

STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA: EXPLORING THE ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS THE BUILDING
BLOCK FOR DEEPER NOTIONS OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Regional community in southern Africa has been limited to the region's states. As a result, deeper notions of community emanating from non-state actors, particularly transnational social movements, continue to be ignored. In an attempt to transcend state centrism, this thesis highlights alternative forms of regional community by exploring the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), one of southern Africa's biggest and fastest growing cross-border movements. The ZCC is a potential agent for developing regional community from the bottom-up, driving a people-oriented regional integration approach in southern Africa. The ZCC, with its extensive following among the region's poor, offers a compelling example of a grassroots and truly bottom-up approach to regional community. This thesis explores the possibility of the ZCC as a model of alternative community and identity centred on people's daily experiences and grounded in a shared history and solidarity. It seeks to highlight the significance of transnational movements like the ZCC to policy makers in the region and it argues that grassroots communities are marching ahead of SADC member states and politicians in the area of integration. There exists a transnational cooperation amongst followers of the ZCC and other grassroots communities across the region and this cooperation transcends the traditional notion of state sovereignty, thereby highlighting deeper notions of what it means to be a community at regional level.

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

AIC-	African Indigenous/Independent Churches
AIDS-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC-	African National Congress
AU-	African Union
ASEAN-	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
COMESA-	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CONSAS-	Constellation of Southern African States
COSATU-	Congress of South African Trade Union
EAC-	East African Community
ECCAS-	Economic Community of Central African States
EU-	European Union
FLS-	Front Line States
FTA-	Free Trade Area
HIV-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC-	Human Science Research Council
IOC-	Indian Ocean Community
IR-	International Relations
NAFTA-	North-American Free Trade Agreement
NGO-	Non- Governmental Organisation
NRA-	New Regionalism Approach
NSA-	Non-State Actor
REC-	Regional Economic Communities
SABC-	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACU-	Southern African Customs Union
SADC-	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADCC-	Southern African Development Cooperation Community
SADC-CNGO-	SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
UNDP-	United National Development Programme
ZCC-	Zion Christian Church

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General Introduction

This research project explores the possibility of alternative community in southern Africa. It attempts to highlight and allow for alternative means of conceptualizing regional community and argues that meaningful community cannot be brought about by the state alone. This thesis therefore explores non-statist forms of regional consolidation or what it terms *alternative community*, that is, forms of social organization that fall outside the nation-state lexicon. These alternative forms of community are located in the everyday-life experiences of ordinary southern Africans. They include the ways in which people live and how they understand what it means to be a community in the regional context. Vale (2003) observes that what it means to be a community as understood by the region's ordinary people is different to that articulated by the region's states. Notably, attempts at regional community development tend to follow a state-centric approach and as such, pursue integration from a realist standpoint which perceives the nation-state as the only path to regional community. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), for example, prioritizes the region's states and not the people who are at the core of development. This thesis questions this state-centric approach to regional integration and suggests alternative ways of imagining regional community.

Context

SADC, like many other regional arrangements, follows a regional integration trend which excludes all forms of community other than the nation-state. The assumption is that this form of community will lead to regional security, equality and prosperity as well as a sense of community among its members. The generic principle of the community is in the economic development of member states. Kornegay (2006: 5) aptly captures this point by observing that "southern Africa has achieved much as far as regional development, peace and security are concerned. But the question of people-centred regional citizenship and identity is not uppermost on the agenda of the region's political establishment". This present effort at development remains an elitist project as it can be seen to be limited to political rhetoric. Criticism of this kind can be attributed to critical, postmodern theory of International Relations (IR). Such a standpoint does not seek to explain regionalism by focusing on the state alone, nor

does it take the state as a given. Instead, “it seeks to explain the conditions which make possible such limiting focus and such limited givens” (Devetak, 1996: 198). It therefore reveals what the state-centric approaches have left out.

In this thesis, the theoretical framework of postmodernism employs a new conceptual language to represent regional integration in order to rethink and expand the concept of political community which can cater for non-statist forms of social organization. As such, it draws our attention to the multiple flows of people and their interactions and networks that cut across nation-state boundaries. It also focuses on the various political, economic and cultural activities which inter-penetrate state-centric notions of regional integration. The aim is to present a conceptual language that can better convey alternative agents of regional integration, specifically non-state actors in contemporary southern Africa so as to enable different conceptions and meanings of regional community.

This approach is taken against a background where, for the greater part of the region’s people, community is not something that is limited or defined by territorial borders. This understanding of community has been expressed in various cross-border social interactions among the region’s people. This thesis aims to highlight these notions of community consistent with the social complexities of southern Africa by extending the boundaries of *community* so that “citizens and aliens” (Linklater, 1998: 45) come together as political equals. Here, cross-border movements offer an inviolable testimony to the idea that the region’s people share a deeper sense of community than that imagined by SADC. Stated differently, there is scope for deeper notions of community derived from these grassroots interactions carried out by the region’s ordinary people.

Although not sufficiently acknowledged or accommodated by institutional bodies like SADC, these non-state forms of community continue to take on a regional life of their own. As I will argue, one of these cross-regional associations is exemplified by the Zion Christian Church (ZCC). The ZCC is a South African based Zionist church with a membership across the region and the broader African continent. The sociology of the ZCC is that of a regional grassroots organization closely connected with the poor who are at the margins of regional development in southern Africa. Moreover, with a

consistent growth in constituency across southern Africa the ZCC provides the potential alternative of a bottom-up approach to regional community in southern Africa.

Blaauw (2007: 5) notes that, “the study [of] regional integration in southern Africa has hitherto [been] largely conducted within the confines of interstate integration”. This can be illustrated via the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Despite the recent reforms of the revenue sharing formula of the Union it continues to exclude societal groups in its decision-making processes and as such remains an inter-state regional integration organization. This suggests that there is yet no realization on the part of SACU that the involvement of non-state actors in regionalism can strengthen regional development. Blaauw (2007: 212) maintains that “what is needed, therefore, is to change the institutional structure of SACU to make allowance for informal regionalism, which takes place spontaneously through the region”. The idea is to move away from narrow interpretations of regional community offered by nation-states and explore those places which have been overlooked by conventional IR theories. The non-statist emphasis requires a re-interpretation and expanded form of regionalism in southern Africa which embraces non-state actors, especially those in the form of grassroots transnational activities of the people of southern Africa.

Furthermore, movements like the ZCC transmute into often unrecognized but significant grey-zones between domestic and regional spheres, blurring boundaries between inside and outside, local and global. By outflanking sovereign controls and crossing state boundaries, the actions of transnational grassroots groups can be read as “hidden transcripts to occur off stage, as it were behind and alongside the ‘public transcript’ of the sovereign state” (Devetak, 1996: 198). These ‘hidden transcripts’ of transnational movements are therefore “deterritorializing”¹ in their ability to transcend borders, escaping the special codes and practices of dominant actors and making possible a critique of the sovereign state’s modes of border shaping and exclusion. Their function also forms important bases for developing a shared identity and a deeper sense of community.

¹ This is the opposite of “reterritorialisation” and is associated with the highly mobile logic of “nomadism” whose function is defined by the ability to transcend boundaries and avoid capture by the state-form. “Reterritorialisation” is associated with the totalizing logic of the paradigm of state sovereignty or state form (Devetak, 1996: 198).

In conclusion, the study explores the ZCC's transnational character and potential contribution towards the construction of a deeper sense of regional identity and more importantly, the modelling of a non-state form of regional community for southern Africa. It seeks to highlight the various ways in which movements like the ZCC affect the way in which its members relate to the region in attempting to meet their needs.

The ZCC members, like refugees and migrants for example, hold a different relationship to space than citizens of a state. Such a relationship can be seen to 'problematize' and defy the 'territorial imperative' of the sovereign state, paving a new path to regional community (Devetak, 1996: 196). Indeed, the widespread growth of these relations dislocates the realist norm which seeks to fix people's identities within the spatial boundaries of the nation-state. As a consequence, the ZCC amongst others, can also be seen to disrupt state-centric conceptualizations of regional community and understandings of the character and location of the political thereby paving the way to a new dawn for the people of southern Africa.

The objectives of the thesis

This study adopts an exploratory approach which aims to probe the extent to which southern Africa can understand and assimilate non-state interpretations of regional community. It seeks to understand and explain alternative community in southern Africa in the light of a multidimensional narrative of regional community. The overriding aim of the study is to try to bring to the fore multiple understandings of community as they indirectly encounter and outflank the nation-state and its sovereignty from which deeper, comprehensive notions of regional community can be explored. Transnational groups and movements such as the ZCC not only transgress national boundaries, but they call into question the territorial organization of political life and thus offer us localised interpretations of regional community.

The statement of the problem

Whilst there is growing consensus across the region for the need of a bottom-up and people-centred approach to regional integration as submitted by the 1992 SADC

Treaty, the organization itself has done very little to drive the process. Regional integration will continue to be a pipe dream unless the peoples of the region determine its content, form and direction, and are, themselves, its active agents. Measures will, therefore, be taken and appropriate mechanisms and institutional framework put in place to involve the people of the region in the process of regional integration (SADC Treaty, 1992). The Treaty acknowledges the need to involve the region's people in the process of regional integration but the set-up of this organization does not provide space or relevant mechanisms for the popular participation of ordinary citizens in regional building. Even after the formation of bodies like the SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (SADC-CNGO) in 1998, the relationship between SADC and non-state actors particularly with the peoples of the region remains precarious and almost non-existent (Blaauw, 2007). This can be seen in the way that SADC member countries continue to prioritise state security over human security² whereas human insecurity poses the greater challenge for peace and stability in the region today.

The formation of the SADC-CNGO undeniably reflects that the organization recognises the centrality of civil society to regional integration. Still, such deliberations have not increased nor encouraged active participation of the peoples of the region and civil society in general where it matters most. This can be attributed to the state-centric approach's limiting scope when identifying and classifying who or what constitutes civil society in the region, and lastly, even with the establishment of the relevant structures that seek to involve civil society in the region. Civil society remains excluded and marginalised from key SADC processes (Blaauw, 2007). This is precisely the case when looking at who or what the main actors are within the organization as well as how the institutional configuration of SADC is staged. As observed by Landsberg (2007: 92), "SADC remains dominated by politicians, notably ministers of foreign affairs, and presidents and prime ministers... the 14 member SADC summit of Heads of State and government is at the apex and is run on an annual troika basis of head of state". Consequently, SADC member states continue to

² Human security is the dominant discourse within international, regional and sub-regional organizations tasked with security and development. It has displaced the traditional state security paradigm with its preoccupation of protecting national interests and state borders through the projection of power. The 1994 UNDP Human development Report noted that human security is an integrative concept that must stress the security of the people. It contended that the concept of security needed to change from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people's security. The report identified a list of perceived new security threats, namely, economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (Hendricks, 2006: 3)

cling to realist interpretations of regional integration that ignore alternatives demonstrated by ordinary people through identifiable cross-regional activities and networks at grassroots level.

These transnational actors and cross-regional activities present a regional community and identity-in-formation and therefore show that there is a need to accommodate such activities in developing a meaningful regional community in southern Africa. However, the vision of regional community and development as outlined by the SADC regional body holds that southern Africa will change for the better. But it does not aptly specify how grassroots organizations like the ZCC can be accommodated by SADC in developing a people oriented approach to regional community and how this alternative agent can form the basis for deeper notions of regional community. What would the functions and features of this alternative regional community in southern Africa be?

Research methodology

Conventional IR theory has long been concerned with states and their sovereignty (Sidaway, 2002). As expected, such approaches offer state-centric interpretations of world politics which make the practise of state sovereignty appear natural or commonsensical and thereby uncritically narrow conceptions of what constitutes political community (Vale, 2003). By contrast, postmodernism seeks to account for the ambiguities regarding interpretations and explanations of the sovereign state that state-centric approaches have obscured by assuming the state as the only form of political and regional community. The study therefore employs a deconstructive mode of interpretation in order to bring these obscured assumptions to the fore. Deconstruction involves the attempt to expose underlying meaning, biases and preconceptions that structure the way a text conceptualizes its relations to what it describes, requiring that “traditional concepts and understandings surrounding a text be revealed” (Denzin, 1994: 185). This being the case, the subject matter of postmodern interpretation must always be those texts that represent the social world, as “knowledge is true only to the extent that it conforms to and is reflective of social reality” (Denzin, 1994: 188).

In exploring an alternative regional community, this study follows an interdisciplinary technique. It uses sociological and historical references to community and brings these into the field of International Politics. Crossing disciplinary boundaries creates exploratory room to make the case for a postmodern regional community in southern Africa. The qualitative data of the ZCC as a regional-community and identity-information is presented through explanations and illustrations that show its sociological, historical as well as transnational character and role in the region. The empirical evidence regarding the ZCC's contribution in developing a bottom-up and meaningful regional community and identity is supported and illustrated by highlighting the positive impact it has had in and outside South Africa. The research is bolstered by discourse analysis of substantial secondary literature in an attempt to deconstruct state-centric forms of community. The reports from SADC, newspapers and literature form part of this research project. The significance of this literature is that in both published and unpublished forms, these materials serve as a "map" (Mouton, 1996: 119) of the places that researchers have ventured into before. The literature also gives insight into the region's history and regional community phenomena so as to assist in exploring, analysing and explaining it. Relevant newspapers and appropriate magazines are used to observe non-state activity in the region. Online sources are also used and referenced accordingly.

Limitations of the thesis

There is not much literature available on the ZCC. Secondary sources tend to focus on its historical background and function as a church. Most literature on the ZCC has not emphasized its regional or transnational character. However, some research has focused on the ZCC's function as a grassroots social movement and therefore as a potential regional actor.

Overview of the thesis

The first chapter establishes the problem of community in IR theory. It argues that community in IR theory has been equated with the nation-state and outlines the various ways in which the realist paradigm has narrowed the interpretation of

community to suite the nation-state which it assumes to be the only logical form of social organization in international relations. Consequently, political community as evidenced in nation-states tends to centre on the notion of inclusion and exclusion via borders which separate people through the establishment of limited identities based on territorial associations.

Against the realist standpoint and its narrow conception of political community, the second chapter explores a new frame of reference from a postmodern perspective which acknowledges that the nation-state is no longer at the centre of social relations as it continues to lose its territorial significance to the proliferation of transnational forces. The chapter focuses on developing arguments for the alternative conception of regional community. It posits the formation of a supranational type of entity in SADC in attempting to build a regional community that transcends state-centric sovereignty. The argument here is that community is neither identical to, nor limited by, nations and thus the nation-state cannot be accepted as the only path to secure forms of social organization. Community for ordinary people in southern Africa appears to be more personal and intimate, and extends beyond national boundaries. This suggests that there are indeed alternative ways to conceptualize regional community in southern Africa.

The third chapter assumes that community, identity and region can no longer continue to be described from the perspective of the nation-state. Therefore, in an attempt to transcend this narrow understanding of regional community, the chapter introduces the notion of *new regionalism* which argues for the accommodation of non-state actors in regional arrangements. The chapter aims to situate non-state actors and their role within this new paradigm. It argues that regional community cannot be limited by geography or the state apparatus but should accommodate non-state actors in the social process of defining regional integration. This suggests that regional community can be understood as the collection of regional activities such as transnational interactions occurring *below* and *outside* the nation-state.

The final chapter attempts to bring theory to practice by exploring alternative conceptions of regional community in southern Africa. It looks at how grassroots transnational movements like the ZCC can play a meaningful role in expanding the

boundaries of community, identity and citizenship. The chapter attempts to highlight the potential that the ZCC has for developing a people-centred regional community in southern Africa. The chapter suggests that the ZCC as a grassroots organization connected to the region's poorest people could help facilitate a regional integration agenda driven by human movement in the struggle to marry human and community needs in the interest of the poorer and marginalized members of the regional community.

Chapter 1

CONVENTIONAL IR THEORY AND THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNITY

1.1 Introduction

Community, identity and region are essentially contested concepts and like many social science concepts, they are not easy to define. Yet they are important concepts that people throughout the world draw on to give their lives meaning. Southern Africans and the broader African communities on the continent are no different. However, in the history of International Relations, these concepts have been dominated by the realist approach which limits them to the requirements of the nation-state. The idea of the sovereign state as the primary mode of social organization and regional integration as assumed by realism will be closely examined in this chapter in order to expose the practices of inclusion and exclusion associated with this form of community.

To challenge epistemological claims to political community questions the location and character of the political. It problematizes realist claims of political community as well as the implications of the discourse of state sovereignty. This involves the search for an as yet undefined transnational understanding of regional community which transcends the narrow conceptions of the nation-state and creates the political space for alternative notions of community. As such, this chapter interrogates the extent to which political concepts such as community, identity and region are tied to realist notions of territoriality, boundaries and exclusion. In an attempt to broaden the political imagination of these concepts, the chapter demonstrates some controversies imbedded in realist interpretations. The nation-state cannot continue to be accepted as the only secure form of social organization.

1.2 The problem of community in IR theory

Community in IR theory has been mainly attributed to two types of entities: state and nation. The former is defined in terms of the territories over which institutional authorities exercise legitimate control, and the latter defined in terms of “communities

of sentiment that form the political basis on which state authority rests” (Barkin and Cronin, 1994: 111). The concept of political community as used in political theory is one of enclosure – be it of a “tribe, polis or empire” (Magnusson 1990: 48). As such, conventional IR theories have paid little attention to community in a wider sense of relations. In political usage the concepts “nation” and “state” have the same extension. But the term “nation” has the connotation of a political community shaped by common descent, or at least a common language, culture and history (Linklater, 1998: 324). This is fulfilled by the idea of the modern nation-state which promoted among its territorial populations an awareness of a politically mediated form of community. The key assumption is that political community requires enclosure – a fixed unit of “secure sovereign space” (Niemann 2001: 64) where members of a particular territorial political community are divided from alien others.

As might be expected, traditional IR paradigms emphasize the role of the nation-state as the predominant source of political community and identity (Fry, 2000: 117). It can be argued therefore, that the realist approach does not concern itself with notions of community not concerned with power, the nation-state and its interests. Conventional IR theory assumes that the nation-state is the only acceptable form of political community. Community in the normative sense is meaningless for mainstream IR theory. The nation-state itself, according to the realist outlook, can also be described as a member of a larger community of states, competing for power and survival in an anarchic international system. Critical interpretations of community occurring outside the nation-state are deemed artificial or apolitical, and are dismissed (Magnusson, 1990: 50).

Conventionally therefore, the essential definers of political community were based on common interests and common identity enclosed in territorial boundaries represented by the nation-state (Booth, 1995). Taken as such, a political community can be defined as a society *centred* in and dominated by the Westphalian state system. As Biersteker and Weber (1996) remind us, the modern state is not based on some timeless principle of sovereignty, on the production of a normative conception that links authority, territory, population (society, nation) and recognition in a unique way and in a particular place (the state). This assumption upholds the nation-state as the only *proper* form of community, as the optimum political community where state

borders are the guides to political community. Community in this realist sense is limited to a set of existing relationships defined by state borders and marked by national identity constituted by the state.

These realist, state-centric notions of community say little about the character of political community once expressed outside the realms of the nation-state, other than that it depends on enclosure (Magnusson, 1990: 50). Hence, political community building by the nation-state involves an aggressive process of division and separation of geographical areas to give rise to sovereign states. According to Bauman (2001: 141), such constructions of community become “expedients aimed principally at the perpetuation of division, separation, isolation and estrangement”. Linklater (1998: 34) also holds that the configuration of political community is about state building and distinctiveness, characterized by an “increased regulation of society, the creation of homogenous national communities and the exaggeration of differences between insiders and outsiders in order to foster national solidarity”.

Claims of political community and exclusive territorial space have been reinforced by the concept of state sovereignty. This concept is based on a view that states have the right (and capacity) to control the people, resources and institutions within their borders (Evans and Newham, 1998: 504). Understood as such, states have supreme authority over the members of the political community. The concept of state sovereignty which has its roots in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia is considered the primary constitutive factor of modern political life. But as Makinda (2005: 950) asserts, “the rules of state sovereignty are historically contingent and reflect the interests and preferences of hegemonic states”. Consequently, advocates of political community have traditionally privileged the nation-state over any other forms of social organization.

In this context it seems apparent, therefore, that the existence of political community presupposes enclosure in the form of state borders guarded by the principle of sovereignty. Viewed in such a way, the political community owes much of its existence and survival to “ensuring that the social bonds between citizens and the state do not extend to aliens” (Linklater, 1998: 1). In other words, political communities endure because they are exclusive. This process is carried out by, and

maintained through, the idea of the sovereign state system which insists on the creation of national borders to delineate the identity of that state. As such, state sovereignty is presented as the only, or best, possible means of organizing modern political life.

However, as Walker (1993: 13) observes, political life need not to be caught between mutually exclusive and exhaustive oppositions such as “inside” and “outside”. Walker is of the view that community need not be exclusionary and that “the trade-off between men and citizens built into modern states need not always privilege claims of citizens above claims of humanity” (Walker, 1993: 34). This calls for a recasting of sovereignty as it is a hindrance to the realization of non-state interpretations of community. It is an invitation to rethink the concepts, foundations and boundaries of states and nations and it also implies that political community needs to be reconfigured so that an “alternative political order might be proposed” (Pemberton, 2000: 101).

1.3 Identity as articulated by conventional IR theories

Identities are necessary in international politics and domestic society alike, in order to ensure at least some minimal level of predictability and order. Long-lasting expectations between states require “intersubjective”³ or shared identities “that are sufficiently stable to ensure predictable patterns of behaviour” (Hopf, 1998: 175). By contrast, identity in IR theory has been dominated by state-centric approaches. Although the nation-state in international politics, across time and space, is assumed to have “a single eternal meaning, realism... assumes that states have a priori interests” [specifically,] “that all units in world politics have only one meaningful identity [namely, that] of self-interested states” (Hopf, 1998: 175). This implies that having the identity of being a “great power” (Hopf, 1998: 176) implies a particular set of interests incongruent with, for example, the identity of a SADC member. In this sense, identities become more than mere labels, they offer each state an understanding of other states, their natures and interests.

³ Structures of human association are determined by shared ideas rather than material force; structures can have shared notions about, for instance, the nature of the state and the relations between states (Leysens, 2004: 60).

As noted earlier, understandings of community formation in the realist sense are highly ambiguous as they represent systems of inclusion and exclusion as opposed to inclusive accounts of what it means to be a community. The nation-state presents a form of political community that is founded on the notions of exclusion and inclusion by means of accentuating differences between nationals and outsiders. The nation-state's conception of community is represented by protected territorial boundaries. Boundary-making serves as a form of identity inscription, territorially defined or "constructed in opposition to a threatening other" (Devetak, 1996: 193). Again, the act of exclusion and separation is present as political identity presupposes the creation of "the self and differentiation against the other" (Martin, 1995: 5). Consequently, identity is an ambiguous notion as it gets its meaning from what it is not, that is, from the *other*. One state's identity implies that it is different from the *others*.

Under the same rubric, realist assumptions that political community requires the perfect alignment of territory and identity, state and nation, functions to reinforce the supposition that community must be understood and organized as a single identity, perfectly aligned as possessing its allocated territory (Devetak, 1996). Accordingly, realist approaches distinguish identity as being at the core of the nation-state, and national identity is forged on the same set of assumptions that validate political community. Identity becomes the nation-state's tool for the assertion of state-centric goals (Hopf, 1998), it is the glue that holds a political community together. The realist conception of identity channels the nation-state towards perceiving itself, as well as other states, as self-interested actors above "an ally, friend, enemy, co-guarantor threat, a democracy and so forth" (Hopf, 1998: 177).

There are various problems with the realist conception of identity and its meaning. One of the difficulties with conventional IR theories is that they present the world from only one perspective even when it may make more sense to view it from several different angles. Realism views everything through the prism of the nation-state. By identifying the nation-state as a "unitary egotistical actor" (Smith, 2001: 225), realism presents an enclosed conception of identity. Realism assumes that the identity of a state implies its interests and subsequent actions. Hopf (1998: 175) asserts that "a state understands others according to the identity it attributes to them, while simultaneously reproducing its own identity through daily social practice". Realism

says little about identity outside the concept of political identity or nationalism based on the notion of “territoriality”.⁴ It lays great emphasis upon the territorial identity of the state and the assumption that loyalty to the state and identification with it could be provided through the concept of nationalism (Evans and Newham, 1998). In doing so, realist approaches assume that identity on the national level cannot be attained beyond the territorial state. In the same vein, “the territorial state provides boundaries of society, which in turn is upheld as a normative order by conventional IR theories” (Albert and Brok, 2001: 34). As a result, these boundaries of society have taken the form of a nation and have assumed diverse national identities contained and protected by nation-states.

The main challenge to the realist conception of identity lies in the fact that communities and identities are not state bound. The territorial system within which national identities are being forged faces many problems stemming from the proliferation of transnational identities. In this way, the realist conception of identity is being transgressed as nation-states can no longer be regarded as “ontological givens” (Albert and Brok, 2001: 39). All the same, the realist perspective seems to be at odds with those forms of social organization which embrace broader notions of community and expanded notions of identity simply because they fall outside the nation-state. The argument presented thus far has been that community and identity in conventional IR has been lacking because realism is occupied with power, security and survival of the nation-state. This implies that the realist approach offers a very narrow interpretation of political community and as such neglects other forms of community occurring outside the nation-state.

The idea that the territorial state provides coherent interpretations of both community and identity is flawed. This is because citizens tend to focus more on their individual and collective rights to act against the state than they do on their individual and collective responsibilities to it. The social structure of a single prevailing national identity has given way to multiculturalism. This has led to the proliferation of multiple identities encompassing gender, culture, sports, work or lifestyle (Buzan and

⁴ “Territoriality is conceived here as a specific arrangement of space, a geographical expression of social power. It is a way to control people and resources by staking out a marked claim and by defending it against rivalling claims” (Albert and Brok, 2001: 33).

Segal, 1996). This weakens the assumptions behind national identity as much as it weakens the nation-state and its borders. It can be argued, therefore, that both community and identity are not limited to the nation-state and that the latter cannot be the sole giver and taker of identities.

Additionally, Lechner (2007) argues that the trappings of realist assumptions such as borders, sovereignty and national identity remain, but are not taken as seriously as before. This is evidenced by the increasing pressure to conform to outside forces - economic, political, and cultural - which weaken nation-states' claims to distinction (Lechner, 2007). As a result, it can be argued that national identities are being eroded and drawn further away from nation-states by the proliferation of transnational forces which are animated by the processes of globalization. Consequently, the nation-state itself is being transformed by these processes through the increase of transnational actors which render different conceptions of identity viable. Although nationalist discourses and warfare still persist in many parts of the world, the weakening of shared identity means that individuals are not as prepared, as in the past, to die for their country whilst being perfectly willing to risk their lives by migrating from their country of origin.

1.4 *Regions* as articulated by conventional IR theories

States in the southern African region and elsewhere enter into regional arrangements with the same set of exclusionist assumptions implicit in both the discourses of political community and political identity mentioned in the discussions above. A region can be defined as “a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual independence” (Fawcett and Hurrell, 1995: 11). A region has its own identity, being a specified and identifiable district, area or territory on the map. Historically, nation and region have stood in much the same relationship to one another as actor and stage (Mayall, 1995). Consequently, the formation of regions created a space for the assertion of national interests within the regional domain. Regions provided the economic and political space within which the interests of the nation-states were enacted. This gave rise to a top-down approach to regional integration, and reinforced state-centric interpretations of what it means to be a regional community.

Regional communities cannot be reduced to the interaction of sovereign state interests as international relations theory would like us to believe. To do so would be to reify the identity and power of the state, presenting states as part of the natural world. As Sidaway (2002: 13) maintains, “it might be impossible to decide if the constituent states produce the regional community or if the latter serve to reproduce the state”. He maintains that a popular narrative in International Relations about regional communities views them as expressions of component states:

the nation-state system is evolving towards a system in which regional groupings of states will be more important than independent units ... the primary units of analysis and of the international system are thereby held to be states, even if the alliances of these in the form of regional communities is a manifest or developing feature of the international system (Sidaway, 2002: 4).

This has resulted in the consolidation of regional blocs such as the EU, ASEAN, and NAFTA which, whilst appearing as possible stepping stones for global community, actually imply fragmentation into state blocs. Realized as such, regional community refers only to levels of community among states and it assumes that one of the shared norms of that community is the non-intervention principle of sovereignty which further enhances the realist notion of political community (Ayoob, 1999).

In the context of southern Africa, Vale (2004: 74) observes that this narrow conception of region meant that the uncritical acceptance of realist frameworks to explain complex social phenomena like community were “driven by the power of international discourses”. In other words, the construction of community in the region simulated global interpretations of community and thereby created a regional community that was not consistent with the way the region itself understood the concept. He maintains that this “reinforced a central operating principle - that the only acceptable route to community in southern Africa was the so called nation-state” (Vale, 2003: 75). Community in this sense privileges boundary-making to construct a southern African community of states which in turn forges a sense of belonging that is marked by national identity, limited to national borders.

Similarly, there is the view that southern Africa is experiencing a mere formalization of state relations under SADC where the constituent member states operate within a shared logic of power, “a struggle for reproduction or legitimation ... the pursuit of aid, investment, and enrichment in the context of an overall peripherality in the world economy and an ascendant neo-liberalism” (Sidaway, 2002: 52). More emphatically, Sidaway (2002: 74) maintains that “SADC member states used the regional entity as an avenue through which they could pursue their national interests”. It could be argued therefore, that SADC conforms to a narrow conception of regional community with established relations only among its member states, thus cutting off other actors in the region.

Regional integration started with (the frontline states who effectively mobilised the region against its white minority regimes and specifically countered South Africa’s destabilization of the region from the 1970’s - 1992 (Sidaway 2002). In the late 1970’s, five Southern African states established a loose political front commonly known as the Front-line States⁵ (FLS) in alliance against minority regimes in the region and in response to Apartheid’s regional destabilisation. These were Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, and Mozambique (Vale and Matlosa, 1996:53).

This state-centric approach in regional integration reinforced the hegemony of the state, particularly the uncontested idea of the nation-state as the only path to regional community in southern Africa. SADC is, in large part, reducible to the strategies of a “state class” (Niemann, 1991: 297), that is, an “elite faction who dominate the state apparatus in most SADC member states and who are sometimes in tension or struggle with relatively underdeveloped industrial-commercial bourgeoisie factions”. In this light, Niemann (1991: 297) argues that “SADC becomes not so much a tool to reverse past dependencies and existing regional ties but... a means to achieve external funding... for nationalist projects”. Under these conditions, an alternative regional community based on a shared identity cannot be forged with ease.

The FLS politically coordinated opposition to South Africa and constituted the Southern African Economic Coordination Conference (SADCC) as an alternative economic region to that maintained by apartheid South Africa. SADCC devised a balance against South Africa’s attempted hegemony in the region and was carefully structured so that politically, no state yielded any of its sovereignty to a regional secretariat. SADCC was formed to oppose South Africa’s region CONSAS (Sandberg and Sabel, 2002).

It is important to note, however, that SADC, unlike other regional communities, identifies itself as a developmental community instead of an “association” as in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for example (Fry, 2000). Ayoob (1999) asserts that regional groupings like ASEAN, for example, clearly have almost no claim to community - thus ASEAN is arguably a *regional society*. With that said, and with the words *development* and *community* in its title, SADC ought to be occupied with development and resemble a community. In other words, the regional grouping in discussion ought to focus on developing itself politically and economically and this ought to take place in a mutual manner. This means that development has to equally benefit the needs of the *community* which is assumed in this chapter to include the people of the region and not only the elite groups at state level.

It is also worth noting that there are at least five other regional communities in Africa which hold different identities and interests derived from their respective sub-regions. These are COMESA, EAC, IOC, ECCAS and SACU. The majority of SADC states are also entangled in other frequently contradictory regional communities, most notably the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). This proliferation in regional communities within the SADC region can be both rewarding and constraining (Makinda & Okumbu, 2008:54). The overlapping membership becomes a challenge in the implementation of [deeper] regional integration programmes, especially when contradictory agendas and visions are being articulated by different formations ‘within’ the SADC. However, the subsequent effectiveness of SADC members belonging to other organisations is beyond the scope of this thesis (Sidaway, 2002: 66-67).

One of SADC’s objectives is to promote self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance and the interdependence of member states. That this has not materialized is because a large portion of SADC states still depend on South Africa’s economy and, as a result, South Africa dominates the region (SADC Treaty Article 5 (h) 1, 1992). SADC member states are today more dependent upon South Africa than they were in the early 1980’s (Sidaway, 2002: 52). Currently, efforts to redesign SADC to accommodate a wider market have been undertaken via the forthcoming

implementation of the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA) which promises to deliver a win-win situation for member states. The SADC FTA is expected to “develop a wider economic space where goods and services can move without tariff and non-tariff barriers” (Weidlich, 2004). This means there would be a wider market for goods that are produced according to acceptable standards and are therefore competitive.

However, improving the economic space among SADC member states does not provide a promising future for the region’s ordinary people who trade on a much smaller scale. This initiative could be just another state-centric approach to economic development and the time that statist initiatives like these take to reach the people on the ground is impractical. Matlosa (2002: 4) is of the view that the problem of unequal and uneven development between and within SADC states themselves presents obstacles for sustainable development in the region. Together with the fact that calls were made for the electrified border-fences between the region’s economic powerhouses (South Africa and Botswana) and some of its erstwhile SADC partners to be reinforced, produces a certain scepticism regarding SADC’s claims of community and development (Sidaway, 2002).

The experience of the people of South Africa and increasingly Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, in relation to crossing borders (legally or illegally), illustrates the idea that cross-border relations in southern Africa are much more profound and extensive than any restrictive mechanism can constrain. These relations will continue to manifest in the region until the region’s people are able to trade and move freely across borders. The free movement of goods and people is essential if SADC wishes to move towards an effective free trade area to grow and prosper. Thus border-controls should not be implemented for the purpose of preventing the cross-border movement of people and goods but rather as assistance in regulating orderly legal movement (Minnaar, 2001).

Vale (2003: 120) is of the view that SADC is located not where social relations are intimate, enduring, or multi-threaded, but...“where social relations are impersonal, anonymous and contractual”. This complicates the understanding of community in southern Africa because it suggests that the state is the true guide to community in the region. Article 5(1/h) of the SADC Treaty speaks of “strengthening and consolidating

the long standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the Region”. However, this contradicts current functioning of SADC member states as they are currently (directly or indirectly) involved in confirming the notions of state sovereignty through actions such as border-policing. Under these conditions it is not clear how SADC can strengthen and consolidate community in the region since “the region’s state system and the community its state-makers have constructed, separate southern Africans from a shared history” (Vale, 2003: 140). As such, the region’s people can never be institutionally reconnected if their governments are still reluctant to the idea of pooling sovereignty represented by the absence of state boundaries.

For Kornegay (2006), the idea of a region as a community aligns itself with the assumption that community life in the region ought to involve a range of informal transnational actors. This will help remove the obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the region generally. Thus community is the variable aspect that is lacking in SADC. Lacking community means lacking security and stability. In order for SADC to deliver meaningful community to the region, it needs to move beyond the realist conceptions of what constitutes and represents community. SADC needs to flex its political muscle and stretch its political imagination to develop a meaningful regional community founded on equity, inclusion and the willingness to consider the idea of regional community where broader interpretations are possible. Community in its expanded sense can deliver a more efficient, a more secure SADC, one which does not privilege boundary making as a prerequisite for regional community construction.

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has criticized the generally accepted assumptions of the nation-state as the only path to regional community. It has argued that realism has dominated the ways in which community, identity and region have been interpreted. The development of regional communities revolved around the idea that the nation-state was the only true guide to community. Consequently, realism does not fully comprehend more expansive interpretations of what it means to be a community - it perceives the state as the only possible agent capable of presenting a political community. This implies that the nation-state is at the centre of regional integration

and is informed by discourses of exclusion through boundary creation in the name of state sovereignty. The realist paradigm sees world politics in terms of independent states engaged in an endless competitive existence to preserve their security and well-being (Evans and Newham, 1998). Accordingly, as indicated by SADC, regional community in the realist lens assumes a group of states located in a “geographically bounded community” (Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998a: 39). Such modes of thought are profoundly challenged by the profusion of other regionally oriented organizations, communities and movements of people that have been neglected by realist approaches. Hence the discourse of the postmodern is valuable, forcing critical theorists to question conventional theories and accounts in the attempt to describe and analyze the meanings of community, identity and region. The postmodern meanings of community, identity and region are not fixed but socially constructed, maintained and changed.

Chapter 2

IMAGINING NEW FORMS OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

The question of the location of community, identity and region in world politics is based on the view that “the nation-state is under siege as the primary site of community and political agency” (Fry, G. & O’Hagan, 2000: 252). Despite the record of state-centric approaches to community, this chapter argues that alternative agents of regional community are active in southern Africa, and attempts to explain alternative ways of conceptualizing community, identity and region using a postmodern framework as an entry point to the task of imagining a new regional community in southern Africa. Such a framework offers new insights for expanded definitions and conceptualizations. In challenging such conventions, postmodernism highlights marginalized forms of social organization which can also be seen to contribute to the formation of regional community and identity (Best, 1994). This approach questions the realist documentations of community, mainly the idea that the nation-state is the only true guide to community in international relations and calls for the reconsideration of the nation-state within the context of this redefinition of regional community and identity. This chapter suggests the development of a postmodern regional community which is consistent with local understandings of community and does not rely on discourses of exclusion and border-inscription.

To conceptualize a different regional community in southern Africa means “to look beyond the present... to recover forgotten stories, to relocate hidden pathways towards self-discovery and to search for community impulses far below the height represented by epochal thinking” (Vale, 2004: 82). The postmodernist stance provides the best opportunity to reintroduce a non-epochal concept of community as understood by the region’s people and what this means in the context of the region. Thus, postmodernism can be seen as representing a broad stream of social science and philosophy as well as other disciplines that express doubt about traditional means of determining what is to count as valid or as “good knowledge” (Bryman, 2002: 163).

Bauman (1997: 32) observes that “postmodernism means different things to different people”. Postmodernist theory holds that there are no absolute truths and that there is no “objective reality” (Thompson, 2001: 240), only that which is constructed by, and contingent upon, dominant discourses. Discourses produce subject positions in which individuals are located. These subjective positions steer the perceptions, intentions and acts of individuals. Discourse in this sense refers to “historically grounded language use and lines of reasoning that are anchored in social institutions, and thus intervene in and regulate social reality” (Bryman, 2002: 175). The point made is that the way events are interpreted and explained will always contain a normative aspect.

The postmodern perspective, therefore, reveals the world as composed of an indefinite number of meaning-generating agencies. To put this in a different way, the postmodern approach entails “the dissipation of objectivity on the grounds of truth and meaning” (Bauman, 1997: 35). Moreover, postmodern theories attempt to “erode ignorance and misapprehensions” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:114) which some associate with realism, in order to try and provide change and transformation of existing structures. Postmodernism encompasses the complexity and fluidity of the economic, political and social forces that transcend traditional, nation-state based paradigms (Calland and Weld, 1994). This framework is therefore ideal for understanding the post-Cold War epoch and the escalation of transnational relations and events globally. Thus postmodernism suggests “that different spaces are needed for different histories and purposes and that a dominant model of society has no rational meaning” (Barnett, 1996: 8). In this context, the postmodernist paradigm is applied as an outlook which deals directly with multiple interpretations and meanings of community at the regional level. It acknowledges the meaningful role and contributions of social processes that shape regional community.

2.2 A postmodernist reading of political community

Linklater (1998: 41) asserts that “imagining new forms of political communities has emerged as a major enterprise in the contemporary theory of the state and International Relations”. This takes place against the changing of the state and its declining capacity to control events. In other words, not all states are in a position to

exercise central power and not all states could claim to have integrated their *nation* with their *borders*. This calls for the need to extend the boundaries of political community so that “citizens and aliens” come together as political equals (Linklater 1998: 54). As such, non-conventional or post-positivist IR theories like postmodernism can offer new insights for an expanded definition and conceptualization of political community. These approaches are critical of the *state-centred* approach to international relations. Instead, they are concerned with bringing out the silenced and marginalized voices by focusing on “localized narratives” (Thompson, 2001: 241) to interpret and explain events. Postmodernists, therefore, call for the use of such “local narratives” to explain community in order to release multiple interpretations and meanings of events.

Understood as such, postmodernist thought serves as a vehicle for the deconstructions of state-centric and exclusionist notions of community and the reconstruction of an alternative regional community reflecting socially constructed meanings and understandings of community. Postmodernism seeks to rethink the concept of regional community without invoking state-centric assumptions of sovereignty and territoriality. By challenging the idea that the character and location of the political must be determined by the sovereign state, postmodernism seeks to broaden the political imagination and the range of political possibilities for transforming international relations. In this case, it focuses on the social processes of (regional) community that are conventionally excluded from international relations in southern Africa. It seeks to offer “local narratives” (Vale, 2004: 76) of what constitutes community and to give voice to marginalized accounts of community:

when theorizing about community and its specific culture, therefore, it must be clear that the goal of theory is not to produce a unified body of universally valid and predictive knowledge; rather, it is to fashion a vocabulary that is both contextualized and interpretative and that makes description possible (Vale, 2003: 138).

In other words, there are different ways of knowing community and these are largely opposed to dominant constructions of community. Community is found within particular cultural contexts and the meanings by which the region’s people live by. In this context then, the thesis draws meanings of community as articulated by ordinary people in their cultural context in order to try and provide explanations for the

argument for deeper notions of community. To do this requires looking at disciplines such as sociology which are familiar with the conceptualizing of social relationships as “stories about society that carry moral, social, ideological, and political significance” (Dickens and Fontana, 1994: 11). Community theorized and understood as such opens up more paths for the alternative notions of regional community as well as revealing local narratives of what it means to be a community.

Community means different things to different people, but to speak of community evokes positive thoughts and as such “‘community’ conveys the image of a warm and comfortable place” (Bauman, 2001: 1-2). Community or the idea of it from a sociological perspective is illusive, with no central meaning (Vitke and Jackson, 1996). Sociologists argue that “a group is a community to the extent that it encompasses a broad range of activities and interests and to the extent that participation implicates whole persons rather than segmented interests or activities” (Selznick, 1996: 196). Hence, this provides a working definition for the purposes of this particular study: community can be treated as a variable aspect of a group experience. Groups can be more-or-less full blown communities and they can *approximate* community in different ways. Nonetheless, community offers a comprehensive framework within which a common, multifaceted life may be lived. It is something that provides settings in which people can grow and flourish, and be protected.

There is also a strong case for arguing that the sociological account of community represents a broader understanding, increasingly providing a rallying point for alternative interpretations of regional community. Sociological theory argues that community is not a one-dimensional idea but that there are varied sources of community and multiple means of attaining it. Selznick (1996: 196) is of the view that “the bonds of community are... strongest when... fashioned from strands of shared history and culture”. Similarly, community arises from, and is largely supported by, the experience of interdependency and reciprocity. As a result, people remain essentially united in spite of separating factors such as state boundaries. Selznick

(1996: 197) applies Ferdinand Tönnies's⁶ idea of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* to distinguish between two basic types of social group. While *gemeinschaft* pertains to local and intimate forms that can render lasting community, *gesellschaft* has connotations of *association* and therefore cannot achieve lasting community. It represents a form of community where relations are impersonal, contractual, and anonymous, where "people are essentially separated in spite of all unifying factors", and like the statist model, is based on rational will (Tönnies in Selznick, 1996: 197). In contrast, the *gemeinschaft* model is based on natural will and refers to a kind of community that fully realizes values of history and mutuality as profound elements of community. This form of social integration is based on personal ties and as such represents more of a community than an association.

A sense of community is usually accompanied by a shared sense of identity that is obtained from a shared history and culture. A common identity presupposes shared norms about social organization, common beliefs and values, and shared understandings about the basis of exclusion from, and inclusion in, the community (Fry, 2000). Understood in this way, identity provides a template from which a community establishes common goals and interests and, simultaneously, a sense of belonging. The people of southern Africa, for example, are currently searching for community beyond borders with their identity functioning as a compass to guide them to deeper notions of community that are based on a shared history. Identity is crucial in explaining alternative understandings and meanings of regional community which are compatible with the region's habits and its shared history. Thus a shared identity forms the building block of deeper notions of community and solidarity.

2.3 Identity and postmodernism

A postmodernist view of identity is not a unified concept but a mixture of different contexts, roles, and experiences a region encounters. Regional identity is more than a fixed notion as presented by the region's nation-states, and encompasses all of the

⁶ German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies distinguished between two types of social groupings. "*Gemeinschaft* (the essential will) - often translated as community and refers to groupings based on family and neighbourhood bonds and ensuing feelings of intimacy. *Gesellschaft* on the other hand, often translated as society refers to groups that are sustained by an instrumental goal illustrated by the city or the state" (Selznick, 1996: 196).

region's historical experiences (colonial and pre-colonial), and the shared notions about community outside national borders. As such, regional identity cannot be forged independently of intra-state and inter-state movement of people over time, because it is through this holistic phenomenon that meaningful regional identity and a shared citizenship can be formulated.

By contrast, regional identity in southern Africa has been limited to the region's nation-states which drive a state-centric regional integration agenda. Kornegay (2006: 5) observes that "southern Africa has achieved much as far as regional development, peace and security are concerned", but the question of *people-centred* regional citizenship and identity is not uppermost on the agenda of the region's political establishment. This presents an impediment to the recognition of regional citizenship and a common identity for southern Africa's people. This is coupled with the increasing unwillingness of SADC member states to share sovereignty in order to address new economic, environmental and security interdependencies. However, the region's states continue to witness various forms of intra- and inter-state migration.

The region's identity, therefore, "should be representative of the considerable cross-border movement of persons driven by economic imperatives of survival" (Matlosa, 2006: 8). The region is also marked by endless cross-border cultural movements based on a shared history. Matlosa (2006: 9) maintains that "the region's people have criss-crossed the entire region since time immemorial, despite the political boundaries imposed by colonial administrations". These cross-border interactions are testimony to the idea that the people of the region share a much stronger sense of commonness than imagined by the region's states. These cross-border interactions offer yet another opportunity for deeper integration in the region and a shared regional identity. It is undeniable, therefore, that the majority of communities in southern Africa share a common history, cultural heritage, language, religion and other social bonds that transcend colonial boundaries (Vale, 2004). It could be argued that these cross-border interactions inform the region's understandings of community and therefore they presuppose a sense of shared cultural identity which is wider and deeper than that forged by means of state boundaries. In most instances, as these communities struggle for daily survival, state borders may be irrelevant.

Southern Africa's contemporary regional identity has been strongly shaped by the liberation struggles against minority racial dominance (Kornegay, 2006). This has generated a political culture of solidarity, largely reflecting a state-centric agenda of mutual support among the region's leaders. Kornegay (2006:2) maintains that

migratory flows from poorer to richer and/or more developed countries - principally South Africa, Botswana and Namibia - that may result from governing crises within the SADC, has complicated issues of immigration and the free movement of people ... this created a situation wherein regional citizenship and identity prospects are increasingly caught in issues of democracy promotion and the need for a 'bottom-up' civil society driven participatory transnationalism that balances and complements state driven regionalism within the SADC.

Transnationalism in its standard definition describes activities across borders, undertaken by non-state agents and reiterates the transcendence of state borders and simultaneously weakens the hold the state enjoys over its territorial boundaries (Clark, 2000). The above discussion highlights the presence of a very strong transnational character of the region, "a pan-African identity transcending the nation-state" (Kornegay, 2006: 1) which is represented by countless cross-regional human interactions and activates, which

might be said to constitute the latent consciousness of a pluralistic southern African socio-cultural nation where multidimensional identities at clan, ethnic and even national levels are shared in an unspoken understanding of a bonding between and amongst peoples, individuals, members of organizations and affiliates and participants in programs - all without any conscious political or transnational civic content (2006:26).

In southern Africa and elsewhere, discourses of the state around immigration reflect the separation of people's identities. Terms like 'illegal immigration' and 'illegal aliens' are usually used to distinguish people into "outsiders" and "insiders" or between citizen and non-citizen (Peberdy, 2001: 29). Paradoxically, however, history of the region is rooted in the free movement of people and thus "the story of southern Africa is the story of... migration" (Vale and Matlosa, 1999: 6). Moreover, and as has been mentioned before, the people of southern Africa have a shared history and this makes statist discourses of immigration almost impossible to achieve as the primary loyalties of people may not be to individual nation-states but to a specific group that transcends national borders (Schoeman, 2002).

Moreover, “the issue of the free movement of people across borders coupled with immigration makes considerations of regional citizenship and identity concrete” (Kornegay, 2006: 29). This also indicates that the region is indeed consolidated beyond the scope presented by the region’s nation-states and SADC. It is argued that this strong transnational character should be the basis for formulating regional identity and a shared regional citizenship. In other words, the extent of commonalities in and among the region’s people set a template for the expansion of citizenship on the subcontinent. Similarly, the porous nature of the region’s state borders discussed above indicates their inability to control and contain state-made identities. This further suggests the need for the construction of a common regional identity which consequently makes the case for postmodern conceptions of regional communities.

Postmodernist theory seeks not only to identify and explain communities to be built in southern Africa but also to provide the means to arrive at them by helping people to gain more control over their lives (Vale, 2003). The two underlying assumptions are that the path to regional community ought to consist of various interpretations, driven by multiple social processes, and these can change the nature of regional cooperation by promoting shared notions about, for instance, the meanings as well as the understandings of what constitutes community (Vale, 2003).

2.4 Regions and postmodernism

Sidaway (2002) observes that a relatively widespread narrative in IR about regional communities views them as expressions of component states. Accordingly, “it has become typical to understand regions as historically contingent social processes emerging as a constellation of institutionalized practices, power relations and discourse” (Paasi 2004: 540). Nevertheless, it is assumed that the nation-state system is evolving towards a system in which regional groupings of states will be more important than sovereign units (Sidaway, 2002). This aspect of international relations may be called the postmodern order. According to this view, the state system is collapsing and giving rise to potential order rather than disorder.

In this sense, postmodernism encompasses the complexity and fluidity of economic, political and social forces which transcend traditional nation-state based paradigms.

As such it can provide a framework for consolidating the region's increased interdependence and transnationalism. This can result in profound structural changes to the political, economic and social orientations of SADC member states. At state level, this implies the weakening of national boundaries to allow the free-movement of people across the region. This idea is linked to a broader continental commitment on the part of the African Union⁷ (AU) to a borderless Africa (Matlosa, 2006). It entails the consolidation of a single overriding regional identity which can give rise to a shared regional citizenship and, therefore, a deeper sense of community among ordinary southern Africans. A people-centred regional development can improve the socio-economic condition of the region's people as they will no longer be shifted to the margins as far as regional integration is concerned. Perhaps a postmodern regional community is appropriate for our times and can constructively drive the region towards constructing a transforming regional community for its entire people.

The implication of the above for SADC is the creation of an institutional space for transnational (grassroots) organizations that happen to hold a different conception of regional community from nation-states. It implies a SADC which moves outside a state-sovereignty paradigm towards a postmodernist supranational integration process. This could reform the organization in order to create greater space for transnational movements that have grassroots constituencies. It is likely to encourage an even larger group of non-state actors and civil society organizations to look "beyond the geometry of state sovereignty" (Blaauw, 2007: 120) for solutions to such problems as unemployment, poverty, resource scarcity, etc.

⁷ The AU has been debating the need to first track economic integration as well as the Union Government to pool together the twenty-six African countries belonging to different regional communities into one bloc. The idea is to use regional communities like the SADC, EAC and COMESA as building blocs towards an eventual AU government. In the 9th African Union summit, themed "the Grand Debate", in Ghana, the SADC 14 member states set in a special session and adopted a common opposition to this regard. The theme of the summit is an exploration into possible options put forward by the AU leadership for a unified integrated continent. Former President Thabo Mbeki, for example, proposed the "Union of African States" and the gradual strengthening of regions and AU institutions, including the executive, financial and technical institutions. An African Union Government was suggested by former Nigerian President, Olesegun Obasanjo, advocating for the creation of 15 continental institutors created under the AU and transforming them into the 55th state in African by 2015. The Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi, wants an African government or the "United States of Africa" model (BuaNews, 03 July 2007). Through the discussion to date, African leaders have retained quite different perspective on the Union Government and the timeframe for implementation. SADC has adopted a more cautious approach to this idea of a Union Government, wanting more consensus and clarity on the operations and mandate of such a government. SADC has also argued for stronger regional integration, particularly the strengthening of the Regional Economic Communities (REC's) as building blocks before considering a unified continental government. Moreover, the African countries have cultural gaps that need to be harmonized before African countries could share a common government. These often have a direct correlation to the legislation and governance of countries, such as the case where many Muslim areas operate under Sharia Law and Christian countries using Roman-Dutch or English Common Law. Melding all these nations under one banner, in SADC's view is not feasible. While the AU is agreed on the movement towards a Union Government, there are different views on the timing and model of governance, (Southern African News, July 2008).

At institutional level, the above could in turn imply that the SADC Treaty does not only bind its member states on the basis of their national sovereignty but as states that are linked to other states and citizens. In other words, SADC member states would need to surrender their sovereignty to a supranational type of regional organization with legally binding rules to all its signatories. In this case, the citizens of the states may even look to other states to help safeguard their rights as individual members of their nationally defined society, or as members of a supranational integration organization (Lucas, 1999: 24). Moreover, and precisely because of the weakness of the formal regional infrastructure to support civil society projects (Mittelman, 1998: 860), such deliberations are necessary in order to improve the infrastructure at formal regional level, and to support non-state and civil society projects aimed at regional community building.

The broad definition of the term supranationalism in this thesis is somewhat akin to the term *transnational* (as defined earlier) but differs from it in that “supranationalism is not intended to focus primarily at the distinction between the state as an actor in international politics versus non-state actors acting alone or together with states” (Lucas, 1999: 7). The concept of supranational integration reflects the expanding interaction of non-state actors with states on an international level. As this interaction is increased, it has tended to shift and perforate the boundaries between nation-states. *Supranational* will thus encompass formal organizations, institutions, and political and legal agreements related to transnational interaction. These range from the cross-border movements of people, commodities, and information (and the agreements and political frameworks that legitimize and regulate these), to more structured, formalized inter-state activity organized and supervised by multilateral institutions and organizations, including grassroots transnational movements (Lucas, 1999: 8).

The above suggests the amelioration of the SADC structural framework towards a supranational type of entity. The purpose will be to allow for a broader regional entity which equally and fully recognises the value of transnational actors and the peoples of the region in the process of regional integration. As such, the proposed supranational type of entity could provide solutions for the various issues in the region, specifically those pertaining to the paradox of state sovereignty within the region’s porous borders. It could, for example, create the political space where, firstly, the Member

States are obligated to subscribe to a 'people-oriented' form of sovereignty as opposed to the current traditional notion of state sovereignty. Secondly, supranationalism could allow for the expansion and possible redefinition of the concept of state sovereignty so that it is the peoples sovereignty rather than the sovereign's sovereignty with the view to afford people "protection from their own governments" (Makinda, 2005: 950). Moreover, supranationalism could afford grassroots transnational movements and civil society the opportunity to "create a political and social space to play an important role in determining the content and scope of regionalism in SADC" (Blaauw, 2007: 210) within a more institutionally flexible context. This means recognising the fact "states are not the only regionalisation actors, and makers, civil society - as well as external actors - are deeply involved in the processes of regionalization, including its political dimensions" (Söderbaum and Taylor, 2003: 11).

The above opens the way for the region's states to be receptive to a bottom-up approach to deal with the region's problems. In this context a postmodern or supranational regional community can be understood as the ability of nation-states to fully allow various regional actors, particularly non-state actors, civil society, the media, and most importantly, ordinary people, to participate in shaping and re-shaping the region. This includes participation in a regional space created for the participation of communities on real agenda setting and decision-making around key issues in the region.

The legal framework for civil society participation is outlined in the SADC Treaty of 1992, and recognises non-state actors as key stakeholders in the implementation of the sub-region's democracy, peace and security project. What is not made clear by the Treaty is *how and in which departments* of SADC could non-state actors engage in order to play a meaningful role in regional integration. In addition to this, SADC, in moving towards supranationalism needs to elaborate how community-based transnational and grassroots movements working closely with poor communities can contribute to bridge the gap between itself and national governments (Nathan, 2004). This includes the role of community-based transnational movements which represent a fundamental aspect of civil society presently ignored by the SADC-CNGO and its processes. Supranational integration can therefore play an important role in the

democratisation of SADC's agenda in terms of involving marginalised local communities to "deepen the integration process and [to emphasize] a sense of regionness" (Blaauw, 2007: 223).

One of the ways in which supranational integration can contribute to the involvement of communities in regional deliberations and processes of SADC is through the outlining of specific areas for collaboration between SADC and transnational movements as well as areas for implementation mechanisms. In other words, SADC needs to determine the appropriate entry point for such movements so as to engage them in key areas of decision-making and agenda setting. This is challenging but can be done through the expansion of the institutional framework of SADC to form a supranational type of entity. In this way, governments can be directly and legally obligated (not necessarily through consensus but through treaties signed between and among states and non-state actors) to actively involve a vast range of transnational actors with a shared decision-making capacity in regional integration. Transnational communities across the region could be invited by SADC to participate in determining policies regarding a range of issues like cross-border trade and movement of people across the region, health care, education, food security and so forth.

In the political context, transnational and grassroots communities could contribute to regionalism from below which is currently undermined by governments in the region. This could be done by conveying regional development projects through the ZCC and other African Initiated/Indigenous Churches (AICs). These projects may be directed at uplifting the social well being of those at grassroots level. Generating a common symbol from which a common meaning and understanding of the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example, can be generated and conveyed through transnational movements like the ZCC with its large constituency throughout grassroots communities in the region. Through such supranational collaboration, the region's states could share financial responsibility in health care and other human security threats that the region is presently faced with. SADC could create a template where transnational grassroots movements like the ZCC and the entire AIC community, amongst others, participate in the fight against human security threats which are currently crippling meaningful regional development. A simple message

addressed at regional level by one powerful voice can reach down, change and empower those at grassroots level.

This chapter contends that the changing of emphasis within SADC from state to non-state or supranational forms of regional community is crucial. It would mean creating space where transnational actors and ordinary citizens participate in the formation of a regional identity. SADC could use a similar approach to identify opportunities to address some of the region's pressing issues such as poverty, education, women's empowerment, youth issues, unemployment, crime and so on. This step towards the development of a supranational entity emphasizing a people-oriented regional community committed to postmodern ways of dealing with human security threats could also be very effective in addressing the problem of xenophobia which puts a strain on regional solidarity and sense of community in southern Africa.

The region's shared history and current cross-regional interactions and networks make a strong case for recalling old meanings of community. This preoccupation with the ordinary creates the opportunity for a construction of a regional community "from below" which is sensitive to, and mindful of, the region's common past which is symmetric to the daily habits or everyday life experiences of ordinary southern Africans. This could give birth to a regional community grounded on local knowledge, committed "to recover forgotten stories and relocate hidden pathways towards self-discovery and the search for community impulses below the global discourses" (Vale, 2004: 83).

Against this open interpretation or people-driven explanation of regional community is the idea of community as interpreted by the region's states which continue to cling to sovereignty defined by state-borders in spite of cross-border community relations which openly manifest a disregard of these borders. The region's people often live and experience a community that is uncluttered by the discourses of the state and sovereignty. There is, then, "no need to erase national borders; those borders have simply not existed in any meaningful sense" (Vale; 2003: 173). Hence, the framework guidelines set out in the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of the Movement of

People⁸ in the region need to be accepted and implemented, as well as those of the SADC Free Trade Agreement, so that more effective formal controls and regional cooperative agreements can be put in place (Minnaar, 2001). It becomes imperative therefore, for SADC to adopt a supranational type of regional order where state sovereignty is limited and priority given to transnational non-state actors presently proliferating and re-shaping the parameters and content of regionalism in southern Africa (Blaauw, 2007: 28).

Regional community would therefore reject the position of the nation-state as the sole arbiter of the rights of its citizens, thereby creating “new spaces of reference” (Niemann, 2001: 78) for social movements with the capacity to transcend boundaries and inevitably challenge structures and institutions. Since these social movements are located where social relations are “natural” and “intimate”⁹ they cannot be separated from regional citizenship and identity issues. They present greater prospects for the construction of deeper or postmodern notions of community in the region. Moving identity beyond the institutional framework is a crucial step towards rejuvenating a regional consciousness thereby strengthening the region’s lasting commonality. The movement between different SADC member states of individuals who have kinship, friendship, community, and employment ties spanning two or more countries reflects a high intensity of exchange. Transnationalism in southern Africa is facilitated by “the transnational ethno-linguistic overlaps” between South Africa and neighbouring countries (Kornegay, 2006: 22) and presents the region’s people the opportunity to reaffirm their historical and pre-colonial understanding of community that had been interrupted by the region’s state system.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that despite the record of state-centric approaches to community, alternative agents of regional community are active in southern Africa. The chapter explained these alternative ways of conceptualizing community, identity and region using a postmodern framework as an entry point to the task of imagining a

⁸ The protocol (SADC, 1995), premised on the basis that the process of building the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is possible only when its citizens can enjoy movement across borders, was signed at the SADC Silver Jubilee Summit in Gaborone in August 2005.

⁹ As implied by Ferdinand Tonnies’s classic idea of *Gemeinschaft* or *closed societal communities*. See above, footnote 5.

new regional community in southern Africa. The postmodernist framework offers new insights for the expanded definition and conceptualization of political community, identity as well as region. In challenging conventional ways of conceptualizing political and regional community alike, postmodernism highlights marginalized forms of social organization which can also be seen to contribute to the formation of regional community and identity. This means constructing a regional community which is capable of accommodating other interpretations of social groupings and actors that are not necessarily linked to the nation-state. Alternative regional community ought to involve the transnational/social processes that fall outside the national space. In other words, deeper notions of regional community can be established in the region's transnational activities that define everyday lives of ordinary southern Africans. Hence the people of southern Africa share a common history, culture and languages and this predisposes them to assume a shared understanding of regional community from which they could equally share in the benefits that come with regional integration. This would be a first step towards creating political community at a local level while avoiding parochial isolation. A regional community so conceived, therefore, appeals directly to the needs of marginalized people of the region and can render a shared regional identity and a shared regional citizenship. In this context, community for ordinary people in southern Africa is more personal and intimate, and extends beyond national boundaries. In light of imagining alternative forms of regional community in southern Africa, the chapter argued for a postmodern regional community which connotes a new form of regionalism because it incorporates a wide spectrum of non-state actors to bring about a new order based on shared norms of social organization, and shared understandings of regional community.

Chapter 3

TOWARDS THE EVOLUTION OF REGIONALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have argued that community, identity and region have historically been described from the narrow position of the nation-state and that this should no longer be the case in postmodern times. Consequently, the chapters have rejected regional communities constructed in a state-centric manner and argued for postmodern notions of regional community capable of accommodating non-statist interpretations of community. It seems appropriate, therefore, to recognize the need to transcend state-centric notions of regional community that exclude other actors in these processes. The *new regionalism* approach (NRA) is a useful transition into such reconceptualizations. This chapter explores this approach to regional community building in the SADC region and argues that regionalism cannot always be driven by institutions alone, but that it must take account of bottom-up as well as top-down regional forces. Of the scholars who have contributed to the NRA,¹⁰ Hettne and Söderbaum (1998a; and 2000) have been the most thorough in articulating the theoretical boundaries of the approach. This chapter draws on their work to develop an analytical framework and adopts their definition of the *new regionalism* as “a complex process of change” (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000: 457) in the political role of regions (i.e., as political communities) by incorporating non-state actors as definitional criteria for regional groupings. The chapter employs this approach to theoretically situate non-state actors such as transnational social movements and their role in consolidating “regionalism from below” (Inheduru, 2003: 50). This approach “represents a shift both in thought about political *community* as well as its practice” (Fry, 2000: 121). It appears to be well equipped to explore the type of regional community that occurs when state and non-state actors are equally involved in the process of regionalism (Grant and Söderbaum, 2003:7). In short, this chapter maintains that *new regionalism* promises a bottom-up and people-oriented approach to regional community.

¹⁰ For example, Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998a; and 2000; Mittelman, 1996; Grant and Söderbaum; 2003.

3.2 Regionalism *old* and *new* in historical perspective

The theory and practice of regionalism and regionalisation is in a state of dynamic evolution. Regionalism is now a major trend in world politics and this in turn suggests a transformation of world order¹¹. As argued by Väyrynen (2003: 27), “to interpret regionalism today it is indispensable to recognize that we are dealing with a qualitatively new phenomenon”. The revival of regionalism represents an important trend in world politics. In the light of this, scholars have called for the interdisciplinary adoption of the NRA in order to capture the multidimensionality of a phenomenon viewed as qualitatively different from, and transcendent of, dominant theories of regional integration. According to Hettne and Söderbaum (2003: 54), this new “paradigm” refers to a phenomenon, still in the making, that began to emerge in the mid-1980s, in counterpoint to the “old regionalism” that began in the 1950s and dissolved in the 1970s.

Conventional views concerning the state-centric regional system are being challenged for their concentration of political and military power at the top. These challenges are also manifested by the proliferation of transnational networks built around economic bonds and cultural identities (Väyrynen, 2003: 28). Early post-Cold War expectations that regions and regional concerts would form the foundation for a new international order have proven untenable. Nevertheless, regions seem to develop either through the spreading of assorted transactions and externalities or as security against the hegemony of capitalist globalization and great-power politics (Väyrynen, 2003:28). More erstwhile conceptions of regionalism need to be redefined and reintegrated into current international relations theories.

¹¹ World Order can be defined as the rules and norms regulating the international system and its actors. The end of the Cold War symbolized the end of a bipolar world and its focus on superpower security. It gave rise to ‘new world order’. This was initially characterized by multipolarity and pluralist concerns, the proliferation and influence of non-state and transnational actors as well as International Non-Governmental Organizations like the UN. But the New World order came to be driven by unipolarity and the project to institute globalization from above. This had an impact on all parts of the world including Africa. Globalization can be defined as the realization of a borderless world, integrated by the global market. It is this new global wave that contributed to the current trend of regionalism which seemed largely a political response to the market driven process of regionalism associated with states (Hettne, 2001: 84). ‘New’ regionalism includes economic, political, social, cultural aspects. In this way it goes beyond narrow preferential trade arrangements characterizing ‘Old’ regionalism. This expanded form of regionalism can be said to be the political ambition of establishing regional coherence, and regional identity and the pursuit of regionness instead of ‘stateness’ (Hettne, 2001: 86).

3.3 Conventional regionalism

Conventional regionalism is typically understood as a “state or state-led project designed to reorganize a particular regional space defined along economic and political lines” (Payne and Gamble, 2003: 328). From a theoretical perspective, regionalism remains tightly constrained by the exigencies of state power and interest, and “the systemic influences that give rise to patterns of balancing and 'bandwagoning by states” (Fawcett, 2004: 442). There are several schools of thought involved in theorizing on regionalism. The study of regionalization has been dominated by functionalist and neo-functionalist approaches to, as it was then called, economic and political integration. As Hurrell (1995: 59) notes, both functionalist and neo-functionalist authors leaned towards the “European Community model”. The result was that the European integration process soon became the blueprint for regional integration in the “South” (Marchand *et al.*, 1999: 900).

Theorizing about regionalism was also dominated by structuralist approaches, with their notion of “core and periphery” (Grant and Söderbaum, 2003: 7) where core regions set the economic, political and security agendas, and peripheral regions adapted to limited choices with slight room for manoeuvre. Yet more liberal theories of interdependence, neo-functionalism and institutionalism also have particular value in examining patterns of cooperation in highly developed regions such as Europe. These approaches focus mainly on what can be termed ‘old’ regionalism and represents the state-led form of regional integration characterized by the objective to form regional collations of states for the pursuit of economic goals.

Conventional theories are often based on highly normative assumptions of the state, and therefore, tend to generate highly normative assumptions about regionalism. On the one hand, political scientists interested in preventing war through creating a security community, theorized on the need to develop a socially and politically integrated community which would “either emerge through practical and technical cooperation in non-political spheres (as functionalists would have it) or would be an elite-led process (according to neo-functionalists)” (Marchand *et al.*, 1999: 903).

Critical approaches, on the other hand, see regions as socially constructed and can thus be constructed and reconstructed to fit the dominant discourses of the time.

Regionalism in this perspective is seen as part of larger world-order transformations. Critical theory scholarship has thus developed the concept of region as a unit of analysis where transformations in post Cold-War politics and globalization have unleashed a peace/security/development nexus calling for complex patterns of interaction between states and non-state actors (Inheduru, 2003). This has produced a qualitatively different type of ‘new’ regionalism, or political cooperation on the regional level to promote the region as a vehicle for economic, cultural and ecological unity (Hettne, 1999: 25). Another interpretation of regionalism focuses on domestic political factors and uses, for example, strategic trade theory to account for the sudden keen interest on the part of policy makers in regional projects (Marchand *et al.*, 1999: 904). Lastly, there is the NRA, developed during the 1990s by Bjorn Hettne and colleagues at the World Institute for Development Economics Research at the United Nations University in Helsinki, and at the Department of Peace and Development Research at Goteborg University (Marchand *et al.*, 1999: 890).

According to Fabbri (2005: 4), there is a “constructivist” strand that runs through the *new regionalism* approach revealing that the construction of regions is contingent on the power and interest of those the regions serve and who currently answer to the states who are the beneficiaries of such regional arrangements. Thus constructivism provides a theoretically rich and promising way of conceptualizing regional integration, bringing the logic of community to the forefront.

3.4 The *new regionalism* paradigm

Regionalization is seen as a “complex process of change taking place simultaneously at three levels: the structure of the world system as a whole, the level of inter-regional relations, and the internal pattern of the single region” (Marchand *et al.*, 1999: 900). This represents a clear break with conventional theories about regional integration and cooperation. One of the fundamental features of *new regionalism* is an attempt to construct an *inclusive* theory that takes regional peculiarities into consideration. An inclusive social theory means “a comprehensive social science that abandons state-centrism in an ontologically fundamental sense” (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2003:462), thereby suggesting that regions are not givens but constructions of the social

processes occurring within the “lived space” (Niemann, 2001: 74) of any specific region.

The *new regionalism* approach gives a holistic account of regionalism, acknowledges the role of non-state actors, can be used to explore different interpretations of community in the region, and recognizes the vital role of civil society and other non-state actors as valuable partners in constructing a region charted by the need to provide for overall human security needs. Significantly, *new regionalism* is a “more spontaneous process from within the region” (Inheduru, 2003: 50) which reconciles the various perceptions of the region that are not necessarily statist.

In the context of Africa, negative mainstream perspectives tend to dominate. If there is any regionalism at all in Africa, it is primitive and characterized mainly by failed or weak regional organizations and a superficial degree of regional economic integration. While this is not altogether incorrect, it obscures the fact that there are vivid and multi-dimensional processes of regionalization in Africa (Grant and Söderbaum, 2003: 1-2). But by emphasizing economic integration, “the mainstream perspectives neglect a myriad of forces and actors that have continued to shape Africa’s regions” (Ramutsindela, 2005: 108). It should be emphasized, therefore, that this state-centric view of regionalism ignores the role of non-state actors and external influences in shaping the region. As mentioned earlier, cross-border interactions and interdependencies existed long before the formalization of the state in southern Africa. In Grant and Söderbaum’s view, these account for “the African state-society nexus [which] is based on multiple actors that are linked together in hybrid networks and coalitions, together creating a wide range of complex regionalization patterns on the continent” (2003: 1).

This implies that the *new regionalism* approach focuses on a bottom-up view of regionalization characterized by increased inter-regional interactions separate from any formal state-to-state activity. Consequently, these interactions make up the informal dimension of a region which Grant and Söderbaum (2003: 23) identify as comprising “a social system characterized by trans-local relations between human

groups which constitute a security complex”.¹² This feature of the region also highlights the sociological aspects within the region. By emphasizing the role of non-state actors and other enclaves of civil society in the process of regionalization, this approach promises a return to a more democratic and inclusive approach to regional integration than purely market or state-led initiatives can deliver.

3.5 SADC and the *new regionalism* approach

The paradigm of *new regionalism* emphasizes “the transcendence of state centric and formal regionalism and calls for a *people-centred* and participatory approach” (Blaauw, 2007: 233). This pre-supposes the building of regional networks amidst both state and non-state actors, which are aimed at constructing new approaches to regionalism. In the same light, the NRA states that institutions alone cannot always determine the route to regional community. This suggests that SADC needs to go beyond the institutional framework to achieve its goals and arrive at a sense of community. This does not mean abandoning or disrupting its current arrangements but transforming and concerning itself with developing a *people-centred* regional community.

One of the pillars that anchors SADC is premised on the assumption that the social welfare of the people of the region can only be promoted by popular participation of ordinary citizens in region-building. In this case, SADC has to accommodate non-state actors, particularly grassroots transnational movements. This will enable a *people-centred* approach to regional integration thereby opening the scope for addressing issues such as respect for human rights, poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS and inequality in the region. Some of SADC’s objectives enshrined by the Treaty of 1992 stipulate that

SADC shall seek to involve fully, the peoples of the region and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the process of regional integration... in order to foster close relations among the communities, associations and peoples of the region (1992: 54).

¹² A security complex is defined as “a set of states whose major security perception concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analysed apart from each other... security interdependence is markedly more intense between those states inside such complexes than it is between states inside the complex and those outside it” (Barry Buzan, as cited by Dunn and Hentz, 2003: 187).

Although the SADC Treaty recognises the need to involve civil society in regional integration, the organization has, to date, paid lip-service to fully and formally accommodating the diverse spectrum of “transnational activities from below [and external to] SADC structures” (Blaauw, 2007: 208). SADC has set up measures for the involvement of only a small fraction of civil society,¹³ and then, mostly from the private sector. Indeed, business in the region is already playing a critical role in the building and rehabilitation of infrastructure, the promotion of SADC as an investment centre, and consequently, job creation platform. Whilst these public-private partnerships are critical for the enhancement of development in the region, their drawback is that until now, the interpretation of a regional SADC community remains the prerogative of the narrow interests of big business and regional elites which remain largely disconnected from the poor and marginalized. SADC’s focus on business to the exclusion of others, fails to recognize that regionalism takes place in *several* sectors and involves a *variety* of non-state actors.

According to Landsberg (2007: 95), from a civil society perspective, big business and formal non-governmental organizations “tend to dominate policy-influencing and engagement opportunities at the expense of the poor-people’s and grassroots organizations”. In this sense, big business is just as “disconnected from the poor” as governments are although they tend to represent civil society (Landsberg, 2007: 95). This could be attributed primarily to the institutional set-up of SADC which only makes provision for non-state actors. Whilst civil society is not a homogeneous group but is drawn from professional organisations, research institutes, community-based organisations and churches, all with different socio-economic and political interests, such diversity should not be used as the reason to bar those aspects of civil society seemingly unmanageable or unprofitable to states.

The trans-border activities from below lend new meaning and value to the region and the notion of regional community. They bear testimony to the fact that regional organization and regionalism are political constructs defined by ordinary people and as such lend new meaning to the notion of regional community. *Regional* can be

¹³ Civil society designates an area of social activity other than industry, commerce and finance, as well as other legislative, administrative and judicial activity. Civic organisations and institutions include “charity organizations, lobbying groups, and political associations agitating for a particular cause or programme, neighbouring associations, non-profit organizations promoting education or providing services...” (Blaauw, 2007: 226).

reconstructed to accommodate the marginalized people in the region and to address broad-based development. What is needed, therefore, is to recognize that regions are also redefined by the people who are conscious of their transnational past and form a transnational community in doing so. This endeavour has been echoed by the amendments (SADC, 2001) made to the SADC Treaty in 2001 which makes reference to the involvement of non-state actors such as civil society, the private sector, as well as ordinary people in the process of regional integration.

Non-state, grassroots actors outside SADC structures can play a decisive role in deepening regionalism and increasing its “*regionness*” (Hettne, 2001: 88). This is sometimes called “transformative regionalism” (Mittelman, 2000: 225) and refers to the alternative, bottom-up forms of cultural identity, self-organization and self-protection of civil society movements. Taken together, these represent a movement away from the state, thereby distinguishing a new way of conceptualizing regional arrangements. Hence the *new regionalism* knows no geographic boundaries. To achieve this, means recognizing that regionalism is multifaceted and that trans-border activities from below lend new meaning and value to the region and the notion of regional community. In the case of southern Africa, this view proposes that transnational actors should lay down the groundwork for deeper regional integration which then lays the cornerstone for deeper notions of alternative community in the region.

3.6 Lived spaces and *regionness*

The *new regionalism* approach advocates that social processes are paramount over geographic or national spaces:

the concept ‘new regionalism’ refers to a transformation of a particular region from relative heterogeneity to increased homogeneity with regard to a number of dimensions, the most important being culture, security, economic policies and political regimes (Hettne, 1996: 14).

The underlying assumption here is that the path to regional community ought to consist of various interpretations driven by multiple social processes focussing on how these can change the nature of regional cooperation by adding *regionness* while promoting shared notions of what constitutes community.

The concept of *regionness* has been used to describe “a situation in which the process of regionalization has advanced far enough for the region to attain some intrinsic regional features” (Väyrynen, 2003: 39). Hettne differentiates *regionness* according to five “stages of growth” (in Ramutsindela, 2005: 107): the borderline of the geographical unit, the development of social systems, transitional co-operation, the organizational framework of civil society, and the development of the personality of the region. Moreover, the region’s ability to develop into a regional community is in part dependent on the role played by the region’s transnational (grassroots) movements and in part by the region’s people who have a critical role in shaping and developing a sense of community or belonging, and by extension, *regionness* and regional identity.

Regionness is the process whereby a geographical area is transformed from a passive object to an active subject capable of articulating the transnational interests of the emerging region (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000: 458). It also refers to the level of commonality and historical experience found in the “lived social spaces” (Niemann, 2001: 74) within the region. Moreover, like identity, it is “not given once and for all: it is built up and changes” (Fawcett, 2004: 433). These “new social spaces of social reference” (Niemann 2001: 75) contain the interconnected networks of human interactions that the state-centric conception is unable to account for and refer, in turn, to the multiple and interconnected links between the region’s people, constructing and representing the way the region is organized.

In order to arrive at an alternative conception of regional community, we need to create new spaces that include transnational actors, coalitions and networks. This calls for a focus on the more critical spaces of reference which Niemann defines as “lived” (2001: 75). These critical spaces refer to transnational activities that are shared by ordinary people of the region as a means of survival and the search for a better life. Generally they attempt to overcome the limitations inherent in the concept of regional community and undermine the state’s control of political space. Consequently, regional transnational movements can be seen as eroding the space between the region’s states and allowing for the localization of this space. They represent solidarity across traditional boundaries and networks of transnational connections.

Localization in this context refers to a process of shaping and reshaping space so that the political cannot be separated from the social or local. Space, therefore, does not necessarily have to be identified with “fixed boundaries, bureaucratic ethos or official status associated with the sovereign state” (Camilleri and Falk: 1992: 210). Here we are reminded of the postmodern tendency to challenge existing boundaries, deconstruct accepted categories and reinterpret prescribed histories in the pursuit of alternative “spaces of representation” (Niemann, 2001:74) outside national boundaries where *regionness* can be re-marked. Expressed differently, localization implies the easing and widening of state borders in order to increase the interaction of different people rediscovering a sense of *regionness* which eventually translates into a regional community from below. *Regionness* is politically illustrated by the extent to which the regional space bears a direct communal relationship to the region’s ordinary people.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that regional interactions focus on continuing linkages among a heterogeneous set of actors in the region, including states, societies/civil societies and communities/people. This argument is informed and shaped by *new regionalism* which is a multifaceted and pluralist perspective which invites a range of actors into the process of regionalism. The *new regionalism* paradigm advocates that social processes outside the confines of geography, or national space, should be the main attraction for analyzing regions. Thus, the new face of regionalism sees the region as a social rather than a state system. As the work of Grant and Söderbaum shows, state actors are important, but so are non-state actors and various other types of actors in diverse and complex networks. These activities and interactions are evident through the informal cultural networks that manifest across national borders. Some of these movements are founded on the region’s history and are a crucial factor in developing *regionness* and by extension a regional identity. This chapter has shown that trans-border relations between human groups have an important role to play in regionalism. This new approach forms the basis for deeper notions of regional community and improved social welfare for ordinary people.

Chapter 4

EXPLORING DEEPER NOTIONS OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY: THE ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH (ZCC)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to highlight marginalized forms of regional community as well as their purpose in shaping and strengthening deeper notions of regional community in southern Africa. The objective here is to show the extent to which the region's people continue to perceive themselves as a single community notwithstanding the statist divisions that have been imposed on them. In this regard, the chapter explores the ZCC as one of the region's fastest growing grassroots, transnational social movements.¹⁴ The ZCC can be seen as a building block for deeper notions of regional community and identity in southern Africa which can reveal the hidden interpretations of community in the region. It is suggested that the ZCC can be a crucial player in facilitating the region's people in their search for community outside the realm of the nation-state. The chapter provides some empirical examples available to endorse these suggestions. The assumption is that the ZCC can help rejuvenate the region's lost/forgotten sense of belonging and indigenous notions of community, thereby playing a critical role in the drive for a *people-centred* regionalism that can be incorporated within the institutional framework of SADC.

4.2 Transcending state-centrism: the need to rethink community in southern Africa

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the region's history is intertwined with different forms of community: "family, clan, tribe, business, trading, religious" (Vale, 2003: 183) all of which predate colonial times and continue to manifest beyond state borders in the present. This suggests the revival of indigenous forms of community in

¹⁴ "The term social movement is meant to include all those practices and meaning-making processes by which those within a given movement express their distinctiveness vis-à-vis the surrounding culture(s) with which they interact. These practices and processes include, but are not limited to: rituals and symbolically charged actions; movement-specific ideologies; idiolects, jargons, and other special language forms; works of art and other expressive forms; unique value systems; material culture objects peculiar to the movement; and various other behaviours and expressions that enhance movement solidarity, strengthen movement-bred identities and communicate movement ideas, values, and goals" (Reed, 1997).

southern Africa. It is suggested that this can best deal with the issue that comes with state-centric interpretations of community which have “separated the people from their shared history and their shared concerns for survival alongside their shared hope for lasting community” beyond the discourse of inclusion and exclusion (Vale, 2003). The conclusion is unavoidable: states are obstacles to fuller human development in southern Africa. As a result, attention needs to be paid to non-statist interpretations and articulations of regional community. New cross-border impulses need to be explored more proactively. The logic of this approach relies in “looking beyond and below the nation-state simultaneously” (Vale and Matlosa, 1996: 12).

Although the concepts of the nation-state and national identity have become an integral part of people’s identities, it is argued that these are not sufficient in describing or forging meaningful community in southern Africa. Southern Africans believe that “the state system no longer offers solutions to their everyday problems; it neither delivers security nor satisfies a desire for community” (Vale, 2003: 135). The people of the region go to the extreme of bypassing the judicial and spatial confines of nation-states, thus increasingly rendering them irrelevant to their well-being (Mohao, 2006: 21). This highlights the response of ordinary people toward state-centric notions of community, driving them to explore new ways of community such as cross-border trading and migration. In this context, therefore, Vale speaks of “making and remaking” the idea of community (2003: 135). This means that there needs to be some form of continuous line that joins the region’s people to their shared history.

It is meaningless to search for community within structures whose notions of community are premised on discourses of inclusion and exclusion as represented by the statist political community which lacks the potential and the appreciation for everyday community in the region. As Vale puts it, “State building in southern Africa has been a manipulative process in which many identities have been massaged to suit the purposes of communities contrived, constructed and explained for narrow political and economic purposes” (2004: 88). The idea of “states-as-community” in southern Africa has been confirmed through historical discourses that have given prominence to the region’s states. But “what is good for states is not necessarily good for ordinary people in the region” (Vale and Matlosa, 1996: 14). Southern Africa should not be represented by a certain conception of time but by its numerous historical instances,

“each of which must come to enjoy equal weighing if community in southern Africa is to flourish” (Vale, 2004: 82).

4.3 Tracing local spaces of representation and community

In many parts of the world, what feeds people, organizes them and constructs their worldview is not the nation-state and its formal agencies (at local, national or regional levels), but the informal sector and its multitude of civil society networks and associations. People do not participate exclusively in the formal or informal sector, but rather, in and out of both. They are constantly involved in regional activities that are taking place at grassroots level and these interactions form an integral part of an alternative regional community. This is because they engender a new method of becoming a region which is informed by the various interactions stemming from the “below” of “lived spaces” where the nation-state has a minimal or absent control over activities associated with informal cross-regional interactions. *Regionness* can increase or decrease depending on the level of the availability of such interactions which, by their existence, transform the region from a geographic state-led unity into a community where the inhabitants have a deeper sense of commonality.

The transnational character of the ZCC is a suitable agent for investigation into these “lived spaces [which] contain the lived experience of inhabitants... and the possibility for the creation of an alternative regional community stemming from ‘below’” (Niemann, 2001: 74).

It is argued that these spaces are the bases for the intersubjective meanings and understanding of regional community and can subsequently increase the level of *regionness*. Vale holds that, “the potential for everyday community in the region is... not possible without understanding the social sites that have been born from the mingling of cross-regional contacts” (2001:49). These shared meanings found in the interaction and activities carried out by non-state actors like the ZCC paint a very different picture of the region. The ZCC represents the opportunities for the possibility of developing a regional community that is charted by the region’s indigenous meanings and understanding of community. Moreover, it represents a compelling example of both developing identity and community-in-formation beyond

national borders, situated, rather, in “local ways of knowing community” (Vale, 2003: 134) and is thus a meaningful instrument for change in which individuals and groups can achieve higher levels of freedom.

Mainstream perspectives that neglect interpretations of community stemming from non-state regional actors created a community in which indigenous people were not inside but outside. Consequently, transnational relations across southern Africa which manifest in interactions among non-governmental organizations and, more broadly, informal trade and cultural networks, have been neglected in regional integration efforts in the sub-region. In order to move away from rhetoric to action as far as the participation of ordinary people in regional integration is concerned, SADC needs to pay attention to such initiatives by grassroots religious communities. It is worth mentioning that transnational movements like the ZCC have the necessary qualities of being “spiritually grounded, economically astute and ideologically sophisticated” (Chitando, 2004: 131) for the renovation of southern Africa charted from below. The ZCC, among many other religious movements, has throughout colonial and apartheid times haltingly conducted its cross-border activities. Up to the present day, this transnational movement manifests during the annual Easter festival which takes place in the province of Limpopo (within the national boundaries of the state of South Africa). More significantly, this event and the cross-regional contact of ordinary people illustrates that “a nascent community is being formed beyond the frontiers of the southern African states” (Blaauw 2007: 262).

4.4 The background of the ZCC

The ZCC is the largest of the African Indigenous/Initiated Churches (AICs) and a stronghold of “Africanisation” (Moriye, 1996: 154). The AIC’s are seen as a reaction against “over-Europeanized, over-institutionalised and over-intellectualised churches in Africa” (Oosthuizen, 1986: 2). Their emergence can be seen as an attempt to retain some measure of local identity in the aftermath of colonialization and the formation of the state system in southern Africa (Venter, 1999: 122), in the form of a challenge not by “individuals but as a movement” (Pitsadi, 1983: 107).

The ZCC is an overwhelmingly African, multi-ethnic movement, spread over a large part of southern Africa. It only gained official state recognition in September 1992 (Naudé, 1995:78). The church grew from a mere 926 members in 1925 to 40 000 in 1943 and 80 000 in 1954.¹⁵ The church continues to grow today and its membership is estimated to be over six million including members from all or most neighbouring states of South Africa. Pitsadi (1983: 107) is of the view that “the main reason for this remarkable growth... is due to the leadership of the church, its dogma, internal organization and management, and their religious practices”. Above all, it is said to be “the church of the people” as it is situated “where the people are and it addresses their hopes and fears” (Pitsadi, 1983: 107).

The ZCC was founded in 1910 by Engenas Lekganyane who was of Swazi origin.¹⁶ Lekganyane formed the church after he had a vision of forming a church that would appeal to the African community at large. He persuaded a white farmer to sell him a piece of his land (now known as Moria or Zion City), to become the headquarters of the church in the Limpopo province, South Africa. The ZCC aims to express Christianity in an African way and thereby synthesizes African traditional culture with Christian beliefs (Moripe, 1996: 160-161). The ZCC and the entire AIC community can be seen as the vanguard of an indigenous expression of African Christianity and as an alternative to mainstream or “mission-derived” churches such as the Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and others (Chitando, 2004: 119). As such, it resembles a form of resistance against “colonial cultural hegemony” (Comaroff, 1985: 237) in relation to African Christianity.

Pitsadi (1983: 172) maintains that the ZCC and other Zionist movements “do not allow African religion to be Christianized; rather they aim to Africanise Christianity in order to make it more meaningful to the African population”.¹⁷ This is a direct link to the paradoxical, and ongoing, struggle for identity in Africa. African identity is conceived primarily as participation in community and only secondarily as individual

¹⁵ Figures obtained from Oosthuizen, 1986: 126.

¹⁶ For the history of the ZCC, see, for example, Oosthuizen, 1986; Pitsadi, 1983; Comaroff, 1985; and Moripe, 1996.

¹⁷ “African Christian Theology is emerging from the African hermeneutic because the questions it addresses are African and the answers have to speak to the African situation in the light of the Word of God... The African Christian Theology is a reflection of what the Biblical God is doing to enhance African survival through the agency of people who are informed by scripture and traditional concepts of God... both Biblical and traditional religious beliefs take the matter of survival very seriously for it is the reason for an affinity for religion” (Pitsadi, 1983: 169).

existence. In contrast to the Cartesian notion of “I think therefore I am”, the African maxim is “I belong by blood relationship, therefore I am” (Mbiti in Pitsadi, 1983: 171). Mbiti further says that “in traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist except corporately... he is simply a part of the whole” (1992: 110).

The ZCC is well known among Africans for its healing, prophetic ministry which is the major force that attracts millions of people to the church: “healing is the most dynamic experience known to its members” (Moripe, 1996: 158). The main doctrine or motto of the ZCC is based on peace, love, unity and reconciliation, productivity and hard work (Pitsadi, 1983: 2). The ZCC represents a particular transformation of the Zionist order, one which revolves around the inherent tension between charisma and routine by stressing the normative to a greater extent than any other Southern African group (Comaroff, 1985).

According to an HSRC survey conducted in 1993 (in Venter, 1999: 120), an estimated 50.3% of ZCC members were part of households who earned less than R600 per month, while 59.7% had Std. 3 or lower qualification. Put differently, 11.03% of all South Africans who earn less than R600 per month claimed to belong to the ZCC, as did 12.9% of all South Africans who had Standard 3 or less. This gives credence to the role of the church as a helping hand to “those at grassroots level who have been ignored by middle-class society” (Pace, 1995: 22). As such, the ZCC qualifies as a paradigmatic grassroots movement. The majority of the ZCC members are found in townships, rural areas and a smaller portion are located in urban areas. They can be identified by a silver star against a small green/black ribbon with the letters Z.C.C. inscribed on it, worn on the left-hand side of the chest.

The leadership of the ZCC is “charismatic in nature and hereditary” (Pistadi, 1983: 29). Comaroff is of the view that the leadership of the church, especially within the Lekganyane descent group, echoes “pre-colonial chieftaincy authority... due to the fact that, in recent years, despite major secession, the leadership has always devolved in the Lekganyane descendents” (1985: 240). In fact, “the balance within the ZCC between local-level autonomy and centripetal power is its particular genius” (1985: 241). Regardless of the centrality of power, membership in the ZCC continues to grow enormously. Today, the church is led by the third generation Bishop Barnabas

Lekganyane who “inherited” the church leadership from his father, Bishop Edward Lekganyane, after his death in 1967 (Oosthuizen, 1995: 22). Pistadi (1983: 54) states that “the African features in this church are expressed through structures that closely mirror traditional society through their hierarchical system inherited from a traditional society”.

Membership of the ZCC displays an interesting phenomenon as it is “transitional” (Venter, 1999: 21) in two senses: first, increased individual economic welfare mitigates against continued membership in the ZCC (Kiernan 1990: 22), whilst increased unemployment provides fertile ground for new membership; second, recruitment of educated, upwardly mobile youth propels the movement towards modernity.

The ZCC has been criticized for being “too soft and a good propaganda machine for the apartheid government” (Pace, 1995:22) for its political stance (or lack thereof), during the apartheid era. In 1985, for example, the church was criticized for reaching out to then President P.W. Botha. In 1992, the ZCC invited F.W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi to pray for peace in South Africa. Anderson (2001) observes that whilst the visit of the nation’s three most significant political leaders to the ZCC’s Easter Festival was a manifestation of the changing attitudes sweeping over all South Africans, it was also a pragmatic effort on the part of the ZCC to play a constructive role in the negotiations then being conducted, thereby helping to promote peace during a time of violent strife. But it was also an acknowledgment of the enormous social and indirect political power that rested within the spiritual following of the ZCC (Wende, 2007). Most significantly, Mandela received the greatest ovation and made reference in his speech to prominent ANC officials who were members of the ZCC. The ZCC was pre-eminently a church of peace, and Mandela was patently the leader closest to this ideal. “Subsequent events have placed most ZCC members squarely behind the ANC government” (Anderson, 2001). It could be argued, therefore, that the ZCC has both historical, and to a lesser extent, political significance.

During the Easter conference of 1994, just before the watershed April elections, the ZCC invited the country’s leading political figures, to pray for the forthcoming

elections and peace in the awaited 'New South Africa'. To this day, the ZCC continues to invite political leaders in celebration of its Easter conference, inviting incumbent president Thabo Mbeki to address the ZCC masses in 2005. Kealotswe's assertion that the ZCC should be seen as a "socio-cultural, rather than political, protest movement" (2005: 214) seems, therefore, most apt.

4.5 New Regionalism and transnational movements: the ZCC

As mentioned in the foregoing chapter, the *new regionalism* approach also suggests that the interactions among transnational actors could contribute to deepening integration and a sense of *regionness*. These transnational movements lend new meanings to regions and the notion of regional community. Members of the ZCC from all over the country and across the region generally, make an annual pilgrimage to the Holy ground of Moria. A congregation of different nationalities gather to listen to the leader of the ZCC deliver a speech presented in sePedi and translated by several interpreters into other languages. Such a procedure presupposes that the general leadership of the organization is mindful of the region's transnational make-up. These symbolic gestures and transnational connections transcend national boundaries and construct regional community along cultural and social ties. The ZCC is the only grassroots, transnational community that can independently host millions of people from all over southern Africa irrespective of state boundaries - and it has done so for a significant period of time.

It is against this background that a transnational actor such as the ZCC can play a crucial role in developing an alternative regional community from below through a common goal and vision, a unified regional identity and, hence, *regionness*. From a *new regionalism* perspective, this "multi-ethnic, proactive social movement" (Oosthuizen, 1996: 309) could assist SADC in attaining its goal of incorporating non-state actors into wider social and economic developmental issues of the region thereby fostering a people-centred and participatory approach to regionalism. Although it has no regional institutional recognition, the ZCC can be seen as a transnational "civil society of the poor which can address the issues of poverty and underdevelopment through a holistic strategy combining social support with tangible development intervention" (Oosthuizen, 1996: 309).

One of the ways in which the ZCC is successful as a meaningful force for improving the lives of ordinary people, is the mobilization of the members of the congregation toward improving their position by providing self-employment opportunities, and thus economic independence. Members are encouraged to enter the business sector and, as a result, form a large contingent of the informal business community within South African townships and rural areas where they are involved in economic activities ranging from street hawking to big business. This dynamic, grassroots mobilisation has seen the ZCC take “over techniques of production and communication from the mainstream society, embedding them within a scheme based upon opposed principles; in this manner, it strives to return to the dispossessed the values alienated by colonialism” (Comaroff, 1985: 251). The ZCC has also established a bursary fund¹⁸ and has built several schools.¹⁹

A good example of the transnational networking of the ZCC is the economic cooperation between members of the ZCC in South Africa and those in Zimbabwe. Informal traders of the ZCC in Zimbabwe have been well received by fellow believers in South Africa and Botswana. It is clear that the contact with fellow believers in a specific trade has enabled Zimbabwean traders to thrive. This “spirit of unity” (Chitando, 2004: 121) amongst believers is cultivated and enhanced at religious gatherings in the different countries. This transnational movement can only expedite the supranational context of regional integration.

4.6 The ZCC and *regionalism from below*

Hyslop (2006: 3) observes that mainstream or secular social scientists may agree with the idea that although the ZCC may well have more members than the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the former “can’t bring the country to a halt [whereas] COSATU can”. Be that as it may, the issue of faith needs to be taken seriously within the growing globalist framework. Events such as 9/11 have brought

¹⁸ The church has granted Bursaries for their students in the following institutions: University of the North, University of Venda, University of the Western Cape, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), University of Swaziland, Fort Hare University, University of Bophuthatswana, University of Transkei, University of Durban-Westville, Rhodes University, University of Zululand, University of South Africa and a number of colleges of education and Technical Colleges (Pitsadi, 1983:9:27).

¹⁹ The ZCC has also established the ZCC-funeral benefit trust fund, the Bishop Edward Lekganyane Bursary Fund, and the ZCC chamber of Commerce (Lekgotla La Babereki). The ZCC has various businesses in the country such as the Pretoria-based Matthew Auto Spares and the Kgotso Family Store (Moripe, 1997:130).

the question of faith into the scholarly realm of IR. The intensification of globalization and the presence of alternative social organizations arranged along religious lines mark an important turn. Globalist discourses emphasise the diffusion of traditional power and sovereignty away from states to transnational groups.

The contribution made by non-state actors in reshaping the international space anticipates the need to theorise the emergence of transnational social movements, religiously inclined or otherwise, and their potential to globally influence change (political or otherwise). This illustrates how religious change relates to socio-political structures, which in turn responds to ideas generated and accepted in international relations (Venter, 1999). Identity has been the leading factor behind the proliferation of transnational social movements. Hence, the AICs in southern Africa have emerged from the need to express a cultural identity in response to western cultural hegemony within the rapidly globalising international space.

From this perspective, the ZCC represents a pan-ethnic movement, shaped by the circumstances surrounding the rise of the neo-colonial state and the emergence of a class of black peasant-proletarians. Through the experiences of urbanisation and poverty, Africans have constructed new religious identities that combined aspects of traditional belief systems and rural ethnic identities with Christianity to form an indigenous religion (Venter, 1999: 118). During the 1990's, the proliferation of AICs across southern Africa coincided with the development of a declining and unstable political and economic environment (Anderson, 2001). According to Jules-Rosette (in Venter, 1999: 120), "the emergence of AICs has to be linked, in particular, to two connected global phenomena: (a) the spread of the nation-state... and (b) colonialism". In Mozambique, for example, the rapid growth of economic disparity in the 1990s was produced by privatization, cuts in government services, and the arrival of foreign aid prompted by Mozambique's World Bank/International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Program (Pfeiffer, 2002).

In similar vein, the ZCC's extensive regional growth was shaped by the conjuncture of a particular historical condition in southern Africa. There is a close link between the spread of AICs and migratory labour which resulted in the development of the current transnational informal economy across southern Africa. Venter argues that

while “the economy has to do with the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities; culture has to do with the communal production and transmission of patterns of thinking and acting” (Venter, 1999: 115). By implication then, the ZCC is strikingly similar to the creative, “neotraditional” responses of peoples faced with the choice of

(a) giving up cultural heritage, or regarding it as inferior; or (b) rebelling against the threat to indigenous cultural identities, and the reaffirmation of traditional culture and belief systems (Venter, 1999: 123).

Comaroff (1985: 253) suggests that the forms of socio-political protest exhibited by this “cultural resistance” were implicit rather than explicit, but nevertheless all-pervasive, and that the Zionism of the ZCC “created a middle ground between a displaced ‘traditional’ order and a modern world whose vitality was both elusive and estranging”. Thus “the ZCC is an expression of a situation of particular disequilibrium in which the destruction of traditional social-cultural norms (like community and identity) is felt by many as an injury more grievous than political and economic injustice” (Kealotswe, 2005: 217). Over the years, people have joined this organization for a variety of sociological, political or religious reasons, taking advantage of porous borders, and thereby facilitating the rethinking of regional community through the transcendence of state-centrism beyond borders.

4.7 Conclusion

In an attempt to imagine an alternative regional community in southern Africa, this chapter has argued that the ZCC, if recognised as a new type of regional actor, could be the glue that binds *regionness* to regional community and thereby, develops regionalism from below. In order for this to happen, the hegemony of the nation-state on the practice of regionalism needs to be interrogated. As a transnational movement, the ZCC can contribute to new ways of understanding community in southern Africa based on the events and interactions of the region’s people. Blaauw states that “a community so conceptualized can offer new meanings of regional community which can restore the regional citizenship and identity of the marginalized in the region” (2007: 226). To construct such a community calls for a break with the traditional models of state-dominated and elite driven approaches. The ZCC presents a new type

of regional actor and the opportunity for alternative interpretations of a regional community in SADC and as such contributes to a bottom-up approach to regional integration. In other words, grassroots communities should be allowed to influence policy planning in the region. Thus, in order to achieve a level of *regionness*, SADC needs to actively involve and engage with transnational societal movements on the ground. This will require SADC members to redefine the meaning of state sovereignty to coincide with a new conception where people are the *de facto* members of a regional community.

Conclusion

Conventional IR theories tend to equate community with the nation-state. Realism renders the nation-state the only logical form of social or political organization in international affairs. As such, the nation-state became the only accepted representation of political community, thus rendering other forms of social organization as apolitical or superficial. This assumption upholds the nation-state as the only 'proper' form of community, as the optimum political community where state borders are the guides to political community. Community in the realist sense is limited to a set of existing relationships defined by state borders and marked by national identity constituted by the state. This state-centric view of community reinforces the notion of the primacy of state sovereignty in international relations. This thesis has explored new political spaces, particularly those formally relegated to civil society, and novel political practices, especially those that defy the metaphysics of inclusion and exclusion; new forms of political community, primarily those that resist spatial categorization; and new modes of trans-border behaviours, especially those that seek to link the claims of humanity at large with those of particular sovereign entities.

The postmodern perspective highlights, and therefore helps to legitimate, alternative forms of community and agency in world politics. As such, this study has argued that new forms of political community are located within socio-cultural accounts of community. Community in this sense is associated with personal and more intimate forms than intended by the nation-state. This expanded notion of community in turn forms fundamental assumptions of alternative regional community in southern Africa. In this context, the thesis argues that the nation-state cannot be the only definer of regional community in southern Africa. Other agents of community in the region are contained by local narratives and have different understandings of community. These have been identified in some of the region's habits which predate colonialism. One of these habits is the ever increasing cross-border interactions of the region's people. This represents a regional community from 'below' institutional level and renders regional community in the light of social relations and processes driven by local narratives and suspended from realist conceptions of community.

This expanded notion of regional community is expressed by *new regionalism*. This multifaceted approach to regionalism highlights and welcomes the value of non-state actors and argues that they can help develop a sense of *regionness*. Significantly, *regionness* also includes the level of commonality and historical experiences found in the region's daily habits. These habits contain local narratives of community and are located in sites which have been neglected by traditional regionalist approaches. These spaces have been identified as those containing grassroots transnational actors like the ZCC. These alternative expressions of community are located in *lived spaces* (Niemann) which contain transnational actors, informal coalitions, networks and neglected regional actors like the ZCC, and offer the opportunity for grassroots articulation of political demands and prospects for the formation of regional citizenship and identity. Thus, the notion of regional community that this movement simulates is one that is consistent with the region's cross-border interactions. Despite being one of the region's current symbols for shared history and culture, the ZCC presents a compelling example of regional community and identity-in-formation beyond that assumed, and constrained, by the nation-state.

As one of southern Africa's fastest growing transnational movements, the ZCC discredits the assumptions associated with the idea of state sovereignty. Such movements and transnational relations are of value to us because they question the conventional interpretations of political community and thereby, directly and indirectly, paint a different picture of the region. The ZCC has, and continues to, empirically ignore the idea of state sovereignty whose time, as Boutros Boutros-Ghali notes, has passed and whose theory was never matched in reality (1992, Para. 17). This suggests that transnational socio-cultural movements offer important insights into the dynamics of contemporary social and political life and reinforce the need for a reinterpretation of the concept and practice of state sovereignty. However, the ZCC might not be in a position to politically actualise its significance as a regional actor. The movement can be said to be politically weak to the extent that the leadership of this potential regional actor from below remains unintelligently silent on human rights violations in Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries. The church is even silent on the plight of Zimbabweans starving and sleeping on the streets of Johannesburg. This is despite of the extensive membership of the movement across the region in that

country. In this case, the ZCC can be seen to be indirectly perpetuating regional inequality in Southern Africa.

Growing regional inequality has led to declining regional cohesion, catalysing the movement of people from politically unstable and economically weak countries into economically strong ones. Being politically and economically stronger, South Africa and Botswana continue to attract uncontrollable cross-border movement as well as illegal immigration. In recent years, political turmoil, oppression and starvation have forced thousands of Zimbabweans to cross the Limpopo River illegally into South Africa (Wende, 2008: 24). It is estimated that between two and four million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa, many of them illegally (SABC 3: 2006). This is the reality in most southern African countries and it is suggestive of the non-existent and artificial nature of state-borders and nation-states alike. This represents what has been termed “soft integration” (Fawcett, 2004: 443). Juxtaposed to this are the relentlessly restrictive state policies and border-policing missions introduced to control the movement of people from one state to another. Restrictive policies have been accompanied by an unwelcoming attitude to immigrants and migrants, particularly those from the SADC region and the rest of Africa. The effectiveness of these border-policing measures in controlling undocumented migration from SADC countries is doubtful, due to the porous nature of state borders. The same applies to the principle of state sovereignty, particularly in countries with delicate political and economic systems. Consolidating a new type of regional community cannot be arrived at using the same exclusionary methods utilised by state sovereignty.

Camilleri (1990: 5) argues that “state sovereignty offers only a misleading map of where we are and an even less useful guide to where we might be going”. The principle of sovereignty affirms a restricted range of possible answers to questions of understanding deeper notions of regional community. Makinda (2005: 950) distinguishes between three types of sovereignty: judicial, empirical and popular, the latter informing this study as it is predicated on the claim that “all people are equal and entitled to fundamental freedoms, and that governments control them only with their consent” (Makinda, 2005: 950). Therefore, if popular sovereignty is people orientated, it is logical to argue that a people-centred regional community should be

based not on state but on popular sovereignty. In the context of southern Africa therefore, the idea of state sovereignty needs to be understood in a broader sense so as to include comprehensive collectives such as cross-border networks and coalitions in the form of cross-religious bonds, traders, and so-called “border jumpers” (Grant and Söderbaum, 2003: 197). Moreover, this argument appeals to the construction of regionalism from below which as a result, redefines the boundaries for inclusion and exclusion and thereby opens up a regional space for non-state actors and transnational societal (grassroots) movements. As such, traditional boundaries that represent sovereign political community are increasingly being ignored as people take on their daily cross-border habits.

It is imperative, therefore, that SADC governments begin to embrace a vision of a common future, a future in a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice, peace and security for the peoples of southern Africa. SADC should embrace alternative interpretations of regional community and transform their structural set-up so as to consolidate a supranational entity with member states and the people whom they claim to represent moving freely within a borderless regional community.

In the context of southern Africa, community is found underneath statist space, and within particular cultural contexts and the meanings by which the region’s people live. The study draws on meanings of community as articulated by the ZCC movement and its cultural context in order to provide explanations for the argument for deeper notions of community. In so doing, regional institutional arrangements must be drawn closer to the lives of southern Africans. Individuals and nation-states in the region can come to enjoy equal protection and sustainable community. Community theorized and understood as such opens up alternative interpretations revealing a growing sense of regional awareness as it demonstrates the historical connectedness of the region’s people. This thesis has argued that deeper notions of regional community are impossible without the recognitions and blending of cross-regional actors like the ZCC.

However, these alternative forms of regional community do not necessarily replace the nation-state as a political or regional agent. Whilst states still retain a powerful

hold on political community, an important task is to denaturalize the assumptions that the state is *the only path* to regional community. These assumptions marginalize the range of other forms of regional agents or transnational actors such as the ZCC. Thus, underneath the surface of the nation-state there lies opportunity for rich forms of community in southern Africa rooted in the region's indigenous ways of interpreting community.

The thesis also sought to explain the appeal of the ZCC based on its ability to reclaim a lost sense of community and regional identity assumed to have disappeared in the wake of colonialism and apartheid. This is the key, it was argued, to re-discovering a wider citizenship and identity in southern Africa. Undeniably, the region's people belong together by more than just a dint of geography. The people of southern Africa and Africa in general, have for centuries considered themselves united by bonds of blood, barter and the search for a better life. Regional consciousness, therefore, represents the emergence of new forms of regional cohesion as well as new forms to organize solidarity across southern Africa. This thesis is not blind to problems such as the cross-border trade of illegal small weapons which tends to beset countries with common borders. Its focus, however, has remained resolutely positive, emphasizing those forces which have a positive impact on, and contribution towards, developing the region.

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