Challenges in Democratization and Securitization

Gladys Mokhawa
University of Botswana, Botswana

It is a great pleasure of ours here at *Southern African Peace and Security Studies* to present our second issue. The editor's introduction in our first issue provided an illuminating foreword about peace and security in southern Africa. The issues ranged from challenges of democratic consolidation to interrogating conflict resolution mechanisms in the region. These issues remain relevant as we proceed with the evolution of democracy in the region. The current issue accentuates the need to still forge ahead in transforming the breadth of democracy into a deeper and more meaningful democratic consolidation.

Democracy in the region is at a critical juncture. The dilemmas, that characterized democratization in the southern African region at the turn of decolonization, still remain. The questions marks have not only been whether states were abiding by features of democratic governance, but also about the fallacy of electoralism, exclusionary politics, limited socio-economic opportunities and the limited expansion of the political space. The acid test for these dilemmas has been demonstrated by the just ended South African leadership elections. These elections were particularly interesting because they were conducted in the wake of both political and social malaise. Post-apartheid South Africa is host to high unemployment rates, high income disparity, and industrial strife. Worryingly, there is a disturbing gun culture that has amounted to serious violence in the country.

Moving beyond the understanding of (in) security as constituted by physical threats, there are, in the region, other threats that do not fit the neat categorization of classical security. Issues such as immigration and transnational threats are assuming an even greater importance in the peace and security discourse and practice of southern Africa. This is so because as noted by Heisler and Layton-Henry (1993), immigration can present threats to security in the receiving countries, albeit generally not directly of a military kind. But in southern Africa disturbances in terms of security are attributed to refugees. This has thus modulated a shift in the framing of 'threats': immigration has shifted from uneasiness to existential threat. Huysmans (2006: 47) warns that "migration becomes a factor in a constitutive political dialectic in which security and identity of a community depends on making this very community insecure". As such, framing refugees in this existential question, Huysmans continues to submit, produces and reproduces a political community of insecurity.

The articles and contributions in this issue span from a variety of themes that express challenges both within the political and intellectual landscape. The hope is that by combining theoretical insights with empirical details a deeper, richer and sophisticated analysis of issues could be achieved. The collection advance arguments that pay closer attention to issues of race and its intersection with social identity, challenges of conflict resolution, peace and security in the region, immigration and worrying political culture.

The article on 'United in Diversity and Divided in Difference: Belonging and Opposition in Democratic South Africa' by Carolyn Holmes argues for a political imagination that is inclusive and does not dichotomize social engineering. The article thus suggests a break away from privileging racialized discourse to engage in authentic conversations about the quality and sustainability of the South African democracy. Moving beyond the dilemmas of democratic consolidation, Hussein Solomon, in 'Critical Reflections of the African Standby Force: The case of SADC Contingent', highlights the less gloomy picture of African violence and conflict. The article showcases Africa's commitment to solving its conflict by establishing an African Standby Force. Although Solomon recognizes the creation of the African Standby Force as a positive development he nonetheless points to a few sources of apprehension. Notably, the African Standby Force continues to experience challenges of logistical support in the form of strategic airlift which then impacts on rapid response. For him the greatest threat to a well-functioning Standby Force is the lack of political commitment by the regional leaders. The motivation of this concern emanates from the realization that the leadership in the region seems to be more concerned with "the security of state elites as opposed to the human security".

Bryson Nkhoma in 'Transnational threats: The Problem of Illegal Immigration in Northern Malawi', draws attention to the conjectures regarding of the presence of migrants in Malawi, namely, the generating of fear that immigrants might potentially be sources of insecurity and compete with locals over scarce resources. However, the results of the study that Nkhoma used for this paper suggest that immigrants are not so much of a concern in terms of crimes committed. Be that as it may, Nkhoma cautions that the problem of immigration threatens violent outbursts motivated by xenophobic tendencies. He therefore proffers the strategies that the Malawian government has used to crackdown on the problem of illegal immigrants. In his concluding remarks, Nkhoma intimates on the delicate balance that need to be struck when dealing with such complex, contradictory and conflicting dimensions such as illegal immigration, transnational crimes and refugees requiring protection. He calls for an adoption of a balanced yet holistic approach with locals involved to deal with immigrants like refugees and asylum seekers who still have the right to protection.

Using the analytic devices of critical theory, Lester Shawa employs the big man syndrome to reveal how this has created a security problem in Malawi. In his article Shawa shows how the leadership (past and present) in Malawi has used their power to thwart citizen's right of expression. This has the potential, according to Shawa, to incite tensions and violence in the country. Thus the paper advocates for "a need for self-reflexivity and argumentation based on

philosophical notions of dialectical reasoning and communicative rationality as ways in which to conceive containment of the big-man syndrome".

The first issue also elucidated the rationale for *Southern African Peace and Security Studies*. We still reiterate our commitment to policy relevant research and this is evidenced by the policy briefs presented. Our first policy brief in this issue is on 'Elections in Angola: Understanding the Results behind the Results'. Without disputing the victory of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) in Angola's 2012 legislative elections which stood at 71.84 per cent of the votes, there is still a bigger threat to MPLA strongholds – the problem of abstention. The brief concludes by arguing that "the MPLA's project of post-war reconstruction, so praised by foreigners, may be effective in guaranteeing peace and a transforming society, but fails in establishing a mature political arena". Thus, "post-war Angola remains underdeveloped and if anything is not done, Angola may become a ritual for legitimation for the MPLA, where the opposition plays the role of figurants, the masses trade their political passion for subventions, the international community cheerleads and the abstention sits as the elephant in the room".

Our second policy brief, 'The Marikana massacre: An Historical Overview of the Labour Unrest in the Mining Sector in South Africa', demonstrated a delicate paradox of the violence organized against the state and vice versa. This brief showcases violence that is socially organized has the potential of creating adverse conditions. Noting the ramifications of the Marikana Massacre, the brief proposes remedies for post-Marikana. The recommendations include the creation of conditions for peaceful and free union activity, requiring employers to participate in centralized bargaining structures, the renewal of union structures, action to address the living conditions of mining communities, and national engagement on transformation of the mining sector.

Finally, we are excited to present a review of Susan William's book, *Who Killed Hammarskjold? The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in South Africa*, reviewed by Mark Stevenson Curry.

References

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Biographical Note

Gladys Mokhawa holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of St. Andrews, UK, and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Botswana.