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## Beyond the notion of security community: What role for the African regional organizations in peace and security?

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Research Paper No. 2005/52

## **Beyond the Notion of Security Community**

What Role for the African Regional  
Organizations in Peace and Security?

Liisa Laakso\*

August 2005

### **Abstract**

African regional organizations' increasing activity in security policy is usually approached through the concept of a 'security community', which can only partially clarify their difficult situation. A multilevel governance model is suggested as a more useful approach in a situation where economic cooperation is weak, member states' principles of governance diverge, and they themselves might be part of security problems. Security community is not a necessary condition for a regional organization to play a role in the field of security. By new intra-regional and cross-level relationships with the international community and civil society, regional organizations can become important security actors in Africa.

Keywords: African Union, regional economic communities, integration, multilevel governance, security community

JEL classification: F02, O19, R11

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## 1 Introduction

The recognition of the role of regional organizations in security is a new issue for Africans and the rest of the world. During the cold war in particular, security problems that spilled over state borders were usually addressed either multilaterally by the UN or bilaterally between one of the superpowers or ex-colonial powers and the African government involved. This situation has changed with the creation of the African Union (AU) and even before that with the activity of subcontinental organizations (like the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS). Today the world powers and the donor community look at peace and security as part of their dialogue with Africa as a region. The G8 major industrialized countries, for instance, in their Africa Action Plan in 2002 committed themselves to assisting African regional organizations so that these can engage more effectively to prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent. The European Union, in turn, provided 250 million euros of its development cooperation funds in 2004 to the AU to promote peacekeeping in Africa.

However, although African regional organizations have put security firmly on their agenda, their actual reputation in the field is mixed. The mere fact that Africa is the most conflict-ridden continent in the world suggests that the continent's more than 15 partly overlapping regional organizations have achieved very little. Criticism towards the new security and peacebuilding policies of the regional organizations is not surprising. Still these policies cannot be reasoned away as irrelevant by the mere fact that the African organizations are weak and African security needs are huge—quite the contrary.

In this regard Africa once again poses a challenge to the international relations' discipline (Lemke 2003). The mainstream approaches to regional integration, both (neo)functional and inter-governmental, postulate that integration starts from economic and cultural cooperation and proceeds to political and security sectors only at the last phase, after there is confidence as well as shared values and material interests between the states creating a 'security community'. In spite of a few exceptions, like the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), which is not active in the security sector at all, African regional economic integration is weak. Since the end of the cold war, intraregional trade in Africa has actually decreased.

Even more fundamental in the conventional theories of regional integration is its conceptualization as a process where states pool together or delegate and lose their sovereignty to regional level bodies. Such transfer of sovereignty can occur only if there is recognized sovereignty at the state level in the first place. This, however, is contested in many African weak, failing or collapsed 'quasi states' that nevertheless are full members of regional organizations (Clapham 1996). Related to this is that fact that the African states usually 'gain' their membership of the regional organizations by their mere geographical location and perhaps good relations between their governments, instead of criteria related to their economic policies, good governance or human rights legislation as applied in the EU for instance.

At the empirical level regional security cooperation traditionally meant common defence or a military alliance. Since the end of the cold war, NATO redefined its mandate to include peacekeeping operations to its activities. The surprisingly smooth progress the EU has made in its Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the rapid reaction forces, stems from global security threats instead of defence against

common enemies. Yet the focus of these two organizations' security arrangements remains outside their borders. In other words, their capabilities are not developed in order to tackle such conflicts as the one in Northern Ireland, the Basque region, or Cyprus. Tackling the intraregional and intra-state crisis, however, is precisely what the African regional organizations are expected to do.

The aim of this article is firstly to show the limited usefulness of the mainstream approaches of regional integration in the African context, and then to investigate the potential of the multilevel governance approach (MLG) to clarify the difficult position of the African regional organizations. Just like the conceptualization of security community, also MLG has been developed to grasp the experiences of integrating Europe. But it is still a novel approach. Security, for instance, has not been in the centre of the debate on MLG model in spite of a few exceptions (Smith 2004; Laakso 2005). Also it has rarely been used to describe developments outside Europe (Develtere, Hertogen and Wanyama 2005).

## **2 Approaches to regional integration and security**

Conflicts in Africa, although usually internal in character, have important regional dimensions. In that sense Africa forms a 'security complex' as defined by Buzan (1991), i.e. a regional group of states, whose security concerns are interlinked. Therefore it is pertinent to assume that regional level cooperation, irrespective of the policy sector where it occurs and how it occurs, affects those concerns. And indeed, even though enhancing peace is not included in the actual mandate of most African regional organizations, peace and security are often mentioned in their constitutive agreements as the indirect benefits of deepening regional cooperation. Precisely this common understanding of the benefits of regional cooperation for security is at the core of the notion of a security community.

### **2.1 Security community**

A 'security community' as originally defined by Deutsch (1957) refers to a group of states between which war has become inconceivable as the states share an understanding that force should not be used to resolve disputes between them. It was thus not the absence of disputes but an ability to solve them peacefully that was crucial. Empirically Deutsch was analysing the Western European developments after the Second World War. It is important to note that security community stems from intergovernmental arrangements. By agreeing to make decisions jointly at the regional level, the governments pool together their sovereignty and empower themselves vis-à-vis the external international environment. Thus the decisionmaking powers remain vested in the state level and states cooperate only when this is in their mutual interest.

The mere will to proceed with regional cooperation is not enough. One of the major shortcomings of many African regional organizations relates to the weak capacities of their secretariats to monitor the implementation of joint agreements. Partly the problem lies in the member states' strained national budgets; partly it reflects their weak commitment. If they do not provide their own resources to the organizations, it is difficult to assume any shared interests in the cooperation, not to speak about building a

sense of togetherness. However, if successfully developed, economic cooperation provides a basis for common interests. Regional cooperation in trade in particular, correlates with peaceful relations between states (Kivimäki 2001). This observation is not limited to the industrialized countries only. Acharya (2001) argues that the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is developing toward a security community. Although there are serious disputes between the member states, there has been no war between them during the organization's almost forty-year history.

However, trade interdependence alone without institutional cooperation does not build up a security community (Hegre 2000). Although liberalization is a stimulus to increase exports and imports between countries and can even contribute to economic growth, there is no positive link between trade openness and economic integration in regions struggling with security problems. As a matter of fact, the trade in some commodities is more profitable during conflicts than during peace, as wars fuel illicit exploitation of resources (Kennes 2005). Throughout the 1990s export growth rates were higher in conflict-affected developing countries than in those not affected by conflict (UNCTAD 2004: chart 31). This means that intensifying trade and friendly relations between governments can take place without peace. The mere fact that there is a security complex, like Central Africa, for instance, does not mean cooperation between the states there would automatically enhance security. The situation can be the contrary: authoritarian leaders might turn to governments of neighbouring countries, while violently defending their position against internal opposition. Low intensity conflicts rather than peace can become essential for them to stay in power (Söderbaum 2003). Partly for that reason entire regions, like Western Africa for much of its post-colonial history, have been ruled by militaries supporting each other instead of democratically elected civilian leaders. In similar ways mafia-like non-state actors or rebel groups can form regional networks for criminal or warfare activities. This relates to the second important, although self-evident, character of security community, namely the fact that it is a teleological and normative concept, tied to the goal of peace in international relations.

It is apparent that at least minimal stability is a precondition for regional cooperation that leads to a security community. Yet the literature utilizing the concept in Africa has largely ignored that aspect. Ngoma, for instance, argues that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has moved towards a security community (Ngoma 2003). Shaw, although explicitly emphasizing the need to look beyond and above the state level when analysing international relations in Africa, predicts the possibility of emerging security communities (2001). Also Lund's and Roig's (1999) approach to Southern Africa as a nascent security community and Schoeman's (2002) analysis of the AU should be mentioned. These observers, though, are not uncritical. They all emphasize uncertainties in the regional security arrangements in Africa—thus the need to qualify the notion of security community with question marks or such labels as emerging, nascent or embryonic.

According to Nathan domestic stability is a necessary condition for a security community. This is primarily so, because domestic violence generates tension among states and can spill over the borders. Therefore he suggests that security community should apply not only between states but also within them, and therefore none of the African regional organizations, which include member states with acute domestic instability, can be regarded as security communities (Nathan 2004a).

It is difficult to disagree with Nathan. But what are the consequences of his remarks? If we follow Nathan's argumentation, domestic affairs cannot and need not be tackled by security communities, as domestic security problems by definition do not exist in such communities. Emerging, nascent or embryonic security communities might be assumed to function differently, but they are too speculative to be useful in any systematic analysis. The simple answer to the question is that the concept of security community is not useful in the African context. Whether we like it or not, states are the building blocks of security communities; and whether we like or not, concentrating on states makes little sense in order to grasp the political realities in Africa. This is not to claim that states are unimportant. On the contrary, the empirical problem remains. In order to be able to build peace, African regional organizations need the mandate, capacity and political will to strengthen or replace the weak, failing and collapsed states. This is also why more attention needs to be paid to the multiple layers of political authority there.

## **2.2 Multilevel governance**

MLG differs from the concept of security community in two important ways. First of all it is not a teleological concept describing a desirable end result of regional cooperation. Governance of course refers to order, and therefore contrasts with the anarchy of war, but in order to be useful, it does not need to encompass all political units in their totality in a given region. Instead it is possible to postulate different degrees of governance at different levels. Furthermore governance is not necessarily legitimate or democratic even when it is effective. MLG contrasts the deterministic (neo)functionalist view of regional integration and emphasizes that the allocation of competencies between state and supra-state actors remains contested (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 28).

MLG explicitly challenges the intergovernmental thesis according to which governments participate in regional level cooperation in their own interest only. Instead it claims that there has been a shift from the domination of the state to the autonomy of other actors. While encompassing the emergence of supra-state levels of political authority, it also pays attention to decentralization and popular participation and, in particular, to the interaction between the substate and supra-state levels bypassing the state-level altogether. A case in point is the establishment of international courts that allow individuals to submit cases. One example is the African Court of Human and People's Rights, which according to its protocol, could ask for advisory opinions not only from member states and the AU, but also from any African NGO that has been recognized by the AU (ILO 2003). In the case of intergovernmentalism, sovereignty and accountability stem from the national level authorities, their nationalist legitimacy and/or democratic accountability of the parliamentary system. MLG, instead, enables different kinds of actors to participate in decisionmaking, although as Bache and Flinders (2004) note, greater participation does not mean greater influence, citizens' abilities to participate through informal networks and lobbying are unequal and the shifting locations of decisionmaking render the use of power difficult to monitor.

In principle the question is about a continuum of governance arrangements from the local level to the global level, the nation state being just one, though important, layer within the potentially infinite number of inclusive and mutually interactive levels. Therefore MLG can extend attention beyond the African subcontinental organizations and the AU to the global level, including the UN and the donor community, on the one hand, and to substate actors like NGO's, different militias and even private security

companies, on the other. Each of these levels has a role in the overall insecurity/security architecture in Africa.

MLG enables pragmatic approaches and relationships that are more about partnerships and regulation than the hierarchies and command usually connected to sovereign authority. It also means that the formulation of coherent policies requires coordination more than conformity. However, rather than developing from a rationalist model characteristic to intergovernmentalism and (neo)functionalism, MLG—with notions of blurred legitimate authorities and multiple non-exclusive political identities (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 45)—reminds us of ‘neo-medievalism’ in the postmodernist approach (Jachtenfuchs 1997; see Aalberts 2004). MLG might translate into heterogeneous and even contradictory policies within and between states, regional organizations and their external supporters. Thus there is a constant need to emphasize coherence not only between different levels but also between different policy sectors. The main asset of the MLG model with regard to security in Africa is precisely here. It is not deterministic and thus leaves room for uncertainties. Sensitivity to uncertainties in turn enables grasping both the possibilities and the constraints of regional organizations to bring security to Africa.

### **3 Multilevel security capabilities in Africa**

Until the formation of the AU, the most active organizations in the field of security in Africa were the subcontinental organizations. Since then the attempts to build continental security capabilities by utilizing the subcontinental organizations represents an interesting development and pattern that can be interpreted through the multilevel model.

The AU, like its predecessor the Organization of African Unity (OAU), has identified five regions as constituent components within the African continent: Southern, Western, Eastern, Northern and Central region. These regions form the basis for the selection of members of the AU Commission. As regional economic communities (RECs) representing these regions the AU lists SADC, ECOWAS, The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as well as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), though the latter includes states from different regions, i.e. Southern, Eastern and Central Africa. The general rule has been only to recognize one subcontinental organization per region. Of the RECs only SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD have been active in the security sector and are thus worth a brief overview here, particularly SADC, which has faced enormous difficulties to formulate a common security policy.

#### **3.1 The examples of SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD**

Southern Africa is an example of a region that has lacked neither attempts to cooperate in the field of security policy nor constant failures to do so in a meaningful way. Difficulties have been faced both as far as the content of the cooperation and its form are concerned. On the one hand, there has been confusion on whether the member states should enter a defence pact, i.e. military alliance, or develop a comprehensive security



policy. On the other hand, there are deep political divisions that hamper the formulation of a common policy, not to speak of an ability to interfere in the internal affairs of any of the member states.

After the end of the apartheid rule in South Africa, the SADC approved the creation of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. The member states, however, were immediately divided on the relationship between the Organ and the SADC secretariat. According to South Africa the SADC Treaty did not provide for a separate organ, while Zimbabwe argued that the Organ should operate independently on a flexible and informal basis. Behind the dispute was the apparent fear of the Zimbabwean government, i.e. President Mugabe who was chosen to chair of the Organ, that Zimbabwe was losing its position in the regional organization to South Africa, the newest member. This division extended to two interpretations of the purpose of the cooperation. South Africa's 'camp', which included Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania, viewed the Organ primarily as a political forum for confidence building within the region. Zimbabwe's 'camp' including Angola and Namibia favoured military cooperation. Mugabe even stated that he foresaw the Organ developing into a 'kind of North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the region' (Nathan 2004b: 8).

In 2001 SADC approved a new protocol on politics, defence and security cooperation and appointed President Chissano of Mozambique as the new chair of the Organ replacing Mugabe. Simultaneously the SADC Treaty was amended to stipulate the Organ as an institution of SADC. In 2003 the SADC Summit approved the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ and the SADC Mutual Defence Pact. The pact provides for defence cooperation in response to an armed attack. Already in 1999, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia had entered into a defence treaty without even informing SADC about it (Nathan 2004b: 7-8).

These institutional vacillations have to be seen in the context of a number of violent conflicts in the SADC region: civil war in Angola that ended in 2002; a war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which became a member of SADC soon after the fall of Mobutu's regime in 1997; electoral violence in Lesotho in 1998, in Malawi in 1999, in Zanzibar in 2001, and in Zimbabwe since 2000; failed secessionist bid in Namibia in 1998/9; tensions between Angola and Zambia in 1998 and 2000; as well as a constitutional crisis in Zambia in 2001. Action, however, was taken only in two cases. Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola decided to send troops under SADC auspices to the DRC in 1998 to help the government of Laurent Kabila without even consulting South Africa, which had emphasized conflict resolution through mediation. The intervention did little to enhance stability in the DRC, contributing rather to the further fragmentation of the country and external exploitation of its resources. Nor was it an economic success for Zimbabwe although government officials there anticipated that the costs of the intervention could be covered by revenues from the riches of the DRC. Quite the contrary, Zimbabwe's economic downturn and domestic political problems were only exacerbated (Addison and Laakso 2003). In the same year 1998 in consultation with Mozambique and Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana again 'under SADC auspices' deployed troops in Lesotho. This was resisted by some sections of the Lesotho army, which then led to battles, killings, anarchy and public demonstrations. As a consequence, the operation was viewed by many observers as a military and political disaster.

In most cases of violent eruption in the region, SADC has refrained from any engagement, treating violence as a purely domestic affair. Zimbabwe is a case in point. SADC has not only remained silent but has expressed solidarity with the Zimbabwean government and condemned its international criticism. In 2003, for instance, the Ministerial Committee of the Organ 'took note that those opposed to Zimbabwe have tried to shift the agenda from the core issue of land by selective diversion of attention on governance and human rights issues' (Nathan 2004b: 11).

Development within ECOWAS has been different, more *ad hoc* by nature. ECOWAS responded to the crises in Liberia in 1989 by establishing a standing mediation committee. This then established the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which undertook peacekeeping in Liberia in 1990 and again in 1999 and 2003, in Sierra Leone in 1997-2000, in Guinea Bissau in 1999 and in Côte d'Ivoire in 2003. Through these actions, ECOWAS has gradually developed institutional capacity for crisis management.

However, in Liberia and in Sierra Leone in particular, the ECOMOG performance was controversial. It did not enjoy unanimous support within ECOWAS and according to some observers rather exacerbated the crises (Cilliers 2001). The domination of Nigeria, particularly when under military rule, did not facilitate acceptance of the legitimacy of ECOMOG troops. Still, a diplomatic norm has emerged emphasizing the centrality of ECOWAS in conflict management in the region. In 1999 ECOWAS adopted the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, as a way of strengthening its mandate and institutional capacity to manage conflicts further (Adibe 2002; see also Francis 2001). ECOWAS has also put in place an observation and monitoring system and has institutionalized coordination with NGOs through Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) since 2003.

IGAD has no mandate to intervene in intra-state conflicts, and only a limited one with respect to interstate conflicts. Its 1996 Act articulates the sovereignty of all member states, as well as the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. There is only an admonition to settle intra-state and interstate conflicts through dialogue. However, it has established the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) office. Although confining its role only to pastoral conflicts, it represents the first attempt to deal with conflicts through a common mechanism, involving non-governmental sources of information and sharing information among member states. Lack of trust between the member states and their tendency to control the mechanism including the information coming from non-governmental sources is a hindrance to its effective functioning. As noted by Apuuli, CEWARN 'is a good theoretical framework to react to the multifarious conflicts that are afflicting the IGAD region, however on the practical level it is so full of ambiguities and lacunae that it might not work' (Apuuli 2004: 174).

IGAD has not been able to prevent or manage interstate conflict, like the one between Eritrea and Ethiopia, where the OAU finally played a major role. Peace initiatives in the region have more often been undertaken through a 'lead nation' rather than through the IGAD secretariat. Kenya, for instance, has led the talks to conclude both the Sudan and Somalia peace processes.

It is evident that the subregional organizations in Africa have not been able to mobilize their resources for common security policy effectively even though there have been

important institutional developments to strengthen their role in the field. Subcontinental organizations often operate under conditions that potentially impair their effectiveness. For example, states involved in conflicts can have leading roles in subcontinental organizations, thereby impeding these groupings from acting as mediators or reducing their impartiality. Rivalry between neighbouring states also makes it less likely that subcontinental organizations would be given intrusive powers to deal with intra-state conflicts. Therefore the AU as a continental body might have more opportunities.

### **3.2 African Union**

Conflict management at the continental level might be easier to arrange as the distance between the AU and the actual disputes is greater than the distance between the subcontinental organizations and the disputes. Related to this asset of distance is the AU's better ability to engage with the civil society and to give it a voice, which is often silenced at the state or subcontinental levels as being the voice of the political opposition only. The AU can more easily represent African security interests globally and has a better ability to raise the long-standing international institutional support that Africa evidently needs.

When formulating a continental security policy the AU not only relies on the experiences of the subregional organizations. Although the OAU is often criticized as having had only a token role in peace and security in Africa, already its 1993 Cairo Declaration set up the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution and its operational arm, the Conflict Management Centre (CMC). Also a special peace fund was established (OAU 1999). With the deployment of several fact-finding and military observer missions, the OAU assumed an active role in the search for political solutions to some conflicts. Examples of the OAU playing an important role include mediation, political pressure and employment of special envoys in Burundi and in the secessionist crisis in the Comoros, as well as close cooperation with the UN in the conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and in the conflict in the DRC.

The formation of the AU represents a major step forward in this field. It has already moved beyond the mandate and record of its predecessor. The Constitutive Act of the African Union allows both 'the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security' (Article 4j), and 'the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity' (Article 4h). In practice, any decisions of this nature would be taken by the AU's Peace and Security Council. While still acknowledging the principle of 'non interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another', the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union gives the Council the power to 'approve the modalities for intervention by the Union in a Member State, following a decision by the Assembly' (AU 2003). This mechanism has already been tested in Burundi, Darfur, DRC and Côte d'Ivoire. In each of these cases, the Commission of the AU was tasked with following the situation, providing a good example of MLG arrangements. With such mandates and adequate recourses, where the international community can pay a major role, the Commission can gradually assume autonomous powers in the security field. It is good to remember that Africa is a vast continent and the member state governments are unlikely to have enough expertise or even interest to control all the actions of the continental body.

Since 2003, steps toward setting up an African stand-by force and a military staff committee under the aegis of the AU have created a special challenge for interaction between the continental and subcontinental levels. The AU Summit in Maputo in July 2003 decided on the framework to set up an African stand-by force (ASF), consisting of five brigades, each comprising contributions from states in a particular region. These troops are to be at full strength in 2010. In the coordination and management of this effort, subcontinental organizations will play a major part. The effort to set up a stand-by brigade for the Eastern Africa region will be coordinated and managed by IGAD, for instance, and within SADC a structure for multinationality command and control has been approved for the force named SADC Brigade (SADCBRIG). Also ECCAS has decided to create a regional military command with a joint brigade to be deployed to peacekeeping in Chad (IRIN 2004).

The prospect of increased military cooperation for peacekeeping offers unprecedented opportunities, both at the continental and subcontinental level. Participation by senior officers and defence ministry officials in meetings to discuss military cooperation can be a confidence-building exercise. The establishment of joint brigades, which requires common training exercises and concrete cooperation on the ground, can further build confidence among states.

Taking into consideration the importance of coherence in MLG arrangements, there is a dual structural challenge posed by the ASF. First, while the principles of AU interaction with subcontinental organizations are still being tested, the latter have to assume a major role in an issue involving the credibility of AU institutions and mechanisms. This might end up putting a major strain on relations between the two levels. Second, there are discrepancies in the geometry of the regions providing stand-by brigades and the subcontinental organizations that will play a major role in administering them. For example, of the thirteen countries which form the Eastern Africa region—from which the Eastern Africa Stand-by Force is being formed—only seven belong to IGAD, which will at least on an interim basis ensure coordination and management functions.

Further challenges relate to the comprehensiveness of African security problems. A framework agreement on a common African defence and security policy was adopted at the extra-ordinary AU Summit in Sirte in February 2004. It includes elements of human security, including human rights, participatory governance, equal development, access to resources and the basic necessities of life, protection against poverty, good education and health, gender equality and environmental integrity. While agreement about such policy is not difficult to achieve, operationalization of such wide policy and setting up priorities within it, is not given (AU 2004a, 2004b).

Also NEPAD points to a continent-wide willingness to apply diverse mechanisms to reduce the incidence and magnitude of conflicts. NEPAD has been recognized as a programme of the AU. *A New African Initiative* (2001) describing NEPAD's goals states that the initiative 'will give priority to capacity building in order to enhance the effectiveness of existing regional structures and the rationalization of existing regional organizations'. Although NEPAD's activities do not directly relate to military capabilities and missions, which require permanent decisionmaking institutions, it could play an important role in the security field by improving the quality and transparency of governance, by interstate dialogue and by increasing cross-border activity. However, this too requires more than agreement of the objectives. The deepening crisis in Zimbabwe shows how weak these new mechanisms still are.

### **3.3 Regional civil society**

The importance of civil society and regional action by civil society organizations in peacebuilding is widely acknowledged. African regional civil society initiators in peacebuilding include Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa), Southern Africa Conflict Prevention Network and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and the above mentioned WACSOF. On the intergovernmental level there have also been important initiatives to engage with civil society, the most important of which is the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA). In 1991, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and the then OAU Chairman, Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni invited African leaders to attend a meeting on security, stability, development and cooperation, which then proposed CSSDCA. However, it was not before the 36th OAU Summit in Lomé in 2000 that CSSDCA was officially endorsed. One of CSSDCA's main functions is to provide a mechanism for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of AU's decisions. To some extent, CSSDCA and the simultaneously launched NEPAD can be seen as competing arrangements initiated by different coalitions of African leaders. With the MLG framework such multiplicity, however, is not a problem if these bodies do not pursue contradictory policies.

Furthermore, the OAU Civil Society Conference on Developing Partnership in 2001 and its follow-up in 2002 explored practical modalities to the goal of engaging with the civil society. The monitoring mechanism is planned as a comprehensive peer review process involving governments through inter-ministerial committees, RECs, civil society organizations and research agencies. As a good example of a multi-level arrangement, it would involve a process of interaction at national, subcontinental and regional level for cross-verification and mediation. In 2001 the OAU secretariat stated that it would work with civil society 'to provide them with a legal framework on the basis of which they could claim their legitimacy at the national level'. Civil society, in turn, was seen as having an important role in informing the African people about the continental level decisions (OAU 2002: 280). A good example of the new relations between the regional level bodies and civil society is that the AU is utilizing the expertise of independent African research institutes also in the field of security.

Inclusion of civil society forum to the peace processes is already a norm. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region under the auspices of the AU and UN, for instance, has facilitated meetings for women, youth and NGOs from the region (AU 2005). When interpreted through the MLG model, the existence of various platforms for dialogue between the public authorities and civil society and overlaps between these platforms do not necessarily make the interaction ineffective. Both conflict prevention and long-term peacebuilding are areas where the exchange of information and views is valuable and should be kept flexible and to a certain extent informal, too. For example, civil society can promote useful informal approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, which is particularly relevant to conflicts involving parties like rebel groups that have not been recognized by governments.

Finally it is important to remember that the challenges of sustainable peace in many parts of Africa lay in promoting equal development with the wealth gained from the primary sector. Transparency in mineral revenues and payments is essential for African governments and public to be able to utilize the revenues efficiently. Conditions for such transparency have to be created in partnership with the private sector, which along with the civil society, needs to be engaged to the African security policy. The significant

and sometimes contradictory role played by international private security companies in Africa is also relevant here. As their engagement is unlikely to work solely on voluntary or on unilateral basis, simply because companies compete with each other primarily in terms of the profit they can make, a regional or global approach is likely to be more pertinent.

#### **4 Conclusions**

The fact that governments of sovereign member states might themselves be part of security problems—also within their own territory—is an obvious challenge for African security integration. It has to move towards a model, which can address situations where the state monopoly over violence is already compromised. By the same token, supranational regional authority becomes a necessity. This makes maddeningly difficult conditions for the attempts of the African regional organizations to bring security to the continent and for its investigation with inherited international relations concepts like security community.

The main argument of this article was that the emergence of a security community is not a necessity for regional organizations to play a role in security. By developing new intra-regional and cross-level relationships, regional organization can exercise empirical power and make a difference to the realities in the ground. In order to evaluate their performance, more research needs to be done within particular cases in the future. It is also evident that the regional level security policy cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of what the regional organizations are not doing. Depressing as it is, there are many conflicts in Africa which cannot be prevented or solved at least in the near future.

The military side of security integration should not be overemphasized. Integration for human security has to proceed in other fields, too. This can involve more than one organization and more than one type of organization focusing on common markets or development cooperation, for instance. While economic benefits are often advanced as the main benefits of regional integration through such organizations, other results like capacity development for democratic governance, social inclusion and sustainable development should not be overlooked. Peace and security are not immediate objectives of such cooperation and not necessarily even included in their mandate. Still as long-term objectives and preconditions for development they can be mainstreamed to all forms of international cooperation.

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