

THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) AND COVID-19: REVISITING SECURITY COMMUNITY IN SADC

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Abstract

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic remains a global security challenge for humanity. The COVID-19 pandemic, a non traditional security threat has exposed how regions respond to non traditional and emerging security threats. Similarly, the South African Development Community (SADC) region remains confronted with security ramifications due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The peace and security of the region has been disturbed due to an upsurge of conflicts in countries, such as South Africa (South Africa's unrests, protests and the Phoenix Massacre), Lesotho (Eswatini protests) and Mozambique's (Carbo Delgado insurgency), all amidst the coronavirus global pandemic. Further to this, SADCs human security challenges that have transpired and, in some cases, have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, include economic decline, job losses, food insecurity and the loss of life to mention a few. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, SADC Member States have had to exercise greater regional pandemic management with diseases, such as Malaria, Human Acquired Immune (HIV/AIDs) and Tuberculosis (TB). SADCs efforts in combatting these human security threats have been progressive and notable. The study will analyse and build on the challenges, identified in Landsberg's (2012) study *The Southern African Development Community decision-making architecture*, where he suggests that at the heart of SADCs progress is the need for greater implementation of their set goals and aspirations. The study will analyse recent efforts, undertaken by the SADC region, in order to determine the successes and challenges, faced by the sub-regional bloc. It is analysing peace and security of SADC under the Covid-19 pandemic through an upsurge of conflicts in the region and the early securitisation and cooperation of the Covid-19 pandemic. The article suggests, SADC strengthened regional cooperation efforts, such as early warning systems and regional execution methods, have fostered advanced regional security outcomes in the region.

Keywords: Southern African Development Community (SADC), regionalism, security community, Covid-19.

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1. Introduction

Globally, as the result of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic there has been unprecedented concern on peace and security. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced the disease as a global pandemic [1]. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to remain a security threat, and as a result The World Health Organisation (WHO) has provided global insights on the pandemic, taking the lead on providing global resolve on the matter.

The outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19) disease was reported by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, China, in Wuhan, Hubei Province. The coronavirus is an infectious disease that affects the respiratory system in the body. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease, caused by a newly discovered coronavirus [1].

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is a severe acute respiratory syndrome virus [2], a non traditional security threat that's ramifications continue to haunt SADC and which has impacted on the regional and human security of the region. Given that, the peace and security of the region has been disturbed in the upsurge of conflicts in countries, such as South Africa (South Africa's unrest and the Phoenix Massacre) [3], Lesotho (Eswatini protests) [4] and Mozambique's (Carbo Delgado insurgency) [5].

In early March 2020, SADC reported its first Covid-19 case. By 15 April 2020, fourteen of the 16 SADC Member States has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic [6]. In March 2020, fourteen (14) of the sixteen (16) SADC Member States were affected by Covid-19 – Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia,

Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In May 2020, Lesotho was the last South African state to record Covid-19 infection.

SADC has also undertaken a number of regional responses to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, such as reinforcing Disaster Risk Management; implementing the SADC Protocol of Health [7], pooling procured services for medical supplies, to mention a few [6].

Infection rates and death rates have since soared in the SADC region. Further to this, instability, connected to emerging human security threats, has impacted people's livelihoods due to economic impacts, job losses and increase poverty. Hence states within this regional bloc have instituted domestic policies, connected to border control, inter-regional travel and transport as well as lock downs and social distancing [6].

The SADC states, have through their regional cooperation strategy crafted plans in line with SADC regional response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A collective commitment to human security matters remains high on the SADC peace and security agenda. The SADC security agenda is connected to matters, pertaining to gender and women's issues, disease, education, food security and climate challenges [8]. An effort for these challenges to be overcome is leading to greater success, alongside peace, security and development.

Furthermore, a noteworthy point flagged has been the implementation of the Regional Strategic Indicative Plan (RISDP) alongside the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap. In addition to the flagging of monitoring and evaluation of all achievements of SADC.

Despite the many structural and strategic implementation challenges, faced by SADC in its formative years, SADCs has managed to overcome many hurdles through its consultative process with member states and their achievements have led to SADC overcoming major conflicts. SADC has curtailed conflicts in both the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) crises and the Lesotho insecurities, due to SADCs thriving early warning security systems. Furthermore, SADCs prevention success in epidemic planning for malaria [9, 10] and HIV [11] epidemic containment and decline have been progressive in the region [12].

It is for this reason and several other reasons that SADC is a unique case study to analyse regional security and early warning strategy for pandemic management. Even though SADC has had increased Covid-19 infection and death rates, other regional blocks have been affected even more with their numbers of infections and death rates. This is purely due to advances in the early warning mechanisms, used in the SADC region [13, 14].

The study will analyse and build on the challenges, identified in Landsberg's (2012) study *The Southern African Development Community decision-making architecture*, and comparatively analyse recent efforts, undertaken by the SADC region, the successes and challenges, faced by the sub-regional bloc. In order to further discuss Covid-19 on the SADC sub-regional blocs' successes and challenges. In exploring the early securitisation of SADC, the study explores the collective strategies and how peace and security have been maintained amidst a global pandemic, in order to explore the security community status of SADC.

The key aim, underscoring this study, is the possibility of transforming the SADC security architecture in response to the lessons, learnt by the global Covid-19 pandemic. As defined in the main, a robust security community can transpire, as the result of the adoption of protocols, policies, and the operationalisation of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation (OPDSC), as well as a Strategic Indicative Plan (SIPO) [15]. Specifically the study seeks to explore the feasibility of the recommendations of the Centre for Conflict Resolution's 2007 policy report. This report argued that a "security community" would have to entail commitments to, and effective implementations to: democracy, human rights, constructive conflict resolution, gender equality, increasing the capacity for HIV/AIDS, and implementing operational plans, which will lead to the constructive settlement of conflicts and peace, as SADC is lacking in these domains. The paper calls for a Collective Regional Policy to ensure that SADC demonstrates a common identity, value system, and a measure in place that ensures that member states implement and adhere to conflict management policy.

2. Materials and Methods

A quantitative research study was employed. Although the notion of SADC as security community has been researched considerably in academic literature, there is a shortage of literature on this phenomenon in the Covid-19 context. This study explored the recent security efforts, undertaken by the SADC under the Covid-19 pandemic, through an exploration of an upsurge of conflicts in the region and the early securitisation and cooperation strategy and operations undertaken. This study is a case study, on SADC, one of the regional economic communities in Africa.

The structure of the study formed the collection and documentation of data with the aim of answering questions and the hypothesis. Firstly, the study employed a quantitative, exploratory literature study which searched definitions, theories, policy, viewpoints, principles, methodologies and other research findings and the data collection of statistics from the various institutions. The study focused on the politics of security communities within the SADC region as the promotion, mediation and management of peace and security within the continent.

Secondly primary and secondary sources were used to conduct desk research using library sources, internet sources and documents, frameworks, treaties, visions, missions, protocol, decisions, reports, websites, press releases, papers, strategies, national and regional frameworks and operational plans and documents, related to the security communities, peace and security with reports, such as AU reports, SADC reports on security dynamics. The institutional dynamics responsible for the implementation challenges of security communities under the global Covid-19 pandemic concluded on the findings.

This case study on the SADC that has adopted a regionalism security approach notes there is a need for the examination and assessment of this in order to ensure the challenges are identified and prescriptions suggested amidst a global pandemic. A review of the current conflict management model is much needed in order to foster a conducive environment for development and progress in the integration process.

3. Result

3.1. The South African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat

The key structure of SADC is its Secretariat, which is based in Gaborone, Botswana. This structure is linked to the institutional reform, which focuses on the changing roles and functions of the SADC Secretariat. The Secretariat possesses power and authority in order to impact on regional security initiatives and the proficient operation of its actions.

The SADC Secretariat comprises of eight (8) directorates, and eight (8) stand-alone units responsible for cross-cutting issues, established by the Council of Ministers as provided for by Article 15 (4 & 5) of the SADC Treaty. The Secretariat has a SADC National Contact point (SNC) for communicating with the member states. However, the SNCs have been ineffective in ensuring stakeholders' involvement and getting structures off the ground [16]. Furthermore, Van der Vleuten and Hulse [17], question whether SNCs ever hold meetings at all, bearing in mind that each member state is responsible to chairs of the SNCs at the country level

Van Nieuwkerk [18] indicates that the key decision-making power within SADC rests with the member states, not with the Secretariat. As such, the Secretariat is weak and therefore unable to help build a community of states. This means that the Secretariat is merely the executor of the member states' decisions. These member states' behaviour is typically influenced by national interest calculus, instead of common regional interests or regional sovereignty considerations. Hence the autonomy of the member states is still highly prescriptive towards the Secretariat. This is the result of the SADC Treaty, SADC's mandates, the Secretariat, and the Directorate that have rendered the SADC Secretariat administrative, lacking decision-making powers. This, for Isaksen and Tjønneland [19] is the reason the Secretariat needs to strengthen its staff capacity, as well as monitor and evaluate the operationalisation of SADC's policies and protocols.

3.2. Theoretical underpinnings of a regional security community

The idea of SADC as a security community is connected to both the pan-African ideal and the notion of "new regionalism". In analysing SADC's security role, amidst regional instability,

conflicts and human security challenges, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the move from old regionalism to new regionalism must be understood.

Prior to the demise of the Cold War, notions of a security community was primarily focused on the needs of the nation-state, and military power was employed as a means of survival. However, after the Cold War, security for developing states, such as those forming part of SADC, focused more on the human security needs of people, as well as social-justice challenges.

The expiration of the Cold War directed and shifted a bipolar system towards a multi-polar system, leading to the initiation of an advanced trend of regionalism.

The theoretical underpinning of a regional security community and the subsequent proliferation of related works on the topic is due to shift from the notion of power security to that of a security community. This is partly because of the increase in the number of democratic states in Southern Africa. The post-colonial political regime reform can be seen to be connected to what the scholar Compton [20] said, a security community entails social cohesion that transpires as the result of the outcomes, accompanied by mutual rewards, creating an environment for positive peace.

The theoretical underpinning of this research on the idea of SADC as a security community is derived from two major thought systems and conceptual definitions by its proponents Karl Deutsch [21], and Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett [22] and builds on a constructivist theory. Deutsch [21] suggests a security community requires institutions and processes that assure long-term dependable expectations of peace among populations. This view holds that international collaboration within security conditions would lead to integration, and that security communities result from participating people and governments' beliefs that peace would be preserved. Ashberg and Wallerstein [23] highlight that the discourse and execution of democracy has led to a structure of democratic security communities.

Democratic peace theory supports regional security communities that are at different stages of development and rigidity linked to notions of oneness [22]. Despite western notions of a security community, that the need for Regional Integration Agreements (RIAs) is a basis for the formation of security communities. This notion, has however been lacking in its analysis of developing worlds, as is demonstrated in this manuscript on the SADC region more specifically. The idea of SADC as a security community remains complex, because the process of regional integration remains different to that of other regional blocs. This is due to the differing context, that is, the Southern African sub-regional grouping that cannot be compared to any other regional block in its entirety, and focuses on "development integration" and the three principles of the regional cooperation process; namely, political cooperation, functional cooperation, and economic co-operation.

Subsequently, the regional collaboration process emerged, becoming multifaceted and therefore difficult to analyse and measure [24]. In expanding on this territory specific theoretical perspective, Pan-African thinking holds relevance to SADC and is often referred to as an ideology and movement, which promotes global unity among Africans. This ideology suggests that unity will ensure political and economic progress. Within SADC, this has been demonstrated through the close-knit liberation ties, which existed among the Front Line States (FLS). Thus, this manuscript concurs that the African security framework is premised – consciously – on thinking, primarily centred on "collective-self-reliance" [25].

Hence new regionalism can not merely be aligned to European or North American notions of a security community formation. It is for this reason that regional security communities, such as the developing worlds, require greater exploration.

Deutsch's definition of a security community can be connected to a peace keeping zone, affiliated to a common identity and value systems, linked to trust, common understanding and loyalty. Given that SADC has already displaced a degree of this under the Covid-19 pandemic, in their attempt to collectively evade security threats, such as conflicts in Carbo Delgado, Lesotho and pandemic management within the region at large.

Furthermore, Nathan [26] remarks that a common value system remains at the heart of an emerging security community and that states that belong to a security community prefer not to use force. Notably, for the purpose of SADC, this notion challenges the realist notion, which posits that states may experience military confrontation or security competition at some point or another.

SADC has attempted to resolve the Mozambique security threat peacefully, hence the reason why so many suggest their response time has been meagre, attempting to resolve the Carbo Delgado matter in a non-aggressive manner.

3.3. SADC in its former years and latter years: A retrospective analysis on the challenges faced by SADC

Landsberg [27] states that “the transition within SADC has been a long, drawn-out process”. This has resulted in an autonomous body, which is predominantly driven by statesmen, governments, and ministers. Furthermore, capacity issues remain a big challenge, due to the dire need for sustained funding. According to Landsberg, this gives the impression that the Secretariat is intentionally kept weak and fragile, to hamper democratisation. However, the process of regional integration is said to have worked well in other geographies, such as the EU and North America. This is because these regions possess strong institutions, structural efficiency, and an acceptable coordination of their member states – which is achieved by operating through security communities.

In SADC's former years, it gained a reputation for its troubling and volatile role in peace. In its former years this was validated by the Angolan civil war and the DRC conflicts. The lack of consensus regarding the situation in the DRC manifested itself when Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia responded favourably to President Laurent Kabila's plea for military intervention. Conversely, a ceasefire was promoted by South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique [28]. In the end, South Africa and Zambia committed to ending the Congolese war, although SADC's involvement in the conflict in the DRC has been minimal. Furthermore SADC has done very little to tackle issues of human rights violations, flawed electoral processes, and state subjugation, by siding with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, mediated the process between the ZANU-PF which was the governing party at the time and the opposition in Zimbabwe [28]. This is against the backdrop of the existence of both a pacific and a militarist camp within the SADC Secretariat.

Coincidentally, in recent years, amidst a global pandemic there seems to be greater consensus amongst member states, as Demuynck and Weijenberg [29] suggest SADC's intervention in Mozambique is a turning point for the regional bloc.

Landsberg [16] and Kelley [23] concur that SADC's efficiency has been somewhat hampered by the slow response to challenges, as has been the case previously in the DRC efforts and the Lesotho intervention and more recently in Carbo Delgado. In most instances, SADC's actions entail policy-makers' opting for diplomatic approaches, as opposed to militaristic interventions [23].

The SADC Summit remains the highest decision-making structure and previously there have been different fractions based on judgements with this unit. Where issues of regional interest often follow as a result of national interest – although this should not be the case. Previously, the consequence of this has been the lack of responsibility and implementation by the SADC countries. The fact that decisions remain centralised within the SADC Organ does impact negatively on the effectiveness of the organisation's functioning [16]. However in recent years change in this regard has manifested itself in the better coordination and crucial decision making, although there is a scope for consensus and consultation.

In SADC states drive their agendas more differently than others, even though pan-African ideals are meant to be the main driver in agenda-setting. Moreover, such states as South Africa – that devote more resources – have a greater influence than states that do not contribute significant resources. This has been demonstrated by South Africa's key involvement in the mediation of threats, notably in Lesotho and Madagascar. In more recent years their support to the Mozambique insurgency, sending 1500 troops to Carbo Delgado.

Hence, the allocation and availability of resources remain a major challenge in pandemic management. Given that, there may be inconsistencies, as more powerful states with resource capabilities will play a more hegemonic role and will take on more responsibility than the less resourceful states. In addition, SADC may become dependent on donor resources that will be channelled into the community. This, however, will not resolve the challenges, which require greater integration. Thus, for SADC to stand united and progress collectively, it needs to redouble its

efforts in dealing with the socio-economic and security challenges [16]. As has been the case with the Covid-19 strategy and successes.

SADC is born from the need to elaborate mechanisms, which ensure efficiency, effectiveness and optimal outcomes in the domains of conflict prevention and management, diplomacy, peace-keeping, and peace-building within the region. These remain linked to the implementation of SADC processes, and its structures. Therefore, the staff capacity and the allocation of resources and funds remain essential in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness [16, 30, 31].

Within SADC there is room for progress within the SADC Secretariat. Indeed, progress was noticeable in new domains, such as gender and policy harmonisation previously, in 2003. In recent years, with increased human security threats, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, food security and pandemic management transpiring, the need for disaster management and pandemic management mechanisms remains key.

Baregu and Landsberg [32] indicate that the main challenges of the SADC Secretariat are the non-execution of the set goals and objectives, the non-operationalisation of the adopted strategy, and its inability to meet deadlines. Landsberg [16] attributes these challenges to institutional weakness and the lack of implementation mechanisms. In addition, the Secretariat lacks technical abilities – which impacts actively on the execution of the RISDP – and well-researched economic and political policy frameworks.

The RISDP 2020-2030 Blueprint [33] suggests that the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030 focusses on ensuring peace and stability within the region, this is not limited to preventing violent conflicts. The Blueprint also encompasses upholding the rule of law; respect for human rights and advancing good governance and constitutional order. Even though the Blueprint is more aligned to global and continental goals, its execution processes consider elements on human security, institutional effectiveness and aspects, connected to greater citizenship and a changing globe, accompanied by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and technological advances [34].

Given the above, Landsberg [16] said that the major challenges for the Southern African region are not related to interstate conflicts or wars, but are rather linked to regional development and integration, a sustained peaceful region, human security, and democratic governance. Thus the democratisation of institutions and decision-making must be high on the agenda, in order to strengthen institutions – both structurally and functionally. This factor was a fundamental point for SADC in 2008, when the need to strengthen institutional efficiency was acknowledged. The implementation challenges, identified by Landsberg, are further also highlighted in recent years by scholars [30, 35, 36]

Policy development remains key for the implementation of strategy and operationalising of set plans. Structurally, national committees were created within SADC to democratise regional policy-making processes. National Committees further assist with the formulation of regional policies; they also coordinate and guide the implementation of policies, and serve as a platform, linked to collaboration amongst SADC and its associated countries. Ultimately ensuring greater integration. National Committees remain important structures, despite the fact that they are the least effective. Indeed, there is not one SADC state, which has a functioning National Committee. Landsberg [16] and Mlambo [37] suggest this demonstrates the lack of regional interest among states, whose priority is their own national interest.

The regional civil society and SADC's Council of NGOs were constituted with the aim of ensuring greater integration and the involvement of civil society and NGOs. This was meant to ensure a better representation of the people of the sub-region. However, despite the creation of this body, greater civil society participation has not been achieved. Hammerstad [38] not only notes the importance of the dialogue between government and the elite, but also stresses that the absence of civil society does not guarantee the outcomes of a security community. This can be seen to be connected to what Tshimpaka et al. [17] suggests, the RISDP Blueprint 2020–2030 [33] highlights the greater consultation and dialogue with citizens, for peace and security advancements to transpire.

The lack of greater social contract results from the fact that SADC's Council of NGOs stems from advocacy by think-tanks and researchers, who seek to ensure that societies participates

towards the creation of strategies and policy development. Nevertheless, civil society and its representation have not been clarified in the territorial cooperation advancements. This non-attendance is linked to coordination of civil society and NGOs, allowed for society to become side lined. This means that, their power and agency remain largely under the auspices of states and governments. This is prevalent, despite civil society's knowledge on all sectors of integration and human security. Nevertheless, some NGOs have made their mark. This is the case of women lobbyists who have pushed for the Gender and Development Protocol, to ensure a solidified regional agenda. Although much has happened, effective execution remains central in ensuring concrete outcomes.

McFadden et al [39] stresses the imperative for post-colonial states to be explored differently from colonial ones. Thus, this case study strives to demonstrate the role of SADC and its security cooperation mandate. This is primarily because sustained peace and cooperation are prerequisites for greater integration within the southern hemisphere of the African continent. Ultimately, regional integration leads to grander trade, with prospects of much expected development and progress. This pattern of probability endorses the view that regional organisations remain the propellers of advancing African states. It is only through integration and flourishing markets that Africa will reclaim its rightful place on the global stage, among industrialised economies [40].

3. 4. Notions of SADC as a security community

The 35th Summit of SADC (2015), held in Gaborone, marked a turning point for SADC. The 35th Summit theme focused on “*Accelerating Industrialisation of SADC Economies through Transformation of Natural Endowment and improved Human Capital*”. This highlights SADC's commitment to evolve itself and the community alongside the human capital of the region. Importantly SADC at this summit was recognised in the safety structures within the DRC, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) operational capabilities. More so the main if limiting the MONUSCO troops in DRC and the upholding of Declarations, such as the Nairobi Declaration. Further to this the government of Madagascar and all agents of the state were requested to protect their nation building and appeasement and promote the SADC agenda for Madagascar. The political administration of the Kingdom of Lesotho as well as the agents of the state were requested to remain committed to advance and institute reform within the constitution and security. This was in addition to the advancement and approval of the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Conversely, literature notes that the lack of structural transformation in the African security structure is inhibiting the promotion of effective peace processes. This is evident in the regional protests that occurred in Lesotho and South Africa and the resulting Carbo Delgado insurgency, preventing development. Moreover, the repercussions of the soft power methods, used by RECs to challenge the shortfall of progressive convention, are all part of the security challenge [41].

Despite these stumbling blocks, SADC is a progressive and strengthened regional community, which is focused on securitisation. A notable example of this is the SADC Organ.

Nevertheless, SADC remains plagued by membership overlaps [42], conflicting obligations [43], members' divided loyalties [44]. These challenges can be connected to the levels of supporting each other when conflicts arise, such as the limited numbers of troops, sent to Mozambique by some states in 2021 to Carbo Delgado. Furthermore, ineffective security activity frameworks can also be connected to the slow response rate to tackling conflicts. Regardless of this, strides have been taken to impact positively on the security of the SADC region. Deficiencies, related to institutional frameworks and implementation protocols, the lack of commitment to serious issues. Previously SADC demonstrated a sense of disagreement between member states, and the trend of security bias – as in the Lesotho/Zimbabwe case – have been overcome [45]. However in recent years their collective response to tackling emerging human security threats, such as the food and water crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrated greater collective consensus and the lack of security bias.

SADC's main objectives are to ensure peace, through conflict prevention, and to monitor security. Further objectives include the management of stability, both domestically and regionally, and the overcoming of interstate conflicts, which impact on the continent's economic and social

development. Despite the abovementioned institutional hindrances, in recent years SADC has succeeded in securing the region.

3. 5. Covid in SADC

At the forefront of this of SADCs security aspirations remain decisive collective decision making and implementation to overcome insecurity and instability in the region in order for economic gains to thrive. Hence at the heart of attaining these aspirations for a stable and secure region is the need for governance that promotes for collective effort, aligned to the strategic and effective implementation of plans. However, during the current Covid-19 pandemic, security within the SADC region has been disturbed as has been the case in South Africa with the Phoenix Massacre, Swaziland Eswatini protests and the Mozambique insurgency in Carbo Delgado in 2021. This study will analyse the implementation of the SADC security cooperation plans during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021.

The SADC region has been bedazzled by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The pandemic was accompanied by months of lockdowns in SADC regions, social distancing restrictions and obligatory hygiene as a means to safeguard citizens and prevent the loss of life and economic strain that would impact on the livelihood of many [6].

On March 5, 2020 the National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed the first COVID-19 case was reported in South Africa[46]. Despite this reported case, and an increase in the number of positive Covid-19 cases, human mobility remained open, such as through airports, ships and border movement. This led to countries in the region experiencing incidences of importation of cases.

Firstly, the result of the infection and death rates is presented below in Fig. 1

Country	Total cases	New cases	Total deaths	New deaths	Total recovered	active cases	Serious. Critical	Total cases/1M popula.	Deaths/1 M pop.	Total rests	Test/1 M pop.	Population
South Africa	408,052		6,093		236,26	165,699	539	6,875	103	2,632,106	44,347	59,352,965
DRC	8,767	47	201		5,109	3,457		98	2			89,697,561
Madagascar	8,741	360	76	6	5,522	3,143	87	315	3	36,773	1,326	27,728,389
Zambia	3,789		134		1,677	1,978	18	206	7	72,82	3,955	18,410,358
Malawi	3,386	84	79	3	1,328	1,979	4	177	4	25,756	1,345	19,155,868
Zimbabwe	2,124		28		510	1,586		143	2	110,56	7,432	14,875,523
Eswatini	2,021		28		882	1,111	5	1,741	24	20,784	17,904	1,160,889
Mozambique	1,582		11		528	1,043		51	0.4	50,121	1,601	31,300,337
Namibia	1,522		7		69	1,446	13	598	3	19,782	7,777	2,543,502
Tanzania	509		21		183	305	7	9	0.4			59,737,030
Angola	851		33		236	582	15	26	1	10	304	32,917,0
Mauritius	343		10		332	1		270	8	205,285	161,4	1,271,904
Comoros	340		7		324	9		391	8			870,616
Botswana	686	94	1		52	633	1	291	0.4	62,296	26,461	2,354,256
Seychelles	114	6			69	45		1,159				98,385
Lesotho	359		6		69	284		167	3	7,432	3,468	2,143,294

Fig. 1. SADC Covid-19 dashboard. Source: Worldometer

Alike the rest of the globe, Covid-19 infection rates and death rates have increased, putting pressure on health systems and requiring additional resources in many of the Member States. This has also further impacted on SADC developing economies, supply chain systems, and foreign exchange and currencies, directly impacting on the buying power of the mass population and their livelihood [47–49].

At present, on 8 August 2021, Southern Africa has a total of 2 821 746 number of positive Covid-19 cases. South Africa is the country with the highest number of Covid-19 cases, with 2 533 466. Followed by, Namibia with 121 043 and Botswana with 122 574 [50]. In SADC South Africa is the country with the highest number of Covid-19 deaths, 78 377 and Zimbabwe with 4181.

In maintaining greater peace and security in SADC amidst the Covid-19, policies with the SADC region focus on maintaining peace, preventing conflict and securitising health, even though the individual foreign policies of member states can be problematic with regards to pandemic man-

agement more specifically [51]. Given that prior to 2013, there was the lack of general consensus amongst the member states on peace-making intervention in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and the DRC. However today, as in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic; Mozambique's Carbo Delgado insurgency security threat, SADC acted collectively with a common understanding on these matters. Even though their response to the Carbo Delgado case was rather inadequate [52, 53], SADC did eventually reach a common understanding, that can be connected to greater trust amongst the member states in their collective efforts.

Notably, the outcomes of the SADCs security cooperation cannot be divorced from the continued challenges, connected to the implementation of SADCs security cooperation during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Baregu and Landsberg [32] indicate that the main challenges of the SADC Secretariat consist of the non-execution of the set goals and objectives, the non-operationalisation of the adopted strategy, and its inability to meet deadlines. Landsberg [16] attributes these challenges to institutional weakness and the lack of implementation mechanisms. In addition, the Secretariat lacks technical abilities – which impacts actively on the execution of the RISDP – and well-researched economic and political policy frameworks.

Today, SADC has managed to advance some of its structural challenges, connected to inherent historical hinderances that prevent the greater commitment to implementing a strategy, as the following key guidelines and measures, undertaken by SADC, attest actions, taken on conflict prevention, such as determining decision making on conflict prevention interventions on the part of a member state. Some of the key actions taken by the Member States include the implementation of Adoption of World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on COVID-19: SADC Member States have adopted WHO guidelines on COVID-19, in terms of preparedness; coordination; planning and monitoring; surveillance, case investigation; infection prevention and control; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); risk communication and community engagement, as well as, guidance to schools, workplaces and institutions and implementation of national level interventions. Secondly, SADC Member States have undertaken various measures that include preparedness and response mechanisms; awareness programmes, suspension of inbound and outbound flights, suspension of business and tourism travel, set up of border and in-country testing centres; social distancing and cancellation of gatherings; adoption of self-isolation and mandatory quarantines for a minimum of 14 days; and treatment for those that test positive. Some Member States have lockdown measures, allowing only essential services to remain open [6].

Further to this, regional measures, implemented by SADC include: Disaster risk management; suspension of regional face-to-face meetings and instead, utilizing modern technology, such as Video conferences, Webinars and Skype Calls until such a time when the situation has been contained; re-establishment and expansion of the Technical Committee for Coordinating and Monitoring the Implementation of the SADC Protocol on Health; mobilisation of regional support towards containment of the COVID-19 pandemic, and mitigation of its socio-economic impact on the SADC region; the SADC Pooled Procurement Services for pharmaceuticals and medical supplies is being implemented; adoption of guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region during the COVID-19; partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); introduction of SADC Regional Status report on COVID-19; monitoring and analysing the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 on SADC economies and daily updates on the status of COVID-19 in the region.

3. 6. SADC as a security community

The manuscript has explored through an analysis of the challenges that SADC was confronted with 10 years ago by Christopher Landsberg in his study *The Southern African Development Community decision-making architecture*, challenges, identified in whether SADC is indeed a security study.

It can be concluded, that SADC has made a number of positive and significantly impactful and sustainable strides through setting a strong foundation through their strategic security architecture and arrangements, mechanisms and conflict resolution outcomes, as has been depicted in the recent outcomes, connected to the Covid-19 pandemic and emerging conflicts in the region.

Therefore this study can conclude that SADC is well on its way to becoming a regional security community.

This primarily because the security of the Southern African region has transformed. This is as the result of SADC, whose character by nature is affiliated to strategic interventions, aimed at sustaining greater peace and security, linked to mediation efforts and greater commitment and involvement of member states, such as South Africa and Botswana. The experiences, gained by the SADC region, have shown that military alliances in the contexts of the developing world are unlikely to succeed. This is partly because even if mutual protection agreements exist, states still take decisions on whether or not they should support another state – depending on whether this advances their own interest – and partly because alliances with bigger powers tend to result in the latter overshadowing the agreement. This has been a determining factor in SADC, as evidenced by the challenges, linked to political instability; member states' firm grip on their endeavours to maintain their national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and domestic instability; has been demonstrated in the study on Lesotho, Carbo Delgado and South Africa.

Prevailing peace has been the result of the existence of strong and efficient structures, which contribute to stability and development. This means that, in order for the security of SADC to prosper and gain strength, political and social integration within member states must be fostered. This will ensure effective and stringent policy implementation and management of conflict. Political and social integration will be achieved through the implementation of policy reforms, the submission of reports; the elaboration of adequate institutional budgets; the resolution of human resource matters; the termination of donor funding dependency; the operationalisation of SADC institutions; as well as the inclusion of external stakeholders and the recognition of their role in the achievement of SADC's institutional and operational objectives.

Ngoma [23] comments that Southern Africa remains linked to its long-standing past experiences. Efforts have been expended and progress has been made in ensuring an inter-state institutional arrangement, which seeks to mediate conflict. This will help to collectively overcome socio-economic challenges, linked to human security threats. This has been attempted through such initiatives as protocols, SIPO and the MDP. It has been argued, that despite its hurdles and deficiencies, SADC is indeed heading towards becoming a security community. This study highlights that SADC has managed to position itself as a security community by preventing major wars and crises.

In seeking to determine whether SADC is in fact a security community, the study remains cognisant of Van Aardt [54] who questions “whether the region is moving towards the development of a security regime or a security community” [23]. This question is fully explored in this section. Ngoma [23] suggests it is probable that SADC can be regarded a safety cooperation due to the number of its member states, as well as the structure and stability that allow it to evolve. Importantly, its members share a common history, which is premised on liberation and stability within the SADC region.

Adler and Barnett [22], as well as Ashberg and Wallersteen [23] associate a “security community paradigm” with having common values, which lead to close security cooperation; increased shared values that lead to transnational linkage; commonalities in the domains of trade, tourism, and education; as well as physical communication.

SADC has ensured progress in terms of governance, peace, and security. Gender equality, food security, the prevention and curtailment of HIV/AIDS, and the adaptation to climate change all contribute to region-building. They form the basis of what a security community's mandate entails [55].

In considering the above, SADC must autonomously steer its visions, values and set-goals in a robust manner, which allows for greater accountability and transparency with civil society. Notably the 35th SADC Summit [56] highlighted the need for greater access to human resources, capital resources and finances, which will ensure that SADC has the support, needed to implement its grand plans, such as the RISDP and SIPO more effectively.

3. 7. Limitations and Recommendations

Desk research was collected. Further documentation that might be available at the Secretariats did not form part of this study, due to the global pandemic travel restrictions. Travel to the

Secretariats could have assisted in identifying the current situation better. In order to improve this study future studies can consider, including the most recent information from the Secretariat's as well, such as more recent audit reports or documents.

Future research that can build on this study can include exploring how SADC can efficiently reduce current and emerging non military security challenges in the region. Further research can also explore a review of the SADC security framework as a means to strengthen the SADC's capacity to deal with new threats as a means to transcend the SADC.

4. Conclusion

SADC has evolved in the scope of its regional endeavours in an effort to ensure greater peace, stability and development amidst a global pandemic, unprecedented protests in South Africa and the Carbo Delgado insurgency. In recent years it has become evident, that SADC must become self-sustaining in its financial needs, to ensure that it determines its own regional security strategy, free from interference by external forces.

SADC is autonomously steering its visions, values and set-goals in a robust manner, which allows for greater accountability and transparency with civil society.

Notably, the 35th SADC Summit [55] highlighted the need for greater access to human resources, capital resources and finances, which will ensure that SADC has the support needed to implement its grand plans, such as the RISDP and SIPO more effectively. The 35th Summit of SADC [55], held in Gaborone, marked a turning point for SADC. The 35th Summit theme focused on "*Accelerating Industrialisation of SADC Economies through Transformation of Natural Endowment and improved Human Capital*". This highlights SADC's commitment to evolve itself and the community alongside the human capital of the region. Importantly SADC improvement in the security situation in Carbo Delgado. Further to this the government in South Africa continues nation building efforts that are underway for greater stability within the SADC state and region. The government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and all agents of the state were requested to remain committed to advance and institute reform within the constitution, marking the instituting of a new Prime Minister in 2021.

A noteworthy point has been the advancements, attained in successfully limiting the spread of Covid-19 in SADC. In comparison to other parts of the globe SADC has managed to stay afloat largely due to its previous experience with Malaria and HIV/Aids programmes in the region, gearing up their pandemic management strategy.

Largely due to SADCs collective commitment to human security matters, which remain high on the SADC agenda, focusing on gender, disease, education, food security and climate challenges in an effort for these challenges to be overcome, leading to greater success, alongside peace, security, and development.

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