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# ***materialien***

**Larry A. Swatuk:  
Regionalexpertise – Southern Africa,  
Environmental Change and Regional Security:  
An Assessment**

**Externe Expertise für das WBGU-Hauptgutachten  
"Welt im Wandel: Sicherheitsrisiko Klimawandel"**

**Berlin 2007**

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"Welt im Wandel: Sicherheitsrisiko Klimawandel"

Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag © 2008

ISBN: 978-3-540-73247-1

Verfügbar als Volltext im Internet unter [http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu\\_jg2007.html](http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007.html)

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Titel: Regionalexpertise – Southern Africa, Environmental Change and Regional Security: An Assessment  
Botswana, Berlin 2007

Veröffentlicht als Volltext im Internet unter [http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu\\_jg2007\\_ex07.pdf](http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007_ex07.pdf)

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# **Southern Africa, Environmental Change and Regional Security: An assessment**

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## **1. Introduction**

This paper examines the likelihood that environmentally-induced conflict will emerge in the SADC region within the next 15 years or so. It sets the analysis of environmental change within the more general parameters of regional development. As shown below, a strong emphasis is placed on the historical development of the region as a composite of weak states heavily dependent on primary commodities for export. Even the region's strongest state, South Africa, is beset by myriad problems resulting from its development as a racially-divided site of monopoly capital in world economic development. Many meso-level environmental changes – e.g. deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, biodiversity loss – result from this regional history of under and uneven development. As shown below, the highly unequal character of Southern African societies ensure that the negative consequences of these environmental changes are felt differently across time and space. Macro-level change, such as global warming, is sure to impact the region in a significant way; however, the weakness of SADC states and the narrow socio-economic and socio-political interests they serve suggests to me that despite extensive donor 'help' in devising an endless array of policies and strategies to help mitigate the worst effects and ensure SADC states adapt to climate change, little on the ground has or will be achieved.

This assessment is divided into five sections. Following this brief introduction, section 2 reviews strengths and vulnerabilities of Southern African social forms. I use the term 'social form' deliberately to highlight the complexity of social organization in a region where the 'sovereign state' is both weak and contested. This section looks at four specific issues: (i) population and migration, (ii) socio-economics, (iii) health, and (iv) ethnic, religious and cultural factors and public opinion. Section 3 reviews problem solving capacity. In particular it critically analyses the nature and capacity of SADC states and economies. Section 4 briefly assesses the likelihood of violent conflict, while Section 5 is a comprehensive conclusion focusing on environmental change and regional security.

## **2. Strengths and Vulnerabilities of Southern African Social Forms**

### *2.1 Population and Migration issues*

According to WHO figures, most SADC state populations will double between 2005 and 2050 (Table 1 below). Exceptions to this trend are Botswana and Lesotho, whose

populations are expected to sink below 2005 levels, and South Africa and Zimbabwe whose population numbers will remain stable primarily due to HIV/AIDS pandemic.

**Table 1: Population Trends for SADC States (millions of people)**

Country	1985	2005	2020	2050
Botswana	1.236	1.765	1.671	1.658
DRC	32.346	57.549	90.002	177.271
Lesotho	1.469	1.795	1.718	1.600
Malawi	7.250	12.884	17.816	29.452
Mozambique	13.219	19.792	25.508	37.604
Namibia	1.119	2.031	2.384	3.060
South Africa	33.178	47.432	48.100	48.660
Swaziland	0.717	1.032	0.983	1.026
Tanzania	22.268	38.329	49.265	66.845
Zambia	7.150	11.668	15.128	22.781
Zimbabwe	8.888	13.010	14.144	15.805

**Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Secretariat, World Population Prospects: the 2004 revision and world urbanization prospects: the 2003 revision**. Accessed at [esa.un.org/npp](http://esa.un.org/npp) on 29 June 2006.

Seriously problematic patterns of population growth and movement are discernible throughout Southern Africa. All SADC states are urbanising such that a majority of people will live in urban areas by 2020 (UNDP, 2006). Typical of developing countries, SADC states are characterized by single primary cities whose populations constitute roughly 20% of total state population, followed by a series of secondary cities. South Africa alone differs from this trend, where Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban all have roughly the same population figures.

These primary cities constitute the nodal point for rapid urbanisation. Urbanisation is both due to natural increase and to in-migration. Thus, population density figures (number of people per square kilometre) do not accurately reflect the concentration of people in primary cities -- many of which are located along coasts (e.g. Dar es Salaam; Maputo; Luanda; Cape Town; Durban). Alongside rural-urban drift is a youth bulge, where roughly half of regional population falls within the 15-24 years of age category. Various studies have linked youthful populations with low economic growth and political instability (Bannon and Collier, 2003; Collier and Sambanis, 2005). Urban spaces are also not strictly urban in the late-modern, Western sense. Weak states' inability to deepen capitalism, create jobs, and provide and/or sustain services has led to, in Jane Jacob's words, the 'rural in the urban': e.g., urban agriculture to satisfy household food requirements; backward fuel switching such that even inhabitants of high rise apartment buildings use wood for fuel. Such ruralization of concentrated populations enhances

susceptibility to infectious disease such as SARS and avian flu.

Southern Africa is a region long characterized by extensive migration flows. Indeed, the wealth of settler societies in South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe are due to forced in-migration of workers from the rest of the region, in particular BLS, Malawi and Mozambique. Initially drawn to the mines and farms of settler Africa, the descendents of many of these migrants have long established roots in host countries. These families function as nodes connecting formal and informal migrant flows and economies throughout the region (Crush and James, 1995; Vale, 2002).

Post-apartheid Southern Africa has also witnessed an influx of migrant labour from West/Central Africa - i.e. nationals from countries such as DRC, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, to name but several. Some of the consequences of these historical and contemporary migration flows are well known. Among other impacts, large urban areas are now ringed with squatter settlements that have become the sites for various illegal activities (small arms traffic; dagga, qat, and other harder drug traffic; sex-trade; traffic in endangered species), and whose social dynamics are primarily dysfunctional (e.g. warlords as providers of 'security'; tribalism and anomic violence as like groups settle with like groups; rape; HIV/AIDS transmission). Cash-strapped municipalities and police forces have limited purchase in these areas. Limited opportunities for formal employment has combined with real and perceived negative impacts of illegal migrants to fuel xenophobia across the region (Percival and Homer-Dixon, 1998).

Another trend in population movement and demographics is the region's large number of refugees fleeing political instability in countries from the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia are home to large refugee populations; and the DRC has hundreds of thousands of IDPs. Post-conflict societies such as Angola and Namibia have witnessed the repatriation of many refugees as well as the demobilization of armed forces and rebel movements. However, many of these actors have drifted into large urban areas, so constituting a potential destabilizing force of unemployed youth/middle-aged men and women.

Moreover, the presence of millions of refugees and IDPs in borderlands has led to a heavy toll on the natural environment - biodiversity loss through bush meat exploitation; deforestation and desertification due to fuelwood demands; localized pollution of watersheds as human waste accumulates; over-exploitation of NTFPs and fisheries. Weak states with limited human, financial and technical capacity serve as hosts for these refugees, so exacerbating the problems associated with the movement and settlement of large human populations (Boege, 2006).

In the short term, climate change is unlikely to have a direct impact on the capacity of these people to sustain themselves, and/or host states to deal with them sustainably and successfully. But in the longer term, climate change leading to for example a decrease in blue/deep blue water availability could heighten tensions in rural areas. According to a recent study by De Wit and Stankiewicz (2006), arid/semi-arid regions such as much of

southern Africa will be hardest hit by climate change in the short to medium term. Among other things, this is likely to exacerbate rural-urban migration.

A final demographic/migration-oriented factor to consider is the trend toward out-migration from the region altogether. There is an increasing trend toward off-continent movement of skilled and employable youth to Europe, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and North America. Remittances sent home to rural/urban Africa are an increasingly important means of sustaining livelihoods in difficult settings. These resources constitute a source of virtual production and may be facilitating the myth of sustainable cities in southern Africa. At the same time, monies sent 'home' facilitate enhanced resource exploitation locally, and consumption of products produced elsewhere (in South Africa, for example) so heightening point-source resource use problems and issues.

Given historical patterns, cross-border migration in the region is common. It is more or less tolerated depending on the nature of the push/pull factors. However, since 1994, especially in South Africa, the effects of economic globalization and national economic policy (GEAR) (especially jobless growth; inability to diversify out of primary product production profiles; low rates of economic growth) have heightened xenophobia and intolerance of particular nationals and ethnic groups. South Africa appears to be the destination point for virtually all migrants from abroad -- while many migrants stop off in Botswana, for example, most quickly move on after discovering that Botswana's 'economic miracle' is largely a jobless one (where only 8,000 people are employed in the mining sector, and the state provides roughly 50% of all jobs). Whereas regional cooperation is likely in the case of extreme events (e.g. the flood of 2000 that devastated large parts of Mozambique), there is a general desire on the part of average Southern Africans that ecological refugees return home as soon as possible. The behaviour of, for example, South African and Botswana police forces in relation to migrants has been well chronicled and does not bode well for improved regional relations. Human Rights Watch reports regarding abuses of migrants in South Africa are disappointing to say the least.

Ethnicity is a potential flashpoint for conflict throughout the region, especially in the context described above. But the sorts of conflict envisioned will largely reflect those that are on-going, thus confirming the findings of Baechler (1999) and Homer-Dixon (1999): violence will likely remain sub-national, diffuse and persistent. Economic inequalities, discussed below, have led to different ways and means of dealing with perceived threats from demographic change: security has been privatized for the most part.

At a regional level, SADC structures are in place to facilitate early detection of potential large-scale population movements, as well as the causes (droughts, floods, politically-motivated armed violence) of such movements. SADC collective and individual state capacity to deal with these issues, however, is questionable. Responses to natural disasters, as shown by South African military response to the floods of 2000, may be rapid and effective; however, addressing many of the underlying causes that are likely to make such future disasters vaster in scope and scale are not in place (see below). In addition, and unsurprisingly given the preponderance of weak states, if little is being

done on mitigation of climate change effects then nothing at all is being done in terms of adaptation to long-term change.

## *2.2 Socio-Economics*

Socio-economic disparities are vast within and across all SADC states. Gini coefficients measuring income inequality are high (i.e. near 0.6 or more) in both settler-dominated (e.g. South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland) and mineral-dependent economies (e.g. Angola, Botswana, Namibia) (SADC, 1998; UNDP, 2006). The effects of neo-liberal economic globalization, particularly in the form of structural adjustment conditionalities, have heightened disparities between and among elites tied to the state (e.g. in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania), their relatives and others linked to neo-patrimonialism, and everyone else (see Section 3.2.2 for more detail; also, Bond, 2006).

These disparities arise and persist due to a combination of historical factors as well. Colonial/imperial behaviour through time (mainly coastal, enclave and resource exploitative in former Portuguese colonies; comprehensive and oppressive in former Belgian, British, French and German colonies) resulted in, among other things, land alienation and the perversion of social structures through the imposition of taxes and enforced migrant labour policies. Today, these historically-rooted patterns of inequality are firmly entrenched behind 'rule of law' rhetoric. So, most people throughout the SADC region are poor, live on communal land, practice primarily subsistence agriculture (with surplus production for markets in good rainy seasons – if their goods can be gotten to market), have one or more household members earning money elsewhere and remitting it home, and are therefore poorly insulated from the vicissitudes of changing global political, economic and environmental climates. Their ability to undertake risk and/or weather various socio-economic storms is limited (UNDP, 2005; Swatuk, 2002a).

At the same time, a minority of people within states and across the region, are tied to state-dominated structures of capital accumulation (either productive or rent-seeking processes). Their personal and household security is more robust and their ability to deal with change (environmental, economic, political) is better than most Southern Africans. This of course varies depending on what economic activities are being pursued – so mining-related activities at present are relatively profitable (with gold at more than USD 650/oz.), whereas the price of oil has impacted negatively on almost all other economic activities, from large-scale farming to small-scale manufacturing.

Hyper-liberal economic globalization is deepening these disparities, verbal commitments by leaders across global forums to reduce/alleviate poverty notwithstanding (Bond, 2006). Social redistributive mechanisms are limited and vary widely across the region. South Africa has taken great pains to introduce and institutionalize a form of social security for those 65 years of age and above. By and large, SADC states employ a variety of make-work (food for work; high labour/low productivity council activities and labour policies) strategies, but for the most part, 'citizens' of SADC countries are overwhelmingly dependent on self-help strategies (neo-patrimonial/familial ties) for household survival. Some governments continually promise comprehensive change such as land redistribution, with Zimbabwe being the extreme case among settler states. But

South Africa and Namibia – countries where land hunger is acute and economic/income inequalities substantial – are also pressing forward with redistribution schemes. Surveys have shown, however, that among urban poor, the desire is for jobs, not land – let alone farm land. In addition, government approaches to food/household security through land redistribution have contradictory effects; they are not uniform, nor are they additive across societies. So, for example, forcible redistribution of land exacerbates pre-existing social fissures of race and class; at the same time, land redistribution has displaced thousands of farm workers in Zimbabwe, most of whom existed in a neo-feudal relationship with the displaced farm owner. South African and Namibian governments are aware of these outcomes.

**In my view, such disparities will not lead to social collapse either in the short term (2020) or the medium/long term (2050). African societies show a powerful resilience in the face of negative change. And where there are comprehensive negative effects, people die – lacking a support base, or a vanguard of any kind, the poor simply do not make revolution; they die. At the same time, Southern African states are supported by a wide array of resources – private, public, formal, informal, legal, illegal – from the international community. These resources best serve political and economic elites, but there are enough support mechanisms across society to ensure a ‘muddling through’ future for most of the region (described as the ‘slow slide’ scenario in IGD, 2002).**

### *2.3 Health*

Adding to this already toxic brew of socio-economic inequality is HIV/AIDS. Southern African states and societies are being fundamentally altered by the consequences of the pandemic: from child-headed households to the comprehensive loss of a trained, skilled work force, HIV/AIDS is wreaking havoc across the region (see Table 2). South African president Thabo Mbeki’s point about poverty heightening society’s susceptibility to HIV/AIDS is worth contemplating. Where long, cold winters across much of southern Africa may result in epidemics of flu, the consequences of influenza are felt unequally depending on where one sits along the socio-economic scale. While middle and upper-middle class people may miss work for a few days; those at the lowest end of the social scale succumb to the disease. Governments across the region demonstrate varying capacity to deal with HIV/AIDS, with many – such as that in Tanzania – still unwilling to openly acknowledge its presence. Policies such as ‘home-based-care’, in my view, are tantamount to ‘go home and die’. Where rural areas have limited water resources, home-based-care programmes have extremely unfortunate social consequences, from simple social stigma to the undermining of social capital (Ngwenya and Kgathi, 2006). As Southern Africa experiences both wetter and drier climate variations due to the effects of global warming, water borne disease vectors such as malaria are sure to expand their scope and impact as well. None of the SADC states are in a position to meet this challenge as it exists now; it is doubtful that on their own they could deal with the many headed hydra of disease in the near to medium term. Two-tiered formal medical care further widens the health gap between haves and have-nots, with state-sponsored



medicine being palliative at best, and private hospitals offering better care, usually more positive outcomes, but at a very high cost.

**Table 2: Select Indicators for SADC States**

Country	GDP growth 1975-2004	GDP growth 1990-2004	% HIV+ 15-49 age group
Angola	-0.7%	-1.2%	3.7%
Botswana	5.7	4.2	24.1
DRC	-4.8	-6.0	3.2
Lesotho	4.7	4.5	23.2
Malawi	-0.4	0.9	14.1
Mauritius	4.4	3.9	0.6
Mozambique	2.6	4.2	16.1
Namibia	-0.8	1.3	19.6
Seychelles	2.8	2.1	--
South Africa	-0.5	0.6	18.8
Swaziland	2.1	2.1	33.4
Tanzania	0.8	1.1	6.5
Zambia	-2.0	-1.1	17.0
Zimbabwe	-0.3	-1.9	20.1

**Source: UNDP, 2006.**

#### *2.4 Ethnic, religious and cultural factors and public opinion*

Given their colonial legacy, all of Southern Africa's states are 'state-nations', i.e. multi-ethnic social formations held together within the arbitrary boundaries of a historically and colonially delineated geopolitical space. Most African states achieved their independence during the height of modernization, and in accepting colonial boundaries African leaders were of the view that (i) redrawing Africa's boundaries to try and coincide with historical patterns of settlement and culture would in the end open a Pandora's box of issues; and (ii) modernization would result in historical forms of allegiance being displaced by modern state associational forms, from nationalism down to civil society organizations. Whereas issue (i) has never fallen away; issue (ii) has not been realized anywhere on the continent. African political economies are only loosely articulated to global capitalism – primarily as rentier states – and other than less than a handful of settler states (Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa), capitalism penetrates only superficially. In my view, capitalism is a necessary pre-requisite for (liberal/social) democracy. Thus, the sort of 'civil society' generally conceived of in the West as being the hallmark of liberal democracy is only marginally rooted on the continent. Without doubt it is deepest in South Africa (O'Meara, 1995). Older forms of associational life, social capital, thus reflect historical patrimonial patterns of social organization – even in South Africa. Neo-liberal globalization is helping re-establish and/or reinvigorate these forms of authority/legitimacy across the continent, often in pathological ways, with warlordism

and shadow states commonly found throughout Central/West Africa (Reno, 1999; Clapham, 1996).

The region also remains highly militarized, despite post-Cold War ends to civil wars in Namibia and Angola. At one level, this militarization and its history has built strong bonds at elite and professional-force levels across Southern Africa. At another level, the region shows a high tolerance for both overt and structural violence.

At the same time, Southern African societies show continuing tendencies toward hyper-masculinity (Cock, 2001). This manifests and cross-links with associated phenomena – such as militarism – in a number of ways. Is this perhaps a loosely unifying factor across the region: men’s perceived common threat from the rising, West-supported power of women? For example, ‘gender’ is generally regarded by men as a Western imposition (quite similar to ‘the environment’). A common sentiment among educated men in Botswana is that while a woman is free to go out and earn money, in the household ‘there is no Beijing’, a reference to the Women’s World Congress held in Beijing, China in 1995. While there are supporters of gender equity across both sexes throughout the region, they represent a minority view tied largely to donor funding. Women have long been objectified and essentialized in Southern African societies. Where there has been a history of revolution and warfare, defending the state from outside penetration by, for example, the *swart gevaar* (black peril) had great purchase across white settler society (so also intersecting with problematic issues of race). Matrilineal societies recognize ‘the woman’ as a unifying force in society. Idealizing (some) women (and pointing to several ‘strong’ women at the commanding heights of polity and economy) as ‘woman’ does not however have any mediating impact on the incidence of rape and HIV/AIDS, and customary practices such as turning a wife out of the home where the husband has died or ‘giving’ her to the brother. All donor projects in the region seek to ‘mainstream gender’, but, in my view, despite twenty or so years of the WID-WAD-GAD<sup>1</sup> debate and transition (i.e. women in development, women and development, gender and development), most African societies remain hyper-masculine. Where there is evidence of ‘equality’ – in formal sector employment, for example – those women bear a heavy burden of the double and triple day.

Men across classes are united through certain practices such as seating and speaking arrangements at public gatherings (*kgotla*, *pitso*, *indaba*), and through a common interest in holding cattle. These factors combine such that anyone not holding cattle will generally not be recognized as having a right to speak in the formal communal setting. In my view, Southern African states are most united at the apex of political community, where men of a certain age share similar values, and participated in the struggle for liberation from colonial/imperial/settler oppression. This helps explain the ability of the region’s policymakers to reach accords both on key issues such as regional integration frameworks and on contentious issues such as quiet diplomacy toward Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe.

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<sup>1</sup> WID: women in development; WAD: women and development; GAD: gender and development

Independence and irredentist movements exist across the region. This is understandable given the legacy of the Congress of Berlin in 1884 where European elites agreed on borders such as rivers and straight lines convenient to them but that flew in the face of lived reality on the ground. Horse-trading land (e.g. cousins agreeing to a Caprivi strip in the hope that the Zambezi proved navigable to the Indian Ocean) has had the result of binding together disparate groups in a political union perceived by those outside the dominant group as one of oppressor and oppressed. Pockets of political resistance exist along the Caprivi Strip, in Barotseland, Cabinda, eastern DRC, and Zanzibar to name the more obvious sites. Consolidating 'stateness' has proved particularly difficult throughout the region (Swatuk, 2002a and 2002b; Herbst, 2000) and bodes ill for future political stability – particularly once the 'old guard' united through common anti-colonial/imperial struggle die off and are replaced by a new generation of leaders weaned on the 'I, me, mine' sensibilities of neo-liberal globalisation (Swatuk, 2007b).

In my view, the media plays a generally negative role across the region. Press freedom is fairly well guaranteed throughout Southern Africa, although governments use various threats and more direct forms of oppression now and again. Government owned and/or controlled radio, television and print media exist in all SADC states. Radio is still the most effective form of communication across rural areas, although television is increasing its reach. In several countries, political parties control competing newspapers. Where print media is independently owned, there are a number of different trends to be discerned. One trend is limited commitment to impartiality; most newspapers demonstrate a clear political position – this is unsurprising as it has been the trend throughout the world across time. A second trend is a predilection toward sensationalism, with heavily over-stated headlines often masking tame or barely discernible content. Third, there is a trend toward sound-bites and news-lite leading much of the media to resemble the 'circuses' side of Marie Antoinette's famous dictum that the public is satisfied with bread and circuses. Fourth, there is a trend toward over-simplified contrariness. Newspaper editors-in-chief across the region seem to misinterpret their important role as the Fifth Estate as being simply 'anti-government' across a wide range of issues. Such a position ensures fractious relations with government. Government responses to consistently unfavorable print have varied widely: from Thabo Mbeki's exhortation that the media should assist in nation-building to subtle (e.g. charging journalists with 'treason' but dropping the case as it goes to court, so consistently costing papers money in court and legal fees) and not-so-subtle (e.g. pulling all government advertising; setting foreign-ownership criteria) government of Botswana pressure to try and bring independent papers into line; to heavy-handed government of Zimbabwe (e.g. destroying printing presses) strategies. Globalization and internet-connectivity virtually ensure that government attempts at muzzling the press will be losing battles.

Private broadcasting has had an equally wide variety of outcomes. Three trends are worth noting: one involves the proliferation of fundamentalist religious programming (especially right-wing American Christian groups) that seems to be effectively tapping into poor households across the region, commingling with trends toward pan-regional Africanized Christianity – an under-estimated stabilizing, integrative factor in my view (Vale, 2003). The second trend involves the gradual emergence of community

broadcasting over the radio waves: where the state has little purchase, donors are directly funding community broadcasting projects in order to address pressing issues and needs, provide information, and build community. A third trend involves the centralization of control of satellite-TV by South African broadcast giant M-Net. Not only does this control enable certain South African perspectives (on world affairs, commerce, sport) to squeeze out local voices across the entire continent; M-Net also acts as a conduit for Western/European models of consumption and the 'good life' to filter into households at all levels of society. Mimicking Western popular cultural styles and interests is one obvious impact; less well understood and under-researched is the possible impact that such images have on expectations so leading to a revolution of rising expectations. Should trends toward jobless growth continue, the disconnect between reality and desire will widen with undetermined social effects.

Southern African societies and polities are highly centralized, and characterized by patrimonial and patriarchal structures of authority – the stereotypical 'big man' syndrome. Traditional authorities such as chiefs and religious leaders remain influential despite the almost uniform tendency by state makers to strip them of decision-making authority. Given the nature of weak states, however, customary leaders (from chiefs to water-point managers to traditional doctors), courts/tribunals, forums (from kgotla to churches) and practices (weddings, funerals, seasonal celebrations) are key stabilizing elements throughout rural Southern Africa. A combination of weak state inability to deliver security and prosperity and weak leadership tendencies toward corrupt practices ensures that traditional structures will remain useful and important entities across the region. One must caution, however, that neither modern nor traditional structures are insular entities: one infuses the other; each subjects the other to pressures of (good/poor/bad) governance and (weak/competent/strong) performance. For instance, weak state inability or unwillingness to provide the resources necessary to help combat HIV/AIDS (e.g. anti-retrovirals; infrastructural support) has led to a resurgence in the place of traditional healers (who can sometimes alleviate the obvious symptoms of flu/pneumonia) in society.

Forty years ago, Larry Bowman described Southern Africa as a 'penetrated political system' (Bowman, 1968). In 1984, Thomas Callaghy described all African states as 'lame leviathans', in reference to the paradoxical impact of resembling a Hobbesian 'Leviathan' but having none of the capacity to bring order as both mandated and warranted under the condition of sovereignty. Aside from numerous other impacts, in terms of leadership, African state makers continue to take their cues from the stronger states in the international system while wielding heavy hands at home. It is a delicate balancing act, with uneven impacts across different segments of society.

These concepts of penetrated political system and lame leviathan manifest in ambivalence toward an environmental agenda largely perceived as fostered by Western special interests. In terms of 'environmental consciousness', SADC states and societies, in my view, are well informed but unconvinced regarding the importance of the 'environment' as an issue commanding state resources. In preparation for the Rio Earth Summit, SADC (1991) issued a position paper that made clear their stance regarding

environmental security: in the absence of economic development, the environment would continue to degrade. With Johannesburg hosting 'Rio plus Ten', this position was reiterated (Swatuk, 2002c).

As a penetrated regional political system comprised of weak states, SADC state leaders are unavoidably receptive to Western interests: gender, environment, governance, structural adjustment conditionalities, regional integration. Where international resources are available, these activities will be pursued – but only as long as the funding lasts and only as long as key political interests are not affected. The demise of the USAID-initiated CBNRM programme in Botswana is a case in point (Swatuk, 2005a). To be sure, there are people within and across the region firmly committed to sustainable environmental resource management (Swatuk, 2005b). If these interests conflict with dominant actor interests within states, they will be stifled; if their impact upon dominant interests is perceived to be neutral, they will be allowed to proceed unfettered but unencouraged; if their impact upon dominant interests is perceived as furthering dominant actor interests they will be fostered and, if necessary, refashioned to better suit these interests. One must not forget that this condition runs in the other direction as well. As shown quite clearly by Wilson (2006), Western development programmes are often more fickle, Quixotic, and/or opportunistic than are developing state policy maker responses to them. In every case, then, outcomes will be partial (Allan, 2003).

It would not be inaccurate to say that most citizens of Southern African states are either ignorant of or disinterested in 'environmental issues' as framed in Western discourses and processes. Rural peoples' primary consideration is food security. Clearly this is tied to environmental processes. However, the small scale of concerns (both in terms of time and space) and capacities limits the ability of rural people to 'think global and act local'. UNICEF articulated this as the 'PPE spiral' – where population increase and abiding poverty combine to increase environmental degradation. In the region, the HIV/AIDS pandemic worsens this interrelationship. Thus, while environmentalism may be a de facto interest among the region's peoples, socio-economic conditions limit the capacity to take positive collective action.

### **3. Problem solving capacity**

#### *3.1 The state and the public sector*

There are so many eloquent, convincing, theoretical, empirically-grounded, moral and ethical critiques of the modern state afloat in the world of political science, that it seems pointless to run through the arguments again. And yet, here we are, having to justify why the state is not the 'be all' and 'end all' of either the political or possible forms of social order (Vale, 2003). Let me just highlight the most salient point.

The state is not a thing, a tool that may be honed for the greater good of the citizenry. Part of the problem with liberalism is its baseline assumption that the state is separate from civil society – that the fundamental reason for the state is to provide a stable playing field for civil society to act freely: Hobbes' 'Leviathan' or Locke's 'social contract',

depending on your view of human nature. So, in terms of regional security, a primary way to ensure ‘stability’ in the global periphery is to reform state institutions and to create ‘more space’ for civil society to operate free from state intervention. For liberals, prior to the end of the Cold War evidence of state failure was debt. African states have been dominated by particular groups who have used the powers of the state to enrich themselves and enfeeble the citizenry. After the Cold War, a series of cross-conditionalities – liberal political systems and liberal economic practices – were imposed to correct these imbalances (cf. Swatuk and Vale, 1999): fixing the institution should fix the problem (World Bank, 1997). But few things are ‘fixed’ and in my studied opinion it is not simply due to bad governance, which is a symptom of a deeper and more tenacious disease: underdevelopment due to the creation of extraverted economies serving colonial/imperial needs.

In my estimation, if we are to get to the heart of many varieties of African insecurities, we must abandon the liberal understanding of state/society relations. After all, the liberal worldview serves liberal interests. It is not an apolitical truth claim they are making about the nature of the state, but an ideological declaration (Pettman, 1996; Peterson, 2003). The links between state and society are more usefully characterized in the Gramscian sense as ‘organic’. For Moore,

If the state is internally differentiated and is itself a site of struggle, then “the state is no longer to be taken as essentially an actor, with the coherence, agency, and subjectivity that term presumes”... Rather, the “state can be opened as a theatre in which resources, property rights, and authority are struggled over” (1993: 389, quoting Mitchell and Watts respectively).

At the same time we must acknowledge that ‘the state’ varies in both time and space. Even the most die-hard liberal must acknowledge that Tilly (1985) has a point. The modern state emerged as a gentleman’s agreement among a group of ‘greedy plotters’ who wanted to resolve two issues: (i) conflicts over land; and (ii) the meddlesome presence of a non-territorial entity – the church. (This is not unlike the process of peacemaking in the DRC at present.) If the modern state has come to resemble somewhere on the planet that imagined by Locke, it is not due to an apolitical institutional ‘fix’, but to a long and tortured history of struggle. This tendency on the part of present day supporters of the ‘liberal peace’ to ignore the bloody history of democratic state-making leads everywhere and always toward permanent emergencies that may or may not be ‘complex’ (Duffield, 2001).

So, states are social constructs. They are historically contingent. They change over time and across geographical/geopolitical space. The state in Germany is not the same as the state in the U.S. or in India or Nigeria or Japan: all ‘democracies’ by the way. Neither is the German state the same today as it was twenty or fifty or 100 years ago. Each one of these states is characterised by a particular constellation of social forces (Cox, 1996) that also changes over time. No one who knows anything about Africa is fool enough to equate the states of Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, the DRC, Somalia and Niger. The error is to think that because the institutions of the ‘state’ are the same, that the states

only vary in terms of their capacity to use these institutions effectively: hence, for uncritical security studies, South Africa and Botswana have relatively strong states while the others are relatively weak and all are very weak in comparison to Sweden, Britain, Germany and the U.S. Once again, the hierarchy of 'state power' is invoked as a simple explanation to a complex social formation (Herbst, 2000).

In an important study, Herbst (2000) argues for a reconsideration of the impact of colonialism on African social formations, suggesting that the inability of the colonial state to 'broadcast' power much beyond primary cities left extant forms of political order relatively intact in the periphery. For Herbst, a fundamental failure of the modern African state has been its inability to give physical form to its sovereign claims. In Jackson's famous terms, Africa's 'quasi states' enjoy juridical sovereignty but not de facto sovereignty. As a result, whereas weak states rarely survived in the European context, they have proliferated in post-colonial Africa. For Herbst, beyond the artificial and openly oppressive stability of the Cold War era, it is understandable that challenges to political order in Africa are coming from this periphery. The very legitimacy, and thus 'security', of the state – its borders, the 'idea' of it, its institutions – is being threatened across the continent (Buzan, 1991 for a theoretical treatment of the state).

Until recently, there was too little serious thinking devoted to this phenomenon. The initial response was to locate Africa's new wars into familiar categories: insurgency movements, rebels supported by rogue states, and the like. It was also important to the Western imaginary that these wars correspond to 'politics in the heart of darkness', to invoke the 'other' in Africa. In this way blame could be located among African savages, and away from the pivotal role played by Western states and corporations in, for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Congo. In my view, Paul Richards' (1996) and Stephen Ellis's (1999) attempts to make familiar the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, to debunk the 'new barbarism' thesis were and remain important scholarly works. Their impact, however, pales in comparison to the negative and abiding impact Robert Kaplan's 'The Coming Anarchy' (1994) has had in statehouses and living rooms around the Western World.

African(ist) academics have also played a negative role in identifying the causes and consequences of Africa's new wars. Most chose instead to focus on the increasing 'criminalisation' of politics on the continent. Theirs was a pro-democratic agenda. As such, analysis was far from impartial: all blame was to fall at the feet of Africa's state-makers, rebels and warlords. To frame it as Herbst might, their central concern has been with the ways in which power has been broadcast. In their view, these means have been pathological – violence, corruption, graft – and need to be replaced by more broadly socially acceptable practices of state consolidation and governance. This intellectual project has been encouraged by proponents of the 'democratic peace' and supporters of concepts such as 'social capital'. The literature on 'good governance' and 'democratisation' has, in my view, been an unoriginal response to rather unique circumstances. Its generalised failure in practice is testimony not only to the intransigence of powerful people – within and without states, within and without Africa – but to the poverty of imagination anchoring both theory and practice.

Western policy makers have chosen to respond to violent ‘disorder’ – that is, when they have chosen to respond at all – through the imposition of order, by proxy or by invitation. Post-Cold War discourses have overwhelmingly focussed on the circumstances that might allow sovereign states to violate the sovereignty of another (Wilson, 2006). The sequencing of events has usually followed a standard pattern: intervention; negotiated ceasefire; power sharing agreement; democratic elections with the DRC being the most recent case in point. Almost without fail there has been a fifth stage: return to fighting. In each case the stated aim has been to *restore* order and to see the creation of a *legitimate* government. Failure is explained away almost by definition: complex emergencies do not submit easily to template solutions; warlords are not statesmen. Where Bosnia is credited as ‘success’, is it any wonder that the African experience, save for the particular case of Mozambique, where it took a USD 1 million pay-off to Renamo’s Afonso Dhlakama not to boycott elections and return to the bush, is uniformly one of ‘failure’?

Duffield (2001) has argued that much of Africa has settled into a type of ‘stability’, a low-level instability that works to the benefit of a wide-variety of actors intent on exploiting the riches of Africa: state-makers, guerrilla leaders, Italian timber companies, arms traders, Belgian diamond merchants, and of course the ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘development’ industries that help, first and foremost, Western businesses and Third World militaries who each earn hard currency for their ‘participation’. To quote Nordstrom (2001: 217):

This international cast of characters moves substantial amounts of goods, influence, and services across the countries of the world. A significant portion of these exchanges takes place outside formally recognised state channels ... Given all wars’ reliance on the vast array of technologies and alliances produced throughout the world, war today, by definition, is constructed internationally. We may speak of internal wars, but they are set in vast global arenas. We may speak of contests within or between states, but a considerable part of war and post-conflict development takes place along extra-state lines. War and peace unfold as much according to these extra-state realities as they do according to state-based ones.

Scholars of the Third World have long recognised the shallow roots of the state as an abiding source of instability. What to do, then? If the very existence of many states in Africa is under threat, whose security should we seek to ensure? For Zartman (1995) the recipe is to stick with what we have (the post-colonial social compact) and make it work. Of course, that is always easy to say from Washington. Ayoob, similarly, counsels support for state security on two grounds. One, that to focus elsewhere is ‘semantic jugglery’ that threatens to make the concept of security ‘analytically useless’ (1997: 126, 125). Two, that only the state constitutes the true arena of politics. Here he invokes David Easton’s 1963 definition of ‘the political’ (1997: 128-9). I wouldn’t bother with such ideas were it not for the fact that Ayoob has been writing on Third World ‘security’ for decades. He considers himself an expert on these matters. It is important to expose the narrow range of thinking that underpins such ‘expertise’. It is also important to question



the correctness of holding firm to a concept for the sake of intellectual coherence. To quote Ken Booth: 'Change is the condition of modern life ... yet understanding it is hampered by a cultural norm that seems to hold that the longer one has had an idea, the truer it is. The corollary of this is that it is somehow a weakness to change one's mind' (Booth, 1997: 113).

More seriously, with regard to the African state, let me quote Booth and Vale from the same collection (1997: 333, 335):

In the Southern African context the state is often the problem, not the solution. In Southern Africa, state security has often been hostile to human security; the phrase has been a code word for the security of (usually very oppressive) political regimes and social elites ... The definition of the primary security referent(s) in Southern Africa is not a value-free, objective matter ... It is ... a profoundly political act.

I have puzzled over the reasons why so many who study questions of security in the Third World cling so mightily to the hope of the state. Ayoob seems to take state-makers at face value: they say they are state-building; they must be state-building.

The overriding importance of the state – both as a territorial unit and as an institutional complex – to the political, and therefore security, realm in the case of the large majority of countries is justified in the context of the historical juncture at which most members of the international system ... currently find themselves. At this juncture their primary goal is the construction of credible and legitimate political apparatuses with the capacity to provide order – in many respects, the foremost social value – within the territories under their juridical control (Ayoob, 1997: 131).

Where are these states? They are certainly not the 'shadow states' described by Wil Reno (1999), or the 'monopoly state' described by Chris Clapham (1996), or the 'lame Leviathan' described by Tom Callaghy (1983). Moreover, in contrast to what Ayoob claims to mark out the boundaries of the political, the state is simply one social form among many competing and often more legitimate social forms in the African milieu. Power is held and exercised in many different forms. Often times villages, cross border communities, forest dwelling societies, families linked transnationally manage quite happily until the state-maker shows up (usually accompanied by *inter alia*, the military, the revenue collector, a representative of a TNC). In the past, foreign companies took the land by hook or by crook – Cecil Rhodes comes to mind – now, state-makers are only too happy to pave the way: creating an 'enabling environment' for land alienation and resource capture (post-Banda Malawi being one good example). One problem with considering the state as but one of many actors, or as but one site of social struggle, is the unfortunate fact of the military. For this reason alone any attempts at regional peacemaking must take states seriously. A second problem is the economic character of most (Southern) African states. They are largely natural resource dependent entities whose primary revenue comes from the rent that accrues from multinational exploitation

of the resource. Thus, the state remains by and large the primary means of production and accumulation. Positive political change can only come from changing this fact, meaning deepening capitalism and increasing industrialisation. History shows there to be no other option (Mittelman, 1988; Harris, 1986).

Beyond the facts of rentier states armed to the teeth, analysts often cling to the state out of fear of the unknown (as Zartman does above). The fact is, states are recently established social forms in the African context. Prior to them societies were both smaller and larger (Herbst, 2000). Who is to say what might emerge in the African landscape were states left to shrink and wither on their own?

But the real problem, the abiding desire to make the Westphalian state work in Africa, to press for peace through elections and formal markets, seems to lie in what I call 'the hope of neo-Westphalia' (Swatuk, 2007a; 2002b). It is common knowledge that liberal democracy is most robust where capitalism has its deepest roots. I am reminded of this every time I go to Europe or Japan or North America. Capitalism's roots in the rest of the world, however, are often very shallow, sometimes little more than an *entrepôt*. In several parts of the Third World, capitalism's roots are deeper: Brazil, the Asian NICs, South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe. These states are approximations of the Westphalian state. This is the reason why Zimbabwe's economy has not completely disintegrated under its current land reforms and the concomitant Western attack upon it: despite it all, things still get manufactured in Zimbabwe. A shallower economy, like Zambia's, would have collapsed long ago. As settler societies with extensive economies, these three African countries feel familiar to Westerners who travel there. At the same time, Southern Africa has two other neo-Westphalian states: Botswana and Namibia. These are large territories with small populations and vast mineral resources. They are governed by unchallenged regimes. As such, they are able to engage in state-building projects: again, they look increasingly familiar to Westerners although as rentier economies they lack the deep capitalist base that exists in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The fact of these three countries – Botswana, Namibia, South Africa – with their commitments to democratic state-building via open markets and adherence to the 'rule of law' suggests to security analysts that perhaps the problem with the rest of Africa really does reside with bad governance: South Africa, Botswana and Namibia have blinded Western analysts to the fact of varying state forms and particular constellations of social forces as discussed above. Yet, simmering land issues in all three states, and abiding intolerance of open dissent (most spectacularly displayed in 'democratic' Botswana with the deportation of Political Science Professor Kenneth Good) suggests that even here stability may be fleeting.

At the same time, it must be said, Western analysts are also guilty of ethnocentric thinking rife with the biases of modernization. Are we really 'secure' in Western states, armed to the teeth, rampantly consuming the planet's resources, extending our shadow ecologies to far flung corners of the world? When I reflect on security in the context of Bush II and his determination to wage war, it seems to me those most secure from the threat of violence are all those people inhabiting geographical spaces of little interest to global capitalism. They stand furthest from what Keegan (1993) calls 'the lands of first choice'.

It would be correct to say that all writing on security in Africa has focused on the state and the region, with 'new regionalism' and 'regional integration' projects constituting the latest hope to bring stability to Southern Africa's constellation of weak states (Hettne, 2001; 1997; Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, 2001; cf. Boege, 2006). Regionalism, be it continental or sub-continental in character, is both threat and promise to the region's state makers. On the one hand, they fear the 'spillover' effects of challenges to state authority. One might say they fear more the fact of Eritrea than that of Charles Taylor. While Taylor sought state power, Eritrea forced Africans to reconsider the relevance of post-colonial lives lived in colonial spaces. The same may be said about Somaliland: there can be no reason for failing to acknowledge it as an independent state other than the fear of the 'knock-on' effect. Is there a Charles Taylor lurking in the Caprivi Strip? Might Barotseland one day be an independent African state?

In terms of the promise of regionalism, all Africans know that the history and reality of the continent is movement: the movement of people and animals with the seasons. While the imposition of colonial borders put a juridical stop to such migrations, many know that such activities continue, will continue and should continue to take place. Throughout the continent, borders are more fiction than fact. Where they do exist they act as useful points for resource extraction by petty officials, and present market opportunities for petty traders. Analysts have long acknowledged the vitality of informal sector trade in Africa. The hope of regional integration is to tap into this vitality, and to perhaps recover a regional economy of scale long smothered by the imperatives of imperial exploitation (Hettne, 2001).

The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union, while largely semantic, when paired with NEPAD, suggests that state-makers will continue to pursue regime survival by balancing national/regional imperatives with Western pressures for 'reform'. Part of the AU vision is to pursue continental union through sub-continental regional cooperation. Thus state-makers are suggesting that security and development regionalism through such groups as ECOWAS and SADC are the way forward for the continent. At least that is the 'stated' vision. On the ground things look painfully familiar: various peacemaking exercises have failed; state-makers happily oversee the dismantling of public enterprise by becoming major shareholders themselves; in the Great Lakes Region resource capture continues unabated; HIV/AIDS ravages the continent (De Jong, Donovan, Ken Ichi, 2007).

As argued at the outset of this paper, ordinary Africans are forced to manage their own security. Many do this through the traditional 'exit' option: retreating to the *shamba* and practising near-subsistence agriculture. Others have migrated within and beyond the continent so creating dense networks of security through capital transfers and informal sector trade. So important are some of these trade networks that the government of Senegal renamed its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the African Diaspora. State-makers, with the ready assistance of the media, have encouraged xenophobia as a tool of 'nation-building'. In urban and peri-urban areas, household security is pursued through small scale urban agriculture, often in confrontation with the

state (Swatuk et al, 2002). In the rich suburbs, private security firms police gated communities. In the townships, warlords extract tribute in exchange for the marginal assurance that you will get home without being mugged or raped. Whereas North-South inter-state relations encourage bureaucratic pairings through military and police training programmes, South-South inter-community relations encourage household security strategies through land invasions, building occupations, and ‘illegal’ reconnections of water and electricity.

Rural peoples, who have always known that the state is threatening, are inadvertently finding support from a combination of ‘democratic governance’ conditionalities placed upon state-makers and new ways of thinking about managing natural resources. Throughout Southern Africa, Western donor states, international NGOs, and IGOs are actively pursuing a wide variety of ‘transboundary natural resources management’ strategies. These activities not only rope together similar government departments from border sharing states (e.g. Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia in the Okavango/Zambezi rivers area), to consider creation of transnational ‘peace parks’ or international river basin commissions. These activities also link together and legitimate the activities of rural communities living in and around these areas. Granted, these ideas are often problematic in practice (Swatuk, 2005a; Katerere, Moyo and Hill, 2001; Jeffery and Vira, 2001), but they do suggest that there may be transnational ways of organizing regional activities in support of rural livelihood strategies: security for the many, rather than the few.

In this section I have attempted to provide a fairly comprehensive critique of state-centric approaches to regional security in the African context. I have suggested that the state is but one of many influential actors in the region. It is also most often a source of insecurity and regional instability. I have highlighted different forms and sources of regional insecurity and articulated state-makers’ visions for achieving peace, security and development through regional integration at sub-continental and continental levels.

In the end, it is clear that people are seeking security outside of the state in their own way. Sometimes these activities are perceived as threats to the legitimacy of the state; sometimes state makers are unsure about the consequences of these activities for regime security. In any event, all efforts at achieving personal, household, village, community, forms of security must take cognizance of the state. I have argued vehemently against uncritical security studies desire to hold on to the state at all costs. While some perceive ‘effective statehood as essential ... to prevent them from permanently remaining secondary actors’ in the global system of states (Ayoob, 1997: 140), others argue quite convincingly that there is much political and economic capital to be gained by remaining secondary actors (Clapham, 1996; Duffield, 2001) – much to the detriment of ‘citizens’. Just as Dalby (1998) argues against the ‘ontotheological’ status of anarchy in international relations, I would say the same about the state in security studies, particularly in the African context. Williams and Krause (1997: xiv) ask, ‘Is there a new grounding for political order that can provide both a referent and an actor in a globalising and fragmenting world?’ My answer is that there are already many geographically-based social forms and transnational social networks providing security in the African context

despite the reality of predatory, collapsed, shadow, monopoly and neo-Westphalian states. Roll down the tinted window of Kaplan's limousine and have a look. If this doesn't cohere with your understanding of 'security', then perhaps you should reconsider it. This is also the main reason why I cannot foresee 'collapse' of either Southern African states or societies by either 2020 or 2050. But, in the absence of deepening capitalism, things will get worse.

Elsewhere I have tried to identify some of the potential sites of security beyond sovereignty (Swatuk and Vale, 1999; Swatuk and Vale, 2002; Swatuk, 2003; also Booth and Vale, 1997 and Vale, 2003). At this point in time, it seems to me to be as important to shift the focus of security away from the state toward humanity at large. A state-centric definition of security is at best partial. States are historically contingent. They are but one, albeit fundamentally important and deeply problematic actor in the global political economy.

This is not simply a semantic or intellectual exercise. It has real policy implications: enhancing environmental and/or human security in Southern Africa rests in my view on altering the extroverted, largely-rentier character of formal political economies. We are back to SADC's 1991 position paper: national or extended-national projects rest on the ability to satisfy the needs and desires of individuals and groups across society. Only where capitalism is deepest do such bonds exist with any real meaning.

### *3.2 Economic structures and infrastructure*

The cumulative impact of colonial/post-colonial history has been overwhelmingly negative on the structure of formal political economies, on peoples' lives, and on the natural environment across the African continent. SADC economies remain overwhelmingly dependent on the export of one or one group of primary products: oil in Angola, diamonds in Botswana, water in Lesotho, tobacco in Malawi, fish in Mozambique, minerals in Namibia and South Africa, sugar in Swaziland, coffee in Tanzania, copper in both DRC and Zambia, tobacco and minerals in Zimbabwe. As stated earlier, these violent, extractive processes begun during colonial times reinforce structural inequalities: between city and countryside, white and black, traditional elites (like the Bangwato in Botswana) and traditionally oppressed (like the San or 'bushmen' in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa), agro-industry and smallholder agriculture, the built environment and the natural world. Unfortunately, with the onset of the "debt crisis" two decades ago and the imposition of IFI-brokered structural adjustment programmes, these inequalities have widened and deepened (Biersteker, 1995). The 'good governance' cross-condition complicates matters further, leading to a kleptocratic cycle of election victory-corruption-election loss and replacement by a new group of kleptocrats.

Table 3 illustrates the changing Human Development Index (HDI) values for SADC states over the last 30 years. In the last 10 years, only Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Mauritius have registered higher HDI values. Of the nine member states for which there is data, only four have higher HDI values in 2004 than they did in 1975, three of which – Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi – have registered declines since 1995.

**Table 3: Trends in SADC State HDIs**

State	HDI Rank (of 177 countries)	1975	1985	1995	2004
Seychelles	47	--	--	--	.842
Mauritius	63	--	.692	.749	.800
South Africa	121	.653	.703	.741	.653
Namibia	125	--	--	.694	.626
Botswana	131	.500	.636	.660	.570
Madagascar	143	.404	.438	.459	.509
Swaziland	146	.529	.583	.604	.500
Lesotho	149	.463	.535	.573	.494
Zimbabwe	151	.548	.642	.591	.491
Angola	161	--	--	--	.439
Tanzania	162	--	--	.423	.430
Zambia	165	.470	.486	.425	.467
Malawi	166	.327	.368	.414	.400
DRC	167	.414	.431	.392	.391
Mozambique	168	--	.290	.330	.390

**Source: UNDP, 2006**

Put simply, HDI is a weighted composite measure of GDP/capita, life expectancy, and education. It shows how much capital is accumulated within a state, to what use it is put and how widely it is spread, with health and education regarded as key indicators of democratic development. As shown in Table 4, those states heavily dependent on oil or mineral wealth, or a combination also including plantation agriculture and manufacturing, show high GDP indexes (i.e. above .67). Heavily agrarian societies, on the other hand, show an inability to accumulate capital. Most SADC states perform well in the education index, but almost all are dragged down by the life expectancy index, so reflecting the costs of the AIDS pandemic in the region.

**Table 4: SADC State HDI: selected indicators**

State	GDP/cap (USD)	Life Expectancy	Adult Literacy	Life Expec. Index	Edu. index	GDP index
Seychelles	16,652	72.7	91.8	.80	.88	.85
Mauritius	12,027	72.4	84.4	.79	.81	.80
South Africa	11,192	47	82.4	.37	.80	.79
Namibia	7,418	47.2	85	.37	.79	.72
Botswana	9,945	34.9	81.2	.16	.78	.77
Madagascar	857	55.6	70.7	.51	.66	.36
Swaziland	5638	31.3	79.6	.10	.72	.67

Lesotho	2619	35.2	82.2	.17	.77	.54
Zimbabwe	2065	36.6	90*	.19	.77	.51
Angola	2180	41	67.4	.27	.53	.51
Tanzania	674	45.9	69.4	.35	.62	.32
Zambia	943	37.7	68	.21	.63	.37
Malawi	646	39.8	64.1	.25	.64	.31
DRC	705	43.5	67.2	.31	.54	.33
Mozambique	1237	41.6	46*	.28	.47	.42

\* unreliable data

**Source: UNDP, 2006**

Most SADC states are not poor *per se*. Indeed, countries such as Angola, Botswana, DRC, Namibia, and South Africa generate vast amounts of mineral and oil wealth. Plantation agriculture reaps large rewards in Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Rather, extremely skewed income distribution is a significant barrier to human development. Only Mozambique and Tanzania have Gini coefficients of income inequality below .40 (where 1.0 equals perfect inequality; and 0 perfect equality). Botswana (.63), Namibia (.74), Lesotho (.63) and Swaziland (.61) are all above 0.6, with South Africa at .58. Many of these data are now ten or more years old, and it would not be unreasonable to hypothesize that, after another decade of structural adjustment, these values are now even higher. So, a significant barrier to development is the insulation from poverty of a particular cohort of people within the region. Given the enclave and extroverted character of these economic drivers, sectors and/or specific industries that have the potential to contribute to national and regional development, operate largely outside of these geographical and social parameters. A key challenge for all SADC states is to channel more of the wealth created by these activities into local and regional political economies. Given the increasingly open nature of the region's economies, however, beyond receiving various rents – through taxation and joint ventures – this remains exceedingly difficult. Based on recent experience in the manufacturing, assembly and construction industries in the region, Chinese President Hu's promises of large-scale investment and 'job creation' made during his trip to Zambia ring hollow.

In the region, aid dependence remains high, where net ODA/capita is at 1980 levels. As a percentage of GDP, ODA has declined from 1990 levels in all SADC states except for Angola, DRC and Mozambique. It constitutes a significant portion of GDP in Tanzania (16.1%), Zambia (20%), Malawi (25.3%), the DRC (27.4%), and Mozambique (20.2%). Debt burdens are significant across the region, so limiting SADC state capacity to access new capital. And whereas FDI quadrupled in the latter half of the 1990s – from USD 691 million in early 1990s to USD 3061 million during 1995-98 – this reflects the post-apartheid honeymoon period and obsession with South Africa. (And though South Africa reaped the lion's share of this FDI, it constituted merely 0.3% of its GDP, an amount equal to its ODA receipts).

Poverty is rife. Fully 70% of the region's population exist on less than USD 2/day, while 40% exist on less than USD 1/day. Agricultural production as measured in average daily per capita calorie supply declined in half of SADC states in the period 1987-97, and

increased marginally in the others. SADC claims that, in order to achieve the MDG of halving poverty by 2015, the region's economies must grow by on average 10%/annum. Yet, as Table 5 shows, not even the region's 'success story', Botswana, has come anywhere near this figure. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly – for it knows no class boundaries – is the HIV+ rate for those aged 15-49. As shown in Table 2 above, regional integration has had a significant downside to it. For all of those states that have contributed to the growth of South Africa's economy (as labour reserves, pleasure periphery, markets for finished goods and sources for raw materials) are caught in a serious web of pandemic disease. Virtually no state other than South Africa has the economic capacity to adequately address this problem. All land based SADC member states lie within the bottom 33% of the world's surveyed states according to HDI ranking. Eight member states are among the 18% of the world's poorest states. In spite of 25 years of regional cooperation, it is clear that SADC is mired in a poverty trap.

In the world of inter-state relations, Southern Africa's primary value is its nuisance value. Influential segments of South Africa's policy making community are inclined toward this perspective. Hence, the perceived need within Ministries of Trade and Industry, and Finance to find a suitable niche within global capitalism, and to continue to dominate the region economically (South Africa's regional GDP is estimated to be 67.5%; and SADC's share of Sub-Saharan African GDP is slightly more than 50%; see SADC, n.d.). Similarly, the perceived need within the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs for the refurbishment of the armed forces, increased defence spending, and closer integration with U.S. and E.U. military frameworks. Denel, the weapons manufacturer, is busy building a global market, so also building bonds among these various Ministries. Such policy positions only serve to further distance South Africa from its neighbours and to reinforce unhelpful binaries of inside/outside, us/them, developed/undeveloped.

Yet, within these relatively poor countries, pockets of great wealth are neatly sown into the fabric of grinding poverty. There is much to be gained and lost by a narrow segment of the region's population tied to resource extraction, service industries, and limited manufacturing – all affected by Western, WTO/G8-driven policy positions.

#### **4. Likelihood of conflict**

In terms of the likelihood of conflict, I would like to make nine points, before bringing the paper to a close in the final section by tying these issues more closely to environmental change.

First, Southern Africa is comprised of vastly unequal societies. Great wealth resides alongside grinding poverty. At the top of this champagne glass of resource distribution, there is a good deal of integration and like-mindedness among elites, but here too there reside several solitudes, e.g. white wealth tied to private enterprise; black wealth tied to the state. It is perhaps better then to speak of Southern Africas – as a pluralistic region of social and political economic communities more or less integrated but all sharing the same physical space. Portrayed this way, it is clear that environmental change will have vastly different impacts across the region.



Second, given these inequalities – best represented as the coexistence of magnificently serviced gated communities and vast, squalid squatter settlements – people’s abilities to weather risk and exercise choice (the hallmarks of high human development and security) are vastly different. These different worlds ensure that there is little or no shared vision and mission among states and societies in the region. Self-help is very much the order of the day.

Third, a key stabilizing factor for the region is the wide array of international support structures that are in place and will remain in place for the foreseeable future. At the level of inter-state relations, the West is desperate for democratic success stories on the African continent and are heavily committed to building regional peace, security and prosperity – albeit (and paradoxically) along liberal political economic lines. International civil society (from diasporas to religious movements to issue-specific and general anti-globalization movements), IGOs and IFIs are all engaged across issue areas and resource use and development strategies and practices. These activities are not additive in the sense that taken together they generally improve the regional condition. Rather, their impacts are various and, in my view, facilitate the ‘muddling through’ slow decline scenario highlighted above.

Four, another important stabilizing factor across the region are the pockets of real vision and mission in state houses, particularly those in Namibia and South Africa. Having fought and won long civil wars, governments in these countries demonstrate in my view a strong commitment to making a better life for all, irrespective of race, class, sex or ethnicity. However, the nature of the rentier state, the scale of the inherited problems, and the watchdog role of G8 and IFIs in service of hyper-liberalism, limits positive impacts and increases frustrations across regional societies and communities.

Fifth, one must also not lose sight of the fact that there are pockets of institutional/bureaucratic competence across the region’s otherwise dysfunctional, kleptocratic, weak and predatory states. Governance may in fact be divisible, where good governance in particular areas of resource management (e.g. rural water point delivery) may sit in a pocket of otherwise bad, macro political and economic governance (e.g. in Zimbabwe)<sup>2</sup>.

Sixth, in my view Southern Africa’s problems and prospects particularly with respect to environmental security are best explained by Baechler (1999; 1998), not Homer-Dixon (1999; also, Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998; Percival and Homer-Dixon, 1998). It may be remembered that both scholars suggest that conflict is likely to be diffuse, persistent and sub-national as renewable resources continue to degrade. However, whereas Homer-Dixon emphasizes national factors, Baechler’s study clearly links (historical patterns of) underdevelopment to contemporary forms of socio-eco and socio-political instability, both of which impact on the condition of natural resources across time and space. If one accepts Homer-Dixon’s state-level analysis, then one may also be persuaded by his

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<sup>2</sup> This was a point made to me by one of the Zambezi Watercourse technical advisors at the 2006 World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden.

emphasis on ‘ingenuity’ and ‘adaptive management’ as keys to breaking the conflict cycle. **In my own view, following from Baechler, if Western governments and civil societies are interested in breaking the PPE spiral in Southern Africa, there are key deliberate steps that can and must be taken in the global North. These are only too well known: for example, stop selling weapons to belligerents; open markets to SADC state products; remove NTBs to trade such as subsidies for unproductive farmers; restrict the flow of hot money in and out of economies, or insist on a Tobin Tax to slow its movement; enforce cradle-to-grave green practices of resource extraction and production, especially among TNCs with headquarters in Western home states; insist on living wages paid to Third World workers; assist African states in establishing manufacturing nodes that link into key global commodity chains.** These recommendations harken back to the 1970s NIEO (new international economic order), but in my view are more relevant today. In the absence of real productive industrial processes in Southern Africa, and in the presence of on-going neoliberal privatisation processes concentrating land and capital in fewer and fewer hands, more and more Southern Africans will face lives of grinding poverty. It will exacerbate the PPE (poverty, population, environmental degradation) spiral locally, and prepare no one to deal with a new world climate order.

Seventh, African states are uniformly dysfunctional in the sense that they are built to satisfy the interests of a narrow strata of people arrayed around money, property and political power. They may be thought of as hyper-colonial states, where the colonial state was designed to facilitate extraction of resources from the colony and discipline the populace to accept such a political economic project. Except for South Africa and Zimbabwe, where highly peculiar political conditions gave rise to extensive import substitution industrialization, all SADC states retain their colonial frameworks of political discipline and economic extraction. What to do about this? Clearly, this point is linked to point six: in the absence of real economic change; enforcing first-past-the-post elections and more transparent governance will result in more evasive and questionable practices. Underdevelopment is deepening across the region and giving rise to new forms of patrimony, within, beneath and beyond the state. Clearly, Western state houses are happy to make do with revolving kleptocracies, primarily because they do not live with the consequences of their conditionalities. Where democracy is deeper, as in South Africa, governments may be seen to be taking deliberate policies to insulate their societies from the worst effects of regional breakdown. In my view, this simply delays the extent of the slow slide across the region.

Eighth, Namibia and South Africa offer hope for the region. Where there has been collective political struggle resulting in a change of government, the incumbents show a real desire to improve life for everyone. However, Zimbabwe offers a cautionary tale for all: hostile external forces; fractured multi-ethnic societies; global economic change; and a small, lightly-diversified economy can come unraveled quite quickly. Mugabe’s behaviour, in my view, is but a symptom of deeper structural factors that came together in a unique way to undo the statebuilding process. Clearly, bad governance has played a key role in the direction and the depth of the fall; but in my view similar outcomes are not far from a state such as Botswana, hitherto considered the ‘darling’ of Western society.

Tanzania offers an interesting example of cautious state building in multi-ethnic societies. The deliberate decision to appoint a Vice President from the most marginalized group in society shows some sort of political will lacking in most patrimonial systems.

Thus, ninth, in my view, visible, positive, engaged leadership is very important in economically weak, ethnically fractious countries in transition to Western forms of liberal democracy. In the absence of economic development, this may appear as little more than traditional forms of patrimonial governance. So be it, if it holds the society together in a way tolerable to most, then one should not necessarily belittle it because it does not conform to Western expectations. We would do well to reflect on the roots of democracy in the West.

To sum up, in my view, Western states will continue with their neoliberal project. After all, more than 80% of all investment and about 75% of global trade travels between and among the U.S. (and Canada), the E.U. and Japan (Stallings, 1995). These regions of the world have long histories of violence within and toward each other (and the rest of the world). It is naïve to think that they will take any steps to offset negative trends in Africa if these actions may jeopardize the safety and stability of their own societies. Having said this, it seems to me that underdevelopment will abide across the Southern African region. Pockets of wealth will continue to exist primarily in global-nodal urban spaces such as Cape Town and Johannesburg. Poor people will continue to stream in from the countryside, to inhabit squalid squatter settlements, and to die of infectious disease. Western states and private sectors will remain interested in the region for a variety of reasons – from democratic ideology to natural resource reality; as limited markets for goods of all kinds (including weapons); and as a sink for Western waste and unwanted consumer products and assembly practices. A wide variety of civil society mechanisms will foster an uneasy stability across much of the region, while violent struggles over resources will continue where open access regimes abide. **The Southern Africa of 2050 in my view will not look much different from that of 2006, but in the absence of meaningful interventions such as those highlighted above, the region will be worse off, though given the almost universally low HDIs across Southern Africa, it seems to me the region and the vast majority of its peoples have not much further to fall.**

## **5. Conclusion: Prognoses for Southern Africa and its link to Environmental Change and Security**

What should be clear from the foregoing is, among other things, the fact that Southern Africa is comprised of weak states and more or less resilient, more or less vulnerable societies. Not only have externally-created, predominantly primary commodity producing states generated vast wealth alongside vast inequality; they have also created – necessity being the mother of invention – extremely creative ways and means of individual, household and community survival. This is a sort of *functional dysfunctionality*, where one example can stand in for many, many others.

In Zambia, the Chalimbana River rises outside of Lusaka and drains into the Kafue, itself feeding the Zambezi River. Water resources have been captured in a typical pattern of

urban headstreams, plantation agriculture in mid-stream, and smallholder, peasant agriculture at the downstream end. A series of dams exist to service the large farms. These dams are often the source of friction between settler big agriculture and downstream local peasants, particularly during periods of low flow. The last of the dams before the communal lands is understandably the main site of contestation. On regular occasions, local people march *en masse* and demonstrate at the dam site, often in a threatening manner. In response, the large-scale farmer opens the sluice gates and lets water run to the satisfaction of the local people. Once they have departed, he closes the sluice gates. In the absence of a more equitable, efficient and sustainable system, this protest-response style of management ‘functions’ to the satisfaction of both parties. However, it creates a sort of cooperative framework without deepening positive social relations across classes and races. Rather, it reinforces the general prejudices held by both sides to the conflict. In the face of real and sustained environmental change, on what basis will future, longer-term cooperation be built? More extreme climate variability will require more flexible and sustainable forms of cooperation, probably including a complex network of early warning systems and delivery mechanisms. But the Zambian state has no capacity to create and manage such a system. If it did, the protest-response method would not be the management style of choice. Self-help, expedient, reactive social-movement-oriented ‘management’ stands in for a functioning state. This small case study may be broadened to include, in varying degrees, all SADC states, at all levels of social organisation, across all issue areas. In contemplating Southern African futures, we would do well to reflect on this point (Vale, Swatuk, Oden, 2001).

In this concluding section, I map the interface between environmental change and ‘security’ in Southern Africa across three different referents: the individual (regarded as the object of human security); the state (regarded in neoliberal discourse as the optimum form of human community); and the natural environment (the least regarded prime referent object of security).

Simplifying somewhat, environmental change occurs and is felt at three levels: macro; meso; and micro. The main macro-change is global warming. As shown in the table below, meso-changes occur across a variety of built environments and ecosystems. Micro-changes are those felt closest to the resource itself.

	<b>SECURITY REFERENT</b>		
<b>LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE DRIVER AND ITS CHARACTER</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Environment</b>
	Comment	Comment	Comment
<b>Macro</b>	<i>Questions of capacity and mobility</i>	<i>Questions of rights and responsibilities</i>	<i>Questions of survival in present form</i>
Climate Change	-Choice of crops	-aggregate concerns:	-dramatically

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- altered hydrological cycle</li> <li>- wetter/drier climate</li> <li>- upstream/down stream variability</li> <li>- Kalahari sands = high impact zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Choice of livestock</li> <li>-mobility</li> <li>-resettlement</li> <li>-ethnic tensions</li> <li>-‘point source conflict’</li> <li>-tragedy of the commons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>citizen and subject</li> <li>-inter-state framework</li> <li>-capital accumulation</li> <li>-function of ‘boundaries’</li> <li>-‘adaptive capacity’</li> <li>-‘resource capture’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changed over the long term</li> <li>-non-recoverable</li> </ul>
<b>Meso</b>	<i>-livelihood/needs issues</i>	<i>-capital generation/wants/needs</i>	<i>survival/resilience -needs</i>
Forest Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-woodfuel consumption</li> <li>-lootable commodities</li> <li>-NTFPs</li> <li>-differential impacts (race/class/gender/sex)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-forex</li> <li>-debt</li> <li>-open access resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-conversion to grasslands</li> <li>-loss of closed canopy/old growth</li> <li>-lack of complexity</li> <li>-increased vulnerability</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Species Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-bushmeat/local markets</li> <li>-endangered species trade</li> <li>-ecosystem conversion/fragmentation</li> <li>-land hunger</li> <li>-refugee resettlement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-MEAs and global ‘citizenship’</li> <li>-post-industrial income earners (charismatic species)</li> <li>-‘poaching’</li> <li>-global demand</li> <li>-regional ‘security’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-empty ecosystem syndrome</li> <li>-increased vulnerability</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Fisheries Depletion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-commons management and migration/population increase</li> <li>-factory fishing versus artisanal fishing</li> <li>-mangrove loss</li> <li>-coastal strip mining</li> <li>-water source pollution (industry, cities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-management capacity and piracy</li> <li>-poaching</li> <li>-forex</li> <li>-debt</li> <li>-jobs</li> <li>-tragedy of the commons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-empty seas</li> <li>-lack of complexity (trout Nile perch)</li> <li>-pollution</li> <li>-remaking stocks into flows</li> </ul>
Coastal Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-quality of life/aesthetics</li> <li>-artisanal activities</li> <li>-loss of access due to privatisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-unmanageable urban sprawl</li> <li>-debt, forex, jobs</li> <li>-privatisation of coastlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-land and water pollution</li> <li>-empty seas</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Topsoil loss	-land hunger/over-	-agro-industry	-loss of soil

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rural</li> <li>- urban</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>crowding</li> <li>-over-grazing</li> <li>-loss of fallow land</li> <li>-hardening of the soils</li> <li>-demand for charcoal</li> <li>-stream flow impingement/knock-on effect for fisheries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EU and Cotonou Agreement</li> <li>-debt, forex, jobs</li> <li>-cash crops</li> <li>-in-migration</li> <li>-government schemes</li> <li>-differential impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fertility</li> <li>-loss of complexity</li> <li>-species loss</li> <li>-link to degradation of water courses</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Expanding Deserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-land hunger/over-crowding</li> <li>-management and the commons/population increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-food security</li> <li>-link to urban issues and municipal overstretch</li> <li>-cash crops</li> <li>-debt, forex, jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-loss of biodiversity</li> <li>-link to degradation of soils and land conversion</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
<b>Micro</b>	<i>Where the 'ill-fitting shoe' pinches most</i>	<i>Differential impacts: starvation versus vacation</i>	<i>Death by a thousand cuts</i>
Point Source Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EPZs, industry and vulnerability</li> <li>-links to over-grazing, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-state capacity and jobs/debt/forex</li> <li>-MEAs, LEAPs, NEAPs and enforcement</li> <li>-what can be safely ignored?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-aquifer pollution</li> <li>-saltwater intrusion</li> <li>-creeping loss of biodiversity and complexity</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Stream/Watershed Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-loss of livelihood</li> <li>-'participation' and development</li> <li>-natural vs. human-made change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-dams and development</li> <li>-power/money/technology interface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-loss of complexity</li> <li>-eutrophication</li> <li>-alien species</li> <li>-dams and the 'living watercourse'</li> <li>-environmental flow</li> <li>-recoverability</li> </ul>
Crop Failure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subsistence/smallholder</li> <li>- forex/large-scale production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-drought/flood regimes and adaptive capacity</li> <li>-overcrowding</li> <li>-marketization of production</li> <li>-cash crops and food security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-production/power nexus</li> <li>-mono-cropping</li> <li>-forex/debt/jobs</li> <li>-food security</li> <li>-GM foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'agricultural ecosystems' and resilience</li> <li>-recoverability to what?</li> </ul>
Urban Decay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loss of services</li> <li>- municipalities over-burdened</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-livelihoods, survival and the big city</li> <li>-in-migration/out-migration</li> <li>-disease vectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-stability of the urban social space</li> <li>-frontlines of social movements and protest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ghettoization of lived environment</li> <li>-pollution</li> <li>-recoverability to</li> </ul>

		-frontlines of delivery	what?
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There is no shortage of ‘stock taking’ exercises as regards the SADC region and environmental change, in particular the interface between development, social change and the environment (SADC, 1991; Chenje and Johnson, 1994; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Baechler, 1998; World Bank, 1989). Without reinventing the wheel, I have organized this conclusion in terms of macro, meso, and micro environmental change and their varied impacts on individual, state and environmental security. My discussion of macro level change is limited to the possible effects of global warming on regional social and physical processes. I label macro-level changes as the unintended consequences of cumulative human activity, so differentiating such a long-term environmental ‘threat’ to people and ecosystems from sudden, natural processes such as drought and flood whose consequences however may be exacerbated by human activity. Drought and flood are natural processes constantly occurring somewhere at some scale across the region. The general inability of SADC states to plan for and cope with these well-known processes speaks volumes about both individual and collective state capacity and specifically empowered actor interests in ameliorating the worst effects of these calamities. Given that large parts of the region are hypothesized to be both wetter and drier under a changed climate regime, it is in the interests of all actors within the SADC region to develop enhanced capacity to deal with these threats. Evidence, however, suggests a continuing tendency toward reaction rather than proaction.

Meso-level environmental changes have been centrally treated in both development and security literatures. Most commonly understood as ‘environmental degradation’, these changes in resource endowments are due mainly to the intentional activities of humans at all level of regional social organization (Chenje and Johnson, 1994). In 1989, the World Commission on Environment and Development hypothesised in *Our Common Future* a link between environmental degradation and state/regional security (see Swatuk, 1997 for an overview and discussion in the Southern African context). In the early 1990s, several large-scale, academic and state-directed research projects were undertaken to examine the causal pathways between environmental change and security (Swatuk, 2005c for an overview). Renewable resources were the focus of these studies (it being assumed that precious, wasting assets such oil and diamonds will always be fought over). Given that Southern Africa was moving toward a post-Cold War, post-apartheid, post-civil war era, the region featured widely in primarily state-specific case studies (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998 for example). In the late-1990s, a counter-current appeared hypothesizing the potential for peacebuilding and inter-state cooperation on natural resources management (Conca and Dabelko, 2002).

Most of these studies, in my view, over-estimated the state-specific aspects of resource use (an odd focus given the parallel emphasis on such transnational phenomena as ecosystems as units of resource management and biodiversity preservation). Equally, in my view, they over-estimated the speed with which resource degradation would lead to (large scale) violent conflict. Globally, in both academic and policy circles, there has been a retreat from these perspectives. Nevertheless, Kaplan’s vision lingers on, with the

spectre of violent people of colour cropping up extensively in World Bank publications (e.g. Bannon and Collier, 2003; World Bank, 2006).

My own preference has been to try and interject (i) histories of the region; (ii) global-local connectivity; (iii) differentiation at the level of the 'state'; and (iv) alternative ideological and theoretical approaches to 'reading' Southern Africa (Vale, Swatuk, Oden, 2001 for example). In my view, when we add nuance and complexity, we arrive at quite different conclusions regarding regional futures (in fact, this is beautifully illustrated in the contrast between the 'empirically-based' Collier-Hoeffler model and its application in the case studies.

Moreover, partial readings – typical of 'management' sciences and sectoral approaches to resource use – lead to often unintended and/or unanticipated outcomes (such as global warming; ozone depletion; invasive species proliferation; watershed degradation). This is also why I have tried to place these issues back into a critical political economy framework and to introduce both discourse analysis and elements of post-modern/post-structuralism to my analysis. The result, in my view, is an analysis that recognizes the politics at the heart of resource use, and emphasizes the connectedness of local processes to multiple actors at various levels.

Micro-level environmental change is site specific and usually due to locally-generated processes, especially developmental activities such as the siting of dams; the decision to drain a wetland; the location of a waste disposal site or factory. Micro processes are most readily amenable to direct intervention to remedy locally-felt negative outcomes. At the same time, they are usually a consequence of wider socio-political and socio-economic processes, so linked the meso and macro environmental changes.

### *5.1 Macro-Level Environmental Change and Security*

Various climate change models reach different conclusions regarding the likely impact of global warming on Southern Africa. Most agree, however, that the Kalahari sandveld vector that extends from South Africa's karoo region all the way through to southern Cameroon will face dramatically altered climates. Hardest hit, it seems all models agree, will be the Okavango Delta region of Botswana (De Wit and Stankiewicz, 2006). In terms of individual/human security, it seems to me, the primary questions and considerations will revolve around capacity to adapt to change and mobility of self, household, and belongings. For example, some Southern Africans will be able to adapt through crop switching, continued access to (mined) groundwater, and perhaps shifting from livestock to game ranching. But many will not, and their primary adaptive response will be to pick up and go. 'Environmental refugees' is the common term for people on the move due to climate impacts. Resettlement brings with it 'point source conflicts' and new/exacerbated 'tragedies of the commons': all possible outcomes in the Southern African milieu.

Given this scenario, state security raises questions about rights and responsibilities: the rights of citizens to have access to resources sufficient for their livelihoods and the state's



responsibility to facilitate this. Homer-Dixon and others have speculated on the adaptive capacity of states facing significant environmental challenges. Given that elites have de facto captured the most valuable resources, their capacity to adapt at a personal level is significantly higher than the vast majority of the region's people who are poor urban dwellers and/or (sub-)subsistence farmers. This insulation (Kaplan's limousine riders) combined with slow, long-term change lessens the likelihood of significant action at national/regional level. Where mitigation and adaptation may take place are where more dramatic changes (drier/wetter) impact on a state's ability to accumulate capital. That regional cooperation has gone furthest in the areas of transboundary water resources management and energy development is testimony in this regard (Swatuk, 1996, 2002a and b; 2005b). To be sure, little progress would have been made without significant donor support. Nevertheless, SADC state-makers continue to press their own agenda, in particular the desire to harness through dam building and water transfer schemes the region's considerable but ill-timed and –located water resources endowment (SADC, n.d.).

For the Southern African environment, climate change is not simply a test of ecosystem resilience. Rather, it suggests that regional ecosystems will be forever changed. Their characters are not recoverable. What will happen if Kilimanjaro's glaciers melt away and are gone forever? Important hydrological cycles that fuel ecosystem strength and shape human communities will be forever altered. Mitigation strategies such as extensive tree planting around Kilimanjaro's base are designed to lessen the worst effects (by enhancing cloud formation and slowing run-off), but it is unlikely to stop global warming processes long underway. Already over-burdened urban areas are likely to see massive influxes of rural dwellers as 'adaptation' will mean out-migration from water-stressed margins.

### *5.2 Meso-Level Environmental Change and Security*

Meso-level changes are most directly the consequences of human action on local environments. Southern Africa's 'beverage' and mineral economies have given rise to very specific sorts of resource degradation (Moyo, Sill and O'Keefe, 1993). That they were constructed to satisfy colonial/settler 'wants and needs' led to further peculiarities of resource pressure. The socio-economic consequences of Southern African state formation are clearly outlined above and need not be revisited here. However, the spatial character of these economies – townships ringed with squatter settlements; affluent, Euro-mimicking, resource-gobbling suburbs; overcrowding on communal lands; highly specialized, input-heavy agro-industry; mines and settlements in upper catchments and at coasts – contributes significantly to both resource degradation and the weakness of social organization to respond effectively to meso-level challenges.

As with the macro level changes, meso-level changes impact differently across Southern African physical and social space. For the vast majority of Southern Africans, soil erosion, forest loss, species loss and desertification are livelihood issues, in part due to an artificially constructed setting. Land alienation and resource capture by the few paved the way for site-specific (e.g. communal lands) and resource-specific (e.g. NTFPs; coastal and inland fisheries; grazing land) degradation.

Post-colonial state-building has, for the most part, only exacerbated these dynamics by introducing health programmes without concomitant resource redistribution or job creation through economic diversification. As I have tried to show throughout this paper, it is too simplistic to blame ‘increasing populations’ for widespread resource degradation. The best lands and the greatest wealth are in the hands of the few who are themselves tied to global actors, forces and factors. Neo-liberal globalization puts these resources into fewer hands still.

To be sure, the processes set under way at the meso-level – hardening of the soils in the search for fuelwood; empty forest and grassland syndromes; overcrowding in urban and communal lands – are ‘resource time bombs’ that must be addressed. SADC’s state-makers have long linked these negative outcomes to an uneven global development playing field (SADC, 1991). The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, was specifically about development, not environment, in the eyes of Third World leaders (Swatuk, 2002c).

Whereas this degraded base has serious livelihood consequences for the individual, state security reflects the so-called ‘poverty trap’, where in an effort to generate foreign exchange, pay international debt, and generate jobs, resource degrading activities are reinforced. Bond (2006a and b) has clearly demonstrated the long-term environmental negative externalities of these activities. That individual, large-scale farmers and industrialists benefit from these activities, wield extensive political capital, and interact at the most superficial level with those most seriously affected by these processes bodes ill for any hope at ameliorating these activities. In my view, it has little to do with a ‘lack of adaptive capacity’ or an ‘ingenuity gap’, as articulated by Homer-Dixon. Rather, the entire structure is a composite of capacities to adapt – some of which are most successful than others, often involving global-local linkages (e.g. family diasporas; the relocation of company headquarters overseas) as well as serious social pathologies (e.g. warlordism; anomic-violence). For example, elites have mobility: they can shift themselves, their families and their assets around when the need arises. In contrast, common property regimes that served Southern African societies so well for hundreds of years are no longer able to cope with current demands (Chenje and Johnson, 1994; Tevera and Moyo, 1999).

For the environment itself, security is a question of survival and declining degrees of resilience. Meso-level changes fortunately are more or less reversible: flows of resources that have become stocks (fish, forests) can be returned to flows. The knowledge and technology is available. But given that these environmental changes most clearly reflect the shape of the regional political economy and its linkages to global actors, forces and factors, I remain unconvinced of the will of the empowered to act on behalf of the greater good. Powerful regional and global actors are recreating ‘unspoiled nature’ through transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) and migratory corridors in the interests of global lobby groups (e.g. WWF, Conservation International) and national tourism income potential, not – despite all the claims to the contrary – in empowering those most vulnerable groups in society who reside in these hitherto ‘lands of second choice’, now

increasingly regarded as lands of first choice by powerful actors (Swatuk, 2001; 2002b; 2005a; also, Koch, 1998; Katerere, Moyo and Hill, 2001).

### *5.3 Micro-Level Environmental Changes and Security*

Environmental changes at this level are the ill-fitting shoes that the poor must often wear: siting of EPZ and dirty industries; location of dams; service delivery in urban areas; NIMBY (not in my back yard) practices set in impoverished back yards. Point source pollution is felt differently: coastal zone spills may kill the livelihoods of artisanal fishers; but they simply sully the aesthetic beauty in rich playgrounds. Individual security at this level often requires the capacity for civil society to mobilize and the willingness of the state to respond rapidly, favorably and effectively. At this level, the incapacity of the state – its weakness – is most clearly revealed. Despite mountains of paper plans – NEAPs, LEAPs, MEAs, national water and sanitation master plans – neither implementation nor enforcement are well realized across the SADC region. Social protest sometimes results in better outcomes; but it rarely results in more effective overall governance.

For the natural environment, this is akin to ‘death by a thousand cuts’. Both Southern Africa’s poor and the natural environment show a remarkable resilience: an admirable capacity to survive, withstand and often recover. It is for this reason that I cannot foresee dramatic changes to the ways lives are lived and resources are used in the region – at least not up to 2020. However, there is no evidence that the region is capable of acting in a concerted fashion toward a greater good; it is a deeply divided socio-economic space, EU ‘blind faith’ in SADC’s ‘capacity’ notwithstanding. Where macro-level impacts become cleaftrer, and meso-level impacts more severe, the relative inflexibility of primary product producing, export-oriented economies whose beneficiaries are relatively few suggests to me that Southern Africa will sink slowly but surely into the mire of ineluctable environmental change. I welcome the opportunity to be proven wrong.

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