



Research Article

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Analysis of the Efficacy of Regional Economic Communities in Relation to Maintenance of Regional Peace and Security: Case Study of Southern African Development Community

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Abstract: Whereas SADC is perceived as the most peaceful region in Africa, this achievement is marred by ongoing armed conflict in the DRC, insurgency in Cabo Delgado in Mozambique's and periodic election related violence and social unrest that characterise some SADC member countries. These security concerns render SADC ineffective with regards to the maintenance of regional peace and security. This qualitative study analysed the efficacy of SADC in relation to the maintenance of regional peace and security. The analysis was based on the Constructive Peace Theory (CPT) and the Sustainable Regional Peace and Security Framework (SRPSF) which was developed by this researcher. Interviews and documentary analysis were used to gather data from 15 participants who were selected using purposive sampling technique. Results show that leadership discord, weak regional institutions, lack of funding and ideological crisis were the key factors that render SADC's bid to maintain regional peace and security ineffective. The study recommended the construction of supranational regional institutions and the establishment of self-reliance funding models to bankroll essential regional peace and security initiatives.

Keywords: Peace and Security, Positive Peace, Negative Peace, Conflict, Regionalism.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is besieged with violent conflicts stemming from armed groups seeking to seize power from sitting governments as well as violence and civil unrest stemming from electoral contestations and disputed elections results. These numerous factors contribute to unrelenting conflicts that destabilise the vastly natural resource endowed African continent. The problem of violence and armed conflict in Africa remains a security concern despite the commitment by the African Union, through its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), to bring lasting peace and security in the whole continent. This unwanted situation is an injury to the African Union's overstated expectation to 'silence the guns by 2020' to create plausible conditions for sustainable development in a tranquil environment. Unexpectedly, the majority of the regional groupings in Africa have been struggling to maintain peace and security. This study analysed the efficacy of regional economic communities (RECs) in relation to maintenance of regional peace and security with particular focus on Southern African Development Community.

Background

The biggest obstacles to improving Africa and its people are those related to peace and security. The majority of African RECs remain mired in a destructive

cycle of conflict, undermining the continent's efforts to develop and integrate. Peace and security in Africa are key drivers in the continent's political, economic, social, cultural, and technological spheres, among many other facets of state and human security. The pursuit of peace and security is certainly the most urgent of the many challenges facing the African continent. Consequently, the need to maintain peace and security in Africa cannot be overemphasised. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) emphasizes the significance of peace and security at all societal levels, including the regional, continental, and global ones. The UN therefore, anticipates that institutions at the national, regional, and global levels will work to advance peace by reducing all forms of violence.

While each state has the primary responsibility to ensure peace and security to prevent chaos of war and disorder within their borders (Anne-Marie, 2017), there is no doubt that RECs are key players in regional peace and security agenda (Adetula *et al.*, 2020a, Bereketab & Cyril, 2021; & Chukwuemeka, 2021). Nevertheless, what is disturbing in Africa is that even under the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic, armed conflicts remain unabated. Recent evidence (Laliberté, 2019; Palik, Aas, & Methi, 2020; & ACLED, 2021) indicates that politics in Africa has failed vast populations in this continent. After the successes of liberation struggles wedged