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## **SADC: Towards a collective security identity?**

Maxi Schoeman

### **Introduction**

When the 'old' SADCC was transformed into the 'new' Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992, great hopes were raised for a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Southern African region. Now, in 2006, we look back over the past 13 years, and to the future, and we are not sure what the verdict is. Are we (the SADC member states) making progress towards 'a future within a regional community' (SADC, 1993:5) or are we increasingly drifting apart, each concerned with our own problems and crises?

In this chapter stock is taken of the extent to which the SADC region has succeeded in improving the security of its people as pledged in its *Declaration and Treaty* of 1993. Although this is an evaluation and appraisal focused at the institutional level, the main concern is with people and their daily lives and the extent to which they live secure and dignified lives: in other words, is SADC developing into the kind of community that has a common identity, based on common values aimed at providing peace and security to all its peoples? In order to contextualise the evaluation of SADC's security approach, the Section 1 provides some information on the quality of life of the region's people and the implied security needs of the region. Section 2 provides a definition of 'security community', focusing on the nature and form of identity, whilst section 3 deals with a description and analysis of SADC's security ethos and architecture. The conclusion focuses on the discrepancy between 'political speak' and reality in the lives of millions of people in the region.

### **1. How do people live?**

By way of introduction, the following statistics and comments on the quality of life of the people of the southern African region are provided (see also the tables in the annexes to this volume):

Table 1

Country	Adults and children with AIDS	HIV Prevalence Rate (%) in adults aged 15–49	Number of AIDS orphans	AIDS deaths In 2003
Angola	240,000	3.9	110,000	21,000
Botswana	350,000	37.3	120,000	33,000
DRC	1,100,000	4.2	770,000	100,000
Lesotho	320,000	28.9	100,000	29,000
Madagascar	140,000	1.7	30,000	7,500
Malawi	900,000	14.2	500,000	84,000
Mozambique	1,300,000	12.2	470,000	110,000
Namibia	210,000	21.3	57,000	16,000
South Africa	5,300,000	21.5	1,100,000	370,000
Swaziland	220,000	38.8	65,000	17,000
Tanzania	1,600,000	8.8	980,000	160,000
Zambia	920,000	16.5	630,000	89,000
Zimbabwe	1,800,000	24.6	980,000	170,000
<b>TOTAL / AVERAGE</b>	<b>14,400,000</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>5,912,000</b>	<b>1,206,500</b>

Source: UNAIDS 2004:189-207

**Table 2**

	GDP/US \$ PPP	Population below \$1 per day %	Life expectancy	
			F	M
Mauritius	11 280		69	75
SA	10 130	10.7	47	49
Namibia	6 660	34.9	52	55
Botswana	8 370	23.5	40	40
Zimbabwe	2 180	56.1	37	34
Madagascar	800	61	55	61
Swaziland	4 850	52.9	36	40
Lesotho	3 100	36.4	39	44
Angola	1 910	41.5	38	42
Tanzania	620	57.8	47	49
Malawi	590	41.7	41	41
Zambia	850	75.8	40	40
DRC	660	41.4	42	47
Mozambique	1 060	49.1	44	46

Source: UNDP: *World Development Report 2005*

What do we learn from these statistics? The short answer would be: life is precarious.

The most important threats to the region's people may be summarised as follows, with no significance attached to the order in which listed:

- food insecurity, both human-made and natural, due to droughts
- people threatened by their governments, even though there is no overt civil war and despite the fact that successive elections have been declared free and fair, e.g. in Zimbabwe
- people threatened by disease, especially HIV/AIDS and have a very low life expectancy and
- people threatened by intra-state conflict, disorder, the destruction of their lives (note the civil war in the DRC; the very slow peace process in Angola; the continuing implosion of Zimbabwe)
- a steady decline in the quality of life – according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe

reached their peak 20 years ago and Mozambique is the only country in the region showing steady progress in terms of these indices.

But there are also the hidden threats, seldom reflected in statistics, decision-making or implementation, though often referred to in political speak (i.e. official declarations):

- the status and position of women<sup>1</sup>
- violence against women
- the rising percentage in HIV/AIDS infection amongst young women in the age group 15–24: 75% female in SA, Zambia and Zimbabwe (*Irinnews*, 1 December, 2005)
- the ‘gun culture’ as part of the fact that the region is awash with small arms, the vast majority of which are illegal (see e.g. Schroeder and Newhouse, 2004)
- exceptionally high unemployment rates, together with high dependency rates – in Malawi, Mozambique, Angola and Zambia 45% of the population is younger than 15 years; in Zimbabwe the unemployment rate is in excess of 50%, in Swaziland it is 45%, in SA 30%, in Namibia 33% and in Botswana 20%.

Apart from these threats, there is also the irony of the way in which insecurity in one country can result in economic advantages in another. The meltdown of the Zimbabwean economy has resulted in a windfall for Zambia, both in terms of its tourist industry, which has benefited largely from the unrest in Zimbabwe, and from white ex-Zimbabwean farmers who have settled in Zambia, adding value to its agricultural production and creating employment for farm labourers. South African businesses are acquiring Zimbabwean businesses at ‘bargain prices’, waiting for the ever-immanent departure of Mugabe, which, according to analysts, will result in huge future profits (see e.g. *Irinnews*, 31 May 2006; Hawkins, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> Inheritance rights, for instance, remain biased against women, often leaving widows destitute. See *Irinnews*, 14 February 2006. It should also be kept in mind that in Sub-Saharan Africa, 60% of informal businesses are operated by women, 70% of farm labour is performed by them and 90% of food production is done by them. Yet, they earn less than 10% of farm income, their rights are severely curtailed, and their role in policy-making and political decision-making limited. (See *Irinnews*, 7 July 2004; Schoeman, 2004.)

## 2. Security communities

The concept 'security communities' provides a useful lens through which to examine and explore SADC as a regional organisation intended to promote security and welfare in the southern African region. The essential and abiding characteristic of a security community, according to Karl Deutsch and his associates (1957:5), is a group of states integrated to the point where people have 'dependable expectations of peaceful change.' The concept was not much used after the late 1950s and 1960s when idealism suffered a retreat in the face of realism and the Cold War, but throughout the 1970 and 1980s anthropological and sociological scholarship on community, community building and networking persisted, and after the end of the Cold War, academic interest from an international relations perspective started to gain popularity again.

In essence, the concept (as originally defined and used) refers to a rather state-centric perspective based on the search for negative peace<sup>2</sup> between states and it reflected the product of this search from an idealist approach to international relations in the aftermath of the Second World War. European integration is widely considered to be the best example of a successful security community and in the words of Keohane and Nye (1975:365) 'represented a response to opportunity and an expression of hope as much as a response to threat and an expression of fear.' At first glance the concept 'security community' does not seem to be applicable as an analytical tool in the case of analysing African attempts at creating regional communities characterised by civil society participation, peace, security and stability, and sustainable development. In fact, in a 1994 survey of regional security building, Acharya (1994:79-94) concluded that such communities were virtually nonexistent in the developing world. After all, war in Africa is mostly of an intra-state nature and one of the main objectives of SADC, given its history of civil wars (Angola, Mozambique and the DRC), is to curb instances of intra-state violent conflict and instability in order to build security in the region.

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'negative peace' refers to the absence of war, turmoil and violent conflict, whereas 'positive peace' is defined in the words of Kenneth Boulding (1978:3) as a 'condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships, gentleness and love'.

Security communities, traditionally considered to be an almost exclusively Northern phenomenon, were regarded as having been predicated on the philosophical basis of democratic peace incorporating liberal economics (see Vasquez, 1966:288-289; Keohane and Nye, 1977). These have not been the defining characteristics of developing world security dynamics. However, the concept 'security community' has of late become somewhat broader in its application, particularly due to the refinement of the concept in the work of Adler and Barnett<sup>3</sup> (1998). It allows, in terms of its present conceptualisation (which constitutes an evolutionary approach), to be applied in analyses of attempts at regionalisation in order to, among other goals and objectives, deter the 'enemy within', (Acharya, 1998:203) to build communities characterised by positive peace and to promote democracy and economic cooperation. The promotion of democracy and particularly of increased economic interaction has become the rationale for many cooperation efforts in the developing world. At the core of (aspiring) security communities, whether those in the developed or developing world, and despite different threat perceptions or security dilemmas, one finds the existence of a shared identity and mutual trust and a conscious attempt to create and maintain security. The vision of SADC conforms to this ideal in that it aspires to build a region characterised by cooperation, peace and stability in order to lay the foundation for development (SADC, 1993:2). The question, though, is to what extent southern African states in their interactions with each other, their commitment to unity and community at the regional level and their intra-state behaviour actually points to a security community growth-path.

The operationalisation of the concept 'security community' as developed by Adler and Barnett allows for a three-tiered analysis of cooperation efforts within three stages of the development of security communities, viz nascent, ascendant and mature.<sup>4</sup> The defining features of each of the three tiers require brief elucidation for the purposes of this analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> These authors are the only ones to have made a comprehensive study of security communities since the pioneering work of Karl Deutsch, including in their work also analyses of community building efforts in the developing world.

<sup>4</sup> This section depends heavily on the work of Adler and Barnett (1998), especially chapter 2.

### **Tier one**

The first tier consists of 'precipitating conditions' that are necessary to induce closer cooperation. These include changes in technology, demography, economics and the environment, as well as the development of new interpretations of social reality and external threats. The existence of these conditions may create a need for increased formal interaction and an expectation that such cooperation would be of some benefit to the various parties. The Adler and Barnett framework emphasises the existence of external threats, though internal threats are as important and are proving to be a catalyst for attempts at achieving regional integration.

### **Tier two**

This tier includes factors that are conducive to the development of mutual trust and collective identity and is characterised by closer and more frequent interactions that have started to transform the environment in which participating states and their peoples are embedded. It is this tier that is of special importance to the current study. There are two categories: structure (power and knowledge) and process (transactions, organisations and social learning). The distinction between structural and process categories denotes the reciprocal relationship between the two sets of variables that provide the conditions under which a collective identity and trust can develop. Power and knowledge are considered to be the crucial underpinnings of the community. Power here refers to the need for a core state or group of states around which the integrative process develops within a certain cognitive structure such as, for instance, a developmentalist ideology. The link between power and knowledge is of crucial importance here. It is a particular *kind* of knowledge, defined by Adler and Barnett (1998:40) as 'those cognitive structures that facilitate practices that are tied to the development of mutual trust and identity, and analytically tied to conflict and conflict resolution that facilitate the development of a security community'. This definition of knowledge is along the lines of a Gramscian understanding of hegemony. There can also be a kind of knowledge, more reminiscent of the realist tradition, in which one would find a hegemony that induces the development of dependency of the periphery on the core, much as was the case in southern Africa during the apartheid era.

The process categories comprise various transactions denoting symbolic, economic, political, material, technological and cultural exchanges, as well as international organisations and institutions that facilitate such transactions, and social learning. The latter category reflects the importance of political elites who fulfil the critical role of redefining and reinterpreting reality. Although it is important to have such 'visionaries' in all member societies, the origin of 'new' social learning that would promote the development of a security community is usually found within the core state/s. This study is particularly interested in the role of political elites and the nature of the common identity that they promote.

The framework tends to emphasise the quantity of transactions and makes only passing reference to the quality and nature of such transactions (Adler and Barnett, 1998:426). Yet quality is of the essence. In southern Africa, for example, economic interaction between South Africa as the core country and its neighbours has multiplied during the 1990s, but it has resulted in a negative trade balance for South Africa's regional trade partners and a feeling among them that the benefits of increased trade relations are accruing disproportionately to the core. Such resentment inhibits trust building and can turn into an obstacle in the attempt to build a community.

### ***Tier three***

Tier three consists of the necessary conditions of dependable expectations of peaceful change, viz mutual trust and collective identity. The variables contained in the first two tiers exhibit positive and dynamic relationships that are conducive to the growth of trust and a common identity (two qualities that are mutually reinforcing) among the members of a cooperative group of states and their populations. Yet this is not a linear process. Some degree of mutual trust and shared identity, at the very least among core members and elites, is necessary to get the community building process under way. The third tier is therefore one that underlies the first two, yet is reinforced and deepened by success and progress in the other tiers.

As far as the three types of security communities are concerned (nascent, ascendant and mature), one needs to take cognisance of the fact that these types lie on a continuum that implies or reflects an evolutionary pattern of development. More

importantly, security communities are social constructs – they are ‘built’ through conscious human endeavour and in this sense represent ‘imagined communities.’ The end product may not necessarily reflect the original dream though, because, in the words of Krasner (1988:83), ‘[i]nitial choices, often small and random, determine future historical trajectories’ and not all such communities will therefore follow the same pathway. Broadly speaking, each phase/type in the evolution of a security community will exhibit a number of characteristics:

*Nascent security communities:*

- the existence of ‘trigger mechanisms’, likely to have material and normative bases, that prompt a need for closer interaction and cooperation, often starting off with a mutual security threat;
- the fact that organisations usually play a critical role; and
- the existence of a strong state/group of states that provides leadership around core issues.

*Ascendant security communities*

- increasingly dense networks of interactions and exchange that promote trust and a common identity and
- the institutionalisation of cognitive structures facilitating social learning.

*Mature security communities:*

- a high degree of trust;
- a shared identity that allows for a conscious and deliberate differentiation between those within and those without the community;
- cooperative and collective security;
- a high level of military integration;
- policy coordination in dealing with commonly defined internal threats;
- free movement of people across national borders;
- internationalisation of authority and
- rule shared at the national, transnational and supranational levels.

The above (summarised) framework developed by Adler and Barnett creates the impression, particularly when it comes to the three types of communities that are based on a growth-path model, that each phase will necessarily and only exhibit particular characteristics. However, in their own words, these represent 'three *stylized* phases' (emphasis added) and it is conceivable that elements of an ascendant or even a mature security community might already be present in an earlier (nascent) phase. One last point should be made with regard to the framework: the authors (Adler and Barnett, 1998:4) imply that community building is very much an intracommunity effort and process – 'who is inside and who is outside, matters most'. But in the case of Africa, this inside/outside distinction takes on a specific meaning. As will be argued in the next section, without external involvement in community building attempts, the chances for the success of creating a security community in southern Africa are very slim indeed, due to the nature and scope of the threats facing the region (and the continent).

It is necessary, though, to pay more specific attention to the meaning of 'collective identity' and its importance to security building. A common identity is formed by actors' interaction with and relationship to others. People identify positively with the fate of others (Adler and Bennett, 1998:47) and a collective identity forms the basis of trust. A collective identity, such as exhibited in a community, is characterised by diffuse reciprocity, yet still allows for a measure of self-interest though 'reciprocity... expresses some degree of long-term interest and perhaps even altruism' (Adler and Barnett, 1998:31). Organisations, moreover, can be a 'site of interest formation' (Adler and Barnett, 1998:420). A common identity and the development of shared interests, as well as the concomitant pursuit of self-interest, are driven by elites, yet clearly for the benefit of ordinary people who over time also develop a sense of a collective identity, based on the perceived benefits flowing from the community. Adler and Bennett place a heavy emphasis on the role of elites, yet assume that this role is positive, i.e. that the sense of a community is forged by political elites, is aimed at ensuring a better life for all – also the masses – but this is not necessarily the case, as will be argued in this chapter.

Contrary to the position of Wendt (1994) who privileges identity over interests (especially in the sense of material features), McSweeney (1999) seems correct in

stating that the two are closely related and that identity is malleable in relation to interests when it comes to security perceptions and policy (see McSweeney, 1999, especially chapter 7). But what is also crucial to the analysis presented in this chapter is that 'a sense of collective identity can exist in relative detachment from material interests' (McSweeney, 1999:179), a point well illustrated by South Africa's (and other SADC countries') apparent acquiescence to Mugabe's ruinous policies in Zimbabwe and their negative impact on that country's neighbours.

### **3. SADC's security architecture and ethos**

SADC is first and foremost an arrangement that facilitates economic integration with a view to improving the quality of life of the people of the region. However, when SADC succeeded the old SADCC, it adopted a broader approach to the underlying basis of quality of life, including the idea of human security, formulating its vision of the region's future as

... a common future, a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and **peace and security** for the peoples of Southern Africa (SADC, 1993:4, emphasis added).

Furthermore, it was decided that the responsibility for peace and security that had previously rested with the Front Line States (FLS) would now become part of SADC. A rather long process of development ensued, largely due to political differences amongst member states on account of two problems: first, a reluctance on the part of Zimbabwe's Mugabe to subordinate the peace and security 'pillar' to SADC, and more specifically the SADC Summit (as highest body of the organisation), and second, a more general reluctance on the part of member states to vest power and authority, or decision-making ability, in the organisation.

Eventually, though, the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDS), created in 1996, became operational when the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation was adopted during the 2001 Blantyre Summit. At the Dar es Salaam Summit of 2003, the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) was

adopted, aiming to focus on strategic planning and policy analysis and development. Also in 2003, a Mutual Defence Pact was signed, of which article 6 (3) forms the crux: 'Each State Party shall participate in such collective action in any manner it deems appropriate'.

Article 9 of the Pact envisions collaboration in military training and joint exercises, but without binding commitments on the signatories.

Therefore at this point in time, the organisation has a functional (in the sense of a generally accepted) security structure, tasked with maintaining and promoting peace and security in the region (see also Moller, 2005).

Two questions, though, remain: What is the genuine nature of the security pursued by the OPDS/SADC and to what extent is the organisation (OPDS, but also, broadly speaking, SADC) reflecting the characteristics of a security community?

The rest of this section will attempt to provide answers to these questions.

As to the nature of security pursued by SADC, it is clear that despite its heavy emphasis in its Declaration and Treaty of 1992 on broad security, since reflected in the concept 'human security', the security architecture of the organisation and the agreements concluded to facilitate the implementation of the security vision, are still deeply rooted in state and military-political security. In the words of Tjonneland (2005:180), it remains 'first and foremost a military framework'. Such a framework, especially in the absence of a clear military threat, whether within or from without the region, points to one of the biggest weaknesses of SADC as an organisation: the extent to which it remains and is being used in order to support regime security through its heavy emphasis on sovereignty. This is most clearly reflected in the history of the development of the Mutual Defence Pact, its watered down clauses, particularly Art. 6 (3) quoted previously, and the organisation's continuing refusal to provide sufficient resources for the strengthening of the Secretariat. The type of security threats implied by the adoption of its security framework, points to a critical vulnerability *on the part of the member states' regimes*: an unwillingness to allow any form of decision-making power to evolve to the regional level – as Van Nieuwkerk

(2006:3) says, 'the establishment of a regional institution with supra-national power in the areas of defence and security [is] a precondition for moving the institution towards a security community'. This refusal to strengthen the organisation, and the attempt to guard the sovereignty of individual states (whilst paying lip service to a regional community), points to the fact that what is in fact protected by SADC, is the security of particular regimes, and not states as such -- neither is the aim to protect and promote human security.

This emphasis on regime security – what Makoa (2005) terms 'the protection of governments' – and failure to transform the security agenda of the region into one that accounts for or promotes human security are also evident in a number of other areas:

- There is little or no effort to promote transparency or civilian participation, such as parliamentary oversight by the SADC Parliamentary Forum for instance (see Makoa, 2005; Nathan, 2004 and Matlosa in this volume). International cooperating partners (ICPs) and civil society organisations have often expressed their frustration at the lack of transparency and accessibility of the Organ.
- Terrorism and mercenarism are identified as security challenges that require urgent intervention (Ndlovu, 2006). This is rather problematic, especially the perception that terrorism is a major threat to the security of states and regions in southern Africa per se – there is little if any evidence of this, and a suspicion amongst analysts that it has more to do with the preferences and interests of ICPs (and more specifically the USA) (see Cilliers, 2003:101) than a reflection of the reality of the region. It is also an example of external influence on the region, detracting from the 'real' security issues and threats experienced in the region (a price that needs to be paid, it seems, in order to obtain financial and other support from international donors). This does not mean that terrorism is not a threat in the southern African region: what is referred to as 'sub-national' terrorism is, according to Cilliers (2003:101), a recurring feature of the civil war in the DRC. But sub-national terrorism of this kind should not be conflated with global terrorism, nor should a focus on 'anti-terrorim' be allowed to overshadow the genuine threats to the life and wellbeing of millions of ordinary southern Africans.

- According to Tjønneland (2005), the emerging priority areas of the Organ are small arms, election management and peace support efforts. In the case of the former – small arms – the issue has a direct bearing on the daily lives of ordinary citizens, especially given the crime rates in the region. As to election management (see also Matlosa in this volume), there is a measure of cynicism in the region, given the way in which Zimbabwe incorporated the SADC electoral guidelines and received a clean bill of health from the region's electoral observers, yet managed to run a rigged election according to many other legitimate observers. Finally, peace support efforts, concentrated in SADC BRIG are also problematic, and remain largely a military concern with no provision for any meaningful civilian involvement in the activities of the standby force.
- There is little evidence that democracy per se will result in a better life for ordinary people. After 12 years of democracy South Africa, for instance, sees little hope of solving its unemployment problems, and its levels of child mortality and malnutrition are rising (see e.g. *Irinnews*, 2006:102);<sup>5</sup> in Zimbabwe, democracy and regular elections notwithstanding, the country has been suffering from a negative economic growth rate, sky-rocketing inflation which has seen food prices spiralling out of control and the near-annihilation of its middle class. The problem seems to be that a causal link is drawn between democracy, development and security/peace, whereas, in fact, such a link is not a matter of course, mainly, perhaps, because the meaning of these concepts and the expectations raised based upon such meanings, differ from country to country and group to group within. As Cilliers (2004:41) has pointed out, the 'relationship between democracy, security and development presents Africa with immense challenges, since democracy is difficult to establish amidst pervasive poverty and almost impossible to sustain in the absence of economic growth'. SADC's (and more specifically the Organ's) claim to having as one of its main objectives the consolidation of democracy therefore becomes problematic, if not empty, especially given the situation in Zimbabwe, the lack of any signs of democratisation in Swaziland, the interpretation given to democracy in the DRC and the lack of progress in the improvement of the quality of life of ordinary

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<sup>5</sup> According to these reports, South Africa's proportion of underweight children has been rising by 5,6% p.a. since 1994/5. Angola, Zambia and DRC are singled out as having exceptionally high mortality rates in the age group under five years: 260 out of every 1 000 births in Angola, 205 in DRC and 202 in Zambia.

people. If one takes 'democracy' as implying a political environment in which people are free to participate in processes that offer the hope of alleviating their suffering and poverty, SADC and its Organ are not promoting democracy or democratic values, but rather, as Makoa (2005:122) points out, '[trading] democracy for the security of its member states and their rulers'.

- The organisation lacks cohesion and synchronisation between its two main divisions (on the one hand focusing on issues of economic integration and general cooperation, and on the other, focusing on regional security) and often the impression is created that economic integration receives more attention than security.

It would seem, then, that in answer to the question about the nature of security pursued by SADC, the following is clear:

- despite official declarations, agreements and pronouncements, the security agenda remains focused on military security as the means, and regime security as the end.
- Because regime security is the key dimension pursued, issues of human security receive little attention and the organisation is not capacitated to deal with security in a meaningful sense, whether military-political or human security.
- Strategies to operationalise the Organ, such as SIPO and the Mutual Defence Pact, are difficult to implement, exactly because decision-making is left in the hands of member states and more specifically political leaders who refuse to provide capacity or power for implementation. In short, sovereignty is god.

In the latter instance, it is useful to quote Hansohm et al. (2005:213):

The formation of a regional integration arrangement requires that regional institutions be developed to which important facets of national economic and political decision making will be subordinate. Its successful establishment ...requires a major transition, which can easily trip participating countries up. This may explain why the conclusion of regional integration arrangements is not matched by the active participation of member states in the integration exercises...

The second question was to what extent SADC (as a region) reflects the characteristics of a security community. From the above analysis, the answer would seem rather clear – the region is not a security community and does not seem to meet even the minimum requirements necessary to qualify as a ‘nascent’ security community. Yet this claim needs to be unpacked, measuring regional efforts at creating and promoting security against a ‘checklist’ (the above is concerned with the ‘what’, not the ‘why’).

‘[C]ompatibility of core values and a collective identity are necessary for the development of security communities,’ state Adler and Barnett (1998:58). This should be juxtaposed with a remark by the OPDS’ acting director at the April 2006 SADC Consultative Conference in Windhoek (Ndlovu, 2006):

...the wounds and scars inflicted by the forces of colonialism and oppression continue to serve as a fundamental reference that draws the SADC citizenry together around a paradigm of political cautiousness and pragmatism...insecurity and destabilisation of a neighbour is one’s own destabilisation, and therefore must be faced collectively.

By implication, a common identity in the case of the southern African region is based on a common history of suffering and the shared value is this sense of reciprocity suggested in the director’s speech. But his statement begs at least two questions crucial to the general understanding of what a security community is. The first is whether this form of reciprocity (which implies support at the national level of political incumbents) is a sufficient (core) value on which to build a security community, and the second is the question of definitions, and very specifically, who are ‘the people’ (citizenry) and who defines them – who are the implied ‘us’ in the common/regional identity who share a ‘sense of a common destiny’ (SADC, 1993:3) in southern Africa?

The organisation obviously finds it difficult, if not impossible, to uphold its various political ideals referred in its Treaty. Not only is there little evidence of shared political values amongst the regimes of the member states (article 5.1.b of the Treaty), but definitions and understandings of concepts such as ‘democracy’ also differ from accepted international definitions. During the opening of the SADC Summit in August

2004, Tanzania's president Mkapa, for instance, lashed out at 'the West' and castigated them for 'imposing their own brands of democracy on Africa' (quoted in Madakufamba, 2004). He referred to Western democracy as 'Coca-Cola democracy, adding that 'multi-party democracy and its attendant elections must never be a cover for the destabilisation of our countries'. In rather stark contrast, Lesotho's prime minister Mosisili remarked (quoted in Madakufamba, 2004) that 'democracy is not only well, but is thriving in the region' and pointed to 'the culture of regular elections in southern Africa'. The protracted implosion of Zimbabwe continues unabated and it is clear that SADC member states either cannot (as in the case of South Africa and Botswana) or will not (as in the case of Tanzania and others) intervene in the name of SADC principles to stop the degradation of the rule of law and human rights or to stop the blatant and violent attacks on ordinary people who seem to be punished for their opposition to the regime in that country<sup>6</sup>. On paper, everything is in place to address the Zimbabwean situation. In practice, there is a rift in the organisation and the 'old guard' under the leadership of Mugabe is clearly in charge, at times making a mockery of the organisation's principles and objectives.

Drawing on Adler and Barnett's work on security communities, it becomes evident that 'transnational identities are generally an elite-centered phenomenon' (1998:426). The nature of such identities – what these are based on – therefore becomes of crucial importance. Because 'security communities' are generally perceived to be positive, the development of a common identity amongst political elites is therefore also accepted to be positive, i.e. it will exhibit an altruistic character. But it would seem that in the case of southern Africa, and especially in the form of SADC as an organisation through which these elites come together and experience and effect social learning, the common identity is one far removed from the people who make up the region, and one much concerned with the reproduction of the elite positions of those defining the common values and claiming a common identity.

The vocabulary or jargon of 'community' can therefore be hijacked in order to create a setting in which the privileged can sustain benefits, in this case regime security, in

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<sup>6</sup> As was generally expected, the 2005 Summit did not in any way deal with the Zimbabwe issue. In fact, the country was praised for having abided by the 2004 SADC 'Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections in the Region' (together with Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique and Namibia).

the name of pursuing human security. The result is a region in which, as has been pointed out, the actual quality of life of its people, even in the most developed and richest member state (South Africa), has steadily deteriorated over the past decade and a half, despite the fact that apartheid has been demolished and the era of destabilisation has ended. This claim is supported by the fact that the region, with the exception of Zimbabwe, has been experiencing positive economic growth rates for the past several years – on average 4.4% p.a., with Mozambique at 7.1% the highest (in 2003) and Swaziland with 2.4% the lowest. In other words, economic growth is not being translated into economic development and it would seem that such growth is only benefiting a small elite in the region.

Even in Zimbabwe, where negative growth rates of 13.2% and 8.2% respectively have been registered for 2003 and 2004, certain groups are not reaping the benefits, and it is interesting to note a remark by one of the leading economists of that country (Hawkins, 2006):

A privileged elite [has consolidated] its position to the point where its interests are best served by maintaining the status quo. A feature of Zimbabwe's decline has been the shift in income and wealth from poor to rich and the associated near-elimination of the middle class.

His sentiments are echoed by Cilliers (2004:10, 39) who states that 'a number of African states present the "shell" of the territorial state where national security is equated with that of the governing elite – "governing" in the interests of their own preservation and advancement, with limited provision of human security for their citizenry'.

In a sense, SADC exhibits a dual character. On paper and in terms of public and official statements, agreements, declarations and the signing of protocols, member states identify with the organisation and its aims and objectives. There are also, in terms of the 'requirements' of a security community as identified by Adler and Barnett (1998:428-429), frequent expressions by member states of 'similar historical roots, a common heritage, and shared future'. SADC as an organisation/institution has even created a security architecture that enhances the prospect for peaceful change (Adler

and Barnett, 1998:419) in the sense of a negative definition of peace and the Organ's emphasis on military security. Furthermore, when one looks at the Organ's aim to settle conflicts peacefully, there has been some success in the case of the DRC – after Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola's initial military intervention in that conflict, the South African position and insistence on a peaceful resolution did win out and at the very least SADC members are no longer involved militarily in the DRC.

Yet, the organisation also has another side to it, especially when it comes to issues of broad or human security and democratisation. This is where there is a marked refusal to empower the Organ and for members to either flatly refuse to democratise (as in the case of Swaziland) (see e.g. Breytenbach, 2005:60) or to continue with undemocratic practices (Zimbabwe) or to flaunt generally agreed upon principles, such as the two-terms-in-office agreement (Namibia – change of constitution; Zimbabwe – Mugabe as president for life). Of even greater concern is the fact that member states will seldom, if ever, criticise each other, even in the face of one of their members posing a direct and very real threat to its own population (Zimbabwe, especially during Operation Marambatsvina – 'drive out the filth' in 2005). It is in these instances where one has to draw the conclusion that the real common identity of the region is elitist – rather than elite driven – and built around the mutual protection of governments.

## **Conclusion**

Adler and Barnett (1998:419) remark that 'communities have diffuse reciprocity' and that the level of community is also determined by the 'extent to which the actor's interests are interchangeable with those of the group'. Although SADC member states have publicly committed themselves to a human security agenda, the implementation of such an agenda is seriously hampered by two factors in particular: first, the fact that member states are not (yet) willing to empower the organisation and specifically the OPDS to assume responsibility for aspects of human security that are common to the whole region; and second, the fact that regime security and reciprocity in terms of protection of ruling elites remain the main objective of regional cooperation.

A common regional identity visible at the regional institutional level is not only confined to political elites, but is often an identity in opposition to the people of the region. At grass roots level one can observe a rather 'free' movement of people across borders, but mostly of an illegal nature, often resulting in xenophobia in the receiving countries, or a movement of refugees, as in the case of Zimbabweans who flee into neighbouring countries, often with dire consequences, as has been the case of Zimbabwean women who were forced into prostitution in SA and Mozambique in order to survive. There is thus little evidence of a common identity among the people of the region and they move across borders mainly because of a struggle for survival in the face of their states' inability or refusal to provide protection.

One explanation for what seems to be an increasing tendency towards regime protection in the region, is the deep-set cleavages in member states in the region across ethnic, class and racial divides, coupled with limited public resources – a linkage which makes capture and control of the state a prize and a survival strategy. This struggle for power furthermore often takes place *within* ruling parties, due to a lack of credible opposition in most southern African countries – a phenomenon which is in turn based on the history of liberation movements and the immense legitimacy vested in such movements-turned-political-parties-turned-governments: South Africa and Zimbabwe, the two strongest powers in the region, provide good examples. There are a series of fault-lines across the government and governance sectors of the region with reference to succession fears and uncertainties, a lack of exit strategies for political leaders (strategies that will also 'secure' their followers/cronies) and little initiative to encourage or promote the growth of civil society as this in itself is often perceived to be a threat to governments.

Under such conditions security becomes a scarce commodity and resources to provide it are focused on regime survival.

In terms of theories of community building, we need to pay more attention to *insecure* communities or 'communities of fate'. It would seem that regional security is predicated on national security, and in the absence of efficient (read 'authoritative') regional institutions, 'regional security' has little substance. A common regional identity in the face of claims to sovereignty (because sovereignty in itself provides

powerful regime security) is difficult to build, and at this stage, SADC's security framework provides little more than symbolic protection to the people of the region.

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