

## IN THIS ISSUE

The variety of contributions to this *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* testifies to the modified concept and context which the journal has promoted since its issue No 1/2013.<sup>1)</sup> Articles engaging with the conflicts among the Congolese diaspora in Pretoria; the guiding security paradigm for the South African military; aspects of the Chinese developmental state and its presence in Africa; the governance of South African society since the end of *apartheid* from an ethical-theological perspective; the xenophobic attacks in a rural South African community; and finally the relevance and notion of development studies all engage in a wider sense with matters of strategic relevance to the Southern African region.

In the first of two *Research Articles*, diaspora in a sub-regional context is the focus of the micro-study by *Saint José Inaka*. His analysis of the political clashes between militant and non-militant oriented Congolese factions in Pretoria draws attention to a hitherto largely unknown phenomenon. The fights between grassroots activists relating to differences in political support in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have since the 2000s expanded into the local arena of the South African capital. Until then mainly a domain of middle classes and elites operating transnationally, the dividing line is less between those for or against the Kabila government than those for or against the use of violence. According to Inaka, Pretoria's leniency towards the militant *combattants* allows them to limit the activities of those preferring peaceful means in support of change at home. Interestingly, the author submits that being exposed to the South African democracy has the impact of setting an example and reference point for how Congolese would like to be governed in their home country.

*Abel Esterhuysen* links his article to an analysis in an earlier issue of the journal, which was asking if the human security agenda had lost significance for the military.<sup>2)</sup> As he argues, human security was never abandoned as the guiding principle brought about under the democratic dispensation, but seems to be increasingly out of touch with the actual purpose and role of operations by the army. With an increasingly outward-looking role of the military, involved in peacekeeping missions leading to military operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, the idea of "a military without an

offensive fighting, force projection, intervention and expeditionary capability ... turns out to be an illusion". He suggests that the concept of human security, cultivated at highest levels of both policymaking and the military, created "a sanctuary to hide from tough decisions about defence" resulting in "an alarming ignorance of the role of military force and the utility thereof". Lack of funds and capability were the result of "a conceptual framework that does not correspond with operational realities". He diagnoses a divide between the dominant notion and the way military forces continue to operate, that is, a lack of translating human security into a defence strategy deliberately guided by an application of the paradigm.

Following a *Special Section* on Russia and (South) Africa in the last issue,<sup>3)</sup> this time two contributions examine Sino-African relations. They also relate to another article in the last issue.<sup>4)</sup> *Carlos Lopes* includes in his comprehensive overview the role and situation of Africans in China. This brings to the fore that such exchanges produce active players on both sides. It also provides insights that xenophobic experiences are part of the exchange relations and affect not only Chinese in Africa but also Africans in China. Lopes considers Chinese investments as an opportunity for industrialisation policies by African countries while infrastructural projects by Chinese are also in support of more regional integration. But "whether this is only to serve its own economic objectives remains unclear". Far from being altruistic, the challenge remains "to walk the talk and make sure the continent's dialogue with China ... takes Africa's blueprints into full account". So far, the continent's leverage in terms of its natural resources "has not been converted into negotiating power".

*Khwezi Mabasa* and *Zukiswa Mqolomba* take a closer look at potential lessons from China's ascendancy based on economic growth at home and how the nature of its developmental state offers useful insights for African countries. Stressing the need for efficient institutions, they at the same time warn that strengthening state capacity should not be at the expense of democracy. Rather, a developmental state setting the agenda instead of leaving this to market forces alone under a neo-liberal paradigm would require a professional bureaucracy committed to the restructuring of crucial sectors in support of industrialisation without limiting the democratic and civil rights of the citizenry.

The analytical *Essay* by *Barney Pitso* deals with a topical issue. His thoughts outside of the box share profound theological and

ethical reflections on the future of South Africa, which to some extent — albeit from a slightly different angle — complement the mainly legal-ethical perspective offered in the last issue as a result of the brutal force applied by the state in claiming to maintain law and order.<sup>5)</sup> Pityana stresses a conceptual understanding that value based philosophical, ethical and moral deliberations map a discourse, which should be considered as an integral part of what is understood as another kind of a strategic review by examining the constitutional democratic state after two decades through contrasting the promises and expectations with the delivery since then. Considered as a contract, he concludes that "the shortcomings of the ANC project have become glaringly obvious during the Zuma Presidency" and "that the transformation promised by Mandela never happened". Recent student protests were just one of the many signs of disillusionment — while articulated in a manner, "which could well undermine their legitimacy". For Pityana, a "crisis of faith" is among the most worrying contributing factors to the current decline. He insists that, "the essence of democracy is an expression of moral consciousness", which "has transformative power". Moral conduct as a duty in public life is necessary to secure decency and dignity.

The first contribution of the two *Analyses and Reports* by *Live Hågensen* and *Nicola de Jager* testifies to the dehumanisation bemoaned by Barney Pityana when revisiting the xenophobic violence of 2009 in De Doorns. Based on field research five years later, they reconstruct some causal factors of what happened then, but also reflect on what they term the "broader psychological conditions in the South African context". They are reluctant to conclude that the root causes for similar eruptions of violence are eliminated: "underlying xenophobic attitudes can still be stirred and used as political tools" by "self-serving and unscrupulous politicians or labour-brokers". Identifying the use of violence, as "an acceptable tool if something fundamental is not done to discredit it" returns to some of the value-based notions in the preceding essay. By appealing that "violence must be taken off the table as an accepted tool for expressing grievances" they also shift the focus from the specific case of De Doorns towards more fundamental considerations related to ongoing forms of social protest.

Finally, *Wayne Coetzee* and *Fredrik Söderbaum* end with some reflections on the state of the art of Nordic development studies triggered by the 3rd Nordic Conference on Development Research.

Examining the different meanings of development they dissect three approaches and schools of thought within the scholarly engagement by the development community. This is concretised with reference to the specific role of 'Africa' as a kind of projection area and mechanism resulting from an earlier era of Nordic solidarity with the anti-colonial struggles for emancipation and self-determination. Such a trajectory risks becoming the midwife of a continued altruistic and paternalistic attitude, which denies a partnership on an equal footing. Instead, it often (if only unintentionally) reaffirms non-reciprocal interactions and relationships based on hierarchical Eurocentric views. In conclusion, they argue for a revised approach by urging development studies being of relevance also in industrial societies to eliminate the dichotomy in favour of an increasingly universal quality. This, in the words of Björn Hettne, would be "authentic universalism in contradistinction to the false universalism that characterised the Eurocentric phase of development thinking".

We hope that the *Strategic Review* through its contributions, which once again are complemented by several reviews on topical matters, is able to maintain an approach in line with Hettne's considerations.

**Henning Melber**  
**Editor-in-chief**

## **Endnotes**

1. See the editorial (2013), "Southern Africa in the World. The Context for a Strategic Review for Southern Africa", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol 35, No 1, pp 1-13.
2. Africa, S (2015), "Human Security in South Africa", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol 37, No 1, pp 178-189.
3. See the contributions by Deon Geldenhuys on "The comprehensive strategic partnership between South Africa and Russia" and by Gerrit Olivier and Dmitry Suchkov on "Russia is back in Africa".
4. Theo Neethling, "China's international peacekeeping contributions and the evolution of contemporary Chinese strategic considerations"; see also the review by Zefanias Matsimbe on China and Mozambique in this issue.
5. Nico Buitendag and Neil Coetzer, "History as a system of wrongs — examining South Africa's Marikana tragedy in a temporal legal context".