SOUTHERN AFRICA IN THE WORLD

The Context for a *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*

Henning Melber
Department of Political Sciences
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Major changes in the global governance architecture have markedly impacted upon and considerably changed the situation in Southern Africa since this journal was established 35 years ago. These shifts have also modified the approach documented in the periodical. With this issue, the *Strategic Review* enters another stage in its development. In pursuance of being a relevant source of information, profound analysis and engagement with topical policy matters, it is representing academically sound Southern African perspectives, as well as perspectives on Southern Africa. At the same time, it adds voices from civil society and other agencies, contributing in their way to necessary debates. The new blend offers further reflections and dimensions to provoke fruitful discourses not only confined to a purely academic analysis.

1.　Post-colonial Southern Africa

The collapse of the Soviet bloc of states and the subsequent implosion of the Soviet Union marked the end of the bi-polar world and almost half of the 20th century dominated to a large extent by the Cold War and superpower rivalry. What Francis Fukuyama had termed "the end of history" (meaning the unabated triumph of capitalism) paved the way for a global appeasement strategy, which allowed the opening of new historical chapters for people in many parts of the world. In Southern Africa, the geostrategic realignments resulted — after the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan as a tit-for-tat — in the solution of the United States (US)-imposed 'linkage' (which was tantamount to a 'blockage'), that is, the withdrawal of the Cuban military

forces from Angola and the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) for a UN-supervised transition towards sovereignty of Namibia. Namibian Independence on 21 March 1990 at the same time marked the test phase for subsequent controlled change in the neighbouring 'big brother' and former occupying power, South Africa. One could say that the controlled change that took place in the former 'fifth province' ultimately also paved the way towards democratic governance in South Africa as a result of a similarly negotiated transition. With the exception of the Western Sahara, still occupied by Morocco, the African continent had finally achieved decolonisation.

The newly (re-)constituted Southern African Development Community (SADC) of the early 1990s faced the challenge of overcoming the structural legacies of foreign dominated societies and economies. This has been a mammoth task, constantly hampered by deeply entrenched local and foreign interests in the maintenance of a *status quo* and by unrest and civil war which continued as a result of earlier destabilisation efforts in parts of the sub-region. Finally, the chronic violence in Mozambique and Angola could by the turn of the century be brought to an end with the different forms of defeat of Renamo and UNITA in Mozambique and Angola, and the integration of their remnants into the political sphere. However, the failed secessionist attempt in the Caprivi region of Namibia in 1999, the turmoil in Lesotho caused by the failed *coup d'état* in 1998, and the involvement of several SADC member states in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1998/99 showed that war-like unrest was not only confined to the former Portuguese colonies. Unfortunately, the increasingly violent nature of the political contestation in Zimbabwe turned into a new factor of concern and resulted in hitherto unprecedented numbers of refugees from this country since the failed referendum in 2000. At the same time the kingdom of Swaziland became more and more a sort of rogue state under a monarch whose royal lifestyle contrasts with the abject poverty among those he rules with an iron fist. Notwithstanding such setbacks, the Southern African sub-region entered a hitherto unknown phase of relative peace and stability during the past decade.

But the continued occasional eruption of political violence and the responding state terror to bring social unrest under control in some of the SADC member countries were reminders that the peace

remains relative and fragile. The killing of demonstrators in Malawi (2011), the xenophobic terror culminating in mass killings (2008) and the Marikana massacre (2012) in South Africa, ongoing institution-alised political repression in Angola and the killing of demonstrators in the 'bread revolt' in Mozambique (2010) were among such markers. They complemented the already mentioned ongoing oppression as an integral part of personal rule in Swaziland and the chronic political violence in Zimbabwe as signs of a frail social contract.

Several liberation movements as governments have main-tained and reproduced their dominance ever since seizing political power in different but similar forms, based to a large extent on authoritarian forms of one-party dominance. But while in Angola and Zimbabwe the country's ruler has not changed for more that 30 years, in Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa several political leadership changes have not put the political control and relative stability into serious question. Transitions took place within the dominant parties. Transfer of political power happened in almost spectacularly peaceful ways also in Malawi and Zambia, while Botswana main-tains continued high scores in democracy under the very same party that has ruled since independence.

Besides the flaws, one can confidently conclude that Southern Africa currently, in contrast with its long history of armed anticolonial struggles, oppression and civil wars, has emerged as a sub-region which has the opportunity to consolidate its relative peace. The region's growing self-confidence is also symbolised in the ultimately successful efforts to campaign for a South African Head of the African Union (AU) Commission. This was declared and celebrated as a triumph for the concerted efforts of SADC, though it might well turn into a Pyrrhic victory: Not all stakeholders on the continent appre-ciate South Africa's high-profile role, and the country's recent military escapades into other parts of the continent and their disastrous results signal that ill-prepared efforts to punch above one's weight might suffer serious setbacks.

Celebrating in 2010 the 30th anniversary of the regional body, originally founded as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) — a pragmatic alliance of so-called frontline states — realistic analyses had to concede that the achievements were more limited in terms of truly regional integration than originally anticipated. Similarly, taking stock on occasion of the 50th anni-

versary of the continental African body, which has matured from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) established in 1963 into the AU in 2002, achievements are visible, but so also are limitations. There is clearly room for further improvement. A journal like the *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* is therefore tasked to embark on self-critical reflections to add to insights on how governance, the promotion of human rights and socio-economic equality, and thereby peace and stability, could be fostered by speaking truth to power under changing global, continental and regional realities.

2.　The Emergence of a New Global Order

Since the beginning of the 21st century the old hegemonic structures under Western (mainly US) dominance, which characterised the global order since the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the subsequent end of the Cold War, underwent modifications and shifts due to the new roles of emerging economies. Their degree of influence in the new global markets became visible since the 'club hegemony' of the G7/8 started, after the Summit in Cologne in 1999, to co-opt the finance ministers of a dozen more states mainly from the South. At the Kananaskis Summit in Canada (2004) the proposal by the then host, the Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, was to officially include the heads of state of these countries. This finally resulted in the institutionalisation of the G20 as the most visible form of new institutionalism signaling modified power structures and spheres of influence, transcending the former North-South dichotomy. It also suggested that the club governance by the G7/8 was about to reach its expiry date.

　　　New tendencies in bi- and multilateral relations are most visibly reflected in the institutional shifts from the G7/8 to the G20 and BRICS, as well as some other institutionalised forms of bi- and multilateral cooperation. All these arrangements remain based on exclusivity (by including a few but keeping outside the many). The BRICS is a prominent case in point, since the most obvious next candidate to join the club would be South Korea. But both China and Russia are determined to come up with all sorts of arguments why South Korea would not qualify. This is an indication that club governance is also about spheres of influence and the power of definition, while at the same time reflecting the limited basis of common interests. The BRICS Bank, announced with huge fanfare ahead of the Durban Summit of March

2013, failed to meet the expectations created for the simple reason that the different stakeholders all had their particular interests and were unable to give the common denominator preference. While this is sobering, it is also somewhat comforting. It suggests that the new complexities are not necessarily bi-polar, nor paving the way for another divide along a North-South dichotomy. Rather, the South has arrived in the North and *vice versa* when it comes to inequalities both globally as well as locally. The resulting interests and policies do not follow established patterns, which makes it less predictable but also more open and therefore providing options for hitherto unexpected alliances.

The new constellation is also to some extent mirrored in the debates and resolutions in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the Security Council, within the negotiations about global public goods and climate change and in the treatment of so-called rogue states. The normative framework of a Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the anchoring of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and subsequent initiatives to prosecute perpetrators all point into a direction that had been unknown until the turn of the century. Security Council resolution 1973 on Libya is a similar case in point, though the biased application of the doctrine for regime change was a setback as regards the position of the Security Council on Syria. The recent initiative on global regulations of arms trade was to some extent spoiled by the dissenting votes of Iran, Syria and North Korea. But the fact that they were the only ones, was significant.

The question remains whether or not an enlarged form of club governance might be an alternative to the participation of all? Why should the Permanent 5 in the Security Council, the members of the G20 or of BRICS or any other institution with a limited number of members be more representative than the totality of all 193 UN member states (cf Farer and Sisk 2010)? Such constructions still bear the characteristics of an elite architecture, which might at best have limited value when dealing with global challenges and global public goods which do not know any borders (consider only pollution, nuclear threats, but also organised crime such as human trafficking).

3.   New Alliances — Old Inequalities?

The share of the 'global South' in world trade is currently at 47 per

cent. The prognosis is that the size of the domestic production in the three leading economies of the South (Brazil, China and India) will by 2020 equal that of the six industrial powers of the North (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and the US). The latest United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) was published on 14 March 2013 under the programmatic title *The Rise of the South*. It suggests that the Southern engines of growth have not only changed the general global balance of economic strongholds, but also offer new windows of opportunity for South-South cooperation and in particular Sub-Saharan Africa:

> The South is now in a position to influence, even reshape, old models of development cooperation with augmented resources and home-grown lessons, but it also exerts new competitive pressures on other aspects of bilateral cooperation, resulting in greater options within the South for concessional finance, infrastructural investment and technology transfer. The growing assistance from the South is often without explicit conditions on economic policy or approaches to governance. The development emphasis on improved infrastructure, for example, has been rediscovered because of the domestic experience and lessons of some emerging economies. Over the past decade, nearly half of financing for infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa was provided by governments and regional funds from elsewhere in the South (UNDP 2013: 17).

In parallel to the G20, new institutions emerged, which signaled the dawn of new global players with considerable influence and impact. The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China), later expanded into BRICS with South Africa as the fifth member, are the most obvious new configuration. IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) reflects a new form of an institutionalised axis of cooperation and influence, which to some extent also represents identity, power and influence in sub-regional settings. Beyond these examples, new countries resuming considerable influence mainly due to their rapidly growing economies and external links include South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Mexico, and some of the Arab oil emirates, to mention only the obvious new players. But their diversity also sets limits to new alliances. The BRICS Summit held in Durban at the end of March 2013 showed the geostrategic interests and also exclusivity: Having the world's 29th largest economy according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

South Africa punches above its weight with the new economic giants on rank two (China), seven (Brazil), nine (Russia) and ten (India). But South Africa is the economic powerhouse of the continent and has managed to establish businesses in many other African economies. Not least, the BRICS alliance is not only about economics, but also about policy, and an African member of BRICS (and the G20, for that matter) is politically opportune.

As the latest figures released by the UNCTAD (2013) document indicate, foreign direct investments by the BRICS in Africa in 2011 displayed significant proportions. It is noteworthy, however, and indicative of the many nuances emerging in the new economic global order, that the third biggest foreign investor (after France and the US) had been Malaysia (with 24 per cent of its Foreign Direct Investment — FDI) in the African continent, albeit mainly in Mauritius, followed by China (rank 4) and India (5th). Four per cent of total FDI by the BRICS was in Africa, which seems little, but is more than the total proportion of the European Union (EU) and the US combined. Opinions differ, however, if and to what extent this new presence of economic interests is to the benefit of African countries and their people. Cautious embraces (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2013) contrast with much more skeptical views from scholars and social movement activists (Bond 2013).

This critical response — also documented in some of the interventions at the World Social Forum in Tunis at the end of March 2013 — is an indication that parts of the global social movements view the shifts in power relations not necessarily as a step in the interest of the struggles for emancipation. Economic growth in itself is not a reliable criterion for social progress towards more equality. The HDR 2013 seems to concur when stating with regard to the overall gradual improvement in values of the Human Development Index (HDI) that,

> progress requires more than average improvement in HDI value. It will be neither desirable nor sustainable if increases in HDI value are accompanied by rising inequality in income, unsustainable patterns of consumption, high military spending and low social cohesion (UNDP 2013: 23).

At the same time, however, the new hype about emerging 'middle classes' as an agent for change (by implication suggested to be a positive change towards more equality and participation) seems to

create a smokescreen for a continued neoliberal project, under which local and global inequalities are far from being reduced, but display the ongoing greed culture of elites. Parts of civil society have therefore reason to remain alert and cautious, especially in the light of deteriorating conditions for human rights activists in many countries. But civil society agencies are — like the so-called middle classes — anything but homogenous. Hence they play different roles in different contexts and represent different interests.

Corporate power as an increasingly influential global factor has moved beyond the reach of direct state policies and interventions and has turned out to be the root cause for the financial crises and the abuses of the banking sectors. The principle of state sovereignty has, since the Westphalian Peace, been gradually eroded by corporate power on a global scale, not least visible in intellectual property rights and other forms of control over public resources and goods. In the neoliberal era states have actively promoted this trend and thereby undermined their own influence and control mechanisms in the absence of a political will to remain in charge over the public interest as the interest of the citizens of their countries (meaning the majority if not all its citizenry).

But corporate power is not operating in isolation. Instead, it is actively seeking new alliances, including a common understanding with parts of global civil society in efforts to find new alternatives to the current impasses as reflected in the setbacks of the anachronistic, fossil-based industrial model of production and the consumer culture. The initiatives around the notion of a green economy are a case in point. Corporate power is hence not only working against demands from civil society, but is increasingly seeking alliances with parts of those agencies operating outside of the economic sphere while seeking representation in market oriented policies. Big international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and others are actively participating in such negotiations and decide on alliances with big companies or governments.

4.　Regional Challenges

Southern Africa (considered to be composed of most of the SADC countries in this context) has since the mid-1990s achieved full political independence and ownership by (more or less) democratically elected

governments in most (though not all) of its countries. However, this does not mean true sovereignty and ownership over all internal matters. The sub-region remains closely linked to external interests and influences and has some of the most open economies in the world. What David Sogge (2009: 22) stated for Angola, applies to all countries in the region:

> Politics remain entwined with powerful outside actors and are still politics of limited access to assets and privileges. State/party elites pursue their interests on the basis of understandings with foreign extractive and banking corporations, and with foreign governments […] elites harbour social and economic ambitions, but those do not now include a developmental state pursuing a socially inclusive agenda.

He also points to the fact that the world economic crisis "has exposed the massive regulatory deficit in national and global governance" Sogge 2009: 23). The "new scramble for Africa" triggered since the turn of the century through increased competition between industrialised and industrialising countries outside of the continent, has become a race to secure access to and control over the vast natural resources of some of these countries (cf Southall and Melber 2009). But the resource boom (which in the sub-region benefited among others and in different degrees Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia) has been short lived and reproduced a deeply entrenched structural pattern not in support of locally owned sustainable development. Exceptionally high annual economic growth rates did not translate into poverty reduction, employment, local ownership or value-adding activities. Instead, Southern Africa registered a massive deindustrialisation.

The economies of the sub-region remain dependent more than ever on a few basic raw materials for export and outward-oriented trade regimes securing revenue income and gains from international trade under preferential schemes, such as the US-American African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) or some other bilateral agreements such as the South African Free Trade Agreement with the EU. The collapse of the growth-based global economy in 2008 once again underlined that the economies in the region remain at the receiving end. Their own economies ended in recession due to the massive dependencies on the world market and the skewed exchange relations.

One is tempted to conclude that recent trends testify to the bankruptcy of the established outward-oriented economies. This outward-orientation looked beyond the region and missed opportunities to consolidate a regional architecture geared towards home-grown development based on mutual interests among neighbours. The massive internal discrepancies among SADC countries might add to the challenge, but does not render systematic efforts futile or doomed to failure.

If the currently dominant approaches to running the economies prevail, the deterioration of socio-economic conditions seems to be more likely than any gains. The resource curse needs to be addressed. Replacing one primary commodity with another where possible is not an answer, but adds to the problem. As long as such growth-based models do not benefit the majority of the people as a means to transform the economic basis in the medium- to long-term perspective, they are merely more of the same, but no cure for the disease.

The comparatively positive governance indicators, which place the region in its aggregate value — despite the rotten fruits in the basket — at the top of the Mo Ibrahim Index for the African continent, contrasts with the failure in terms of socio-economic delivery to the majority of the region's citizens. As the latest HDI reveals, several countries of the region are among those with the highest differences between the average per capita income ranking and the ranking in terms of human development: Botswana (-55), South Africa (-42), Angola (-35), Swaziland (-30) and Namibia (-27) are sad examples of how relative wealth serves mainly elites at the expense of the majority of the people. It is hardly any comfort that South Africa and Namibia are competing for the worldwide highest Gini coefficient, which measures the degree of inequality in terms of income discrepancies within a society.

5.   In This Issue

As indicated in our common framework presented with this issue, the *Strategic Review* is far from understanding regional stability as merely a military or intelligence-motivated undertaking in terms of traditional concepts of security. Nor do we consider security as limited to a notion of state security. Rather, we see the need for a human security perspective, which places the people at the centre of concerns. The

ambition is to engage in the analysis of socio-political and -economic developments that over and above the level of empirical case studies also impacts on or provides lessons for Southern Africa.

As a multi-disciplinary platform, the journal aims to facilitate vigorous and enlightened debate among scholars, policy makers, practitioners, students and activists. We thereby strive to contribute to the wider discourse strengthening and promoting democracy, human rights, security, good governance and the rule of law. The journal therefore adds to the core of scholarly analyses (which remain the backbone of the periodical) topical reports and assessments, debates, briefings and reviews to reach as wide a readership as possible by means of different but complementing forms of engagement. In this way we seek to promote agency and exchange through thought-provoking, at times provocative, plural and open-minded interaction between various stakeholders. These are at the same time invitations for a discussion, for which we would gladly provide a forum.

A first particular thematic and regional focus in this issue is for obvious current policy reasons devoted to various aspects of the situation in and around Zimbabwe. *Arrigo Pallotti* engages with "Human Rights and Regional Cooperation: SADC and the crisis in Zimbabwe". He seeks to explain reasons for the passivity towards executing a more visible and effective collective responsibility of the regional configuration to implement the decided mediation towards a compromise among the local political rivals and in protection of constantly violated human rights. By doing so, he points to some of the constraints and limitations of a body, which in the first place is an alliance of governments interested in maintaining their influence and power. This research article is complemented by the update of *Michelo Hansungule* on "The Suspension of the SADC Tribunal", which to a large extent is the result of the Zimbabwean government's refusal to accept the authority of the Tribunal. In addition, a report by *Steve Kibble* on "Zimbabwe Between the Referendum and the Elections" summarises his impressions during a recent visit and offers an atmospheric picture from the ground.

The research article by *Sadiki Koko* on "State-building, Citizenship and the *Banyarwanda* Question in the DRC" draws attention to the power of citizenship as a defining element for integration or exclusion of people as (non-)members of a society. Governments in the region are tempted to tamper with citizenship definitions and rights

for reasons of maintaining and reproducing power bases and the elimination of potential rivals as political candidates. That this is by no means an instrument confined to Southern Africa is documented by the recent efforts to discredit the US President for allegedly being not a born US-American citizen and therefore not qualified to campaign for and being elected into the highest political office. Notions of citizenship remain a contested affair also with regard to whole groups of people in the process of nation building, as the article shows.

The research article by *Moritz Schuberth* revisits "The Politics of Knowledge Production in Post-genocide Rwanda" as an example of lessons from practices of transitional justice and forms of dealing with trauma. Reconstruction and reconciliation are ingredients to nation building in many Southern African societies and are handled in different ways — if handled at all. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission contrasts, for example, with the deliberate absence of any such efforts in Namibia as a way of defining and handling national reconciliation. The case of Rwanda offers insights which can be instructive for meeting the challenges in other societies in the region. This focus on coming to terms with a post-genocide era touches also in some way on security issues and the desire of governments to maintain and execute control over the societies they represent at the politically elected level — not least by means of an official discourse.

But it is not only discourse and official narrative, as forms of social engineering, which are applied as instruments to govern. The much more direct temptation to opt for increased measures of securitisation as control mechanisms by governments is reviewed critically by *Dale McKinley* in his intervention on "State Security and Civil-political Rights in South Africa", thereby presenting a social movement activist's perspective. We do hope that his engaged critique will initiate some further debate on related matters.

Finally, *Anthoni van Nieuwkerk* complements the security perspective within a regional context through his examination of "SIPO II: Too little too late?", which returns to an analysis of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms through the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation as an institutional arrangement within SADC. It reflects on achievements and limitations of regional integration as an important reference for multilateral relations in Southern Africa.

We trust that this blend (which is spiced by three *book reviews* on titles we find of relevance also from a regional perspective) creates more appetite for the next issues, which will continue to strive for a similar offering guided by scholarly endeavor in combination with policy relevance and perspectives from civil society. Turning the journal into an *open access* publication will add to the wider circulation and impact. At the same time we will continue to publish the issues in hard copies.

We invite potential contributors to consult our guidelines for the submission of manuscripts and look forward to any comments and proposals to further enhance the relevance of this internationally accredited journal. Its reputation benefitted from the commitments of many scholars over the last three and a half decades. Most notably among them had been the late *Maríe Muller*, who passed away after a long illness just before this new format of the journal could be published. We remember her by means of an obituary. In recognition of her lasting contributions to the Department of Political Sciences as publisher of this periodical in particular and the wider academic community in South Africa in general, we have decided to devote this issue to her memory.

Bibliography

Bond, P with the Centre for Civil Society, groundwork and South Durban Community Environmental Alliance and in conjunction with Pambazuka News (ed) (2013), *BRICS in Africa — anti-imperialist, sub-imperialist or in between? A reader for the Durban Summit*. Durban: Centre for Civil Society/University of KwaZulu Natal.

Farer, T and T D Sisk (2010), "Enhancing International Cooperation: Between History and Necessity", *Global Governance*, Vol 16, No 1, pp 1-12.

Sogge, D (2009), *Angola: 'Failed' yet 'Successful'*. Madrid: FRIDE (Working Paper 81).

Southall, R and H Melber (eds) (2009), *A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

UNCTAD (2013), "The Rise of BRICS FDI and Africa", *Global Investment Trends Monitor*, special edition, 25 March.

UNDP (2013), *Human Development Report 2013 — The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*. New York: UNDP.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2013), *Africa-BRICS Co-operation: Implications for Growth, Employment and Structural Trans-formation in Africa*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.