

A proposal for: Research for a regional southern African development strategy

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An abstract of a proposal for
RESEARCH FOR A REGIONAL SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Southern Africa possesses great potential for peaceful development capable of providing full employment and rising living standards for all the region's inhabitants. Yet today international attention focuses on southern Africa as a center of violence, a threat to world peace. An intransigent minority's repressive rule in South Africa and its deliberate destabilization of its neighbors appear as the immediate source of the conflict. But the end of minority rule will not automatically bring prosperity to the region. It will remain divided into mini-economies, no one of which possesses the resources, capital or markets to build modern industries on the scale required to realize the region's potential.

This research aims to examine the institutional matrix that functions to leave the separate independent southern African states underdeveloped and subject to South African domination. In particular, it will focus on the way national institutions in three problem areas function to reinforce national divisions: 1) the national planning agencies' focus on national plans that preclude building pole-of-growth industries based on national resources to spread productive employment and rising living standards throughout the region; 2) the national foreign trade and payments mechanisms carve out national markets that block creation of the regional markets required to make such industries viable; and 3) the national tax, financial and investment policies that hinder efforts to direct capital flows to finance regionally-oriented projects.

Using a problem-solving methodology, the research will:

- *examine the available evidence as to how the national institutions function in each of these problem areas;

- *propose institutional changes designed to overcome the causes of their negative consequences;

- *investigate the difficulties of institutional innovations in other regions that seek to resolve similar problems;

- *recommend ways to implement the proposed changes in southern Africa.

In this process, the research seeks to contribute to deepening the theory of regional integration, and, simultaneously, to help find ways to overcome the practical difficulties hindering southern Africa's realization of its rich regional potential.