Abstract

The multiplicity of wars and armed conflicts in Africa, coupled with diverse security threats and challenges, has refocused international policy and academic attention on the peace-security-development nexus. A particular area of concern is what role African regional economic and security organisations can play in conflict stabilisation, conflict management and winning the peace in transition societies in post-Cold War Africa. This article critically explores the nexus of peace, security and development within the framework of the resurgence of economic and security regionalisms with a particular focus on regionalist projects in Africa, including ECOWAS in West Africa, SADC in Southern Africa and IGAD in the Horn of Africa. It explores the role of viable, strong and modern states in driving and strengthening the nexus within the framework of economic and security regionalism in Africa.

Introduction

Nowhere in the world are the problems and challenges of security and development more prominent than in Africa. The multiplicity of wars, armed conflicts and security threats (from both military and non-military sources) has foisted on academics, policy practitioners and development and conflict interveners the imperative to engage with the link between peace, security and development (henceforth the ‘nexus’). A focus on economic and security integration in Africa provides an innovative perspective and context for understanding the connections of the nexus. The inextricable link between economic regionalism and security integration highlights the fact that it is impossible to achieve the economic growth and development objectives of integration in an environment of wars, armed conflicts and perpetual regional political instability. Violent wars and multiple security threats have challenged the narrow traditional academic and policy approaches to Development Studies, Peace Studies and Security Studies as separate disciplines with little or no interconnectedness. Africa provides a range of challenges and opportunities for understanding the conceptual, policy-relevant and empirical understanding of the nexus.

To illustrate the critical connections, this article advances the framework of a peace-security-development nexus as a disciplinary bridge for understanding this nexus. The first section outlines the international policy setting, which leads to an interpretation of peace and security theoretically linked to developmental regionalism and cast in terms of new regionalism in Africa. The second section applies the concept and practice of the peace-security-development nexus to European Union integration, assessing insights and applicability for Africa. The third examines how wars and armed conflicts have undermined
the achievement of the regional economic integration and development objectives, and in
the process forced on the regionalist projects the imperative to develop peace, security
and conflict management mechanisms as a strategy to maintain regional peace and security
– the prerequisite for regional economic growth and development. The fourth section
evaluates three regional case studies: regional economic integration and peacekeeping
interventions in West Africa; regional economic and developmental regionalism in the
Horn of Africa; and regional economic and security integration in Southern Africa. The
article concludes by arguing that despite the limitations and challenges facing Africa’s
economic and security regionalisms, especially the fact that weak states drive the
regionalisation process, the continent provides valuable insight into understanding not
only the dynamics of the peace-security-development nexus, but also how to strengthen
the policy approaches and responses to development and conflict interventions.

Redefining Peace, Security and Developmental
Regionalism: The Critical Connections

_Agenda setting of security and development policies: what we know and why limited international action?_

A glance at the literature and policy practice of conflict and development interventions by a
range of national, regional and international actors illustrates that regional economic and
security integration has been the missing link in development and security studies. These
actors have assumed a positive correlation between security and development. This
assumption has recently been applied to the practice of economic and security regionalism
in Africa with the understanding that conflict can no longer be treated primarily as a peace
and security issue, but rather should be treated as an important development issue. This
raises some questions. How do we know that there is a positive correlation between security
and development? How do we theoretically and methodologically explain this correlation?

Evidence suggests that the assumed positive correlation is not rooted in rigorous research
and in-depth policy analysis. The policies and social realities of the security-development
nexus are disjointed and do not provide a coherent and useful guide for conflict and
development interventions. In effect this nexus has been policy-driven and not research-
driven. In addition, the compartmentalisation of security and development as separate
disciplines has obfuscated the critical connections. To understand the disciplinary
intersections, one should start by challenging some of the dominant discourses on
development and security, in particular the imposition of ‘security’, ‘development’ and
‘liberal peace’ agendas on the developing
world. A research programme should also
include an evaluation of the effects of the
policies and interventions of the rich
countries (the global North) on developing
countries (the global South). In addition,
there is need to focus on human
development and security that confronts
both vertical and horizontal inequalities, in
particular the focus on the resilience of
developing countries and peoples. A critical
dimension is how to engage with the failure
of development in the South and why does the international community “conveniently”
neglect some of the failures? Rather than simply describe the security-development nexus
in terms of positive outcomes, we should recognise and incorporate the tensions,
contradictions and potential social costs in the implementation of the nexus. This requires a critical review of the informal dimensions of ‘development’ (e.g. informal economy) and ‘security’ (e.g. civil militias), and how to utilise local and regional actors in conflict and development interventions owned by the local communities and peoples. Security and development are thus mutually reinforcing, though with tensions, contradictions and potential social costs. Let us now endeavour to provide an understanding of the narrow and traditional compartmentalisation of development, security and peace studies, and try to reconceptualise them.

Traditionally, economic integration has been treated as an approach to regional economic growth and development, creating concepts such as customs union theory, transactionalism, functionalism and neo-functionalism to explain the phenomenon of international integration (Caporaso 1998; Keohane & Nye 1987). Even within the disciplines of Political Science and International Relations, despite acknowledging the normative underpinnings of regional economic integration as an approach to peace and security, no much effort was made conceptually and empirically to explore the connections between regional economic integration, peace and security – in particular how they reinforce each other. More recently the political economy approach to regional economic integration, cast in terms of the new regionalism debate within the context of globalisation, has contributed to bringing the academic and policy debate on the nexus between peace, security and economic regionalism to the fore. To understand the linkages it is important to start with brief definitions for peace, security, development and economic integration.

**Defining peace**

If we argue that there may be a link between peace, security and development, it is important to illustrate what kind of peace are we referring to, specifically peace for ‘whom’ and for ‘what purpose’. Peace is a contested concept and has attracted different interpretations. Briefly peace is about the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, human suffering and violence and about peaceful co-existence. The Norwegian peace theorist, Johann Galtung (1996), has pointed to three types of violence relevant to the understanding of peace: direct violence (physical, emotional and psychological); structural violence (i.e. deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm); and cultural violence (i.e. cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering). Galtung also differentiates between ‘negative peace’ – the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels – and ‘positive peace’: the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships and injustice, and inner peace at an individual level. While these conceptual categories may be useful, it is important to highlight that different cultures and civilisations have different interpretations of peace which are grounded in the particular historical experience and specific political context of a country, society or region. For example, the majority of people in the Great Lakes region of Africa associate peace with the absence of war and armed conflict, while those in Southern Africa associate peace with the absence of depressing social and development indicators such as poverty and the AIDS pandemic (Freedman & Poku 2005). The concept of peace in all its manifestations is therefore about security, development and social justice. It is this broader understanding of peace that links it to security and development.

**Redefining security**

A reconceptualisation of peace, conflict and development practice illustrates the inextricable link between peace and security. According to Terry Terriff *et al* (1999), even though peace is widely accepted as the absence of warfare, the concept of peace has remained unexplored,
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until recently, as a security issue. But how do we define security and how does it relate to peace? Security, albeit a ‘contested concept’, is generally understood to be about the condition of feeling safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threats to acquired values. Put simply, security is about survival and the conditions of human existence (Buzan 1991; Thomas & Wilkin 1999). The traditional concept of security has largely focused on the threat and use of force. This largely military conception of security has focused on the state as the primary referent object of security.

Various scholars have criticised the traditional military conception of security because it does not account for the emerging non-military sources of threat to security at the individual, societal, state, regional and global levels. This has led to the broadening of the concept to embrace non-military dimensions such as environment, migration, ethno-religious and nationalist identities, poverty and economic insecurity, and disease. This broadening of the security agenda is now described as Critical Security Studies. In the African context there are both military and non-military sources of security threat. Security is about protection and preservation from fear and danger that threatens the survival of societies and peoples.

It is about survival and the conditions of human existence in a continent with depressing social and development indicators, with an estimated 47% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than a dollar a day. Security, therefore, is about peace, development and justice because the absence of all three of these creates the conditions for conflict and armed violence. In this conceptualisation we see the inextricable linkages between peace and security and the imperative for the securitisation of peace.

Securitising development

Violent wars in Africa and the devastating consequences on development and security highlight the limitations of the traditional interpretation of development studies and practice. The emerging post-Cold War debate is on the securitisation of development, i.e. treating development as a security issue because wars and armed conflicts exacerbate the problems of underdevelopment and insecurity. The problems of underdevelopment such as poverty, social exclusion and gross violations of human rights in some cases instigate violent conflicts. Hence development studies and practice have been forced to look beyond their traditional focus to critical issues such as peace, security and the impact of violent conflict. But what is development and what type of development are we describing, in particular development by and for whom and for what purpose? Some argue that development is a relative term, meaning different things to different peoples and communities. In general, the concept is a positive one, connoting ‘progress’ or ‘change for the better’. As such the definition has embraced: economic growth; basic human needs and human development (food, shelter, clothing, education and health care, and freedom, democratic participation and human dignity); sustainable development and political development (Allen & Thomas 2000; Burnell & Randall 2005). From this expanded definition it follows that development is about equality and social justice; positive change at personal, societal, national and global levels; and about peace and security. But development is also driven by contradictions and tensions because the process of achieving positive social change also includes negative social costs. In the practice of development a whole range of actors – governments, donor agencies, international development and financial institutions and regional groupings – have been silent about the social and destructive costs of development. Furthermore, the dominant development paradigms advanced by the North, such as modernisation and neo-liberalism within the context of globalisation, have emerged as the universal blueprint for the policies and practice
of development, and in the process neglected all other alternative forms and approaches to
development. Accepting the varied interpretations of development, it becomes easy to
appreciate the interconnectedness between peace, security and development.

**Conceptualising developmental regionalism: explaining the missing link**

To appreciate the critical connections of the nexus, we have to explore further their links to
regional economic integration. The driving force for the establishment of regional economic
integration in contemporary world politics has generally been seen as an approach to economic
growth and development for maintaining regional peace and security. In economics and
development terms, the advantages derived from regional complementarity of goods and
services, economies of scale, comparative advantage and industrialisation were motivating
factors for the creation of regionalist projects in different parts of the world. Regional political,
security and identity-based issues were also reasons motivating geographically proximate
states to cooperate and integrate their economies and communities. A dominant interpretation
of regional economic integration has to do with the normative assumptions, i.e. about
development, regional order, security and peace. In effect regional integration was perceived
as a ‘good thing’. After World War II international integration became a dominant strategy
for international cooperation and regional development.

Functionalists such as David Mitrany (1966) argued that the provision of common needs
through functional strategies across national borders would unite people and the evolving
mutual interactions and interconnectedness would potentially create an identity of
community citizenship. Karl Deutsch (1957) also outlined a framework for the emergence
of a security community that avoided the use of force in inter-state relations and peaceful
resolution of conflicts. Both Mitrany and Deutsch, in describing the normative
underpinnings of international integration, talked about the potential for developing
‘islands of peace’ and a ‘working peace system’ based on liberal economics and democratic
politics. However, the normative assumptions are silent on the potentially negative
dimensions of regional economic integration, i.e. that increased regional integration has a
tendency to create regional conflicts and perpetuate economic exploitation. Often regional
integration carries the risk of reproducing dominant forms of power; the stronger and
more developed states tend to be the net beneficiaries (Francis 2001; Schulz et al 2001). In
addition, regional economic integration creates a ‘growth pole’ detrimental to weaker states
in the integration grouping, whereby the majority of the foreign direct investors and
regional institutions tend to favour the more developed and stronger states (Schulz et al
2001:1-7; Fawcett & Hurrel 1995; Francis 2001). Finally, regional integration entails a ‘pooling
of sovereignties’ which by implication undermines the political, economic and fiscal
sovereignty of member states in a regionalist project.

**The Peace-Security-Development Nexus: European Integration**

European integration in the post-war period is one of the few successful examples to
demonstrate the peace-security-development nexus. Europe, emerging from the
devastation of World War II, experimented with the concept and practice of regional
integration and cooperation. In the immediate post-war era, the primary consideration
was how to prevent inter-state wars in Europe, create a conducive environment for regional
peace, order and security and build cooperation among the states and communities that
would ensure interdependence. The difficult transition from post-war recovery to
development and dealing with Europe’s perpetual security problems led to the creation of a regional integration and cooperation grouping. Consequently when the European Coal and Steel Community was created in 1951 and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, they were based on the notion of sharing regional collective resources in development and security terms.

Between 1960 and 2003 the EEC expanded to 25 member states in a European Union (EU), with a common ‘European community identity’ – a supranational institution in the form of a European Commission with a parliament and a common currency, the Euro. The established EU governmental structure is based on principles of liberal economics and democratic politics.

But Europe as we know it today has not always been stable and economically developed with viable modern states. William Wallace argues that ‘West European integration was a product not only of a common culture and history, and of a particular geographical density, but also of a common disaster and predicament: the war and its aftermath, American hegemony and the Soviet threat’ (Wallace 1995:201). To respond to these diverse regional problems, Europe implemented constructive development and security programmes and policies such as the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Lomé Convention outlining the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific economic relations (ACP), a common market with a customs union, political cooperation and a common foreign and security policy. These regional post-war development and security programmes were supported by the U.S.-backed Marshall Plan. The regional policies and programmes led to the building and intensification of economic, social, political and security interdependence. In addition, European polices on regime and security convergence led to the political stability and democratic success of former military and authoritarian regimes such as Greece, Spain and Portugal and the new member states from the former Soviet bloc and Eastern Europe. Traditional ‘enemies’ such as France and Germany are now locked into a partnership involving economics, security, development and politics. Despite the progress in linking security and development in Europe, however, the EU is still plagued by a perpetual amity-enmity divide about the nature of the European project either as a ‘partnership of nations’ or a ‘federal political union’. The rejection of the EU proposed constitution by France and Holland in 2005 reinforces the view that the security-development nexus is not problem-free.

What we see emerging in the EU is a deliberate policy and practice to link regional peace-security-development in order to build diverse interdependent states and peoples sharing a ‘common European identity’. The EU case also illustrates that viable, strong and modern states are crucial to the nexus at both national and regional levels.

**The African Context**

To what extent are African states – most of which have weak, failing and cash-strapped economies – able to lend themselves to the difficult and demanding project of linking peace, security and development both at national and regional levels? Are there any successful African examples? Answering these questions requires examining ‘why’ and ‘how’ regional economic integration and cooperation in Africa expanded into the domain of regional peace, security and conflict management.
An overview of contemporary violent conflicts and the socio-development situation in Africa gives an insight into the ‘why’ and the imperative of the nexus. The post-colonial political and security landscape of Africa is littered with inter-state and intra-state wars and armed conflicts. By 2002 there were 18 active wars and armed conflicts in Africa at different levels of intensity or at different stages of transition from war to peace. Most of these wars are being fought in some of the world’s poorest countries. Civilians have become the main target and victims in these civil wars, accounting for more than 90% of the casualties (UNDP 2002:16). According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2002, an estimated 3.6 million people were killed in internal warfare in the 1990s and half of all civilian casualties are children, with an estimated 200,000 child soldiers in Africa of the 300,000 worldwide. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons grew by 50%. The civil wars in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone have led to state collapse and societal fragmentation. Attempts have been made to negotiate civil war peace settlements, and multinational peacekeeping forces, both regional and from the United Nations, have been deployed. Low-intensity ethno-religious and political conflicts in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Sudan and Central Africa Republic continue to undermine peace and stability on the continent.

The cumulative effect of armed conflicts and instability is that they undermine and deter the attainment of regional economic integration and development objectives. Hence a variety of complex domestic, regional and external factors have forced the originally established economic groupings in Africa to expand into the peace and security domain. Experimental regional peace and security initiatives by originally chartered economic groupings, despite their limitations and shortcomings, illustrate the resilience and resurgence of regionalism in Africa – and a tacit recognition that development and economic integration objectives cannot be achieved in an environment of insecurity, wars and armed conflicts. This section therefore explores the specific regional context of the peace-development-security nexus in Africa.

**ECOWAS integration and regional ‘collective’ peacekeeping and conflict management in West Africa**

Robert Kaplan portrayed the West African sub-region in 1994 as having the potential to become the ‘real strategic danger’ threatening international peace and security. Why West Africa? The sub-region comprises 16 geographically proximate states that have emerged as distinct political and socio-economic entities. Its diverse political history is reflected in the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone colonial divide which has often played itself out in the arena of sub-regional politics. In the immediate post-independence period most countries in the region had promising economic development prospects, but a combination of domestic and external forces have turned the sub-region into one of the least developed in the world. The countries are excessively reliant on official development assistance and export economies based on extracting minerals such as diamonds and oil. Their demographics describe a large and growing youth population, mostly unemployed, lacking in skills and educational opportunities. These depressing social and development indicators have a devastating impact on the sustainability of human security. In the 1990s the combined effects of the end of the Cold War and the negative impacts of globalisation, coupled with the nature of domestic politics and economic decay, led to state collapse and civil wars as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Côte d’Ivoire.

The nature of conflicts in West Africa demonstrates the importance of understanding the ‘regional conflict complex’ exacerbated by local, intra-state, regional and international factors.
These armed conflicts are not just confined to state borders, but the regional dynamics also often fuel and sustain these wars through the activities of the shadow economy and ‘peace spoilers’. The military security threats include criminal and intra-communal violence and involve civil militias and mercenaries and the proliferation of light weapons.

In recognition of the security and development challenges faced by the West African states, in 1975 the countries in the sub-region established a regional integration and cooperation grouping in the form of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), comprising 16 member states and with market integration and common market objectives. ECOWAS has had limited success in achieving its economic integration and development objectives, notably in facilitating intra-regional trade, regional economic growth and social progress, and has had a negligible impact on the lives of West Africans. Despite its attempts at market integration and facilitating the free movement of the factors of production within the region, physical or regional infrastructural integration is limited.

Developments in the 1990s forced ECOWAS to expand into the peace and security domains. These included the devastating impact of violent civil wars in the region which spilled over into neighbouring countries, the changed international political and security environment with the end of the Cold War, and the perceived international neglect of Africa after the Cold War. This prompted the realisation that violent wars and regional instability undermine and prevent the achievement of regional economic and development objectives.

Nigeria, the sub-regional hegemon, was instrumental in the creation of ECOWAS. With the new conflict and security challenges, Nigeria played a leading role in the formation of the regional peacekeeping and intervention force, ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which gave it the opportunity to promote and achieve its foreign and security policies. ECOMOG was an ad hoc coalition of ‘willing states’ deployed in 1990 in Liberia to assist in stabilising and managing the civil war. Its experiments in regional peacekeeping and conflict management/ stabilisation in West Africa covered:

- ECOWAS civil war peace settlements and ECOMOG peacekeeping and conflict management in Liberia from 1990 to 1997, and ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) in August 2003;
- ECOWAS/ECOMOG peacekeeping and ‘democratic intervention’ in Sierra Leone (ECOMOG II) in 1998;
- ECOWAS as peace broker and ECOMOG ceasefire monitoring in Guinea Bissau in 1999; and
- ECOWAS civil war peace settlement and ECOMIC movement in Côte d’Ivoire in 2004.

The ECOWAS experiments in maintaining regional peace, security and order have been supported by UN-ECOMOG co-deployment peacekeeping and peace support operations, external pivotal states interventions such as the British ‘Operation Palliser’ in Sierra Leone, French peacekeeping deployment in Côte d’Ivoire, and U.S. military deployment in Liberia in 2003.
In the light of the above, West Africa may not be the best example of linking peace, security and development because the efforts to respond to regional conflict and security challenges have not been based on constructive and long-term strategies to link the issues. In addition member states of ECOWAS, in pursuit of selfish strategic interests, have supported and instigated wars and armed conflicts in neighbouring states. An example is the Liberia-backed insurgency in Sierra Leone. Even within the framework of regional peacekeeping intervention the members have often failed to agree on a common foreign and security policy. Furthermore, ECOMOG peacekeeping and intervention efforts have been largely in pursuit of Nigeria’s political security and economic and military strategic interests. Regional peacekeepers have been involved in gross violations of human rights and the exploitation of war economies in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is therefore questionable whether the ECOWAS expansion into the peace and security domain provides building blocs for promoting the realisation of the nexus.

Developmental regionalism and preventive diplomacy in the Horn of Africa: attempts to link security and development

In contrast to the West African sub-region, a variety of developmental challenges caused by natural disasters such as drought and famine, further accentuated by perennial wars and violent conflicts, have forced countries in the Horn of Africa to develop policies that illustrate the nexus. The Horn comprises Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda.

The Horn demonstrates diversity in ecological, political, socio-cultural and economic terms. Most of its peoples depend on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism in the face of scarce natural resources. The pervasiveness of conflict and the rampant use of landmines in the region have had devastating effects on economic activities and the environment. Most countries in the Horn have implemented structural adjustment programmes with varying degrees of success. Their level of development is reflected in depressing economic and social indicators, reinforcing the perception of the region as a ‘disaster zone’. Peter Woodward (2003:173) comments that the Horn is the ‘stage on which Africa’s tragedy is played out in stark and violent form’. The regional impacts of environmental and development problems on human security led to the formation of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) in 1986. IGADD initially focused on issues of drought, famine and desertification in the region. The resurgence of regionalism in world politics in the 1990s caused the political leadership of IGADD to consider transforming the authority, and at an extraordinary summit in Addis Ababa in 1995 the decision was taken to revitalise the institution and to expand its remit to cover peace and security. At a 1996 summit in Nairobi IGADD agreed to establish the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Its three primary areas of focus were food security and environmental protection; infrastructural development (transport and communications) and regional conflict prevention, management and resolution; and humanitarian affairs. An evident manifestation of the peace-security-development nexus in the Horn is the shift in IGAD’s original preoccupation with environmental protection and development cooperation to, now, a concern with regional peace and security.
Though the developmental regionalism efforts by IGAD have not provided the expected economic and development benefits, due to a combination of national, regional and international factors, the regional organisation has started to put into place the structures and mechanisms for linking regional peace, security and development. It has established the IGAD Centre for Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism and facilitated conflict management in both Sudan and Somalia. The expectation is that peace and stability in the Horn will potentially create a conducive environment for the achievement of regional economic and developmental objectives.

However, it is premature to perceive the peace and security efforts by IGAD as laying a solid foundation for regional security and development. IGAD member states, like ECOWAS countries, habitually intervene to instigate armed conflict in neighbouring countries. IGAD countries have failed to forge a common foreign and security policy necessary for regional peace and a stable political order. Rather, the relative success of IGAD’s preventive diplomacy efforts in both Sudan and Somalia has been made possible by the EU-IGAD Partnership Forum and U.S. financial, political and diplomatic backing. In particular the Bush Administration, for a variety of political considerations, including pressures from the American Christian right, the ‘war on terror’ and oil energy needs, has backed the Sudan and Somalia civil war peace settlements.

SADC and the challenges of regional integration in Southern Africa

The heterogeneous regional space now described as ‘Southern Africa’, according to Fredrick Söderbaum, has been collectively constructed by ‘state, market, society and external actors in a historical perspective’ (2002:59). The political history of Southern Africa had been largely dominated by the struggles for political independence of Angola and Mozambique from Portuguese colonial domination, the political liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the struggle against apartheid South Africa and its policy of regional destabilisation. The end of the Cold War ushered in a wave of democratic governance in Southern Africa and led to the transformation of some of its authoritarian and anti-democratic regimes. South Africa is the economic giant in the sub-region. Though Britain, the U.S., Japan and Germany remain South Africa’s main trading partners, Southern Africa is emerging as an increasingly strategic and valuable export market.

However, the depressing social and development indicators in Southern Africa not only reveal the disparity between the countries of the region, but also manifest the multi-dimensional security problems and challenges that belie the putative economic growth and development in the SADC region. Life expectancy at birth in 2001 of relatively developed countries such as Seychelles and Mauritius is 72.2 and 71.6 years respectively. This is in sharp contrast with life expectancy in other relatively developed states in the region such as South Africa (50.9), Namibia (47.4), and Botswana (44.7) (UNDP 2004: 238-9). The AIDS pandemic is largely responsible for this depressing disparity. The multiple security and development challenges led to the creation of the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) in 1980 as the regional development mechanism to respond to these problems. However, SADCC’s sectoral development approach was a failure, and coupled with the changed international security and political environment with the end of the Cold War, the regional body was transformed in 1992 to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with a common market objective. The end of apartheid in South Africa and of the Cold War have led to relative political stability in much of Southern Africa.
Regional integration in Southern Africa, like West Africa and the Horn, is driven by an amity-enmity dynamic. While it may foster mutual interdependence and an ethos of collective security, it may also lead to competition, conflict, mutual suspicion and a lack of peaceful co-existence. The personality conflict between former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe flowed into the complex politics of the region, with South Africa emerging as the reluctant sub-regional hegemon and Zimbabwe as the hegemonic pretender – in effect dividing the region into rival political camps, the ‘two SADCs’.

The civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the threat to regional peace and security led to intervention by neighbouring states such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi on the one hand, and the deployment of the SADC Allied Armed Forces (SADC-AAF), including Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola, on the other. This gave rise to what has been described as ‘Africa’s First World War’ and the partitioning of DRC in to rival security, military, economic and political spheres of strategic interests. The deployment of the SADC-AAF peacekeeping and conflict stabilisation force helped to contain the conflict, forced ceasefire and peace agreements on the warring factions, succeeded in stopping some of the killings and created a fragile security situation that ensured the survival of the Kinshasa government. It also made possible the deployment of the French-led EU peacekeeping force – Operation Atermis – in the east of the country. This paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign troops by Rwanda and Uganda and the eventual deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission, MONUC. The peace has yet to hold and is threatened by a variety of regional ‘spoiler’ problems.

SADC expansion into regional peacekeeping and conflict management, like that of ECOWAS, has been fraught with problems. There is a debate as to whether the SADC intervention was a peacekeeping deployment or a ‘coalition of willing states’, in particular Zimbabwe, in pursuit of strategic security and economic interests in a ‘free-for-all’ exploitation of DRC’s war economy. This article argues that SADC’s expansion into regional conflict management has not been based on a coherent policy approach in linking the nexus in practical terms. Rather, this ad hoc intervention is largely driven by the diverse and conflicting strategic interests of major regional partners. The real challenge for SADC is how to capitalise on this ad hoc intervention to begin the process of institutionalising the nexus.

Beyond the Ad Hoc Approach: Opportunities for Institutionalising the Nexus

Returning to the question of Africa’s potential to provide constructive examples of the nexus at national and regional levels, the response is both ‘no’ and ‘yes’. While efforts undertaken so far have been fraught with challenges that lead to questions of sustainability, sub-regional examples unfailingly illustrate ‘why’ and ‘how’ we need to understand the nexus in Africa. In all the three regional case studies, the lack of pre-existing integrative approaches to development and security led to violent wars and armed conflicts, state collapse, warlordism and societal fragmentation. Now, however, some tentative efforts are being made to tackle problems of violent conflicts and insecurity in an integrative regional manner. The ECOWAS/ECOMOG peacekeeping and conflict management interventions in West Africa have reinforced the need for a stable regional
peace, security and political order to achieve development and economic growth. Similar lessons could be drawn from the preventive diplomacy interventions of IGAD and the SADC-AAF deployment. Out of these ad hoc, ‘fire brigade’ interventions we see the emergence of regional mechanisms put in place to attempt to address the peace, conflict, security and development problematic. Examples are the ECOWAS 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security and the 1996 SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. However, the mere establishment of these regional peace and security structures does not guarantee practical implementation.

Several key lessons from the European model explaining the nexus are relevant for Africa. First, for regional economic and security integration to succeed there should be strong, viable and modern states; this has not been the case in Africa. Any project in Africa linking security and development will require efficient political and economic management of the state. Furthermore the international systemic factors that marginalise African countries in accessing world markets and global economic forces all pose serious external challenges to the possibility of efficient African states and therefore reduce the possibility of successfully linking security and development. Second, the European experience shows that consolidating the gains of the security-development nexus is a drawn-out and gradual process, not a ‘quick-fix’ project. Some media commentators and international policy practitioners are often critical of Africa’s slow pace or lack of progress in establishing the nexus in practical terms; hence we see depictions of Africa as the ‘Hopeless Continent’, as The Economist described it in 2000. These analysts do not take into account that it has taken Europe more than six decades to successfully link regional peace, security and development.

Despite available EU lessons, African sub-regional economic and security integration experiments have not yet produced a viable model for Africa. A variety of reasons account for this, including the nature of domestic politics and bad governance leading to armed conflicts and state collapse. Most of the states in Africa are weak and therefore do not have the capacity to lend themselves to the demanding tasks of linking regional peace, security and development. Three decades on, regional economic and security integration in Africa is still driven by the governing elites with limited participation by civil society and, worse still, lack of societal ownership of the regionalisation process. In addition Africa’s regionalist projects are far too busy copying EU and OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) models of economic and security integration, rather than exploring alternative strategies of linking the nexus that are context-specific and historically relevant and reflect the African realisms.

What do we learn from the nascent efforts of weak, poor and underdeveloped states responding to the complex problems and challenges of linking regional peace, security and development? Rather than conclude on a pessimistic note, it is clear that opportunities exist in Africa to link peace, development and security, as witnessed by the nascent institutional mechanisms and ad hoc structures being established in all the regional examples. Perhaps the international political commitment and goodwill generated by the ‘Year of Africa’ (2005) provides a window of opportunity to incorporate the nexus into all international policy processes and responses on Africa.
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Endnotes

1 The UN has led the policy-driven debate and conceptualisation of the peace-security-development nexus (United Nations 1994, 2000, 2004; Francis 2002). The New York-based International Peace Academy (IPA) runs a fully fledged programme on ‘Strengthening the Security Development Nexus’ funded by high-profile Western donors. IPA has organised a series of policy-relevant conferences on the theme (Tschirgi 2003; Hurwitz & Peake 2004). The literature includes other relevant policy-focused publications on the nexus (OECD 1998, 2001) and academic analysis (Duffield 2002; Partick 2000). To all intents and purposes, the current donor-driven agenda of the security-development nexus looks like an emerging conflict-development intervention ‘industry’. In contrast, Peter Uvin’s article of 2002 aptly summarises the evaluation of typology and debates on the nexus.

2 ‘Regional conflict complex’ (Wallensteen & Sollenberg 1998), ‘regional security complex’ (Buzan 1991) and ‘regional conflict formation’ (Rubin et al 2001) are concepts that share similar elements in that they generally ‘explain transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts’ (Pugh et al 2004:24-5).

3 In 2000, Mauritania withdrew its membership of ECOWAS for a variety of reasons.

References

Pugh, M., Cooper, N. & Goodhand, J. 2004, War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.


