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**SECURITY COMMUNITIES AND THE  
PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC INSTABILITY**

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**Security Communities**  
**And The Problem Of Domestic Instability**

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**Abstract**

*The literature on security communities neglects the question of internal instability. Using examples drawn mainly from the Great Lakes region of Africa and the region covered by the Southern African Development Community, I argue that domestic stability, defined as the absence of large-scale violence within a country, is a necessary condition of a security community. I seek to demonstrate that large-scale domestic violence prevents the attainment of these communities by rendering people and states insecure, generating uncertainty, tension and mistrust among states, and creating the risk of cross-border violence. In contrast to other writers, I conclude that the benchmark of a security community – dependable expectations of peaceful change – should apply not only between states but also within them.*

**Introduction**

In this article I refute claims that the Great Lakes region of central Africa and the region covered by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are emerging or embryonic security communities.<sup>1</sup> At a theoretical level I argue that the literature on security communities mistakenly neglects the question of internal instability and that domestic stability, defined as the absence of large-scale violence within a country, is a necessary condition of a security community. Using examples drawn mainly from the two African regions, and from Southeast Asia for comparative purposes, I seek to demonstrate the ways in which domestic violence precludes the emergence or existence of such communities.

In the 1950s, Karl Deutsch and his colleagues conducted an extensive inquiry into the means by which war had been eliminated in certain geographic areas and historical periods through the formation of security communities.<sup>2</sup> According to Deutsch, a security community is “a group of people which has become integrated”, where integration is defined as:

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<sup>1</sup> These claims are made by Naison Ngoma, ‘SADC: Towards a Security Community?’, *African Security Review*, 12:3 (2003), Institute for Security Studies, pp.17-28; Michael S. Lund & Enrique Roig, ‘Southern Africa: An Emerging Security Community’, in Monique Mekenkamp *et al.* (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Africa: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Management Activities*, Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 1999, pp.391-395; Fredrik Söderbaum, ‘The New Regionalism in Southern Africa’, *Politeia*, 17:3 (1998), pp.75-94; Timothy M. Shaw, ‘African Renaissance/African Alliance: Towards New Regionalisms and New Realism in the Great Lakes at the Start of the Twenty-First Century’, *Politeia*, 17:3 (1998), pp. 60-74; and Timothy M. Shaw, ‘African Foreign Policy in the New Millennium: From Coming Anarchies to Security Communities? From New Regionalisms to New Realisms?’, in Kevin C. Dunn & Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), *Africa’s Challenge to International Relations Theory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, pp.204-219.

<sup>2</sup> Karl W. Deutsch *et al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

the attainment, within a territory, of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population.<sup>3</sup>

The “sense of community” encompasses a “we feeling” and a dynamic process of mutual sympathy, consideration, loyalties, trust, and responsiveness in decision-making.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary security communities include Western Europe, Canada and the US; and the Nordic group.<sup>5</sup>

Security communities pose a significant challenge to the central tenets of realism. Realism holds that the anarchic structure of the international system necessarily and inescapably gives rise to fear of military confrontation and to relentless security competition among states. States are not involved in war at all times, but they can never exclude the possibility that they might be attacked and they must therefore at all times be prepared for war.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to these assertions, states that comprise a security community regard the use and threat of force against each other to be so improbable that they eschew preparations for fighting one another. As Deutsch put it, “there is a real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way”.<sup>7</sup>

Largely because of the onset of the Cold War and the dominance of the realist paradigm in the field of international relations, Deutsch’s pioneering work lay fallow for many years. In the 1990s, his ideas were resuscitated, the most influential contribution being an edited volume by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, which extends and refines the ideas, explores their application in different regional settings and presents a rich agenda for further research.<sup>8</sup> Adler and Barnett construct an analytical framework in which mutual trust and collective identity among a group of states are the necessary conditions for dependable expectations of peaceful change, the benchmark of a security community. The emergence of the community is set in motion by any number of precipitating conditions that motivate the states to adopt similar orientations and engage in co-operation and policy co-ordination. Over time a positive interplay of interactions, institutions, social learning and other factors generates the requisite trust and transnational identity, which are themselves reciprocal and mutually reinforcing.<sup>9</sup> Peaceful change is defined as “neither the expectation of nor the preparation for organized violence as a means to settle interstate disputes”.<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between security communities and domestic stability is largely ignored in the literature. Adler and Barnett, for example, do not explore this issue, noting only that some of the case studies in their book “hinted that political instability in general and the absence of

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<sup>3</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.5.

<sup>4</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.36.

<sup>5</sup> See, respectively, Ole Waever, ‘Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community’, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.69-118; Sean M. Shore, ‘No Fences Make Good Neighbors: The Development of the Canadian-US Security Community, 1871-1940’, in Adler & Barnett (1998), pp. 333-367; and Håkan Wiberg, ‘Scandinavia’, in Richard Dean Burns (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Arms Control and Disarmament*, Vol. 1, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993, pp.209-226.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, John J. Mearsheimer, ‘The False Promise of International Institutions’, *International Security*, 19:3 (Winter 1994/95), pp.5-49.

<sup>7</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.5.

<sup>8</sup> Adler & Barnett (1998).

<sup>9</sup> Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, ‘A Framework for the Study of Security Communities’, in Adler & Barnett (1998), pp.29-65.

<sup>10</sup> Adler & Barnett (1998), p.34.

democracy in particular might be an obstacle to the development of a security community”.<sup>11</sup> I offer three reasons for arguing that domestic stability is sufficiently important to be considered a necessary condition of a security community: the first focuses on the security of people and credible usage of the term ‘security community’; the second focuses on the linkages between intra- and inter-state conflict; and the third focuses on the volatility and uncertainty associated with instability. In summary, large-scale domestic violence prevents the attainment of security communities because it renders people and states insecure, generates uncertainty, tension and mistrust among states, and creates the risk of cross-border violence. In contrast to Adler and Barnett, I conclude that the benchmark of dependable expectations of peaceful change should apply not only between states but also within them.

The following three sections explore in turn the three reasons for viewing domestic stability as a necessary condition of a security community. The penultimate section outlines an agenda for further research by posing a number of questions about the relationship between security communities and structural instability, latent instability and political systems. The conclusion summarises the empirical and theoretical arguments, and the policy implications for regional organisations.

### **The security of people and the question of credible terminology**

The first reason for insisting that domestic stability is a necessary condition of a security community relates to the security of people and the question of credible terminology. If domestic stability were not a necessary condition, then a group of countries could be classified as a security community when there are dependable expectations of peaceful change between them and large-scale violence within some of them. The inhabitants of unstable countries are not remotely secure, however, and substantial violence threatens the security if not the survival of the state. It would strain credulity to claim that people and states in these circumstances are part of a ‘security community’. This term is admittedly a specialist one in the international relations literature, but its definition and usage must be convincing in their own right.

By way of illustration, in 1998, Timothy Shaw described the Great Lakes region as an embryonic security community in light of a strategic alliance forged between Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).<sup>12</sup> At that time, Uganda was afflicted by civil wars and terrorist activities in its northern and western provinces; Rwanda was confronted by the armed forces responsible for the genocide in 1994 that were now conducting attacks on the country from bases in neighbouring DRC; Burundi was under military rule and beset by civil war; and the failed state of the DRC was shortly to be consumed by a rebellion and full-blown war in which the erstwhile allies fought each other. In August 1998, Uganda and Rwanda moved to overthrow the Congolese government and, over the next two years, fought each other in pitched battles inside the DRC.<sup>13</sup> The Great Lakes region, whose possible futures, according to Shaw, included “the stereotypical nightmare of exponential ‘anarchy’”,<sup>14</sup> was not an embryonic security community by any stretch of the imagination.

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Barnett & Emanuel Adler, ‘Studying Security Communities in Theory, Comparison, and History’, in Adler & Barnett (1998), p.425.

<sup>12</sup> Shaw (1998), pp.61, 66 & 70. The Great Lakes countries covered in the current article are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda.

<sup>13</sup> See ICG, ‘Scramble for the Congo: Anatomy of an Ugly War’, *ICG Africa Report*, 26 (20 December 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Shaw (1998), p.69.

The problem of credible terminology is not resolved by adopting a bifurcated approach that treats a group of unstable countries with co-operative and pacific relations as a security community at the inter-state level but not as a security community at the intra-state level. Frederick Söderbaum takes this approach in respect of the SADC region:<sup>15</sup>

In so far as intergovernmental relations are concerned, Southern Africa has been transformed from an explosive security complex towards a security community with cooperative relations, that is, the level of regionness has increased. ...When moving beyond intergovernmental relations, Southern Africa is not of course a security community.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond intergovernmental relations, Söderbaum observes, lay civil wars in Angola and the DRC as well as “potentially explosive situations in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, etc. [where] order is upheld mainly with power and by the armed forces”.<sup>17</sup> To suggest that these countries were part of a security community, however qualified, defies common sense. Elsewhere Söderbaum takes a different and preferable position, maintaining that a security community exists where “the level of regionness makes it inconceivable to solve conflicts by violent means, between *as well as within* states” (emphasis added).<sup>18</sup>

Other writers who view SADC as an emerging security community focus on regional security arrangements.<sup>19</sup> The key mechanism in this regard is the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, a common security regime established in 1996, whose aims, methods and jurisdiction are set out in the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation. The Organ’s objectives include the evolution of common political values, peaceful relations between states, and pacific peacemaking.<sup>20</sup> These objectives indicate SADC’s desire to become a security community. Yet the Protocol envisages a range of domestic situations that would render people and states highly insecure. It provides that the Organ’s peacemaking mandate covers civil wars, insurgencies, military coups and “large-scale violence between sections of the population or between a state and sections of the population, including genocide, ethnic cleansing and gross violation of human rights”.<sup>21</sup> These scenarios are not compatible with any convincing notion of an emerging security community. Nor, for that matter, do SADC states have dependable expectations of peaceful change between them. The Organ’s mandate also covers inter-state conflict in which an act of aggression or other form of military force has occurred or been threatened.<sup>22</sup> As illustrated in the following section, these internal and external scenarios reflect the realities of a region wracked by insecurity.

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<sup>15</sup> In 2003 the members of SADC, a regional organisation established in 1992, were Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<sup>16</sup> Söderbaum (1998), pp.79-80.

<sup>17</sup> Söderbaum (1998), p.80.

<sup>18</sup> Björn Hettne & Fredrik Söderbaum, ‘The New Regionalism Approach’, *Politeia*, 17:3 (1998), p.11.

<sup>19</sup> See Ngoma (2003); and Lund & Roig (1999).

<sup>20</sup> Article 2 of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, 2001. The Protocol can be viewed on the SADC website at [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int).

<sup>21</sup> Article 11(2)(b) of the Protocol.

<sup>22</sup> Article 11(2)(a) of the Protocol. See also Article 5 of the SADC Mutual Defence Pact of 2003, which outlines procedures when a State Party believes that its territorial integrity, political independence and security are threatened by another State Party.

Whatever the nature of inter-state relations among a group of countries, a citizenry engulfed by internal violence cannot plausibly be said to inhabit a security community. This emphasis on the security of people is consistent with Deutsch's sociological approach. In his much-cited summary formulation, a security community comprises a group of *people* that has become integrated, and the subject of dependable expectations of peaceful change are not states but rather the *population* of the territory covered by the community.<sup>23</sup> This leads Andrew Hurrell to adopt a position similar to that of the current author.<sup>24</sup> He contends that Brazil and Argentina have forged a loosely knit security community, but insists that other South and Central American countries are not part of this or any other security community. Although civil wars and social violence in these countries have largely been contained within national borders, the levels of violence have been very high and include the killing of 165,000 people in Colombia in the 1980s. Hurrell continues as follows:

If, as Deutsch originally argued, security communities have to do with groups of *people*, as well as collectivities, integrated to the point that they will not fight each other, then it becomes impossible to hide behind the distinction between international wars and other forms of social conflict [original emphasis].<sup>25</sup>

### **The impact of domestic instability on inter-state relations**

The second reason for insisting that domestic stability is a necessary condition of a security community relates to the linkages between intra- and inter-state conflict. At the very least, domestic violence generates tension and mistrust between states in ways that prevent them from attaining the high level of mutual confidence and collective identity required to create and maintain a security community. At worst, it can lead to cross-border violence in the form of inter-state hostilities, rebel attacks from neighbouring countries, military action by governments against rebel movements, or collective enforcement action intended to restore domestic order. I show below how instability has had these effects in Southern Africa and the Great Lakes region. I also discuss the impact of instability on inter-state relations in Southeast Asia.

#### ***Domestic instability can escalate into inter-state hostilities***

In 1996, a rebellion in the central African state of Zaire led to the fall of President Mobutu Sese Seko and the assumption of the presidency by Laurent Kabila. The country was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo and became a member of the SADC. In 1998 the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie* (Congolese Rally for Democracy) launched a rebellion against Kabila with the support of Rwanda and Uganda, which had helped to bring him to power. Kabila called on the SADC for military and political assistance. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia responded positively and deployed troops in the DRC. The DRC's neighbours in the north, Sudan and Chad, also came to Kabila's defence, while Burundi lined up with Rwanda and Uganda. The continent's biggest war began as an internal rebellion and soon involved nine African countries. Hostilities raged until 2002, when most of the state

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<sup>23</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Hurrell, 'An Emerging Security Community in South America?', in Adler & Barnett (1998), pp.228-264.

<sup>25</sup> Hurrell (1998), p.260.

belligerents withdrew from the Congo, and continue to simmer at the time of writing (September 2004).<sup>26</sup>

The state belligerents had various reasons for initiating and prolonging their military engagement, including access to the DRC's abundant natural resources. For the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, Angola and Burundi, an additional and primary motivation related to national security concerns arising from instability in their own countries. Each of them was subject to attacks by rebel groups based in the DRC: the Interahamwe and other forces responsible for the Rwandan genocide; the Ugandan guerrilla movement, the Allied Democratic Forces; the Angolan rebels, Unita; and the Burundi rebels, the *Forces Pour La Défense De La Démocratie*.<sup>27</sup> Although Zimbabwe's motivation did not fall into this category, internal instability was part of the equation. A United Nations report on the DRC war attributed Harare's military involvement, *inter alia*, to its desire to rally domestic support for its leaders in a context of falling standards of living and "gross mismanagement of the economy, unchecked public expenditure, corruption and one-party rule".<sup>28</sup>

There are many other examples from central and southern Africa of cross-border destabilisation and violence occurring when rebels are located in neighbouring states.<sup>29</sup> In the 1980s, apartheid South Africa repeatedly launched military attacks on countries that provided rear bases to Umkhonto we Sizwe, the liberation army of the African National Congress. In the post-apartheid era, Angola was involved in an attempted coup against President Chiluba of Zambia in 1997, and threatened to invade Zambia the following year on the grounds that Unita was operating from Zambian territory and receiving support from its officials. In 2000 Zambia accused the Angolan army of conducting operations against Unita on its territory. In 1997, Angola provided military assistance to General Sassou-Nguesso in his coup against President Pascal Lissouba of Congo-Brazzaville, the latter's government having had close ties to Unita.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Domestic instability can destabilise relations within a regional organisation***

The DRC war reveals how internal violence can thwart progress towards a security community by undermining trust and cohesion within a regional organisation. When Kabila appealed to the SADC for assistance in 1998, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, in his capacity as the chair of the SADC Organ, convened a meeting of a select group of African heads of state. He excluded South Africa, which held the rotating chair of the SADC at the time, because of a dispute between Harare and Pretoria over the status of the Organ.<sup>31</sup> Thereafter he declared that the SADC had decided to meet Kabila's appeal. When President Mandela challenged Mugabe's authority to send troops on behalf of the regional body, the latter

<sup>26</sup> See ICG (2000); ICG, 'Congo at War: A Briefing on the Internal and External Players in the Central African Conflict', *ICG Congo Report*, (17 November 1998); and David Shearer, 'Africa's Great War', *Survival*, 41:2 (Summer 1999), pp.89-106.

<sup>27</sup> ICG (1998 & 2000); Shearer (1999).

<sup>28</sup> United Nations, 'Addendum to the Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of National Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo', Security Council document S/2001/1072, 13 November 2001, para 76.

<sup>29</sup> See Oliver Furley & Roy May (eds.), *African Interventionist States*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001; John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*, Boulder: Westview, 2000; and Christopher Clapham (ed.), *African Guerrillas*, Oxford: James Currey, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> On Angola's military interventions as external projections of its internal conflict, see Norrie McQueen, 'Angola', in Furley & May (2001), pp.93-117.

<sup>31</sup> See 'Foreign Affairs Tries to Deny Mugabe's Snub', *Southern Africa Report*, 16:32 (14 August 1998), pp.4-5.

responded with thinly veiled insults.<sup>32</sup> The DRC accused South Africa, a fellow SADC state, of being “puppets of the aggressors” in its country.<sup>33</sup> Supported by Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania, South Africa attempted to broker a diplomatic solution to the DRC crisis. To this end, Mandela convened an emergency meeting of the SADC Summit in Pretoria. Mugabe failed to attend this meeting, proclaiming that “it is not possible for us to resolve [the crisis] as SADC because we are divided”.<sup>34</sup> Although SADC leaders subsequently sought to present a united front, the dispute around the DRC war generated lasting antagonism and crippled the Organ.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Domestic repression can destabilise relations between states***

Where a government is guilty of gross human rights abuses, neighbouring countries concerned about the regional implications might feel compelled to raise concerns that provoke accusations of domestic interference and destabilisation. SADC states usually avoid criticising each other and have generally tolerated the high level of state violence and repression in Zimbabwe since 2000.<sup>36</sup> However, in late 2001 President Mbeki of South Africa issued mild criticisms of Mugabe. The state-owned newspaper in Harare, the *Herald*, claimed that Mbeki had betrayed the ruling party and joined the “neo-colonialist plot” to overthrow it.<sup>37</sup> When Mbeki registered misgivings about the arrangements for the presidential election in March 2002, the *Herald* accused him of “removing his gloves for a bare-knuckled fight with Zimbabwe” and of mobilising SADC states to “justify a regional and international onslaught” against the country.<sup>38</sup> In 2003 Botswana, the SADC state most openly critical of Harare, felt obliged to denounce media reports in the region that it was conspiring with the US and Britain to launch a military attack on Zimbabwe.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Acute instability can lead to collective enforcement action***

In situations of chronic instability, neighbouring states might decide to employ collective force in an effort to stabilise the situation. This occurred in Lesotho in 1998 when the Prime Minister of that country requested Pretoria to take military action aimed at restoring domestic order. Against a backdrop of mounting dissent over the results of a national election, there were fears of an imminent coup when a group of junior officers deposed and imprisoned the commander and other senior members of the Lesotho Defence Force. In consultation with Mozambique and Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana deployed troops in Lesotho. The deployment was fiercely opposed by sections of the Lesotho army and population. Eight South African soldiers and an estimated 58 Basotho soldiers were killed in battles over

<sup>32</sup> See UN-OCHA, ‘DRC: Zimbabwean, Angolan Troops Arrive to Back Kabila’, *Integrated Regional Information Network bulletin*, 21 August 1998.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in UN-OCHA, ‘Democratic Republic of Congo: Kabila Lambastes Pretoria’, *Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa*, Weekly Round-Up No. 50-98, 4-10 December 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Eric G. Berman & Katie S. Sams, *Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities*, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000, p.178.

<sup>35</sup> See Laurie Nathan, ‘The Absence of Common Values and Failure of Common Security in Southern Africa, 1992-2003’, *Crisis States Working Paper*, 50, London: Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics, 2004a.

<sup>36</sup> On state repression in Zimbabwe, see the reports of Amnesty International at web.amnesty.org. On SADC’s support for Zimbabwe, see Nathan (2004a), p.11.

<sup>37</sup> See Pule Molebeledi, ‘Harare’s Herald Swipes at Mbeki’, *Business Day*, 4 December 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in ‘President Thabo Mbeki Given a Lashing by Zimbabwe as He Gets Tough with Mugabe’, *Southern Africa Report*, 19:49 (7 December 2001), pp.1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Press release issued by the Botswana Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gaborone, 8 August 2003.



several days. Anarchy and public demonstrations against the intervention ensued, leading to the virtual sacking of the capital city, Maseru.<sup>40</sup>

### ***The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)***

The ASEAN states have avoided a war with each other for close on forty years.<sup>41</sup> This is a hugely significant achievement given the region's intense conflicts prior to the ASEAN's formation in 1967 and the on-going tensions among some of its members. The establishment of the organisation institutionalised a reconciliation process, and has since provided states with a forum in which to address, or ignore, their disputes peacefully.<sup>42</sup> The maintenance of pacific relations is frequently attributed to the 'ASEAN way', which entails a set of norms and principles on inter-state relations and a strong preference for addressing disputes through informal procedures.<sup>43</sup> The norms and principles include dialogue, consultation, consensus and 'agreeing to disagree'; non-interference in domestic affairs; peaceful settlement of disputes; and avoidance of the threat and use of force. In 2003, the ASEAN declared its intention of building on this approach, with the explicit goal of becoming a security community.<sup>44</sup>

The non-interference norm has had contradictory effects on the ASEAN's prospects of achieving that goal. On the one hand, it has helped to manage bilateral disputes and prevent their escalation into violence and regional destabilisation, thereby contributing to peace, stability and community-building among states.<sup>45</sup> In this respect the ASEAN stands in marked contrast to the SADC and other African formations. On the other hand, the norm has prevented the ASEAN from playing a useful role in domestic crises.<sup>46</sup> The organisation was ineffectual in relation to the Asian financial crisis of 1997/78, the separatist insurgencies and anarchy in Indonesia after the fall of President Suharto in 1998, and the East Timor catastrophe of 1999. Prior to 2003, the ASEAN failed to take a critical stance on the military regime and human rights abuses in Myanmar. If it softens the principle of non-interference and becomes more engaged in national affairs, as has been contemplated in light of its failures and the resulting damage to its credibility,<sup>47</sup> it is likely to provoke inter-state tension and accusations of external interference. However the principle is modified, it will not overcome the obstacle that actual and latent domestic instability poses to the attainment of a security community.

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<sup>40</sup> On the Lesotho intervention, see Laurie Nathan, 'Organ Failure: A Review of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security', in Liisa Laakso (ed.), *Regional Integration for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Africa: Europe, SADC and ECOWAS*, Helsinki: Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, 2002, pp.78-79.

<sup>41</sup> In 2003 the members of ASEAN were Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

<sup>42</sup> See Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, London: Routledge, 1989; and Dana R. Dillon, 'Contemporary Security Challenges in Southeast Asia', *Parameters*, 27:1 (Spring 1997), pp.119-133.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Amitav Acharya, 'Collective Identity and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia', in Adler & Barnett (1998), pp.198-227; and Mely Caballero-Anthony, 'The Regionalization of Peace in Asia', in Michael Pugh and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu (eds.), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2003, pp.195-211.

<sup>44</sup> See the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, Bali, 7 October 2003, available on the ASEAN website at [www.aseansec.org/15159.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm)

<sup>45</sup> See Acharya (1998); and Caballero-Anthony (2003).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Nicholas Khoo, 'Constructing Southeast Asian Security: The Pitfalls of Imagining a Security Community and the Temptations of Orthodoxy', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17:1 (April 2004), pp.137-153.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Caballero-Anthony (2003), pp.204-205.

Amitav Acharya argues further that to the extent that authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia face growing popular demands for human rights and democracy, regional co-operation and community-building become narrowly confined to the inter-governmental level. This type of regionalism, he maintains, does not translate into the kind of societal co-operation and sense of community envisaged by Deutsch.<sup>48</sup> To put the case more strongly, regional solidarity among states has bolstered regime security at the expense of human security. Even at the inter-governmental level, domestic instability and the fragility of regimes have inhibited multilateralism and progress towards integration in certain areas. This is most evident in the defence sector, where no multilateral co-operation had taken place by the late 1990s.<sup>49</sup>

A more detailed account of the relationship between domestic instability and the development of a security community in Southeast Asia would include consideration of the following: the implications of Myanmar assuming the ASEAN presidency in 2006; the effects of Indonesia's political volatility on its leadership of the ASEAN and on strategic assessments of peaceful change in the region; Malaysia's harsh treatment of political refugees fleeing violence and repression in Indonesia; and the extent to which Singapore's military posture derives from concerns about a recurrence of the violence directed at the Chinese minority communities in Indonesia and Malaysia in the 1960s.

### **Instability, uncertainty and the risk of cross-border violence**

The third reason for arguing that domestic stability is a necessary condition of a security community relates to the volatility and uncertainty associated with instability. As noted in the introduction, a security community requires so strong a degree of mutual trust and sense of community among a group of states that they consider the use and threat of force against each other to be unthinkable and consequently eschew preparations for fighting one another. None of this is possible without: consistency and predictability in the international conduct of states; trust, as a social phenomenon that rests on "the assessment that another actor will behave in ways that are consistent with normative expectations";<sup>50</sup> the requisite sense of community, including "mutually successful predictions of behaviour";<sup>51</sup> and reliability in the conduct of states, as a *sine qua non* of dependable expectations of peaceful change.

Realist scholars of international relations insist that the problem of uncertainty can never be overcome sufficiently to eliminate mistrust and the fear of war: states cannot divine perfectly the intention of other states and therefore cannot be completely certain that other states will refrain from attacking them.<sup>52</sup> Established security communities refute this position. The Nordic states and West European countries have achieved sufficient trust and sense of community to have made long-term security decisions of a pacific nature with a high level of confidence. With respect to the US and Canada, Sean Shore makes the following assertion:

It is simply unimaginable to most observers... that the two North American countries could fight a war over any issue that is likely to arise. As 5,000 miles (and 125 years) of undefended border attest, neither side regards the other as even

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<sup>48</sup> Acharya (1998), pp.215-216.

<sup>49</sup> Acharya (1998), pp.217-218.

<sup>50</sup> Adler & Barnett (1998), p.46.

<sup>51</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.36.

<sup>52</sup> See Mearsheimer (1994/95), p.10.

a potential military threat, despite the fact that interstate anarchy supposedly makes war an ever-present possibility.<sup>53</sup>

The problem of uncertainty is acute when states are unstable, however. The trajectory, outcomes and regional repercussions of large-scale domestic violence are neither controllable nor predictable. Notwithstanding the inevitability of certain negative effects, the volatility associated with instability can also throw up nasty surprises. For example, the tension between Angola and its neighbours that supported Unita was inevitable, but the conflict between Uganda and Rwanda, the scope of the DRC war and the impact of that war on relations within SADC were totally unexpected. Moreover, instability can provoke dramatic changes in leadership, through rebellions, assassinations, coups or palace revolts, which give rise to radical shifts in political orientation and agendas. Even if the leaders of a group of unstable states are confident of a common commitment to pacific norms, they cannot be certain that this commitment will be shared by future leaders.

Domestic instability in the form of substantial violence does not always lead to cross-border violence and destabilisation, but the risk of such effects cannot be ruled out. Although the precise nature and level of the risk may be indeterminate, it would be imprudent of states in a volatile environment to base their plans on long-term expectations of peaceful change. They are more likely to err on the side of caution. As noted earlier, this is precisely what the SADC did in its Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation. While the Protocol reflects a desire to establish a security community, it also anticipates and mandates the Organ to address a range of violent scenarios between and within these states, and it includes the option of collective enforcement action when peaceful forms of conflict resolution have failed.<sup>54</sup>

In light of the preceding discussion, some tentative observations can be made about the factors that heighten the risk of domestic instability leading to cross-border violence. The observations are tentative because the volatility of unstable countries militates against definitive generalisations and because the sample of regions drawn on here is small. Even this small sample reveals significant variations in the dynamics of domestic and regional instability, and the reasons for and constraints on use of force by states.

### *Scale, intensity and duration of domestic violence*

The duration, scale and intensity of internal violence appear to be the most significant risk factors. In the African examples cited above, with the exception of the intervention by South Africa and Botswana in Lesotho, the domestic violence that led to cross-border use of force was large-scale, widespread and sustained. By contrast, there have been many incidents of low level and short-term violence in SADC countries that did not result in major conflict between states. The most prominent of these incidents include a failed secessionist bid in Namibia in 1998/1999, election disputes in Malawi in 1999, a constitutional crisis in Zambia in 2001, and election disputes on the Zanzibar island of Tanzania in 2001.

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<sup>53</sup> Shore (1998), p.333.

<sup>54</sup> See Article 11(3) of the Protocol.

### ***Proximity***

The risk of cross-border violence is greatest among contiguous countries. Domestic instability is most likely to threaten the security of adjacent states, rebel movements are more likely to be based in neighbouring countries than further afield, and military operations are easier to mount and sustain across immediate borders than over longer distances. Conversely, states that are separated from one another by other countries or a geographical buffer may be less vulnerable to being affected by each other's instability. For example, the islands of Mauritius and Seychelles are members of the SADC but have not been destabilised by conflict on the mainland.

### ***Military balance of power***

States are likely to weigh up the balance of power when contemplating whether to use force against other states and whether the objective is to conduct a strike, hold territory or overthrow a government. Weak states are obviously less likely to attack strong states than the other way round. Balance of power considerations are also relevant in regional enforcement operations. It is improbable, for example, that South Africa and Botswana would have sent troops into Zimbabwe or Angola had the latter countries experienced the conditions that prevailed in the tiny kingdom of Lesotho in 1998.

### ***Strategic culture***

The strategic culture and foreign policy of states are critical factors. For example, the SADC is split into pacific and militarist camps with respect to conflict management and resolution. In the 1990s, its members engaged in heated debates over the orientation and methods of the SADC Organ, with Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania favouring a common security regime and diplomatic approaches to peacemaking while Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe preferred collective military options and a Nato-type arrangement.<sup>55</sup> The import of this division was exposed starkly during the DRC war of 1998, when the militarist camp deployed troops and the pacific camp sought to initiate negotiations and broker a ceasefire. The Lesotho intervention, on the other hand, was an isolated event rather than indicative of the foreign posture of South Africa and Botswana.

### ***Regional organisations and norms***

The strategic orientation of regional organisations is similarly a salient issue. At one end of the spectrum, the organisation may have a militarist tendency if member states view collective enforcement action as appropriate. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has often resorted to peace enforcement, is an example of this inclination.<sup>56</sup> At the opposite end of the spectrum, the ASEAN has studiously avoided such interventions. It has also been much more successful than African organisations in preventing inter-state violence. A genuine commitment by states to pacific relations is clearly a more relevant factor than the mere presence of a regional body and formal declarations of pacific intent.

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<sup>55</sup> See Nathan (2004a).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 2002.

### *Defensive versus offensive motivations*

States that are under attack by rebels based outside their country naturally have a strong incentive to resort to cross-border force. Nevertheless, the distinction between offensive and defensive motives in military interventions is often unclear. In the African cases discussed in the previous section, most of the intervening states were driven by a mixture of national security concerns, regional aspirations and economic interests. Moreover, all the belligerents in a given situation invariably profess to have a defensive motivation, and in some instances independent observers may be hard pressed to make a categorical judgement on the competing claims.

### *Structural instability*

The preceding discussion focused mainly on the proximate relationships between domestic instability and cross-border violence in Africa, such as when the rebels of one country are based in another country. However, the proximate relationships and relevant causal mechanisms can only be properly understood in the context of deep structural instability throughout the continent, which flows from weak and vulnerable states, authoritarianism and repression, marginalisation and persecution of ethnic groups, and underdevelopment and socio-economic inequity. These problems are compounded by the legacy of the colonial powers' ethnic policies of divide-and-rule and arbitrary demarcation of national boundaries that split ethnic communities. As a result of these structural and historical factors, many African states have a propensity to large-scale internal violence.<sup>57</sup> Their weakness prevents them from halting the flow of violence, weapons and armed forces into and out of their territories and contributes to the absence of a clear dividing line between domestic and regional instability.

### **An agenda for further research**

In this section I present an agenda for further research by raising a number of questions and concerns about the relationship between domestic stability and security communities. For example, I have argued that one of the fundamental obstacles to these communities is *large-scale* violence. Does this phenomenon require more precise specification in terms its intensity, duration and scope, or would such specification inevitably be arbitrary? In any event, is the emphasis on large-scale violence entirely necessary? As indicated below, political instability without substantial violence has thwarted the formation of security communities in certain regions. Does it always have this effect? Put differently, what kind or level of instability obstructs the emergence of a security community? Conversely, what kind or level of instability can be sustained by a security community?

The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) provides an example of domestic instability inhibiting the emergence of a security community despite the absence of major violence.<sup>58</sup> All the GCC countries are monarchies and, with the exception of Bahrain, have Sunni majorities and substantial Shi'i minorities. Elite fears of instability have led to some internal security co-operation among the GCC members but they have also generated mutual suspicion. Rulers are concerned that their neighbours might support their domestic opponents and undermine their regimes. Accusations of domestic interference in the 1990s contributed to reversing the

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<sup>57</sup> See Laurie Nathan, 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: The Structural Causes of Crisis and Violence in Africa', in Peter Batchelor & Kees Kingma (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: Concepts and Processes*, Vol. 1, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp.41-58.

<sup>58</sup> The GCC states are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

progress towards security co-operation that had been achieved in the 1980s and during the Gulf crisis of 1990.<sup>59</sup> By way of further example, Guadalupe Gonzalez and Stephan Haggard show how US concerns about Mexico's lack of political stability and democracy have been a significant reason for the absence of a tightly coupled security community between the two countries. These concerns have inhibited the development of trust, institutionalised co-operation, common identity and US confidence in Mexico's capacity to make credible international commitments.<sup>60</sup>

Methodological complications also arise from the fact that the problem of violence is not limited to current and objective manifestations of physical force. The perceptions of relevant actors about the future are also germane because a security community rests on dependable *expectations* of peaceful change. In the absence of violence in a given country, its citizens and neighbouring states may nevertheless believe that there is a strong possibility of domestic violence and/or cross-border violence occurring in the future.<sup>61</sup> These perceptions are likely to be informed by assessments of the country's structural stability. Should 'structural instability' therefore feature more prominently in the equation? How might this term and its relationship to security communities be defined in a general fashion?

As illustrated by the GCC and ASEAN, structural or latent instability can be a barrier to security communities not only among weak states but also among relatively strong authoritarian states. This highlights the need to examine the nexus between security communities and political systems. Deutsch found that "compatibility of main values" in the political domain was an essential requirement for the establishment of these communities,<sup>62</sup> but his historical survey did not reveal which values were most conducive to their attainment.<sup>63</sup> The critical values differed from one region to another and depended on the domestic politics of the participating units. In some processes of integration leading to a security community, states had tacitly downplayed and depoliticised certain incompatible values.<sup>64</sup>

Adler and Barnett are unsure whether liberalism is the cognitive structure best suited to building trust between states and whether it is a necessary condition for the development of security communities.<sup>65</sup> Yet the relevant criteria extend beyond compatibility and trust to include stability and security. Authoritarian rule might be stable in some instances but, unlike democracy, it does not provide citizens with a basis for effecting domestic change freely and peacefully; it does not offer them the security of fundamental rights; and riots or rebellions, once triggered, can unleash massive violence, topple regimes and destabilise adjacent countries. Deutsch maintained, without further elaboration, that security communities exclude

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<sup>59</sup> This account of the GCC is drawn from Michael Barnett & F. Gregory Gause III, 'Caravans in Opposite Directions: Society, State, and the Development of Community in the Gulf Cooperation Council', in Adler and Barnett, *Security Communities*, pp.161-197.

<sup>60</sup> See Guadalupe Gonzalez and Stephan Haggard, 'The United States and Mexico: A Pluralistic Security Community?', in Adler & Barnett (1998), pp.295-332.

<sup>61</sup> There are no good reasons to follow Deutsch in limiting the subjective test to the opinions of 'political elites', thereby excluding the majority of citizens. See Deutsch *et al.* (1957), pp.31-32.

<sup>62</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), pp.46-49.

<sup>63</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), p.66.

<sup>64</sup> Deutsch *et al.* (1957), pp.46-49.

<sup>65</sup> Barnett & Adler (1998), pp.425-426.

“certain types of dictatorships”.<sup>66</sup> It is unclear which, if any, types of authoritarianism would make the cut.

In light of the above, an analytical framework for understanding the relationship between domestic stability and security communities would entail a matrix whose variables include actual and potential violence; lower levels of instability; structural instability; the security of states and people; the linkages between intra- and inter-state conflict; and subjective perceptions of these dynamics held by states and citizens. A comprehensive general description of the relationship may be elusive because of the number of interacting variables and because the emergence, evolution and retardation of a security community are contingent on historical, political, security, social and other factors. A viable parsimonious formulation would be to define a security community to include dependable expectations of peaceful domestic change, in which case the contingencies and complexities would be empirical matters that require investigation in each particular case.

## Conclusion

For a security community to exist, it is not sufficient that states have a formal commitment to pacific relations, that they view the risk of war among them as low, or even that they have avoided hostilities for a lengthy period. Formal commitments can be breached and the low probability or absence of war might be due to factors unrelated to those of a security community, such as the balance of power, geo-political dynamics and material constraints on successful use of force. Instead, a security community exists where states have achieved a sense of community and a level of mutual trust and collective identity that are sufficiently strong for them to regard the use and threat of force against each other as unthinkable and to avoid preparations for fighting one another.

Security communities thus appear to be a promising solution to what Deutsch described as the fundamental problem of international politics and organisation, namely the creation of conditions under which stable and peaceful relations between states are possible and likely.<sup>67</sup> These communities are consequently a matter of interest chiefly in the field of international relations, which focuses principally on the global and regional levels.<sup>68</sup> In the study of security communities this has led to insufficient attention being paid to stability at the national level and to the relationship between national and regional instability.

The main argument of this paper can be summarised as follows. Domestic instability in the form of large-scale violence precludes the emergence or existence of a security community in a number of ways. It generates tension and suspicion between states, preventing the forging of trust and common identity that are necessary conditions of a security community. It can also lead to cross-border violence and destabilisation. Even if it does not have this effect in a particular case, it rules out dependable expectations of peaceful international change since states cannot exclude the possibility of cross-border violence and cannot be certain about the reliability of unstable regimes. In the national context, instability seriously undermines the security of citizens and the state. The inhabitants of a country wracked by violence cannot

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<sup>66</sup> See Karl W. Deutsch, ‘Security Communities’, in James Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy* (1<sup>st</sup> edition), New York: Free Press, 1961, p.103.

<sup>67</sup> Deutsch (1961), p.98.

<sup>68</sup> A notable exception is the regional security complex theory developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, which systematically links the national, regional and global levels. See Barry Buzan & Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

reasonably be said to live in a security community. A security community should therefore be defined to include dependable expectations of peaceful domestic change. On the basis of this definition, structural instability and authoritarian rule could be regarded as further obstacles to these communities.

Because the benchmark of a security community is so high, analysts may be tempted to take the seemingly easier route of depicting certain regions as ‘emerging’ or ‘embryonic’ security communities. This approach is fraught with difficulty and ambiguity, however. These terms imply that the states in question are progressing towards dependable expectations of peaceful change but do not yet discount the risk that some of them might use or threaten force against others of them. Definite movement of this kind, from uncertainty, insecurity and risk to a substantial absence thereof at some unknown point in the future, is very hard to ascertain and prove as a contemporary claim about a group of countries. Such claims tend to evoke contradictory evidence and significant qualifications to assertions about progress towards a security community.<sup>69</sup> The identification of an emerging or embryonic security community is far easier and more plausible when reviewing retrospectively the historical trajectory of an established security community.<sup>70</sup>

States in the SADC region and the Great Lakes region do not constitute emerging or embryonic security communities. They do not currently, and will not for the foreseeable future, have dependable expectations of peaceful internal or external change. Political instability has generated acute mistrust between them, undermined any sense of community, in many instances led to cross-border violence, and in all cases rendered citizens profoundly insecure. As a result of deep structural instability and the weakness of states in particular, these trends are not limited to southern and central Africa but are evident throughout the continent.<sup>71</sup> Instability in the GCC and ASEAN groups has similarly impeded the development of trust and certainty required to form a security community. By contrast, the Nordic, West European and US-Canadian security communities are comprised exclusively of stable countries. Broadening the necessary conditions of a security community to encompass political stability would therefore not alter their classification as such. It would be most relevant when considering whether groups that include unstable countries have attained or could attain that state.

The argument presented here has strategic and policy implications for regional organisations that include unstable countries and that aspire to become security communities, implicitly as in the case of the SADC or explicitly as in the case of the ASEAN. They will not succeed in this quest by concentrating on inter-state relations and adhering rigidly to the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs. Large-scale internal violence cannot be quarantined and invariably begets regional instability. Yet the regional organisations in question are ill-equipped to deal with this problem. Their ability to strengthen weak states and transform authoritarian ones is severely constrained because their capacity, orientation and mandate

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<sup>69</sup> The claims that Southern Africa and the Great Lakes region are emerging or embryonic security communities are strongly qualified by the authors who make these claims. See Söderbaum (1998), pp.80 & 89; Lund & Roig (1999), p.391; Ngoma (2003), pp.26-27; and Shaw (1998), pp.65-69. Khoo raises the same concern about the qualifications invariably attached to claims that ASEAN is a nascent security community. See Khoo (2004).

<sup>70</sup> Adler and Barnett identify three temporal phases in the development of a security community, distinguishing between nascent, ascendant and mature communities, but insist that this classification is only a heuristic device to aid research. See Adler & Barnett (1998), pp. 49-57; and Barnett & Adler (1998), pp.431-435.

<sup>71</sup> See Furley & May (2001); Harbeson & Rothchild (2000); and Clapham (1998).

<sup>71</sup> On Angola’s military interventions as external projections of its internal conflict, see Norrie McQueen, ‘Angola’, in Furley & May (2001), pp.93-117.



derive from the capacity and orientation of member states. Weak states unavoidably establish weak organisations, and authoritarian regimes set up multilateral forums that tolerate authoritarianism. These constraints are compounded by the fact that regional bodies are themselves destabilised when domestic instability creates tension between states.<sup>72</sup>

In all likelihood security communities lie beyond the reach of regions characterised by chronic instability. The best that regional forums can do in these circumstances is to create security regimes that manage inter-state relations without resort to force and contribute to domestic stability through peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities where appropriate and possible. That said, policy prescriptions that place the burden of domestic stability on regional organisations are misplaced. Political stability is primarily a national project and the contribution of regional organisations to this project is determined and circumscribed by the capacity and mandate of member states.

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<sup>72</sup> For a fuller discussion on the limitations of regional organisations that comprise weak and unstable states, see Nathan (2004a).

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The aim of the Crisis States Programme (CSP) at DESTIN's Development Research Centre is to provide new understanding of the causes of crisis and breakdown in the developing world and the processes of avoiding or overcoming them. We want to know why some political systems and communities, in what can be called the "fragile states" found in many of the poor and middle income countries, have broken down even to the point of violent conflict while others have not. Our work asks whether processes of globalisation have precipitated or helped to avoid crisis and social breakdown.

### Crisis States Programme collaborators

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### Research Objectives

- We will assess how constellations of power at local, national and global levels drive processes of institutional change, collapse and reconstruction and in doing so will challenge simplistic paradigms about the beneficial effects of economic and political liberalisation.
- We will examine the effects of international interventions promoting democratic reform, human rights and market competition on the 'conflict management capacity' and production and distributional systems of existing polities.
- We will analyse how communities have responded to crisis, and the incentives and moral frameworks that have led either toward violent or non-violent outcomes.
- We will examine what kinds of formal and informal institutional arrangements poor communities have constructed to deal with economic survival and local order.



## crisis states programme

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