreign currency provided by mineral exports". Ramos and Cassim's interpretation draws from *Depêndincia* theory, arguing that South Africa embodied "peripheral Fordism" which sustained the economic core countries with highly exploitative modes of production, thereby enabling the survival of Fordism in the core (Bond 2010: 12-13; see Gelb 1987; see Ramos and Cassim 1989).

(RDP)" to the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Reconstruction plan (GEAR), aimed at macro-economic stabilisation, the opening up of the economy and increase in FDI, also manifested itself increasingly on the regional scale (Taylor 2010: 4; see also Poku 2001: 55-56; Söderbaum 2004b: 84; Alves and Edwards 2009: 104-108; Marais 2001). Following an approach of functional cooperation (particularly in infrastructural development) widely outside of the SADC framework, since 1995 South Africa launched and promoted a number of Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) and Development Corridors on the micro-regional level, several of them cross-border in nature (Hentz 2005: 37-38). They were driven by parts of South Africa's ruling elite and big business interests, but rapidly supported by "(outward-oriented) economic and political elites in neighboring countries" (Söderbaum 2004a: 424), and spread through the entire region with the stated intention to "unlock inherent economic potential in specific spatial locations in southern Africa" (Taylor 2003b: 317; see also Lee 2003: 152, 156; Söderbaum 2004b: 162-163). They can be seen as "the most distinct form of policy-driven microregionalism" (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008c: 13) and are informed by the idea of creating globally competitive micro-regions of economic activity to attract private sector investment and to trigger growth. The pivotal role in SDI projects falls to the share of private capital, whereas the state is only seen as a facilitator which shall keep the institutional and bureaucratic structure for SDIs slim, foster public-private partnerships (PPPs) and make private investment easier. The intrinsic ideological emphasis on export growth at the expense of people-centered development, the prominence of the private sector and the confinement of the state to an investment-facilitating agency resemble the dominance of open regionalism in the "methodology" of the SDIs (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008b: 38-39). The SDIs underline "perceptions held at the elite level that in an era marked by globalization, regionalization is a crucial means by which states may come together and tap into this process in order to maximize their pulling power *vis-à-vis* international capital" (Taylor 2003b: 317). Therefore, the SDIs are portrayed by decision-makers as in line with the logic of policy initiatives on the macro- and meso-level aiming at the economic integration of Africa, such the 'African Renaissance', NEPAD or SADC's neoliberal market integration, and thus as their logical micro-regional manifestation (Söderbaum 2004b: 83, 188). However, the lack of democratic oversight and civil society involvement and negative impacts on people populating the respective areas have been observed repeatedly. This includes, for instance, the banning of informal traders from the N4 toll road as well as financial implications for community members using the toll road after the its privatisation in the context of the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC) (see for instance Lee 2003: 158; Söderbaum 2004a; Söderbaum and Taylor 2003b; 2008b; Taylor 2003b; 2011b).

Encouraged by the SDIs, South African capital cemented its overwhelming presence in the region since the end of the *Apartheid* era – contrary to Pretoria's political proclamation to level regional imbalances. At the beginning of the millennium, South African investment accounted for 85% of total FDI in other SADC countries and over 70% of multi-national corporation (MNC) subsidiaries in the region were South African (Hentz 2005: 45). The regional macro-economic imbalance remains unaltered: 70% of SADC'S Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is still generated in South Africa and

"[d]uring the period 2005-2008 South Africa supplied nearly 44% of total intra-regional exports, but took up only about 11% of intra-regional imports" (African Development Bank 2011: 5, 10; Hentz 2005: 22). Indeed, the SADC region proved to be a lucrative sales market for internationally uncompetitive products from South Africa as well as a major destination for South African investment in both traditional sectors such as mining, energy or transport as well as consumer and financial services (Taylor 2011a: 1238). South Africa's economic expansionism is driven by "an emergent Black bourgeoisie [which] joined the ranks of the established (White) elites, to form a nascent historic bloc" (Taylor 2010: 5). As Söderbaum underlines, "[e]ver since early colonialism South African business and corporate actors have played a hegemonic role in the regional economy" (2004b: 75). The latter established rather informal but strong "regional state-business partnerships" by "drawing in (political) elites in the neighbouring countries" and turned out to be the key proponent of (neo)liberal norms and policies within SADC (Söderbaum 2004b: 203-204). As then President Thabo Mbeki stated:

> "Accordingly, and again driven by our painful experience, many on our continent have introduced new economic policies which seek to create conditions that are attractive to both domestic and foreign investors, encourage the growth of the private sector, reduce the participation of the state in the ownership of the economy and, in other ways, seek to build modern economies" (1998: 247; also cited in Söderbaum 2004b: 74).

Mbeki's elaborations exemplify the discourse about political and economic modernity to which, in the eyes of the author of the "African Renaissance", Africa should finally align itself to. Concomitant with its support for neoliberal economic policies Pretoria therefore tries to promote Western-style liberal democratic governance and the norm of "good governance" within SADC and other regional fora (Taylor 2011a: 1236-1238). Söderbaum rightly argues that:

> "[G]ood governance is thus defined as 'less government' and 'getting the prices right,' rather than providing public goods and intervening in the economy and ensuring poverty reduction. It indicates the commodification of basic material needs and everyday life, which only results in a retreat of the conventional welfare and development ambitions of the state. Poverty reduction is reduced to economic growth, and development projects must be bankable and profitable. The public is needed mainly to ensure an enabling environment for the private. In other words, the public has been subsumed under the private. It is a systemic fault in this type of governance to accommodate the interests of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the unemployed who lack the means to participate, much less compete on a global market" (2004a: 425).

While neither external actors nor a pro-neoliberalism coalition of social forces led by South African political and economic elites have (yet) succeeded – for reasons which will be discussed in subchapter 3.3, SADC's evolution illustrates a fundamental turn away from an inward-looking regional strategy of development cooperation towards its neoliberal, market-driven counterpart, open regionalism.

3.2.2 Great ambitions, sobering realities

SADC's crucial political and programmatic shift of the 1990s had not been mirrored by significant institutional adjustments until 2001, when a major institutional reform aimed at centralising the institution's politics by replacing the 21 member state-based sector co-ordinating units, inherited from

SADCC, with four directorates coordinated by the Secretariat in Gaborone (Godsäter 2011: 8; McKeever 2008: 457; see also Le Pere and Tjønneland 2005).[43] Subsequently, in 2003, following protracted negotiations, SADC approved the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) which, since then, constitutes the integrationist guideline for SADC in the social and economic sphere. The RISDP aims at streamlining various earlier sector-specific SADC initiatives expressed in a vast number of protocols or memoranda of understanding which, so it has been argued, in sum lacked programmatic focus (Godsäter 2011: 12; Le Pere and Tjønneland 2008: 102). It comprehensively highlights twelve priority areas for intervention and its 2004 implementation framework "provides detailed implementation plans of 15 years, five years, and one year" (Le Pere and Tjønneland 2008: 102). While identifying "the combating of poverty as the overarching priority in its integration agenda" (SADC 2003: 56), the RISPD – deeply informed by the European 'blueprint' (see Taylor 2011a: 1233-1234) – reinforces SADC's commitment to neoclassical market-led integration as the vehicle for social and economic development (Thompson 2007: 123; Gibb 2009: 707-708). The linear model of regional market integration, anchored in the 1996 Trade Protocol and specified in the RISDP, reflects the idea of economic integration as "a process of progressive integration via several hierarchical steps" (Gibb 2009: 706-707; see Poku 2001: 75). With the RISDP and its implementation framework SADC has set itself an ambitious – one might call it unrealistic – agenda by establishing a FTA by 2008, a customs union by 2010, a common market by 2015, followed by a monetary union in 2016 and a common regional currency in 2018 (Mudzonga 2008: 15; Le Pere and Tjønneland 2005: 30-31). In accordance with this schedule, in August 2008 the SADC FTA was launched. However, due to derogations from negotiated tariff phase-downs, the intended complete liberalisation of tariffs and non-tariff barriers by 2012 is far from being implemented. SADC is, moreover, running behind the self-imposed timetable in regard to the planned customs union which is, so far, not established because of disagreements about revenue-sharing as well as multiple membership in regional communities (Hartzenberg *et al.* 2012: 2-3; Gibb 2009: 710-711; Saurombe 2009: 101-102; see also Mudzonga 2008: 16-20). Diverging national interests and the multiple membership of state constituents in regional schemes with similar agendas result, in several cases, in contradictory commitments to various trade or tariff regimes (Gibb 2009: 710-711; Le Pere and Tjønneland 2008: 104). Furthermore, studies suggest that the SADC FTA has not (yet) significantly boosted intra-regional trade or equalised the stark economic asymmetries among member states, while the "share of intra-regional trade in total

[43] The four original directorates entrusted with 'regional integration' cluster as follows: Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI); Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR); Social and Human Development and Special Programmes (SHDSP) and Infrastructure and Services (IS). Meanwhile, a fifth directorate, the Directorate of Policy Planning and Resource Mobilisation (PPRM), has been added to the regional integration portfolio. Additionally, the Secretariat has two directorates in charge of "finance and administration" as well as several cross-cutting units responsible for e.g. gender development, internal audit, public relations and macro-economic surveillance. The Secretariat also hosts the Directorate of Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (PDSC), which is attributed to the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation (OPDSC) (Godsäter 2011: 11, 15, 17; SADC 2010).

trade of the group[44] decreased during the period 1980-2008" (African Development Bank 2011: iii, 10; see Gibb 2009: 712; McKeever 2008: 460).

But SADC not only faces serious implementation challenges regarding its self-imposed timetable of market integration. More importantly, socio-economic development for the people of Southern Africa – ostensibly the very imperative of the Southern African *Development* Community – can arguably be questioned. The social and economic realities in SADC remain affected by enormous poverty, under- and unemployment, socio-economic inequality, deficient access to education and consistently high epidemic prevalence rates. Even SADC itself estimates that 45% of the region's population lives on less than $1 per day (Evans 2010: 118; see also CNGO 2011b). In the DRC, an estimated 71% of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2006 (CIA 2012a), in Zimbabwe the number amounted to 68% in 2004, while 95% of the Zimbabwean work force were not employed in the formal economy in 2009 (CIA 2012b). The SADC member states average a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.506 compared to a global average of 0.682. The inequality-adjusted HDI draws an even more sobering picture with a SADC average[45] of 0.290 and a world average of 0.525 (UNDP 2012a). The region features a high degree of income inequality even within the most advanced economies in the region, with Namibia (0.71 in 2009), Seychelles (0.66 in 2007), South Africa (0.63 in 2009) and Botswana (0.61 in 1994) indicating Gini coefficients above 0.6 in the respectively most recent data available (CIA nd; World Bank nd/a; see also McKeever 2008: 460). Recent HIV prevalence rates point at limited improvements in regard to HIV prevention, as numbers from the HIV/Aids programme of the United Nations (UNAIDS) make clear:

> "Globally, 34% of people living with HIV in 2009 resided in the 10 countries in southern Africa; 31% of new HIV infections in the same year occurred in these 10 countries, as did 34% of all AIDS-related deaths. About 40% of all adult women with HIV live in southern Africa. […] [w]ith an estimated 5.6 million […] people living with HIV in 2009, South Africa's epidemic remains the largest in the world" (UNAIDS 2010: 28).[46]

Within SADC, the number of people living with HIV increased by 12% between 2001 and 2010 to an estimated total of 13.3 million (UNAIDS nd). Life expectancy at birth in the region averaged, in 2011, 56.1 years (UNDP 2012b: 154-155)[47], thereby being 12 years behind world average (67,9 years between 2005 and 2010) and even 22 years behind the respective Northern American figure (78,2 years, 2005-2010) (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2011: 17). Last but not least, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) counted 21, partly regionalised, active conflicts of different intensity within and between SADC member states in 2011[48] – including *inter alia* border disputes, secession endeavours, political power struggles between governments and opposition movements or minorities as well as incidents of xenophobic violence (HIIK 2012: 30-32).

[44] SADC excluding Tanzania and the DRC.
[45] SADC member states excluding Angola, Botswana, South Africa and The Seychelles due to lack of data.
[46] Southern Africa refers here to the countries Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
[47] Own calculation based on the data given in the cited source.
[48] Own calculation based on the data given in the cited source.

Indeed – from my epistemological point of view – macro-economic indicators are rather arbitrary and they do not allow for law-like generalisations. However, the indicators do underline the on-going marginalisation of a vast majority of the regional population and question SADC's path of open regionalism and its neoliberal mode of governance. There is seemingly a persisting mismatch between 'the SADC we want' and 'the SADC we have', at least if the observer takes into consideration the vast majority of the region's population which is still waiting to profit from outwardly oriented market integration. Yet, to focus only on the formal regionalism pursued by SADC would risk falling for the same ontological and analytical fallacies for which traditional approaches to regional integration, with their preoccupation on states, markets and intergovernmental institutions, have been rightly criticised. The subsequent subchapter hence draws attention to the nexus between formal and informal regionalisms in SADC.

3.3 The formality-informality nexus of regionalisms in SADC

The previous section of this chapter underscored how the official neoliberal and market-centred narratives, driven by a small number of political and economic elites and deeply entrenched in the formal SADC agenda, characterise its contemporary official development approach and drastically impact on the livelihoods of the people living in the region. However, the last part of this chapter attempts to look beyond the formal SADC approach to regionalism. Firstly, crucial modes of regional governance are scrutinised by revealing the dialectic dynamism inherent in the coexistence of (neo)liberal hegemony on the global and regional level (in the case of SADC at least *formally*) and the absence of hegemony in most of SADC's member states. It is argued that the *informality* of much of Southern African politics counteracts the very foundations of the official SADC regionalism. In subsection 3.3.2 informal regionalisms, coexisting and often interwoven with formal SADC practices, and regional counter-strategies of the populace are outlined.

3.3.1 Neoliberalism encounters neopatrimonialism – modes of regional governance in SADC

The alignment of the political elite, as well as local outwardly oriented businesses and money capital, with the neoliberal paradigm is one influential, although certainly not the only, facet of SADC's complex, pluralistic and interwoven modalities of regional governance, including public and private, as well as formal and informal actors and practices (see Söderbaum 2004a: 421-422). One important interface between formal and informal regionalisation processes is marked by the prevailing contradiction between the – despite the ongoing global economic crises – unbroken hegemony of economic and political neoliberalism at the international level, which SADC has at least officially subscribed to, and "the absence of hegemony at the national level across the region, with few exceptions" (Taylor 2011a: 1241; see also 2010: 6-7). The result is a situation in which globally hegemonic norms are incorporated in the region in the form of neoliberal policies but are not grounded in a hegemonic socio-political base. This closely resembles Gramsci's notion of passive revolution (see Cox 1996a: 137). Because of their inability "to articulate the interests of other social groups to its own" (Mouffe 1979: 181; also cited in Taylor 2011a: 1242), the ruling elites in most SADC countries

rule their respective country with little consent of, but much coercion, towards subaltern social groups or, in Gramscian words, with the blank "iron fist" (see Gramsci 1971: xxxvi; Taylor 2011a: 1242). Ian Taylor points out: that "the ruling elites' domination and their modalities of governance became (and remain) expressed through both the threat and actual use of violence *and* the immediate disbursal of material benefits to supporters in neo-patrimonial regimes" (2011a: 1242). Lacking state legitimacy, which is derived from the consent of major parts of the population and rooted in "a hegemonic bourgeoisie, grounded in a solid and independent economic base and successfully engaged in a private accumulation of capital" (Fatton 1988: 36; also cited in Taylor 2011a: 1244), the ruling classes resort to political practices of neopatrimonialism and corruption (see Söderbaum 2007: 323-325).[49]

SADC's official approach, built on neoliberal market integration and liberal democratisation, falls particularly short of its pledges by disregarding the neopatrimonial nature of the post-colonial African state. As Morten Bøås points out, "the African state system is defined as one that is constituted by weak states but strong regimes" (2003: 31). Consequently, "power in African politics must be understood as the utilisation of patronage and clientelism and operates within neo-patrimonial modes of governance" (Taylor 2010: 4). Since "[u]nder the neo-patrimonial state model control of the state equates to control over resources and power, resulting in a lack of differentiation between the public and private" (Gibb 2009: 718), SADC's agenda, underpinning the (neo)liberal notion of a clear-cut separation between the public and the private and thus between politics and the economics, is diametrically opposed by personal rule, clientelism and corruption (Taylor 2011a: 1243).

The disjuncture between neoliberalism and neopatrimonialism becomes apparent in further features of SADC's regional governance. In fact, the leaders in the region play a "two-level-game"[50] of a special kind, with SADC summitry upholding neoliberal values on the one hand and patronage-based, and often corrupt, advancement of particular interests in domestic politics on the other. This leads to a *paradoxon* Söderbaum termed "sovereignty-boosting" regional governance, whereby leaders make use of the regional arena to bolster their crumbling governments – both domestically and in front of the international community. This ostensible commitment to the region does not only often sustain authoritarian regimes by portraying their leaders as statesmen who advance regional integration, but it also widens the implementation gap between ambitious rhetoric and legal acts on the regional level, accentuating people-centred development, on the one side and socio-economic realities and the lack of implementation in the member states on the other (Söderbaum 2004a: 425-428; see also Söderbaum 2010: 6-9; Gibb 2009: 716, 718; Hettne 2005: 454-455). Moreover, sovereignty-boosting regional

[49] Botswana and, more recently, South Africa and Namibia are arguably constituting, to varying degrees, the most noteworthy exceptions within the region, *inter alia* due to historical and socio-structural reasons but also because of relatively transparent and democratic oversight mechanisms of economic state activities (see Bauer and Taylor 2005: ch 4, 8, 9). An in-depth discussion of all the different forms of state in the Southern African region would however go beyond the scope of this study.

[50] This term was coined by Putnam in his attempt to explain the ambivalent situation national leaders find themselves in when negotiating international agreements which need to be ratified, and thus justified, at the second level, the domestic political game (see 1988). In the case of SADC the nature of the "two-level games" differs in so far as leaders in the region pledge allegiance to SADC regionalism at ministerial meetings or SADC summits but, in fact, often prevent implementation of the very principles and policies they signed in the regional arena at the domestic level.

governance leads to an over-commitment to regional organisations. As Gibb points out, "on average, each African state now belongs to four different regional integration agreements" (2009: 702-703) with Mozambique being the only SADC member which does not simultaneously belong to one of the other market integration schemes stretching in(to) the sub-region, namely SACU, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). In fact, overlapping membership contradicts particularly the introduction of a common external tariff and the harmonisation of rules of origin, thereby preventing any considerable advancement in terms of SADC's self-imposed plan of orthodox market integration. This flaw is reinforced by disintegrating practices in relation with external partners, as, for instance, in the case of the EU which deals with SADC members under a variety of trade regimes such as the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) with South Africa, the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative in case of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and three different EPA groupings of which, again, none resembles the entire membership of one of the existing regional organisations (Lee 2003: 73-74; Gibb 2007: 430-431; Stevens 2008: 64-66; Naidu 2008: 79-80; Hurt 2012: 505-506). The cherry-picking of some member states regarding the constitution of regional EPA groupings "raises the question of how important their own regional integration agenda and their membership of regional economic communities actually are" (Hartzenberg and Malungisa 2011: 70).

The Janus faces of regional 'sovereignty-boosters' are also revealed in their relationship with SADC institutions. Much has been written about the inadequate resources of the Secretariat, not only in terms of finances and staff to implement regional projects, but also when it comes to legal competences to control and ensure member states' compliance with treaties and protocols (see Kaunda 2008: 80-81; Godsäter 2011: 35; Le Pere and Tjønneland 2005: 18-21). Similarly, the SADC National Committees as well as the SADC Parliamentary Forum, which is not even part of the official SADC structure but an autonomous SADC institution approved by the 1997 summit, remain rather toothless tigers instead of instruments of participatory and democratic regional integration (Godsäter 2011: 25, 29, 36; Le Pere and Tjønneland 2005: 22, 24; see also Nzewi and Zakwe 2009). The record suggests that, as soon as regional institutions challenge domestic practices, the ruling elites stifle them – as for instance in the case of the SADC Tribunal. Despite its arguably insufficient legal status, the latter delivered several important judgements in defence of individuals' rights against state authorities. The Tribunal was suspended in 2010 following an intervention by Zimbabwe's government after a critical judgement concerning the latter's land reform (Killander 2012: 93). Just recently, in May 2012, the suspension has been continued for another year by the Summit of Heads of State (AllAfrica 2012).

Southern African governments render themselves conspicuous by a rather superficial commitment to regional integration and their absolute understanding of state sovereignty which runs counter the imperative of traditional regional (market) integration theory and practice. As Gibb states:

> "African state sovereignty is, therefore, underpinned by a neo-patrimonial culture and value set that imposes real impediments to the sharing of sovereignty. Put simply, African states are reluctant to share sovereignty because, from a classic Westphalian perspective, 'neo-patrimonial sovereignty' cannot easily be shared. Indeed, the neo-patrimonial

> system, based on patronage and personalised rule, has limited extra-territorial presence. Thus, many African states are reluctant to share sovereignty because in reality they do not have sovereignty to share" (2009: 718).

This tendency is reinforced by the deep internalisation of a traditional state-centred approach to security, a legacy of the colonial period which "facilitated the deepening of inside-outside conceptions of interstate relations" (Vale 2003: 81; see also Thompson and Leysens 2000).

However, the neo-neo-encounter discussed here does not only affect the realm of institutionalised regionalism. As will be outlined in the remainder of this chapter, it rather blurs the (analytical) dividing line between formal and informal regionalisms and, in fact, deeply intertwines them (see Söderbaum 2011; Söderbaum and Taylor 2008c: 13, 17; Shaw 2000: 401).

3.3.2 Shadow regionalism and regional survival strategies

Since the separation between the state and the market, as proposed by (neo)liberal thought, is widely absent in most states in the region, regional activities of political elites in SADC often go far beyond – or perhaps more precisely, far below – public and formal processes of regionalisation and constitute what has been termed "regional shadow governance" (see Söderdaum 2004a: 428-433). Probably the most prominent and highly destructive examples for the involvement of SADC leaders and officials in illegal networks and activities since its foundation are the political and military interventions of SADC members in the conflicts of the Great Lake region. Under the guise of a formal peace-building mission mandated by the SADC OPDSC, a number of high-ranking politicians and military officers from Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and the DRC were deeply involved in underground economies located around the Congo's natural resource sector during the civil war of the late 1990s and early 2000s (Söderbaum 2004a: 430; see also Taylor 2003a; Taylor and Williams 2001; MacLean 2002). Taylor and Williams argue that "a number of state elites in the Great Lakes and Southern African regimes have ceased to use the mantle of sovereignty to promote the collective good. Instead they have used it to help bolster their patronage networks and weaken those of potential challengers" (Taylor and Williams 2001: 281; also cited in Söderbaum 2004a: 429). The Eastern DRC and its surroundings have evolved into what Shaw called a regionalised "war economy", which connects conflict zones to the wider regional and global environment through a number of profiteers who actively sustain violence (Shaw 2000: 399-400; see also Taylor 2003a). Thereby, the neoliberal dictum of the last two decades – implying the retrenchment of the state as well as the reduction of formal barriers to the movement of goods and capital between states – has contributed to a regionalisation of the "shadow state" – a strategy through which domestic political power of personal rulers is upheld by exploiting malignant and criminal regional networks in order to keep potential rivals under control and to undermine remaining government bureaucracies (Söderbaum 2004a: 428-430; see Reno 1998; 2000).

But shadow regionalisms are not confined to conflict zones. Several illicit networks and underground economies stretch over the entire SADC region and beyond. For instance, Mozambique's civil war left the serious legacy of illegal weaponry, estimated between half a million and six million weapons, of which only a small fraction was collected or destroyed after the conflict (Taylor 2003b:

322). Weapon smuggling, thus, still constitutes a vital illegal parallel economy within the region. In their case study of the MDC, Söderbaum and Taylor point out that an assumed "144 organized criminal syndicates are operating in Mpumalanga, specialising in offences ranging from cash heists to stock theft [...] [as well as] counterfeiting money, cross-border vehicle smuggling and (increasingly) subverting government through corruption" (2008b: 49). Moreover, drug trafficking became a flourishing business within the MDC. In this regard, particularly in Mozambique, a close connection between illegal networks and corrupt police forces as well as senior political figures can be observed (Gastrow and Mosse 2002: 53). "The political elite are intimately involved in this whole corridor of crime, protecting criminals and providing patronage to those involved in illicit activities" (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008b: 50). Authoritarian-neopatrimonial modes of governance, hereby, enable the leading protagonists "to intimidate those state officials who would be in a position to act against corruption and organized crime" (Gastrow and Mosse 2002: 64). Tragically, the international donor community, intentionally or not, overlooks these practices of parts of the Mozambican elite, as the latter does not embezzle donor money, but profits through concealed investment in legal and illegal businesses (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008b: 50; see Hanlon 2002: 6). The ones who prove to be the losers again, are the local communities who are hindered in making their living, because the cross-border trade seems to be reserved "for those who can pay the necessary bribes" (Bach 1999: 162; also cited in Söderbaum and Taylor 2008b: 50).

In fact, the liaison of neoliberal policies and the involvement of the ruling class in clandestine and illegal networks and practices does not only further reduce the legitimacy and efficiency of state and intergovernmental institutions, but it also necessitates ever-more sophisticated "survival strategies" on the part of the region's populace, as it becomes most obvious in regionalised informal trade and labour migration. Whilst labour migration had been a fundamental politico-economic component of the region at least since the large-scale invention of a widely formalised system of contract labour migration around the region's mining industries and commercial agriculture at the turn of the 19th century, regional migration has been increasingly informalised in the last two decades (Evans 2010: 116-117). Particularly the restructuring of the post-*Apartheid* South African economy, which implied both "the formal promotion of domestic job creation and labour standards" as well as "a strategy of moving overaccumulated capital [particularly from the natural resource sector] into infrastructural and speculative financial ventures", resulted in a significantly decreasing demand for unskilled contract labour from abroad (Evans 2010: 117-118). Additionally, South Africa's neoliberal GEAR policies, which aimed ostensibly at "redistribution through growth", further aggravated domestic unemployment and social inequity and reinforced "exclusionary and often discriminatory migration policies in order to shut down the movement of peoples". By othering and systematically excluding migrants and informal traders, the South African state falls back on the "'last bastion of sovereignty' under neoliberalism (the domain of security)" in order to restore state legitimacy (Evans 2010: 119-121; see Crush *et al.* 2006: 31-32; Mulaudzi 2009: 56). At the same time, socio-economic hardship and geographical economic asymmetries in SADC, exacerbated in the past by neoliberal SAPs and

growing unemployment through trade liberalisation and public sector retrenchment, led to a flourishing of the informal cross-border sector, with informal trade and circular migration constituting important livelihood strategies of the populace.[51] As a consequence, restrictive migration regimes have triggered a vast illicit informal economy around SADC's internal borders, particularly those of South Africa, including activities such as human trafficking and bribery of officials. The securitisation of migration and the concomitant informalisation and criminalisation of migrants and traders imply – besides the often dehumanising impacts on individuals – disintegrating effects on SADC as a region (Evans 2010: 120, 122). Indeed, as several authors claim, informal cross-border traders and circular migrants "contribute to the creation of a transborder culture that transcends nationality and ethnic differences by emphasising commonality through economic interdependence and cooperation" (Evans 2010: 119; see Muzvidziwa 2001: 72) and thus "bringing the concept of regional economic integration down to the individual level" (Johnson-Núñez 2009: 31; also cited in Evans 2010: 119). However, their significance to regionalisation is largely neglected by SADC's official regionalism which leads to an apparent detachment between the latter and popular perceptions, as well as lived realities, in the regional context on the ground (Evans 2010: 119; see Söderbaum and Taylor 2003a: 3). In the past, South Africa actively resisted any attempts to a SADC-wide implementation of the principle of free movement of people either through its actual border policies – from which some corrupt officials even profit – or by watering down policy initiative from SADC, as could be observed in the case of the 2005 Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (Evans 2010: 122-133). Moreover, the discriminatory dealings of South African politicians and officials with what they classify as "illegal immigrants" fosters anti-regional sentiments and contributes to the outburst of xenophobic attacks against foreigners – clearly everything but conducive to rising levels of regionness (Söderbaum and Taylor 2008b: 44-45; Evans 2010: 121-122).

3.4 Conclusion: What role for civil society?

This overview of the history and the social, cultural and political construction of the Southern African region underlines the importance of an analytical approach to regionalism and regionalisation which goes beyond state-centrism and economic determinism. Indeed, Southern Africa bears pre-colonial and colonial regional historicities which have a lasting impact on the modern-day region, such as historical diffusion of its ethnicities, the regionalised political economy of colonial exploitation or the liberation struggle. In the more contemporary history, SADC has been strongly affected by the advent of neoliberal hegemony in global politics which still determines official discourse and policies of regional development and integration. Contrary to its own promises, SADC's open regionalism has not yet brought socio-economic development for the majority of the population, but has rather cemented, and even deepened, social inequity and economic marginalisation of the majority. This chapter also highlighted crucial contradictions inherent in SADC's political economy, particularly the

[51] Informal cross-border trade in SADC is estimated to amount to "approximately 30 to 40 per cent of the value of SADC's formal regional trade", while the actual figures could be even higher due to its clandestine nature (Evans 2010: 118-119; see Johnsson-Núñez 2009: 11).

formal alignment with the neoliberal hegemony against the background of a ruling elite lacking hegemonic status. This situation of a "revolution-restoration" (see Cox 1996a: 129) finds its expression in several, often competing, formal and informal, as well as legal and illicit, regional strategies with which a variety of actors either profit from, or try to cope with, the experienced realities in the region.

Thereby, the dominant modalities of state-led regionalism, namely SADC formal adherence to market-centred regional integration and neoliberal practices and the concomitant neopatrimonial principle of political organisation, turn out to be highly exclusionary for a majority of the population, which leads to the assumption that there is little space for civil society to ensure an inclusive and people-centred process of regional development. As Söderbaum points out, "state actors may engage in regional projects in order to achieve private goals and to promote particular (vested) interests rather than broader societal interests". Consistent with the discussed neopatrimonial logic of Southern African politics, he further argues that, since "[v]ocally critical civil society organisations tend to threaten the basis of (neo-patrimonial) power, [...] many Southern Africa [*sic*] regimes have shown a propensity to buy them off, own them, stifle them or simply crush them" (2007: 325, 332).

Nevertheless, popular reactions in the form of informal cross-border activities constitute important bottom-up regionalisms which at least bear potential to "challenge and transform the uneven geographic development of Southern Africa at the micro level, as well as foster a common identity and values framework premised on solidarity and interdependency" (Evans 2010: 125; see Taylor 2003b: 316). Against this background, the question of an alternative, more inclusive, regional order and of non-governmental agents capable of transforming SADC from below becomes salient. Bøås and colleagues underline:

> "Trade liberalization as a part of the state-driven regionalization process can facilitate the regionalization of gun-running, drug-trafficking and criminal networks, but formal regionalization in the form of trade liberalization can also entail the regionalization of various elements of civil society into a regionalized civil society that can become a supporter of a viable counterforce to the formal regionalization project" (2003: 209).

In the remainder of this work I will therefore turn to civil society actors at the SADC level which are engaged in, critical of or opposed to SADC's regionalism to examine their transformative potential.

4 Regional civil society in Southern Africa: A force for transformation?

The Southern African region has not only a long history of regional construction and deconstruction with its lasting effects, but remains also marked by deep social, economic and political contradictions, as illustrated in the previous chapter. The pledges of SADC's founding document, to "ensure, through common action, the progress and well-being of the people of Southern Africa" and "to involve fully, the people of the Region and non-governmental organisations in the process of regional integration" (SADC 1992: preamble, ch 7 art 23(1)), appear odd against the socio-economic and political realities of the region twenty years after the organisation's inception. While the people of the region are far from powerless, as alternative regional strategies discussed in Chapter 3 underscore, their socio-economic and political marginalisation diminishes trust in the region's governments and calls SADC itself into question. It speaks for itself that not even half of the regional population (49%) agree that SADC helps the countries of the region "somewhat" or "a lot", while more than every third person (36%) simply has not "heard enough about [SADC] to say" and 15% of the people do not think that SADC helps their country (Afrobarometer 2009: 40).[52]

Against the background of a high degree of political and socio-economic exclusion, the question of whether contemporary regional civil society constitutes an active force for social and politico-economic transformation from below and alternative forms of regionalism becomes salient. Four regional civil society organisations (CSOs) are scrutinised in this chapter: the SADC Council of NGOs (SADC-CNGO), the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) and the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN). Each of them challenges, although in varying manner and intensity, the *status quo* of the Southern African region and, not least, the development path *hitherto* taken by SADC. The close examination of these organisations provides insights into the dynamics and contexts whereupon the civil society actors find themselves and should allow for conclusions about the transformative potential of regional civil society in Southern Africa. Therefore, structures, objectives and functioning of the four CSOs are discussed in the first section. Crucial obstacles to their transformative potential are outlined in the second section. Thereby the focus lies particularly on persistent institutional dependencies on Western donors, limited degrees of representativeness and popular involvement and diverging strategic and ideological approaches. Positive trends within regional civil society, which are seen as conducive to its impact on social and political change in the region, are discussed in the third part, before the chapter concludes with an outlook on the chances of transformation driven by regional civil society.

[52] Own calculation based on country data for Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia und South Africa, as provided in the cited source.

4.1 The organisations under investigation

4.1.1 The SADC Council of NGOs

The SADC-CNGO was formed in 1998 but started its official operations only in late 2004 by establishing representation in Gaborone, at that time hosted by the Botswana Council of NGOs (BOCONGO) (interview Muchabaiwa; CNGO 2012a: 1; see also Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010: 40). Yet, it took the organisation until 2007 to gain sufficient financial resources and staff and to become fully operational and opening their own secretariat in Gaborone. The membership of the organisation is comprised of 15 national umbrella bodies of NGOs, one from each SADC member state. It is complemented by associate members in the form of thematic networks, of which each of them operates in at least six countries of the region, e.g. Gender Links, the Southern African Youth Movement (SAYM), the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) or the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) (interview Muchabaiwa; interview Ditlhake). Its organisational structure is twofold, divided in a "governing" and a "programme implementation" structure. The former is constituted of the regional assembly, the highest decision-making body, bringing together delegates from the national umbrella organisations and thematic networks. The regional assembly elects an executive committee which, in turn, oversees the work of the Secretariat (interview Muchabaiwa). While itself not being an implementing organisation, the CNGO, through its programme implementation structure, provides region-wide sectoral coordination for NGOs in four programme clusters: Governance, Peace and Security; Poverty and Development; Regional Economic Integration and Civil Society Mobilization and Strengthening (CNGO nd/a; CNGO 2010b: 40-41). These programmatic clusters are again divided into subsectors, such as, for instance, peace building, human rights and elections, and implemented by specific task teams and reference groups (interview Muchabaiwa).

The overall strategic objective of the CNGOs is "to promote and support sustainable human-centred regional development characterised by good governance, democratic processes and institutions, and meaningful people's participation in all aspects of development that affect their lives and destiny". Furthermore, the CNGO aims towards active civil society participation in the politics of SADC and supports, as well as facilitates, civil society efforts towards "democracy, peace and good governance". In the socio-economic realm, the CNGO dedicates itself to "positively influence the SADC poverty eradication agenda" with the aim of a "people-centred, equitable and sustainable Regional Economic Integration and development" (CNGO 2010b: 40). The CNGO pursues its objectives through a dual strategy at the regional and national levels, implying "meaningful engagement between civil society and the SADC Secretariat and other relevant structures at [the] regional level while at the same time promoting national level engagement with member states through national NGO umbrella bodies and other specialized organizations" (CNGO 2010b: 40). The CNGO's areas of activity can be distinguished in three categories: firstly, it devotes itself to an information role in order to increase the ability of NGOs in the region to understand SADC and, in turn, to receive information from them about the region. Secondly, the CNGO pursues public policy

advocacy towards regional decision-makers and the SADC Secretariat. And thirdly, the organisation understands itself as a capacity builder by providing NGOs with services and skills or connecting civil society actors in specific issue areas with each other (interview Muchabaiwa).

The SADC-CNGO pursues a pragmatic approach of engaging with SADC. Already in December 2003, the CNGO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SADC which foresees close collaboration between the inter-state body and civil society, officially *inter alia* in order to "contribute to the improvement of the standard of living for the peoples of the region through eradication of poverty and creation of employment opportunities" (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010: 40-41). The MoU has previously been considered as "exist[ing] in the world of theory" but not as yet being "translated into practical reality" (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010: 41). Indeed, it is argued by CNGO representatives that the MoU is an insufficient provisional solution and that civil society involvement in SADC affairs needs to be legally institutionalised and formalised by concretely defining the modalities of civil society involvement (interview Ditlhake). Nonetheless, according to the CNGO, "there is a gradual opening of SADC towards civil society" lately and the CNGO has succeeded to play a ponderous role in a number of SADC policy bodies, such as the Regional Poverty Reduction Framework (RPRF), the Steering Committee for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) or the Gender Unit (interview Muchabaiwa; also interview Ditlhake). In order to hold SADC policy-makers accountable, and to ensure the implementation of their regional commitments, the CNGO regards as one of its main priorities the strengthening of the institutional capacity of NGOs and broader civil society by enabling them "to campaign and put pressure at the national level" (interview Ditlhake). Lately, the CNGO has extended its efforts in reviewing and monitoring the progress of implementation of SADC protocols, programmes and policies, for instance through its regularly published "Protocols Tracker" or its "shadow reports" in the context of the SADC Regional Poverty Observatory framework (see CNGO 2010b: 6; 2011b: iv; interview Ditlhake).

4.1.2 The Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council

SATUCC was established in Gaborone 1983.[53] During its early years of existence, the organisation was preoccupied with supporting and coordinating liberation efforts in countries still oppressed by white minority rule. Meanwhile, the organisation serves as the umbrella organisation of 18 trade union federations from 13 SADC member states (interview Muneku).[54] Its secretariat is based in Gaborone.

With political liberation achieved region-wide in the early 1990s, SATUCC's "political focus has shifted towards promoting and defending democracy and good governance" (SATUCC nd/b) as well as "influenc[ing] policy at the regional level in favour of workers" (SATUCC nd/a). Institutionally, SATUCC has the most formalised interaction with SADC among the four organisations under scrutiny here. The crucial supportive role of labour unions for liberation movements in the region has created close and lasting relationships with African post-independence regimes in the region. This historical

[53] For an account on SATUCC's founding history, see SATUCC (2001).
[54] To date SATUCC does not have affiliated organisations in the Seychelles and in Madagascar. However, a Madagascan trade union federation has indicated the intention to apply for SATUCC membership (interview Muneku).

legacy played a crucial role, when the regional tripartite structure, encompassing SADC Labour and Employment Ministries, employers and the regional trade union body, was for the first time legally formalised and, thus, SATUCC gained official status as a social partner in SADC in 1995 (SATUCC 2010: 30; interview Muneku). Since then SATUCC has put several initiatives on the SADC agenda of which some have meanwhile reached legal status, most importantly the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights in SADC, for which SATUCC had campaigned for twelve years before it was adopted by SADC in 2003, and the region-wide ratification of the Eight Core Labour Standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the member state-level. SATUCC has interpreted its advocacy role as going beyond the sole representation of labour interests by having lobbied SADC also in relation to the protocols on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005) or on Gender and Development (2008) (SATUCC nd/b; interview Muneku; see also Osei-Hwedie 2008: 11-12). Like the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC regards the dragging implementation of SADC's legal instruments at the national level as a major problem. A main focus of the organisation is thus the building of sufficient capacity and expertise among its affiliates as well as the development of monitoring mechanisms in order to assess the implementation progress of SADC protocols and charters in the member states and effectively and publicly criticise where there is a lack thereof (interview Muneku).

The regional labour movement underscores its call for a people-centred and -driven SADC with a special programme under the auspices of SATUCC, the Alternatives to Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa project (ANSA). ANSA originally emerged from an initiative of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). As a reaction to the IFI-sponsored Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), implemented in Zimbabwe in the first half of the 1990s,[55] the ZCTU launched a study on the impacts of neoliberal economic reforms and proposed its alternative policy recommendations in a book titled *Beyond ESAP* (interview Kondo; see ZCTU 1996). Inspired by ZCTU's approach to propose political alternatives to neoliberal economic policies in Zimbabwe, regional trade union leaders and academics affiliated to the labour movement subsequently agreed that further research and analysis, as well as the proposition of alternative economic policies beyond the case of Zimbabwe, were necessary, particularly due to the region-wide experience of neoliberal structural adjustment in the course of the 1980s and 1990s (interview Kondo).[56] Henceforth, labour unionist, social activists and intellectuals from across the region, supported by labour-affiliated research institutes in the member states, have regularly convened in workshops and consultations, which were institutionalised at the regional level in 2003 in the ANSA project of SATUCC. ANSA has conducted detailed country studies (*hitherto* on Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia and Malawi), as well as a comprehensive analysis of the SADC region in which it argues for an alternative development

[55] The implementation of ESAP started in 1991 with the stated intention "to transform Zimbabwe's tightly controlled economic system to a more open, market-driven economy stated intention" (World Bank nd/b).

[56] ANSA is based on the following ten principles: "1. It is led by the people, 2. Autocentric development, based on domestic, human needs and the use of local resources, 3. Regional integration, led from the grassroots, 4. Selective de-linking and negotiated re-linking, 5. Alternative science and technology, 6. National, regional and global, progressive alliances, 7. Redistribution of wealth to empower the non-formal sectors, 8. Gender rights as the basis for development, 9. Education for sustainable human development, 10. A dynamic, participatory and radical democracy" (ANSA nd; see also 2007: 8).

paradigm for SADC and its countries (interview Kondo). With its input, ANSA aims at "provid[ing] a basis for discussion amongst workers, farmers, women, intellectuals, youth, NGOs, faith-based organisations and government officials across Southern Africa" (ANSA 2007: x) and, in this way, "stimulat[ing] the various localised struggles and organisations" (interview Kondo). According to protagonists involved in the project, ANSA seeks to go beyond the sole function of a 'think tank' and follows a three-stage operational strategy: The first stage consists of research activities which shall provide in-depth analyses, the necessary holistic understanding of the *status quo* and propositions for people-centred social and political change. The second step focuses on training and the dissemination of research results and political alternatives. This stage involves formats such as workshops, as well as the publication of popular versions of the studies, in order to enable stakeholder organisations across the region to engage the regional population. Actual engagement is seen as the last stage and is aimed at creating a mass movement striving for transformation in the region (interview Martens; interview Kondo).

4.1.3 The Economic Justice Network

The EJN was initiated in 1997 by representatives of Christian faith-based organisations from the region. At that time, particularly against the background of the negotiations of both the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and ACP countries and the TDCA between the EU and South Africa, the founding members "felt there was a need for an organisation that could provide the view or the voice of what the church is saying on socio-economic issues in the Southern African context" (interview Damon). Subsequently, the EJN became a project of FOCCISA, the umbrella body of Christian councils in Southern Africa. The organisation is based in Cape Town. Institutionally, the EJN is governed by a steering committee, which, in turn, is supervised by the executive committee of FOCCISA (EJN nd/a).

The declared vision of the network is "to harness the resources of the southern African region for all of its people" (EJN nd/b). Thereby, the organisation's Executive Director, Malcolm Damon, argues, "We have a clear bias, and our bias is towards the poor and marginalised, those at the margins of society and those who do not have access to the resources. […] Because if we look at Southern Africa, and Africa in general, everybody would say 'we have political justice, but not economic'" (interview). Consequently, the EJN pursues two main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to provide national councils of churches in the region with the capacity to work on issues of economic justice. Therefore, the network is currently collaborating with councils of churches in twelve SADC countries.[57] Secondly, the EJN pursues an advocacy role with which it aims at influencing policies related to economic justice at the SADC level from a church perspective. The EJN operates in four broad work areas, namely debt and finance, trade, food security and policy advocacy (interview Damon; see also EJN nd/c). The network is neither a membership-based nor a classical project-implementation organisation. Its work is rather characterised by capacity-building and advocacy aimed at

[57] To date, the EJN does not have cooperation programmes with councils of churches in the DRC, Mauritius and the Seychelles (interview Damon).

"establish[ing] mechanisms to bring the experience and concerns of the marginalized and the poor people to the agenda of the church and society" (EJN nd/b; also interview Damon).

4.1.4 The Southern African People's Solidarity Network

SAPSN was founded in 1999 by a number of Southern African CSOs working on issues such as debt, poverty, trade, structural adjustment and globalisation. Its general secretariat rotates through the region on a three-year basis. Between 2000 and 2003 the EJN was first hosted by the Cape Town-based Alternative Information Development Centre (AIDC), before it moved to the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) in Harare, where it was based until 2011, due to capacity constraints of the succeeding host organisation. Only then, the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) took over the chairmanship and became the current host of the secretariat. The coordinating committee of SAPSN consists of representatives from the present secretariat as well as from the preceding and future chair organisations. SAPSN's membership is both diverse and open. It reaches from community- and faith-based to student and environmental organisations, as well as trade unions and economic justice networks. It is open also in the sense that it comprises CSOs from the local to the regional level which subscribe to the objectives of the network (SAPSN 2007; also interview Matanga).[58] SAPSN's self-understanding differs from the other organisations above. As Dakarayi Matanga, Secretary General of SAPSN until 2011, states: "We perceive ourselves as a social movement and quite distinct from the NGO-type formations. So, for us it is individuals, trade unions, students groups, community-based organisations. More of like the low grassroots-oriented organisations" (interview).

SAPSN is highly critical of neoliberal globalisation and market-driven regionalism (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 157-158). Matanga explains with regard to the genesis of the network:

> "The background is that civil society has noted this tendency by governments in the SADC region to implement neoliberal-type policies, especially noting the orthodoxy, the prevailing approach to economic management that is pushed by multilateral institutions. So, I think, the creation of these movements is an attempt to sort of reclaim policy-making for the benefit of people. […] So, on a whole array of issues, it is asking the question of let us get our economies back, let us do away with this neoliberal hegemony" (interview).

SAPSN considers itself as standing in the tradition of the common struggles for political liberation from colonialism and *Apartheid* and, thus, commits itself to "revive, steer and encourage a united front of the peoples of the SADC region in the fight against global trade injustices, poverty and debt" (SAPSN 2007; also interview Kasiamhuru). In pursuance of this goal, SAPSN considers itself as a platform to exchange experiences and information, create awareness and a mass movement through social mobilisation (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 158). Therefore, the organisation convenes its members in an assembly, once every four years, as well as in an annual People's Forum, held parallel to the SADC Summit of Heads of State, and in regional workshops (interviews Matanga; Kasiamhuru).

[58] For an overview of SAPSN's diverse membership, see Söderbaum (2007: 333).

4.2 Obstacles to the transformative potential of civil society

As discussed, Gramsci considered civil society as both stabiliser and potential challenger of historical structures. For him, social and structural change, in favour of the working class, was dependent on the latter's ability to establish hegemony within a broader coalition of subaltern classes, an alternative historic bloc (see Cox 1996a). Transferring his logic to the situation of regional civil society in Southern Africa, it becomes apparent that there are fundamental obstacles to an effective transformative challenge of the *status quo*. Firstly, the four CSOs introduced above remain institutionally weak and structurally dependent. Secondly, they are only to a limited extent representative of the people living in the region and, thirdly, they continue to be ideologically and strategically split.

4.2.1 Institutional weakness and donor dependency

The inadequacy of resources on the part of the organisations under investigation here is striking, as their staffing exemplifies. The CNGO tries to coordinate NGOs region-wide with six full-time staff members (CNGO 2012a: 1), SATUCC has only three (interview Muneku) and the EJN seven (interview Damon). SAPSN seems even more constrained institutionally. Despite the understandable rationales for the rotating procedure of chairmanship and the periodically moving secretariat of SAPSN, namely the collegial ownership of the organisation among its members and the gradual popularisation of the movement in the entire region, this practice certainly restricts continuity in the work of SAPSN and also limits its organisational strength in general, due to very limited capacities at double-hatted hosting organisations (interview Kasiamhuru). Moreover, the structural weakness of some of SAPSN's member organisations has resulted in an "over-dependency on the SAPSN secretariat", not least when it comes to fundraising (interview Matanga).

The limited institutional capacity of the four organisations is also apparent in terms of their financial resources. While SATUCC can, even though to a very limited extent and by far not to the degree of trade union federations in industrialised regions, draw financially on some contributions from its affiliates and the EJN partially profits from its institutional affiliation with FOCCISA (interviews Muneku; Damon), all four organisations are predominantly dependent on donor money. Bob Muchabaiwa points out with regard to the SADC-CNGO: "We are currently almost 95% donor-funded which makes us largely vulnerable and dependent on the donors" (interview). The overall lack of distinct sources of income among Southern African CSOs does not only absorb significant internal capacity for securing external funds, due to fundraising and reporting procedures, but it also confines long-term planning security. Muchabaiwa explains: "We have yearly commitments with almost 80% of our funding partners and that in itself becomes a burden, it becomes time-consuming and it gives a lot of uncertainties" (interview). This underlines the close connection between donor-dependency and the question of sustainability within regional civil society. A representative of a large European donor agency states reflectively: "If the Austrians [referring to Austria Development Cooperation], the Ebert Foundation and us say tomorrow, we cannot [fund] anymore, then, there will be no SADC-CNGO

anymore" (interview Mönikes; author's translation). Additionally, most donors confine their funding to specific project-costs and "refuse to support institutional costs", which further undermines long-term planning and institutional autonomy (interview Muchabaiwa; also interview Mogwe).

Representatives from the CSOs focused upon in this study make no pretence of the downsides of their financial dependencies. Indeed, exertion of influence on the agenda of CSOs varies among donors and happens mostly in an indirect and subtle way, in particular through their priority setting when allocating funds (interviews Damon; Ditlhake; Sigudhla). However, as Alfred Sigudhla from the SAYM, a sectoral affiliated member of the SADC-CNGO, points out: "Even if donors would not tell you what we must work on, they have criteria, they identify the issues they are working with. And if you apply for funding, then you must comply with what they want to deal with" (interview). The dependence on external funds therefore automatically raises the question of the autonomy and ownership of civil society. As Jude Howell stresses, "[t]hrough capacity building, financial auditing requirements, reporting procedures and proposal preparation, donors play a powerful role in shaping not just the developmental agenda but also the direction and raison *d'être* of civil society" (2000: 17; original emphasis). Consequently, the donor dependency of regional civil society inhibits the "formation of self-regulated autonomous organizations", for Gramsci a necessary condition for establishing a transformative historic bloc (Buttigieg 1995: 19). Besides that, the donor dependency of regional civil society has created a competitive environment within regional civil society CSOs (interviews Muchabaiwa; Sigudhla). The four organisations compete for *limited* funds from a *limited* number of donors of which some have supported several of the four organisations in the past, as for instance in the cases of Norwegian Church Aid (supporting CNGO, EJN, SAPSN), Diakonia (EJN, SAPSN), Oxfam Novib (EJN, ANSA, SAPSN), Friedrich Ebert Foundation (CNGO, SATUCC), Open Society Foundations (EJN, SAPSN), Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EJN, ANSA) and Southern Africa Trust (CNGO, EJN).

The overall absence of local funds for civil society and the respective dependency on financial support from actors external to the region causes another dilemma, namely suspicions on the part of SADC governments that regional civil society pursues 'hidden' agendas (Osei-Hwedie 2008: 15). As Sigudhla explains, "[e]very time you want to work with SADC, they will ask you 'who is funding you?'". SADC's scepticism seems to underline Howell's observation that "[c]ivil society in some countries that depend upon aid has become a battlefield, where state and donors contest each other for hegemony" (2000: 18). Thereby, SADC's position reveals contradictions. On the one hand, all SADC officials interviewed for this study emphasise capacity constraints as well as the lack of organisation, coordination and expertise on the part of civil society in the region as major impediments to its closer involvement into political processes in SADC (interviews Baloi; Ndabeni; Chitambo; see also Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 162). On the other hand, civil society remains structurally weak, because regional decision-makers remain reluctant to allocate sufficient resources and organisational freedom for civil society to prosper. Sigudlha underlines: "If you do not have a funding mechanism that is independent, created for people to access, it is not acceptable that you can blame civil society

for being agents of Western powers, because they are the one[s] who are providing the resources" (interview). The role of donors thus remains ambivalent, as Söderbaum rightly points out:

> "Through their funding, strategies and ideas, donors can play a positive role in the advancement of regional networking and capacity building in civil society. However, donors are by no means 'neutral' and they are actively involved in the social construction of the region. In this process their own interests and modes of operation play a significant role. This dynamic impugns the authenticity of these civil society activities" (2007: 329).

The structural weakness of regional civil society and its close relations with foreign donors underlines the entanglement of structures and agents. On the one side donor support of civil society empowers agents within civil society to develop and pursue alternative regionalisms. At the same time, the alternative regionalisms are confined by civil society's structural dependencies and external oversight.

4.2.2 The question of representativeness

Looking at regional civil society as a potential agent of social and structural change makes it obligatory to look closer by whom, for whom and for what purpose CSOs push for certain regional agendas. As Bhikhu Parekh underlines, "[t]he poor and the marginalized are often too atomized and overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness to have the confidence to set up vibrant associations" (2004: 23). In the context of Southern Africa, a region marked by large-scale socio-economic marginalisation and inequity, the question to what extent regional civil society represents the populace becomes therefore salient.

In the case of the SADC-CNGO, the representativeness of the institution has been a constant point of debate, both within and beyond the organisation. The CNGO itself is neither a conventional membership organisation nor directly related to the population, but rather connected to the regional populace via indirect links, namely through the members of its members, the latter being itself professionalised umbrella organisations at the national level. This, in a bottom-up sense, relatively weak legitimacy base is further challenged by the general long-term trend in prevailing organisational forms in the NGO sector, which is characterised by a shift away from classical membership-based organisations to professionalised forms of organisation with a more indirect form of popular participation (Anheier *et al.* 2012: 21; see Anheier and Themudo 2002: 193-197). Thereby, according to Helmut Anheier and Nuno Themudo, "[m]embership organisations have the greatest potential for democracy and accountability. Non-membership organisations can contribute to increased pluralism, but accountability remains weak and legitimacy claims are easily questioned" (2002: 211). Besides that, another factor is critical in the case of the CNGO, as Bertha Osei-Hwedie points out:

> "[I]ts representation of the regional voice is limited given the fact that not all national NGOs are members of their respective mother bodies, which in turn constitute the membership of the SADC-CNGO. Similarly, the SADC-CNGO does not network with all regional CSOs. Therefore, its representativeness is not inclusive" (2008: 16).

The CNGO is aware of this problem and argues that "feedback and accountability is not just a function of good structures, it is also a function of resources" (interview Muchabaiwa). In fact, the deepening engagement of the CNGO with CSOs other than the national umbrella organisations of NGOs through

its programme implementation structure can be interpreted as an attempt to address earlier criticism, not least from donors, about a lack of representativeness. Despite these efforts, according to Sigudhla from the SAYM, the exclusiveness of CNGO's membership prevails by confining full membership to the 15 national umbrella organisations of NGOs, only one per country. He argues further that the regional character and representativeness of the CNGO remains limited, as long as only the national umbrella bodies of NGOs are fully incorporated into its structure, "because those umbrella bodies […] are pretty focused on national issues, by very nature". Therefore, the SAYM advocates an opening up of the membership of the CNGO in order to establish a "civil society coalition of everybody in SADC" (interview Sigudhla; see also Osei-Hwedie 2008: 16).

In contrast, labour unions are traditionally mass organisations. While SATUCC itself, as an umbrella organisation, is also missing individual membership, its affiliates are comprised of unions which are accountable to definable constituencies, which, in aggregate, add up to roughly 7.2 million members (SATUCC nd/a). However, SATUCC's representativeness also has limitations. Firstly, in accord with the global trend and related to the global economic crisis, labour unions in the region have lost significant numbers of members (interview Muneku). Secondly, and even more importantly, the regional labour movement faces another crucial structural challenge, which becomes apparent by juxtaposing the seven million members of SATUCC's affiliated federations with the regional population of over 250 million. The small degree of unionisation among the labour force in the region can be traced back to the very structure of the regional political economy. The formal economy only accommodates about 20% of the labour force in the regional average, with the rest being either dependent on the rural (or communal) peasant-based subsistence economy or employed in the urban informal economy (Jauch and Kaampa 2011: 4; SATUCC 2010: 2). The large share of the informal economy poses serious challenges to unions in the region to organise workers on a larger scale. Indeed, "[t]here are many issues faced in common by formal and informal workers (wages or income, health and safety, social protection, and so on), […] many are different or of differing priority" (Bonner and Spooner 2011: 90). Nonetheless, the primary focus of people employed in the informal economy is their economic survival, since they mostly lack any form of "employment-related social security" or "access to government schemes" (Bonner and Spooner 2011: 91). Furthermore, workers in the informal economy must, usually, work longer hours to protect their livelihood and are often in stark competition with each other. These characteristics of the informal economy make the organisation of its workers very difficult (Bonner and Spooner 2011: 90). Not least, opposing interests among workers employed in the formal economy and people in the informal economy must be assumed, when it comes to their ideas of the region as a workplace and, more concretely, opinions on the principle of free movement of persons within SADC, labour standards or wage dumping. In fact, recurring xenophobic attacks in South Africa and beyond tragically illustrate this perceived clash of basic interests among workers (see Bond 2012: 261). These aspects pose serious challenges to traditional labour organisations and the probability of successfully rallying the working class of the region around *one* alternative regionalism.

As abovementioned, the EJN is not directly based on individual members or member organisations. Its links to the people of the region go through the national councils of churches. This is problematic in several regards. Firstly, to the extent that the EJN plays the role of a 'faith-based think tank' for the national councils of churches, a top-down approach is embodied. National councils of churches are themselves professionalised networks of high-ranking church representatives. And, it should be added here, that churches are not *per se* democratically organised institutions (interview Botterweck). Moreover, as Damon admits, the representativeness of the councils in terms of the affiliated churches varies from country to country (interview Damon). Nonetheless, the very fact that the EJN engages the councils with regard socio-economic issues arguably puts into effect opinion-forming processes within crucial civil society institutions, namely Christian denominations, which represent a large proportion of the regional population and, overall, have a firm footing within the societies of the entire region and at the grassroots-level. Furthermore, the involvement of the EJN in other networks such as SAPSN, and its recent cooperation with associations of cross-border traders aim at increasing the input from and the exchange with the regional population (interview Damon).

Even when it comes to SAPSN, the decidedly most diverse and inclusive network under investigation here, the representativeness of the institution is not an unproblematic issue. As Andréas Godsäter and Fredrik Söderbaum argue, "most CSOs participating in SAPSN are not membership-based. The number of participants and stakeholders involved is steadily increasing, but the agenda and output are dominated by a limited number of vocal activists" (2011: 158-159). While SAPSN comprises a large array of associations from the local to the regional level, the extent to which it is driven by the people living in the region is limited because of organisational and structural constraints. Matanga self-reflectively admits: "Sometimes we need to be frank and say, 'maybe also the technocrats within the social movements may dominate the processes'. So, I think in the future we need to find a way to democratise the space, so that it is really owned by the people" (interview). Matanga sees regional civil society, in this regard, in a continuous learning process in which it needs to evaluate and adapt its approaches towards popular involvement and agenda-setting (interview).

The issue of representativeness of CSOs points to the more general problem of social mobilisation. In fact, Robert Fatton's assessment of the socio-structural bias of CSOs, made twenty years ago, still seems to have certain validity:

> "There is […] no reason to believe that NGOs in Africa will escape the upper class bias that has traditionally characterized the politics of associational life in liberal-pluralist societies. To participate actively and effectively in voluntary organizations requires relatively high levels of education, easy access to financial resources, and free time – all attributes of upper-class lifestyles. Moreover, voluntary organizations are most easily constituted when they comprise small groups of individuals who are conscious of their special interest and of their capacity to effect desired changes" (1992: 5).

To date, transformative regionalisms are developed, discussed and articulated by a limited number of, mostly professional, activists and still lack support on a mass scale. Therefore, regional civil society must effectively address the prevailing problems of representativeness and legitimacy.

4.2.3 Strategic and ideological divergences

> "I have always had problems if the NGO people tell me: 'But the SAPSN people, they just want to throw stones, they want to be on the streets'. And if you talk to the SAPSN people, they say: 'Aah, these NGOs in suites'" (interview Damon).

This statement from the EJN Director highlights the issue of strategic and ideological dissent prevalent within regional civil society. Indeed, the CNGO, SATUCC, EJN and SAPSN pursue quite distinct approaches in advancing their regional agendas as well as in engaging SADC. While diversity in strategies does not necessarily have to be a weakness, but can even strengthen the cause of regional civil society, the fact that strategic and ideological divergences among the actors under investigation have been perceived as incompatible by some in the past clearly hampers cooperation and, thus, the establishment of a broad transformative alliance.

Even though still lacking the contractual basis of legally institutionalised cooperation with SADC, the overall approach of the CNGO is formalised and technocratic. While being critical of SADC's state-centric nature, the CNGO takes the latter as a given and tries to engage pragmatically with the institution, in order to influence the regional agenda. As Muchabaiwa argues: "Participation and interaction is a two-way process, if you are dealing with an introvert. […] If you are dealing with an organisation that is naturally state-centric, it is also for the civil society to be up its game and be able to find below the line and above the line ways of engaging SADC" (interview). Godsäter and Söderbaum attribute a partnering approach to the CNGO (2011: 155). According to their typology of civil society in regional governance, "partners in regional governance basically accept and support the agenda formulated by regional intergovernmental organizations" and perceive their tasks in service delivery or lobbying/monitoring activities to adjust existing structures (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 152-153). Thereby, the stark focus of the CNGO on engaging with SADC at the decision-making level is seen critically by some observers:

> "SADC-CNGOs may have fallen into the same trap of perceiving regional integration through statist and elitist lenses. Until and unless SADC-CNGOs develop a specific strategic objective that focuses on how to bring ordinary people, through community-based organisations, into the process of regional integration as subjects with a voice, its efforts towards a critical engagement with SADC is bound to be severely limited" (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010: 40).

At the CNGO, one is aware of the bias of the own organisation. The organisation's Executive Director admits: "It is true that the NGOs represent a particular class within civil society and a particular discourse by their very nature" (interview Ditlhake). The CNGO's main emphasis on a lobbying-/advocacy approach towards SADC reveals a commitment to a reformist strategy and the belief that SADC can be incrementally changed in favour of a more people-centred regionalism. While these aspects of CNGO's engagement serve the purpose of increasing the accountability of SADC in a problem-solving manner, they curtail, at the same time, the critical distance of the organisation, which is necessary for formulating and enhancing a transformative challenge to the hegemonic form of regionalism. In fact, the CNGO attempts to change SADC's approach through closer collaboration with the ruling elites, thereby putting itself in jeopardy of being co-opted into the mainstream.

Gramsci's warning of *trasformismo* through which the ruling elite incorporates transformative ideas and protagonists into the prevailing order seems therefore appropriate in this context (see Cox 1996a: 130, 139; Buttigieg 1995: 13). The supposed role of the CNGO as the hub for civil society involvement with SADC structures also brings the organisation closest to state agencies from outside the region, such as, for instance, the Austria Development Cooperation or the GIZ, two institutions with which the CNGO is partnering. As Armstrong and Gilson emphasise, "there is a risk that groups that cooperate and interact too closely with government officials may end up effectively co-opted into quasi-governmental functions" (2011: 7).

SATUCC pursues an ambivalent approach. On the one hand, as part of the SADC tripartite structure, it acknowledges the contemporary economic order of SADC and confines itself to a reformist role within it. As Cox points out, tripartism presupposes "the existence of capitalist hegemony, i.e., an acquiescence by organized labor in the continued organization of the economy through the capitalist mode of development" (1987: 78). SATUCC's close collaboration with the ILO and its strong commitment to promote the latter's conventions within SADC underscore this assumption, since, "[t]he ILO, by advocating tripartism, legitimates the social relations evolved in the core countries as the desirable model for emulation" (Cox 1993a: 63). Godsäter and Söderbaum consider SATUCC as fulfilling a "legitimating" function *vis-à-vis* SADC. Legitimating civil society actors pursue "a critical engagement more than a straightforward partnership", lobby for reformist policies and pressure for accountability, democratic governance and inclusive regionalisation (2011: 156, 157). SATUCC's engagement with SADC arguably enables it to exercise influence on certain policies and contributes to the aim of gradually ameliorating the socio-economic situation and living standards of ordinary people in the region. However, it takes place in narrowly confined realms of possibility.

This is why SATUCC, on the other hand, complements its formalised engagement with SADC by actively advocating post-neoliberal alternatives and the transformation of the contemporary political and economic order, in particular through its affiliated ANSA programme. ANSA's proposition of a "holistic bottom-up approach" is certainly aimed at fundamental social and political transformation. The strategy leads from grassroots mobilisation pressing for a transformation of the state "into an ethical, responsible and developmental state" to the establishment of "an effective regional block in Southern Africa that will benefit the people of the region" and can, in the long run, resist the systemic pressures from the "Empire" (ANSA 2007: 1-2). The crucial role of civil society is thereby explicitly acknowledged. However, the ANSA project also warns against the danger that civil society is not immune from being incorporated into hegemonic political processes and practices, which are the very subject of its criticism:

> "The current crisis in Africa can only be understood by looking at the root causes in a holistic way. This means analysing the imperial strategy on the continent, including co-option of local elites into the imperialist project. […] We also need to critically look at civil society organisations and the role they play in transforming society. Once in power, civil society leaders like trade unionist all too often behave no differently (or even worse) than the politicians they replaced" (ANSA 2007: 5).

The ANSA programme finds support from a growing number of activists and academics in the region. Nonetheless, as an activist involved admits, as yet ANSA is still driven by high-ranking functionaries from the trade unions, a limited number of leading activists from other CSOs and academics. The main task of turning it into a bottom-up movement, by rallying the people at the grassroots level behind a post-neoliberal regionalism, *i.e.* the stage of engagement, has not yet been accomplished (interview Martens). Moreover, Jos Martens self-critically argues that the ANSA project is not immune from the danger of becoming a "bureaucracy in itself" or a "middle-of-the-road-thing" (interview). In this regard, SATUCC and other CSOs involved need to expand their efforts to popularise its alternative political ideas for the region within and beyond their constituencies, in order to enhance the chances of fundamental social transformation from below. Yet, this is significantly undermined by SATUCC's ambivalence between pragmatic engagement with the dominant classes in politics and business, here, and the quest for fundamental social change, there, which curtails both the organisation's emancipatory goals and the credibility of its efforts to bring about social transformation in the region.

The EJN likewise pursues a dualistic approach. As its Executive Director points out, "in our organisation, we have always believed that you must […] have an inside and an outside serving" (interview Damon). In contrast to SATUCC or, to a lesser degree, the SADC-CNGO, the EJN does not have any official channels of exchange with SADC. This is why the EJN has entered into closer cooperation with SATUCC and the CNGO lately, as will be discussed below, in order to make the voice of the church heard through established lobbying channels. The EJN follows its advocacy role through the national councils of churches by sensitising them to issues of socio-economic justice and encouraging them to increase pressure on national governments (interview Damon). While trying to influence decision-makers within SADC through lobbying and advocacy, the EJN is outspokenly critical of SADC's regional development approach. Damon points out:

> "The rhetoric, the talk, [of policy-makers in SADC] is a leftist, progressive, alternative rhetoric. But if you look at the implementation and the approach, then it is totally within the neoliberal paradigm. […] I would say, we [are] not going to change in Southern Africa, and Africa in general, if we do not move away from the neoliberal approach, and if we do not move away from this approach of growth at all costs […] [I]f one look[s] at economic integration, what we need is definitely more integration, but an integration that will play not so much on opening up. […] Not so much on opening up to the outside world, but how countries can integrate their economies locally, so that they can benefit from each other" (interview).

Since its inception there existed awareness within the EJN that a fundamental change of SADC regionalism cannot be achieved through lobbying alone. As a founding member of SAPSN, the EJN therefore supports efforts to conscientise local communities and to enable them to champion their alternative vision of the region through social mobilisation (interview Damon).

SAPSN regards SADC and its regional approach as serving the interests of the leaders, rather than the people, and, thus, generally avoids getting too close to governmental actors. SAPSN "emphasizes the limits of state-steered regionalism" (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 158) and considers large-scale popular demand for social and political change through social mobilisation as the precondition for the realisation of "people-based regional cooperation, integration and a genuinely united and

developmental region" (SAPSN 2010: i). As former General Secretary Matanga underlines, "we are the social movements and we have got our own style of doing things. And some of it is to use a non-engagement approach, and some of it is a more radical approach" (interview). SAPSN remains highly sceptical of the impact of lobbying through official channels and institutions, particularly since the latter are regarded as the unsuitable to incorporate the demands of the majority of people living in the region. The former long-standing coordinator of SAPSN at ZIMCODD, Patricia Kasiamhuru, states: "Even me, I do not know whether how to approach the regional parliamentary forum. What about the people in the villages? So, for us, the nearest way to do it is, take them [the people] up in buses, to meet, march and present our point" (interview). SAPNS's approach therefore differs significantly from the, rather pragmatic, strategies of the SADC-CNGO and SATUCC. It is characterised by the far-reaching rejection of state-led regionalism and particular resistance against neoliberal regional governance and policy (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 157-158). Charles Mutasa, Executive Director of Mwelekeo wa NGO (MWENGO), a member of SAPSN focused on capacity building of NGOs in the region, underlines: "[N]ormally, social movements […], they take the law into their hands, […], they take it that they can solve certain problems by pushing for certain demands, with or without government's support" (interview).

The strategic diversity within regional civil society, particularly the split between advocates of a pragmatic engagement with SADC and those who choose a resisting approach of non-engagement, has led in the past to the perception of an incompatibility of the different approaches among protagonists within regional civil society. This, in turn, has crucially impeded closer cooperation among civil society actors, a necessary precondition for mounting a serious transformative challenge to the *status quo*. The persistent strategic divergences, especially between the approaches pursued by NGOs and the ones preferred by social movements, within regional civil society have, according to one interviewee, historical and ideological causes:

> "It is ideological in the sense that the historical position and operation of national councils of NGOs has always been much more closer to governments, in most cases. In some cases, people would even say, they are in the pockets of government. […] Social movements would have a problem with that. […] So, it comes from that ideological position where, previously, the NGOs, or not all the NGOs, but the national [ones], because the Council of NGOs works mostly with national NGOs, […] in some cases, were more closely aligned to government, or even if they were not aligned to government, they […] have a conservative approach to change, to how you change things" (anonymous interview).

An elucidating example is the persistent holding of two civil society fora in the context of the annual SADC Summit of Heads of States and Governments (see Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 162). On the one hand, since 2005 the CNGO has organised the annual Southern African Civil Society Forum which usually takes place in the immediate time before and at the respective location of the SADC Summit of Heads of States (CNGO 2012b: 1). It has been co-hosted by SATUCC and FOCCISA since 2008 (Osei-Hwedie 2008: 8). A second forum, the SADC People's Summit, is convened by SAPSN parallel to the Heads of State Summit in the respective hosting country (SAPSN 2010: iv). While both events clearly intend to call the attention of decision-makers, as well as of the broader public, to

regional ideas and expectations prevalent in civil society, so far there has not been the attempt to integrate the two events into one, which might provide both a platform to confer about political alternatives emanating from civil society and elements of popular mobilisation and protest around the SADC Summit. When asked why it has not come to closer cooperation in this regard, respondents also refer to the difference in discourse and nature between the professionalised forms of civil society and social movements:

> "You will find the more intellectual type, technocratic people that do the analyses and so forth. Then you find the grassroots, someone who just generally wants their life transformed, but they do not have the know-how, maybe they are not even educated. And, I think, it is a challenge for those two types of people to work very well" (interview Matanga).

Consequently, the Kasiamhuru argues that "if you want this technical discussion all the time, you leave the people out" (interview). According to Damon from the EJN, which is both in an alliance with the CNGO and SATUCC and member of SAPSN, the usefulness of having two separate civil society fora has been questioned for a long time: "There have been various discussions, but even SAPSN is saying, 'maybe it is good to have kind of their own stuff', so otherwise they feel they will be pulled in by the SADC Council of NGOs. But there should be closer cooperation, we have always pushed for closer cooperation" (interview).

However, dividing lines between different camps within regional civil society cannot only be reduced to differences in strategy, ideology or constituency, but also to quite utilitarian, and even existential, considerations. The aforementioned donor dependency results in a downright struggle for financial resources. Within civil society organisations the effects of this competition are familiar: "We know for sure that civil society […] is well known for working at cross purposes, because it is an industry on its own" (interview Muchabaiwa). At once, one is aware that these cross purposes "only work[s] in favour of governments unfortunately" (interview Muchabaiwa). Several representatives underline that the competition among CSOs for funds has significantly intensified since the beginning of the recent financial crisis and respective budgets cuts on the side of donor countries and institutions (interviews Mogwe; Mutasa; Sigudhla). Securing of financial resources thus becomes a question of organisational survival – and effective cooperation within regional civil society, in turn, a secondary issue. One interviewee states pointedly: "Whoever convened a meeting to engage others, it is because he has been funded to do so" (anonymous interview). The competitiveness of the civil society sector is therefore a crucial aspect that intensifies existing divisions and fragmentation and results in duplication of work and a lack of collaboration (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 161). Mutasa underlines: "The moment each group thinks that we have nothing for us in there, because it has not been led by us, […] you have a problem of coordination" (interview).

In fact, continuing contention within regional civil society about the appropriate way of bringing about change and the lack of coordination and cooperation underscore Chris Landsberg and Shaun Mckay's assessment that "[n]on-state actors are often poor at forging networks. They are also poor at articulating common positions on key issues, and often find themselves outmanoeuvred by state

actors" (2005: 5). Moreover, the divisions within regional civil society bring to the fore that the various groups operating in regional civil society have not yet managed, to transcend, in a transferred sense, the two first stages of "cooperate" and "class" consciousness in favour of a "hegemonic" consciousness uniting the subaltern classes (see Cox 1999: 15-16; 1996a: 133). Fortunately, there is growing awareness in terms of the inhibiting effects of internal divisions and the necessity of a coordinated regional civil society among the actors discussed in this chapter (interviews Dithlake; Damon; Matanga). Attempts for closer cooperation will therefore, among others, be discussed in the following section, which examines prospects for a transformative regional civil society.

4.3 Prospects for a transformative regional civil society

The long-term and arduous establishment of hegemony in the civil society in a war of position requires agents which can "evolve a clearly distinctive culture, organization, and technique" among a broad coalition of subaltern classes (Cox 1996a: 132). For Gramsci, this was the task of organic intellectuals and had to be carried out "in constant interaction with the members of the emergent block" (Cox 1996a: 132). In order to transform the contemporary regional order, civil society actors thus need to develop both a shared awareness and an in-depth understanding of the prevailing problems in the region. The must lso provide for the effective organisation and mobilisation of subordinate social forces and, not least, a close cooperation between actors dedicated to transformation. In fact, there are several trends observable within regional civil society that suggest the possible evolution of a nascent transformative historic bloc. These trends are discussed in the following section.

4.3.1 Overlapping critique towards SADC

Despite the, not minor, differences in both organisational structure and strategic orientation among the CNGO, SATUCC, EJN and SAPSN, they fulfil a crucial requirement which constitutes a necessary condition for transforming the region, namely a significant overlap in their 'error analyses' with regard to SADC. Firstly, the four regional CSOs strongly criticise the elite-driven and exclusive nature of SADC politics, which they perceive, in the words of one interviewee, as a "club of the leaders, very removed from the people" (interview Kondo). Consequently, critique from all four CSOs as well as from affiliated organisations, is directed at the overall insufficient involvement of civil society, both at regional and national levels of decision-making, within SADC, and at the prevalence of neopatrimonial modes of governance at the expense of genuine democratic practices (interviews Muneku; Sigudhla; see also Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 155, 158). Indeed, SADC officials from the Secretariat keep on referring to the SADC National Committees (SNCs) in each member state when asked where civil society participation is best located, while concomitantly pointing out the limited legal competences of the Secretariat to steer civil society involvement in SADC processes (interviews Baloi; Chitambo; Ndabeni). The referral to the SCNs brings to the fore the persistent lack of political will to effectively involve civil society at the regional level, not least when taking into account that, overall, "SNCs are still largely government-centric and inept" and not "inclusive forums for civil society participation" (Nzewi and Zakwe 2009: 46, 43). Kasiamhuru from SAPSN says: "We

do not want SADC focal points [SNCs] which are just there, just desks. Which is what is the case. […] [T]he focal points are not serious. I think they are just placed there, just as a sham" (interview).

A second major criticism, emanating *unisono* from regional civil society, is the perceived lack of Southern African ownership in the process of regional integration. The issue of donor dependency is obviously not confined to regional civil society but a *problematique* at the very heart of the institution SADC itself, where, in the words of one interviewee, "the EU [and] the Germans are literally running the Secretariat" (interview Dithlake). The financial dependency of SADC on donor money is criticised by regional civil society, since it is regarded as bringing African development in line with the interests of donor countries and the hegemonic ideology. The Secretary General of SATUCC, Austin Muneku, stresses: "We have to know who is running the SADC and who is funding it. It is basically externally funded and those call the shots and they want to put up their models. This is one of the biggest challenges around that organisation [SADC]. It is not an organisation which the owners own" (interview). Referring to the exertion of influence by external actors on the SADC development agenda, Muchabaiwa paraphrases: "There is no free lunch as Adam Smith taught us. There is no free lunch in this world, even though people say it is free lunch" (interview).

Last but not least, not only SADC's governance structure and practices, but also its policies, particularly SADC's reliance on outward-oriented market integration, are considered to be unconducive to inclusive regional development. A study published by the EJN, and boldly titled *Entering the Dragon's Den: Neoliberalism and the SADC Free Trade Agreement*, points out that "the FTA as it has been formulated and implemented is wholly incapable of fostering genuine people-oriented trade and development and in the process benefit the vast majority of the people of Southern Africa who remain completely marginal to the neoliberal conceptual and practical exigencies of the SADC FTA" (EJN 2011: 8). Insinuating the region's peripheral position in the global economy, the SADC-CNGO in turn states in its *Southern African Civil Society Poverty and Development Charter* that:

> "Poverty in the SADC region is also being generated in a *broader international context characterised by the forces of globalization* in which developing countries are generally marginalized […] [and] fuelled by *de-industrialization under neo-liberal economic reforms*, the raging HIV and AIDS pandemic, climate changes resulting in droughts and floods, natural resource degradation and gender inequalities" (CNGO nd/b: 4; emphases added).

Furthermore, the name of its ANSA project is already indicative of the deep dissatisfaction on the part of the regional labour movement with the form of regionalism contemporarily pursued by SADC. The 2003 RISDP, which outlines SADC's commitment to open regionalism in form of a market-driven approach aimed at a fast integration into the world economy, is accused of repeating policy failures of the past: "Overall, the RISDP endorses the neo-liberal approach to development […]. The private sector is uncritically viewed as the engine for economic growth […]. The plan ignores the 25 years of African experience with the failed SAPs" (ANSA 2007: 25). Last but not least, the self-understanding of SAPSN is deeply marked by a clear rejection of neoliberal globalisation and its respective commitment "[t]o end financial exploitation, economic subordination and political control of peoples

and nations through the instrument[s] of debt and neo-liberal policies" (SAPSN 2010: I; see also Söderbaum 2007: 332-333). Concerning the current integration agenda, Matanga states:

> "[An] example which raises the issue of whose integration is it for. […] SADC has got a very poor commitment to free movement of people and goods. But if you go to the airports, there, I am sure, it did not take you 15 minutes to get from the plane, and check out and get out into the city. But you need to speak to some of the cross-border traders and understand the kind of challenges that women traders and cross-border trades […] are facing at our border posts. It is very anti-people, the way it is pursued for the grassroots. But for the elites it is a totally different story. So we want to see more commitment to integration, and a type of integration that benefits the citizens of SADC, not for big business and political and economic elites" (interview).

These proclamations underline that there is a consensual evaluation of the contemporary SADC approach among a relatively diverse set of actors within regional civil society. This is a necessary precondition for any form of social transformation emanating from civil society. However, it is clearly not the only requirement.

4.3.2 The dual approach – professionalising and mobilising regional civil society

As outlined in Chapter 4.2, the four CSOs focused on in this study face serious obstacles, which hamper their potential of effectively triggering social and structural change. It is therefore argued that regional civil society needs to address institutional weaknesses and limited popular support with a dual strategy that aims at professionalising civil society, in terms of expertise and institutional capacity, while, at the same time, popularising an alternative regionalism with the intention of creating a broad societal movement. There are some indicators which show that this could be a productive venture on both counts.

To begin with, over the years, regional civil society has significantly enhanced its expertise on issues of regional concern. As a representative of a donor agency verifies, the substantial output emanating from the CNGO, in the form of policy papers or situation analyses, is continuously increasing (interview Mönikes). By commissioning issue-specific studies, such as for instance on *Poverty Eradication in Southern Africa*, the CNGO moreover attempts to provide a critical academic assessment of SADC policies (see 2011b). Alternative research is not least conducted by SATUCC's ANSA programme, which draws on the expertise of renowned critical academics and activists from the entire region and provides the labour unions and other affiliated CSOs with comprehensive studies on the political economy of the region and its member states (see for instance ANSA 2006; forthcoming; Kanyenze *et al.* 2011). Likewise, the EJN has published studies on the impacts of FTAs, the EPAs and the global financial crisis on the SADC region (see EJN nd/d; 2009; 2011; EJN and SEATINI 2011). Last but not least, SAPSN conducts "community research activities", aimed at providing a better understanding of the realities and livelihoods of the regional population, and organises the periodic publication of "Community Voices" through which local communities get the chance to express their opinions and experiences on a specific topical issue (interview Matanga; also interview Kasiamhuru).

All four organisations discussed also incrementally broaden their regional agenda and bring it in line with the social and economic realities of the region. In their *communiqué* from the 2012 Civil Society Forum the CNGO, SATUCC and EJN declare jointly that they are "[c]onvinced that while formal trade has an important role to play in all economies, informal, people-based, and largely women-led cross-border trade is key to economic development and poverty eradication" (PACT 2012: 5). This assessment is underlined by efforts such as the production of distinct research on consequences of contemporary state- and market-led regionalism on the informal economy and the livelihoods of the people, which enhances the competence of regional civil society (see for instance CNGO 2010a; SATUCC 2010). Informal regionalisation in the form of cross-border trade is also a main focus of the EJN. The Network operates together with associations of informal cross-border traders in order to strengthen their institutional capacity *vis-à-vis* SADC policy-makers and raise public awareness about pressing problems within the region's informal economies, for instance through a touring exhibition (interview Damon). Moreover, SATUCC and its member organisations have widened its programmatic focus by incorporating and developing positions on issues going beyond the immediate interests of its membership, particularly problems of workers and traders in the informal economy. Muneku emphasises the necessity of a "people-driven SADC" and "inward-looking" regional integration which takes informal integration fully into account:

> "Those who, I would say, are actually implementing the integration are the informal cross-border traders but who are in constant harassment […] [and] hassled at customs in [*sic*] the borders. […] That is integration which we [are] supposed to be promoting. We do not pay eye to that, we want to see big trucks and everything moving and getting machinery from one end to the other. But the people are ignored, no facilities made for them to understand their region" (interview).

SATUCC and several of its affiliates have entered into closer exchange and cooperation with regional and national initiatives representing the interests of people employed in the informal economy, such as *inter alia* the Mozambican Associação dos Operadores e Trabalhadores do Sector Informal (ASSOTSI), the Zimbabwe Informal Sector Association (ZISA) and the Alliance for Zambian Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA) (interview Muneku). At the regional level, SATUCC has partnered with StreetNet, a transnational alliance of street vendors associations based in Durban, and demands that:

> "SADC member states should align their legislation and policies with the ILO's 2002 Resolution on Decent Work & Informal Economy […] [and that] [e]xisting labour rights should be extended to informal economy workers, including their representation by unions of their choice" (SATUCC and StreetNet 2008).

While key challenges such as the effective organisation of informal economy workers, in order to represent their needs, as well as the reconciliation of their interests with the ones of formalised labour remain unsolved, SATUCC's engagement with the informal economy increases its programmatic inclusiveness and its legitimacy as the representative of the region's workers. In the current tripartite negotiations of the planned SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour SATUCC has insisted that the protocol must not "have this focus of just concentrating policy on the formal but to look at the labour

market in its totality, including the informal economy" (interview Muneku). Related to that is SATUCC's more general call for a "tripartite + 1" structure which foresees the inclusion of broader civil society in an institutionalised social dialogue (SATUCC 2010: 14).

By taking into account the 'real' political economy of the region and incorporating informal regionalisation into their programmes and positions, regional civil society clearly expands its authenticity and programmatic representatives. Yet, enhanced expertise and the attempt of more evidence-based advocacy do not suffice to bring about social and economic transformation. While the gradual opening of SADC towards civil society, perceived by several of its representatives (interviews Muchabaiwa; Ditlhake; Damon), is certainly a chance for regional civil society to pronounce their case, it should not be a reason for enthusiasm or even satisfaction with the *status quo* on the part of regional civil society at the expense of its commitment to genuine socio-economic and political change. The increasing contact between SADC and CSOs needs to be critically appraised, since it is not least a result of external pressures, first and foremost from SADC's funders such as the EU and the GIZ (interview Damon). In fact, the cooperation with, and the support for, regional civil society is a condition of the financial agreement between SADC and the GIZ (interview Baloi). Consequently, this trend does by far imply a general paradigm shift towards a people-centred, post-neoliberal and genuinely democratic regionalism. The demand for an alternative regionalism therefore necessarily needs to be substantiated by social mobilisation and public pressure and is dependent on the ability of regional civil society to popularise alternative ideas of the region within the populace and rally a majority of people behind it. Referring to the wide absence of popular politicisation since the end of liberation movements, the Programme Director of ANSA, Timothy Kondo, emphasises the importance of renewed mass mobilisation for regional transformation:

> "What happened immediately after independence in each country is that those forces [popular forces of the liberation struggles] got de-mobilised, [and] not only de-mobilised but also de-politicised. […] Unless we re-mobilise and re-politicise the people to claim their space, we will not be able to change the situation. […] so we have to go back to the grassroots and re-mobilise" (interview).

Overall, the awareness within regional civil society has increased that a sole reliance on lobbying and advocacy is insufficient to trigger fundamental change. Malcolm Damon from the EJN underlines the necessity of a dual strategy of professionalised and evidence-based advocacy as one element and social mobilisation as the necessary other:

> "You need the technical people […], you know, the advocacy type who looks at the tax, who looks at the policy […]. But we are never going to change things just by policy, because some things are […] of a highly political nature and it is about power imbalances and power relations and then you need mobilisation, you need pressure and you need other forms, so that people can realise, 'but actually we need to change, we cannot just operate like this'" (interview).

By expanding its forms of participation, as through its thematic clusters which involve NGOs from the local to the regional level, the SADC-CNGO attempts not only to address its *hitherto* weakness with regard to representativeness and legitimacy but also to strengthen its outreach into the region and popularise alternatives to the contemporary form of state-led regionalism. Thus, the CNGO has

arguably discovered the necessity to get closer to the pressing questions of the population in the region, while, at once acknowledging the "need to create a SADC movement as a means to mobilise SADC citizenry for collective engagement with SADC structures in order to shed the elite image associated with the SADC-CNGO" (Osei-Hwedie 2008: 16). At a meeting of the steering committee of the Alliance Pact (between CNGO, SATUCC, FOCCISA/EJN), in March 2012, open discussion evolved, for instance, around the question of the right format of the Civil Society Forum. Participants predominantly agreed that the forum should provide for a stronger popular element which would allow for the active participation of ordinary citizens, for instance in rallies or public marches.

The realisation that regional civil society must be able to combine technocratic and expertise-based engagement with the region, its political economy and contemporary policies and institutions with strategies aiming at social mobilisation in a coordinated manner points at the importance of closer cooperation among the four actors. Since they differ significantly in their approaches, as discussed in Chapter 4.2.3, with some being predestined for providing the technical understanding necessary for formulating a political alternative and the others being better equipped to mobilise the grassroots, the pooling of respective strengths through effective coordination and strategic collaboration could significantly increase the transformative potential of regional civil society. First attempts of coordinating the region's civil society more effectively have already been undertaken, as will be briefly discussed in the following.

4.3.3 Alliance building

In order to strengthen intra-civil society cooperation, the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC and FOCCISA (represented by the EJN), in June 2010, formed a 'Pact of Regional Apex Organisations'. In pursuance of their "common desire to work together to eradicate poverty, inequalities and to achieve social justice" the objectives of the Pact are, among others, to "enhance cohesion and coordination of civil society voice when engaging with SADC, other continental and international bodies on issues of common interest", to "demonstrate solidarity and commitment in working together as a united civil society" and to "strengthen the civil society voice and maximize common positions when engaging with business and or governments" (PACT 2010: Preamble and Art 2(1)). For representatives of the three parties, the decision to formalise cooperation in form of the 'Pact' has been a strategic one (interviews Ditlhake, Muneku; Damon). By facilitating exchange between regional CSOs with different constituencies and creating mutual consent on common positions and strategies, the Pact suggests a possibility to provide strategic leadership, which broader regional civil society has been widely lacking so far (see Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011: 162). One interviewee underlines that today "[t]here is [*sic*] better ways of cooperation. […]. Over the years, definitely, there has been a more progressive move in broader civil society, NGOs, churches and trade unions, […] because of this Apex Alliance where we feed each other" (interview Damon). The Pact is also perceived as a

possibility for the three organisations to learn from one another and profit from respective strengths. Speaking on behalf of SATUCC, Muneku states:

> "[W]e have thought, this will be an opportunity for us to start providing leadership to the broader alliance and lead it and maybe they [broader civil society] could learn also from our organisational ways and the way we run our organisations with the democracy which we exhibit […]. So, we have a mission in this strategic alliance and our mission is to provide that leadership and to use this as a vehicle to advance our interests, collectively. And interests which, we think, also are of interest to those in the civil society, though they may not come up collectively. […] We also have realised that there is a lot of potential and there is a lot of knowledge in this emerging social movement, with expertise which we may not have as trade unions, which we may harness" (interview).

Even beyond the Pact, more exchange between the four investigated CSOs can be observed. The EJN as well as several of SATUCC's constituents are members of SAPSN. While the CNGO is not a member, representatives of the organisation have repeatedly given input at the SAPSN People's Forum. Meanwhile, SAPSN also attends meetings of the Apex Alliance as an observer (interview Kasiamhuru). Matanga even thinks that SAPSN should become a member of the Alliance Pact to use this formation to make the voice of the network better heard. In retrospect, he argues self-reflectively that "these are things that have not been tried or used extensively" (interview Matanga). While underlining the differing nature of the *hitherto* parallel existing two civil society fora, particularly in terms of discourse and participants, Kasiamhuru argues that "[i]t is possible to have one big forum. […] [w]e are saying, the two should be integrated. They interrelate, they complement each other. […] The two can work together for the benefit of the whole region and the people of the region" (interview).

Generally, the trend towards closer cooperation between NGOs, trade unions, Christian churches and social movements is conducive to the process of consensus-building among various social strata. It certainly creates synergy effects by avoiding unnecessary doubling of work, pooling capacity, resources and expertise and aligning various constituencies. Thereby, not only horizontal cooperation between civil society actors at the regional level but also the supportive collaboration with progressive movements at the local and national level is inevitable. The receptiveness of decision-makers to demands of civil society varies significantly from one SADC member state to the other (interviews Damon; Kasiamhuru; Matanga). Therefore, the vertical dimension of cooperation and support for progressive social groups within the member states, particularly in the more authoritarian ones, must also be further enhanced within regional civil society. The exchange of information and experiences and the creation of a region-wide public sphere with regard to pressing domestic issues strengthen popular movements inside the states of the region. It goes without saying that regional transformation is, to a significant degree, dependent on the establishment and coordination of alternative coalitions at the local and national levels which need to achieve hegemony within the member states. If organised in a well-structured manner, a resilient coalition between the four CSOs discussed in this chapter could provide strategic leadership for broader civil society and become the vehicle for the effective implementation of the discussed dual approach of

professionalising regional civil society on the one side and building a popular movement on the other, in order to substantiate the call for transformation.

4.4 Conclusion: Quo vadis 'società civile'?

This chapter has addressed crucial characteristics and dynamics within the regional civil society in Southern Africa by scrutinising four organisations operating at the regional meso-level, namely the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC, EJN/FOCCISA and SAPSN. Looking closer at the regional agendas pursued by these actors, an important trend can be observed: All four organisations, even though to varying degrees, challenge the regionalism currently pursued by SADC, explicitly its neoliberal form. However, their engagement for an alternative regionalism, which is centred upon the people living in the region and enhances regional integration for their benefit, is significantly hampered by persisting weaknesses that undermine the transformative potential of the actors. Firstly, the investigated organisations still have limited institutional capacity and, more importantly, the resources available are largely provided by Western donors. As a result, the agenda of regional civil society is not solely determined by actors from within the region but rather influenced through the exercise of control by donors, which impacts the probability of an alternative historic bloc that could pose a fundamental challenge to neoliberal market integration. Secondly, the four organisations, again to varying degrees, feature a certain detachment from the region's population. Particularly the strong operational emphasis of the CNGO and, to a lesser degree, of the EJN and SATUCC, on lobbying SADC decision-makers restrains, firstly, their critical distance to the regional body and, secondly, their capacity to engage with the region's populace, *i.e.* the bottom-up character of their work. Even SAPSN, which has the self-understanding of being the network of grassroots movements, so far faces challenges to sensitise and mobilise people on a larger scale for a transformative regionalism. A third weakness is the lack of a coordinated approach aimed at social transformation. In fact, the four organisations have not yet effectively managed to merge their respective strengths in pursuance of a dual strategy which combines technocratic/academic engagement with regional issues and actors with the popularisation of an alternative regionalism and social mobilisation.

However, despite these deficiencies, there are also reasons for optimism. First of all, the critique pronounced by the CNGO, SATUCC, EJN and SAPSN towards the contemporary form of state-led regionalism reveals significant overlap. Each of the four organisations shows clear dissatisfaction with the exclusionary politics of SADC as well as the organisation's dependence on external funders. Not least, they consider the outwardly oriented market integration pursued by SADC, as highly unconducive to socio-economically inclusive regional development. Moreover, the four CSOs have successfully started to address their respective institutional weaknesses. In spite of still limited resources, regional civil society has developed significant expertise to provide thorough analyses of SADC policies and formulate alternatives. Likewise, systematic attempts are undertaken in order to increase the programmatic representativeness, for instance by incorporating issues related to the informal economy into their work. The organisations show also increasing awareness of the necessity

to engage and mobilise the population and rally them behind an alternative regionalism. Last but not least, intra-civil society cooperation climbed on the agenda. The 'Alliance Pact' between the CNGO, SATUCC and FOCCISA, for instance, constitutes a crucial step in terms of pooling transformative efforts within civil society at the regional level and could, in the future, provide strategic leadership for the broader civil society.

For the time being, the major task of civil society is therefore to combine respective strengths. Civil society needs to provide a consistent political alternative in order to challenge the prevalent, highly exclusive, regional agenda of SADC. This necessarily requires the in-depth and technocratic engagement with the region as it is as well as informed negotiations about the appropriate programmatic alternative. However, the Gramscian dictum that 'organic intellectuals', as the driving forces of transformation, must be closely embedded in and connected to the social forces subordinated and excluded in the contemporary historical structure, also underlines the imperative of popularising transformative regional ideas and building broad social movements. In this regard, the transformative potential of civil society depends significantly on the strategic cooperation between CSOs. While the CNGO and SATUCC have developed crucial technocratic understanding of regional policies and institutions as well as close links to policy-makers, SAPSN, and to a lesser degree also the EJN, clearly hold closer ties to local communities or workers and traders in the informal economy and their day-to-day realities. SATUCC and SAPSN, again, are more predestined to mobilise larger proportions of the population in favour of an alternative regionalism, because of their membership-base, in the former case, and their links to the grassroots, in the latter. It is only when such respective operative strengths are effectively pooled that civil society can pose a serious challenge to the current form of elite-driven and market-centred regionalism of SADC.

The ongoing global economic crisis, which further enhances the socio-economic marginalisation and respectively increases popular dissatisfaction with the neoliberal-capitalist order, provides a window of opportunity for actors within civil society to advance a people-centred vision of the region. Yet, this necessitates the incorporation of the population and their needs into a broad social movement. While growing professionalisation within regional civil society is welcome, it must be harnessed with the view of providing effective leadership in a "war of position as a long-range revolutionary strategy" (Cox 1993a: 53). Notwithstanding the short-term importance of civil society's reformist efforts, the long-term goal must be fundamental social and politico-economic transformation. This goal is doomed to failure if regional civil society remains over-reliant on lobbying and advocacy activities in the hope of triggering social and politic-economic change by convincing the ruling elites and changing regional institutions, which are both in line with global hegemonic norms. Fundamental change necessarily requires a revolutionary element, which should not be confused with the simplistic popular understanding of revolution. As Joseph Buttigieg eloquently points out:

> "Revolutionary activity, for Gramsci, has little or nothing to do with inciting people to rebel; instead, it consists in a painstaking process of disseminating and instilling an alternative *forma mentis* by means of cultural preparation (i.e., intellectual development

> and education) on a mass scale, critical and theoretical elaboration, and thoroughgoing organization" (1995: 14; original emphasis).

In this sense, regional civil society has certainly made the first steps. Transformation, however, is a 'long walk'.

5 Conclusion

This study focused upon regionalism, both in theory as well as in practice, with regard to the Southern African region and regional civil society. The intention of the study was twofold: In the first place, it aimed toward contributing to the theoretical debate on regionalism by providing a critical/reflectivist framework that transcends reductionist and *status quo*-biased presumptions of much of the existing theorisation on regionalism and, instead, takes account of the complexities and contradictions inherent in regions and regionalist projects. Secondly, the study brought civil society into the debate about Southern African regionalisms. After having analysed the construction, as well as the de- and re-construction, of the Southern African region in a historicist manner, the work shed light onto the role of civil society at the regional level, in order to address the question as to whether it could constitute a force for social and structural transformation.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from this work. Firstly, regionalism as an object of study cannot be reduced to state- and market-centric ontologies, but requires a rather holistic and critical theoretical approach that questions how regions came about, by whom and for whom regional agendas are driven and which possibilities for social and structural change exist in regional historical structures. The proposed theoretical synthesis between insights from Coxian Critical Theory (CCT) and from the New Regionalism(s) Approach (NRA) allowed for the analytical inclusion of both the social structures in which regionalisms are played out and the variety of regional actors which shape the region through their regionalist strategies and agendas. Secondly, the research showed that, while there is clear dissatisfaction with the *status quo* in the region, regional civil society in Southern Africa, in the form of the scrutinised CSOs, faces crucial structural and institutional weaknesses, as well as internal dissensions, which, so far, continue to inhibit its transformative potential. Nonetheless, there are also recent trends within regional civil society which suggest opportunities for effectively building a broader societal movement which could pose a challenge to elite-driven and market-centred regionalism in SADC.

Discussing the theoretical 'landscape' of the field of study in Chapter 2 revealed several shortcomings of mainstream theorising of regionalism. In fact, the academic discourse on regionalism, which had its origin in the debates around early European integration after the Second World War, is still dominated by rationalist theories with clear Eurocentric biases that culminate in the privileging and reinforcing of highly institutionalised inter-state frameworks, aimed at market-led integration, as the 'role model' of regional integration against which other regions are compared. The debate on regionalism in the academic mainstream is, moreover, not spared from the impacts of the 'neo-neo-synthesis' between neoliberal institutionalism and neorealism in broader IR, and is therefore overwhelmingly characterised by the ontological assumption of rationalist states as the main actors in international politics. Consequently, regionalism is predominantly understood as an inter-state project and, generally, little attention is given to civil societies or informal forms of regionalism. Not least, the hegemonic status of the neoliberal ideology in economics, as well as in the global political economy, cemented regional economic integration of a specific kind, namely in the form of an outwardly

oriented market integration, as the dominant model of regional integration. Against this background, this study stressed the necessity of further theoretical innovation of a critical/reflectivist nature. In order to overcome the reductionism of rationalist theorising and to reveal the normative tenets of dominant theories in the field, I proposed a theoretical synthesis incorporating respective strengths from CCT and the NRA. It was argued that such a theoretical framework allows for a better understanding of the complexities of contemporary regionalisms, the interpenetration between regionalisation and globalisation and the unequal effects of, and contradictions inherent in, these processes. Drawing eclectically on CCT, as well as on the NRA, also allowed for the analytical inclusion of both structures and agency into the study of the Southern African region. The historicist method of CCT, which is focused on how prevailing configurations of power, in the form of material capabilities, ideas and institutions, came about and what the chances for their transformation are, calls existing historical structures into question. Furthermore, CCT's incorporation of Gramsci's concept of hegemony calls attention to the impacts of external actors and power relations in the global political economy on the nature of regionalisms. Therefore, CCT offered useful analytical tools for this study to determine in whose interests specific forms of regionalism are promoted. Not least, the Gramscian notion of civil society as both the stabiliser and potential challenger of existing historical structures provided a dialectic understanding of civil society, in contrast to an overly optimistic Western liberal perspective. The NRA, also rooted in the critical/reflectivist tradition of social theory, has over the last two decades developed an impressive alternative 'research agenda' on regionalism and, thus, significantly increased our understanding of regions. Its analytical interest in a variety of regional actors, the specific contextualities in which they are embedded and their regional strategies underline that there is more to regions than formal inter-state frameworks and market integration schemes. A region must consequently be understood as a social space in which a multitude of actors pursue various, often competing, regionalisms, be they formal or informal, legal or illicit. The focus of the NRA on regional processes and reflective actors and its openness towards the analysis of concrete empirical cases complemented the historicist method of the CCT, which is more preoccupied with long-term change at the macro-level. Therefore, the theoretical synthesis allowed for a combination of a diachronic and a synchronic approach, thereby providing both the understanding of historical, political and economic constraints and structures marking contemporary Southern Africa and the in-depth analysis of regional societal actors, their capability to adapt to social structures and their alternative regionalist agendas.

Discussing the genesis, as well as the social, cultural and politico-economic characteristics, of Southern Africa in Chapter 3 underlined that the region has significantly changed over time and is to date the site of co-existing, often competing regionalisms, be they formal or informal. The contemporary Southern African region and the most prominent regional inter-state framework, in the form of SADC, can be attributed to social constructions, political contestations and structural constraints, some of which reach as far back as to pre-colonial times. SADC's current approach of outward-oriented and market-led regional integration is not least a result of the (neo)liberal hegemony

in the global political economy. The coexistence of a neoliberal regional agenda, aimed at the fast integration of the region's economies into the world economy, and neopatrimonial practices in regional and national governance in Southern Africa has thereby resulted in further socio-economic marginalisation of the regional populace. Despite the elite-driven nature of regional integration promoted by SADC, the analysis also showed that the people have developed regional strategies to cope with their overall exclusion from the regional development agenda. These alternative regionalisms, such as, for instance, the region-wide migration patterns, cross-border informal trade or illicit regional economies, which are often entangled with neopatrimonial regimes, constitute important features of the Southern African region. They underscore that any attempt to analyse the Southern African region by giving attention solely to formalistic processes of inter-state frameworks and market integration cannot do justice to the complex regional realities, the multitude of actors and the interpenetration of processes and social structures from the local to the global level. In this sense, Chapter 3 pointed to important contradictions inherent in the past, but also in the present, historical structures of Southern Africa. The highly exclusionary impacts of neoliberal and neopatrimonial modalities of the regional political economy on the livelihoods of the majority of people living in the region and the wide-spread socio-economic marginalisation of the population necessarily led to the question as to whether fundamental social and structural transformation is a probable outcome and to what extent civil society constitutes a driving force of social and structural change.

In the analysis of four civil society organisations at the regional level, representing the realms of NGOs, trade unions, Christian churches and social movements, several obstacles to the transformative potential of regional civil society were manifested. Firstly, the organisations feature serious institutional constraints, first and foremost in terms of an almost complete lack of financial autonomy, which makes them largely dependent on financing from Western donors. A second challenge constitutes the organisations' limited degrees of representativeness and popular legitimacy. All four CSOs are regional umbrella organisations which are run by a limited number of professionalised activists and functionaries. Moreover, the links to ordinary citizens are mostly indirect through member organisations. Thus, the critique formulated by regional civil society towards SADC's approach to regionalism *hitherto* lacks substantiation through a popular mass movement. Last but not least, significant ideological and strategic divergences among the actors investigated can hardly be overlooked. While parts of regional civil society, with a reformist intention and through advocacy, pragmatically engage with SADC and its decision-makers and, thereby, legitimise the institution and its contemporary approach, others pursue a critical approach of non-engagement and social mobilisation. The ambivalence of pragmatic engagement with SADC and the advancement of a people-driven fundamental alternative thereby comes not only to the fore between the organisations discussed in this study but even within them, as the case of SATUCC exemplifies best. Additionally, the still weak coordination between civil society actors and their diverging strategies, which is intensified by competition for donor funds, inhibits, up to this point in time, the creation of a broader transformative alliance within regional civil society. Despite these weakening characteristics of

regional civil society, each of them significantly compromising the transformative potential of regional civil society in Southern Africa, rising awareness of the necessity to strengthen organisational capacity and popular support by using synergy effects of closer collaboration are observable among the protagonists. Civil society representatives seem to have noticed that a successful dual strategy, entailing the technocratic development of a political alternative that is principally able to create consensus among excluded critical societal groups and the social mobilisation of these forces, is inevitable if social change is to occur in the region. In fact, recent efforts of closer cooperation, such as, for instance, in the 'Alliance Pact' between the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC and EJN, attempt to rally a broader societal coalition behind an alternative vision of the region. If this coalition were to systematically expand, by including social movements and grassroots initiatives, it could succeed, in the form of Gramsci's collective 'organic intellectual', in providing the strategic and political leadership for a broad societal movement as the basis of a transformative historic bloc that is able to challenge the contemporary regional order. In the end, the investigation of regional civil society as a force for transformation provided ambivalent results. While its transformative potential remains curtailed, there are observable positive trends which provide reason to believe that a region-wide emancipatory movement remains a possibility.

The analysis of regional civil society also allows for central theoretical conclusions which reinforce the utility of a critical/reflectivist framework for studying regionalism. The investigation of regionalisation processes within civil society underlines that regionalism is everything but a 'states-only' domain. Civil society regionalisation meanwhile constitutes a crucial feature of the Southern African region. Increasing regional communication, interaction and activity within civil society, facilitated *inter alia* by the four organisations discussed in this context, thereby certainly contribute to a rise in regionness. The promotion of regional solidarity, the furtherance of regional agendas and the provision of regional platforms for exchange are necessary precursors for the development of a "regional society" (see Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 464-466; Hettne 2003: 29). The four organisations discussed in this chapter provide evidence that non-state actors develop distinct regional ideas, agendas and strategies, which, at times, complement state-led regionalism, but, in many regards, also challenge the contemporary form and approach of regional inter-state bodies. It is therefore necessary to look beyond formal integration processes and state-led regionalism and take into account civil societies, their internal dynamics and their relationship to inter-governmental frameworks. Moreover, the research provides evidence for the assumption that civil society is not *per se* the people-driven force for good, independent from state and market actors and dedicated to social change from below. Regional civil society is a more complex social space in which competing interests and ideas coexist and diverse relationships with governmental actors, both internal and external to the region, prevail and, in some cases, lack critical distance between civil society actors and the decision-making elite. Therefore, regional civil society bears, not least, an internal dialectic in the form of its stabilising but, at the same time, transformative role in the contemporary regional order. With regard to meta-theory, the empirical insights gained through this research underline that while structures matter,

agents matter, too. The analysis of the history and political economy of Southern Africa, as well as the role of regional civil society, brought to the fore that regional actors, be they inter-governmental bodies, such as SADC, informal cross-border traders, migrants or regional civil society organisations, face various structural constraints, ranging from globally hegemonic norms to discriminating border regulations or dependencies on Western funds. At the same time, all of these actors show significant reflective, cognitive and learning capacities which enable them to cope with existing social structures and, eventually, change them over time. It must remain the task of critical/reflectivist research to provide a better understanding of both structures and agents without neglecting *a priori* the significance of one or the other. The theoretical synthesis between CCT, which constitutes an impressive 'case of instruments' to study historical structures and their long-term change, and the NRA with its commitment to a reflectivist form of empiricism, incorporated in its 'reflectivist contructivism' and a particularly process- and actor-oriented focus, allowed, in the context of this study, the analytical inclusion of structures *and* agents and the employment of critical/reflectivist theory in a diachronic *and* a synchronic manner.

This work opened with a quotation of Karl Polanyi. His conviction that a countermovement eventually evolves and balances the perversion of the market system, in order to protect society, still serves as an inspiration for many. However, such a movement does not naturally evolve but has to be actively built. The study underlined that transformation in favour of the marginalised and deprived is a long-term project that necessitates sophisticated organisation and strategic coordination among progressive societal actors. In this regard, more academic engagement with the possibilities of social and structural change is desirable, clearly not only at the regional level. This study only provided insights into one meso-region and a limited number of civil society actors. Further research is, for instance, necessary concerning the interrelatedness between emergent transformative movements, from the local to the global level, as well as in different world regions. In fact, the current global economic crisis, the resulting enormous social and political dislocations and the perceived lack of political commitment to a fundamental alternative to neoliberal-capitalist globalism resemble a *paradoxon* Gramsci observed some 80 years ago, in the context of the rise of fascism in Europe, namely that "[t]he crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci 1971: 276). It remains to be seen if progressive popular forces collectively succeed in challenging the current hegemony in favour of a 'new' order, before the 'old' recovers or an even more momentous and dehumanising 'new' enters the scene.

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